

Fort Smith 1838 - 1871

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SYNOPSIS

FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

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## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter I

#### Congress Selects a Site

Projects for the defense of the Western Frontier. Cass' report on the defense of the frontier to the Benton Committee. The 24th Congress appropriates \$332,000 for the defense of the frontier. Activities and recommendations of the Kearny commission. The Arkansans press the War Department to have the new post located at "Old Fort Smith." Colonel Whistler's commission visits "Old Fort Smith." John Rogers writes his senator. The Arkansas Congressional Delegation intervenes; Secretary of War Joel R. Poinsett agrees to compromise. Congress passes a joint resolution selecting the site for the fort on the Arkansas. Rogers sells the government the land for Fort Smith. Totten and Thayer prepare a comprehensive plan for the proposed western forts. Colonel Cross urges that troops be sent to the Arkansas frontier to work on the military road.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter II

#### Major Thomas' First Year at Fort Smith

Colonel Cross select Thomas as project engineer at Fort Smith. Thomas receives his orders. Thomas visits Washington and is given his instructions by Cross. The mechanics and laborers are recruited. Thomas transports his construction people from Bangor, Maine, to Fort

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Smith.

The construction crew arrives on the Arkansas. Arbuckle orders Bonneville's company of the 7th Infantry from Fort Gibson to Fort Smith. The dispute over the disposition of the Fort Coffee ordnance stores. Bonneville refuses to detail any of his soldiers to work on the new fort. The dispute is referred to Washington.

Thomas visits Fort Gibson. Preparations are made for beginning work on the Garrison. Thomas has trouble over the quarters assigned to Assistant Surgeon Hammond and Lieutenant Britton. The equipment for the sawmill arrives. Thomas complains to the Adjutant General of Bonneville's failure to co-operate and of the failure of Captain Davis to send lime from Fort Gibson. Bonneville's company leaves for Florida.

Captain Belknap takes command at Fort Smith; work is started on Cantonment Belknap. Like Bonneville, Belknap refuses to detail soldiers to work on the Garrison.

Thomas reports on the condition of the old storehouse. Funds run short; Thomas receives \$20,000. Thomas supplies the post quartermasters at Cantonment Belknap and Camp Illinois with funds. Thomas makes a buying trip to New Orleans. Belknap starts work on the military road from Fort Smith to Fort Towson. The 4th Infantry relieves the 7th Infantry on the Arkansas frontier.

✓ The walls of the Garrison are staked out, and the foundations P 42 for the sawmill and Bastion No 1 begun. Thomas resumes his fight to compel Belknap to detail troops as unskilled laborers. Lumbering operations are commenced on the Poteau. The sawmill takes shape. Work on Bastions No 1 and 2 is pushed.

Captain Belknap receives orders from the Adjutant General to co-operate with Maj. Thomas. Money again runs short. Thomas reports considerable progress in May 1839. Despite orders from the Adjutant General, Belknap continues to find excuses not to detail any soldiers to Thomas. Thomas contracts with Brown and Smith to raft logs down the mill down the Poteau. The Choctaws protest the cutting of timber on their land and the removal of stone from Belle Point. Secretary of War Poinsett rules against the Choctaws.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter III

#### Major Thomas Clashes with John Rogers

Many of Thomas' men left Fort Smith at the expiration of their contracts. Thomas has trouble recruiting his labor force. Difficulties with Captain Belknap continue. Thomas hears that he is to be relieved by Captain McRee. The wood contractors try to hold up the government.

Thomas travels to Natchez and New Orleans to get funds to close his accounts. Colonel Arbuckle visits the fort during Thomas' absence. Thomas returns from New Orleans and takes steps to increase his labor force. Thomas learns that he is to remain in charge of the project.

The sawmill begins operation. Work on the foundation for the walls and bastions is pushed. Thomas fails to get Belknap to increase the number of troops detailed to work on the Garrison. Thomas' progress report for December 1839. Difficulties with Browne and Smith over the contract to raft timber down the Poteau.

Thomas adopts a new scheme for subsisting his construction crew. The details sent by Belknap to work on the fort get smaller. Financial troubles plague Major Thomas. Thomas grants Earhart a franchise to operate a ferry on the reservation. A new storehouse is built. Thomas forwards a plan of the Garrison to Washington. Thomas' progress report for February 1840. Colonel Arbuckle calls on Major Thomas. The dispute with Browne and Smith comes to a head.

John Rogers seeks to use his political influence to get Major Thomas transferred. Thomas clashes with Hemby and Rogers over the ferry. Captain Belknap supports Rogers. Thomas wins his point. Rogers takes the dispute to Washington. Trouble over the whiskey trade. Thomas' plan to fence the reservation. Thomas discovers that Rogers had failed to deed the government as much land as provided in his bond. Unable to compromise, the principals carry the dispute over the reservation boundaries to Washington. Following

Thomas' departure from Fort Smith, the government and Rogers work out a compromise on terms similar to those originally advanced by the major.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter IV

#### The Funds are Curtailed and Work on Fort Smith is Stopped

Major Clark sends Thomas additional stonemasons. Thomas tries to get Browne and Smith to honor their rafting contract. Thomas' May 1, 1840, progress report.

High water forces the quarry to shut down and hinders logging operations. The old storehouse on the river is razed and a new structure raised. Thomas fails to contract out the manufacture of bricks. The reservation is fenced and work on the cellars and foundations for the Officers' Quarters and barracks is started. ✓ P. 109

Thomas contracts for hay to feed the public animals during the winter of 1840-41. Funds run short. Congress appropriates \$50,000 for Fort Smith, but the Jones' rider prevents its disbursement. Colonel Arbuckle visits Fort Smith and likes what he sees. Thomas learns that work on the post is to be suspended. As soon as the project is secured, Thomas is to proceed to Florida. To pay off his men and the government's obligations, Thomas borrows \$30,000 from Indian Agent Armstrong. Thomas' files his progress report for May to September 1840, reporting work accomplished on the wall, the basements, the blockhouses. Continued efforts to get Browne and Smith to raft lumber down the Poteau fail. Thomas files the report of his operations at Fort Smith for July 1838 to October 1840.



PORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

Chapter V

Captain Alexander Runs into Trouble

Colonel Arbuckle makes a plea that when work is resumed at Fort Smith that Major Thomas be placed in charge. The project shuts down. Captain Alexander as caretaker. Captain W. W. Lear replaces Captain Belknap as commandant at Cantonment Belknap. Lear asks Arbuckle to order Alexander to furnish material for completing his quarters.

Colonel Cross visits Fort Smith. Cross' report on building materials on hand, and steps that should be taken when work is resumed. The transfer of ordnance supplies from Fayetteville to Fort Smith make it necessary for Alexander to provide another storehouse.

Governor Yell presses the War Department to resume construction at Forts Smith and Wayne. Secretary of War Bell asked Quartermaster General Jesup for information concerning the funds spent and available for work at Fort Smith. The War Department decides to resume work on the Garrison. As the first step, Lieutenant J. R. Irvin is sent to Cincinnati to recruit a labor force. The construction people reach Fort Smith. On October 11, 1841, work is resumed. Alexander organizes his force.

Trouble with the Choctaws about cutting timber on the Indians' land. Alexander contracts for more corn. Financial troubles plague the captain. The activities of the lumberjacks cause additional difficulties with the Choctaws.

Thomas Earhart complains to Colonel Cross about the caliber of the men hired by Lieutenant Irvin and of Captain Alexander's supervisory abilities. General Jesup determines to investigate Earhart's charges. Irvin submits affidavits to support his course of action.

General Jesup urges Alexander to cut expenses. The walls of four of the five blockhouses are raised to seven feet. Work is resumed on one

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Officer's Quarters and one barracks. Alexander reports on the amount of building material (lumber, stone, and bricks) prepared in the 1st Quarter of 1842.

Several of the men are fired when they refuse to work from "Sun to Sun." The discharged employees institute legal proceeding to compel the Quartermaster's Department to take them back. General Jesup supports Captain Alexander and the disgruntled men are not rehired.

Money again runs short. General Jesup on July 28, 1842, directs Alexander to reduce his labor force. Alexander prepares to close down the project. The 6th Infantry replaces the 4th Infantry on the Arkansas frontier. Congress on August 23 appropriates \$10,000 for carrying on the work at Fort Smith. This money merely enables Alexander to pay off his obligations.

Earhart brings charges against Captain Alexander. A court of inquiry vindicates the captain. Alexander files charges against Earhart.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter VI

#### Colonel Taylor Commands the Second Department

Colonel Zackary Taylor is ordered to replace Colonel Arbuckle as commander of the 2d Military Department. Arbuckle's friends protest. Taylor establishes his headquarters at Cantonment Belknap.

The new commander complains about the vast sums of money being spent to construct Fort Smith. General Alexander Macomb dies. Fort Washita is established.

Taylor urges that Fort Wayne be abandoned. The Arkansans oppose the abandonment of Fort Wayne. Taylor's arguments as to why the Cherokees,

Choctaws, and Creeks don't constitute a threat to the Arkansas frontier. Taylor wins the day. The "Grand Council" of May 1842. The "Grand Council of June 1843". Taylor's lack of pretensions. Taylor is instructed to take charge of the First Military Department. Arbuckle resumes command of the Second Military Department on May 23, 1844.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter VII

#### The Garrison Moves In

Captain Alexander cuts down the scope of his operations. Quartermaster General Jesup sends Alexander funds to settle the claims against the government. Alexander seeks help in the hire of plasterers from Captain Macrae. Jesup vetos Alexander's request.

Alexander, in the interest of economy, reduces wages. Jesup orders Alexander to cut his labor force to the bone. Alexander fails to get soldiers with the necessary skills to replace the discharged carpenters.

Congress appropriates \$20,000 for the completion of Fort Smith. Alexander is authorized by General Jesup to ask Colonel Taylor for assistance. Alexander disposes of the surplus public transportation at Fort Smith. General Jesup agrees to let Alexander employ a few skilled craftsmen to complete Officers' Quarters A and Barracks D. Alexander travels to New Orleans to cash a bank draft. The government plans to dispose of the sawmill. The Quartermaster's Department works out a new arrangement for transmitting funds to its officers in the field.

Alexander's report of work accomplished under his superintendency. Alexander estimates that it will take another \$60,000 to complete Fort Smith.

Alexander's 1843 visit to Washington. While there, the captain submits a memorandum urging the completion of the Garrison. Major Thomas supports Alexander's position in regard to the strategic advantages enjoyed by Fort Smith. General Scott belittles the importance of Fort Smith, but urges that in view of the great expenditures it should not be abandoned.

Captain Davis complains of the inadequate quarters for officers at Cantonment Belknap and of the need for a new commissary storehouse at Fort Smith. General Jesup seeks to get Commissary General Gibson to send the subsistence stores contracted for Fort Gibson directly to that point.

Despite Scott's and Taylor's arguments, the 28th Congress appropriates funds for the completion of Fort Smith. Jesup notified Alexander in October 1844 that it has been decided to "recommence operations on the New Works." Alexander is instructed to recruit his labor force from the garrisons in the Second Department. There being no artisans at Cantonment Belknap, Alexander runs into trouble when Colonel Arbuckle refuses to transfer men from the other posts in the department to work on the Garrison. When Alexander is unable to get any soldier-craftsmen, Jesup authorized him to employ a few mechanics to complete Officers' Quarters A and Barracks D.

General Jesup visits the Arkansas frontier. The general authorizes Alexander to contract for the construction of a storehouse on the foundations of Bastion 1, and the completion of Officers' Quarters C as a hospital.

Jesup negotiates with the commissioners to purchase Section 16. Congress refuses to appropriate the necessary funds and the deal falls through. Alexander contracts with Blumenthal to build the storehouse and the hospital.

Alexander reports on the repairs and alterations made at the post in the period October 1, 1844 - October 2, 1845. Jesup reports on the situation at Fort Smith. General Scott takes exception with one of Jesup's statements.

Blumenthal's men complete the Commissary Storehouse. Alexander's construction crew finishes Officers' Quarters A and Barracks D. The troops evacuate Cantonment Belknap and moves into the fort on May 15, 1846. P. 175

The Mexican War begins. Blumenthal contracts to Complete Blockhouse No 2 as a Quartermaster's Storehouse. Alexander asks for field duty. The battalion of the 6th Infantry leaves Fort Smith on July 13, 1846, for the Mexican border. August 8, Company D, 1st Dragoons arrives at Fort Smith. Captain Alexander is ordered to rejoin his regiment.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter VIII

#### The 5th Infantry Comes to Fort Smith

Colonel Arbuckle approves of the way Lieutenant Gardiner carries out his numerous duties. Gardiner has a stable built without securing Jesup's approval. Gardiner drafts plans for a guardhouse. The dragoons leave Fort Smith on May 10, 1847.

Lieutenant Franklin F. Flint takes over as post commander and quartermaster. Flint reopens the question of building a guardhouse. At the same time, he asks the Quartermaster General for funds to raze and rebuild the blacksmith shop. Confronted by a shortage of funds because of the Mexican War, Jesup tells Flint to defer these projects.

The Fort Smithites learn that the 5th U. S. Infantry is being redeployed to the Arkansas frontier. Colonel Arbuckle, learning that the 5th Infantry had been ordered to his department, presses Lieutenant Flint to get permission to build a guardhouse and a small office building. Jesup approves the request.

The 5th Infantry reaches Fort Smith. Companies B and E are assigned to the Garrison. Captain Caleb C. Sibley relieves Lieutenant Flint as post commander on November 3, 1848.

The Arkansas starts its annual rise. Lieutenant John C. Robinson is appointed post quartermaster and commissary. Robinson's transactions.

General Jesup sends Captain Arthur B. Lansing to the Arkansas frontier as department Quartermaster. Confusion reigns over which should be Lansing's proper station -- Fort Gibson or Fort Smith. Jesup orders Lansing to take post at Fort Smith. Lieutenant William W. Burns replaces Lieutenant Robinson as post quartermaster at Fort Smith.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter IX

#### The Santa Fe Expedition Rolls West

The Fort Smithites made plans for a road to the "Golden West." A meeting was called and a memorial framed. A Fort Smith Company for California was organized. The Arkansas legislature accordingly asked Congress to open a military road from Fort Smith to Santa Fe.

Senator Solan Borland called on Secretary of War Marcy for help. Marcy agreed to help. Adjutant General Jones directed Colonel Arbuckle "to organize a suitable party to accompany the expedition as far as Santa Fe." Not completely satisfied by this measure, Borland pressured the War Department to direct the Santa Fe commander to see that the emigrants were escorted from Santa Fe to California.

The emigrants begin to assemble at Fort Smith. Arbuckle advised the Fort Smith Company on the proper organization to insure the success of the expedition. In addition, Arbuckle sketched the projected route for the Fort Smith committee.

Lieutenant Joseph Updegraff's detachment reaches Fort Smith, and the emigrants continue to pour into town. A group of Fort Smithites seek, without avail, to get Colonel Arbuckle to name Major Bonneville commander of the military escort.

Dent's reconnaissance from Fort Smith to Edwards Trading-House. Dent's report is well received by the emigrants and the Fort Smith boosters. Steinthal returns from the Canadian with additional good news. Lieutenant Dent with Updegraff's detachment crosses the Poteau on March 29 to begin opening the western road.

Several companies of emigrants had grown restless and pushed on without waiting for the military escort. Captain Randolph Marcy reaches Fort Smith and takes charge of the escort. Marcy's command leaves the Garrison and crosses the Poteau on the evening of April 3. Captain Lansing's impression of the expedition.

Lieutenant Simpson, the expedition's topographical engineer, reaches Fort Smith. Additional emigrant companies arrive and push westward. Cholera breaks out. Heavy rainfall plagues the forty-niners. Lieutenant Dent returns to Fort Smith on May 15 and describes the opening of the road from Fort Smith to beyond Belaware Mountain. Dent tells of the troubles encountered by the emigrants, especially those who had crossed to the north side of the Canadian at Edwards Trading-House, because of the heavy rains. Captain Robinson returns to Fort Smith, his company having lost their oxen and gear when trapped by a flash flood.

Although the travel season was advanced, emigrants continue to flood into Fort Smith. At the end of May, the rains finally cease, and the Arkansas begins to fall. Thomas Aird returns to Fort Smith with a report that most of the forty-niners have passed Choteau's Trading-House. Captain Marcy's May 14 report. Captain Dillard's letter describing the hardships encountered on the march north of the Canadian is published by the Herald.

Although the Arkansas was falling in mid-June, it was still high enough to be navigated by the biggest boats. The forty-niners keep arriving. Cholera takes a heavy toll among the Choctaws, who had just arrived at the agency from Mississippi. Lieutenant Buford returns to Fort Gibson from Santa Fe with good news for the Fort Smithites. Editor Wheeler hears from his Perryville correspondent of the progress of the emigrants.

The first two weeks of July 1849 are unseasonably wet. Because of the wet weather, it is feared that crops in the Arkansas Valley will be below average. Cholera breaks out at Fort Gibson and in the Creek Nation.

Lieutenant Buford tells Editor Wheeler of the Socorro route to the Rio Grande.

Wheeler's campaign to get the alleys and streets of Fort Smith cleaned pays dividends. The Marion Rangers depart for California on August 10. The river falls but is still navigable.

Official dispatches are received from Captain Marcy telling of his arrival at Santa Fe. Marcy returns to Fort Smith on November 16. The captain describes his march from Dona Ana.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter X

#### Fort Smith is Abandoned

The "Soldiers' Quarters" burn. Lansing's and Burns' investigation of the fire. General Jesup ask Colonel Arbuckle to convene a Board of Survey. The Board of Survey conducts its hearing and drafts its report on the fire. Captain Sibley's comments. Steps are taken to provide the troops with shelter pending the construction of new barracks. p. 248

Captain Lansing is transferred. Lieutenant Burns has surveys made to determine whether it will be feasible to build the new barracks on the foundations of the old. Gardner's and Neuber's reports.

Arbuckle determines that it would be best to raise a one story brick barracks to replace the gutted Soldiers' Quarters. General Jesup and Secretary of War Crawford approve Arbuckle's plan to repair the burned barracks.

Captain Alexander Montgomery, Lansing's replacement, disembarks at Fort Smith on September 9, 1849. Montgomery contracts for lumber and bricks to be used in rebuilding the barracks. Montgomery launches a campaign to get the "Soldiers' Quarters" rebuilt as a two story building, rather



than as a one story structure. Since the plan to build a one story barracks had already been approved, Montgomery fails.

Montgomery concentrates all the surplus mules and wagons belonging to the Quartermaster's Department in the Seventh Department at Fort Smith. The captain tries to get Jesup interested in the purchase of additional land for the reservation on which to pasture the public animals. Montgomery receives permission to hire a man to keep the wagons in repair and to dispose of the sawmill.

With the approach of winter, the Arkansas again becomes navigable for steamboats. A number of vessels during the winter pass Fort Smith en route to Fort Coffee with Choctaw emigrants. Cholera claims a number of the Indians.

The winter and spring of 1850 are unseasonably wet. The emigrants begin to trickle into Fort Smith. On April 16 the first company starts for California via the Dona Ana Route. The number of emigrants which pass through Fort Smith en route West in 1850 isn't near as great as the previous year. Cholera breaks out at the Choctaw Academy at Fort Coffee. Montgomery disposes of the sawmill.

Colonel Arbuckle receives a leave of absence to visit Hot Springs. With Arbuckle on leave, Colonel Belknap commands the Seventh Military Department. Company B, 5th Infantry is withdrawn from Fort Smith.

Montgomery reports on the condition of the barracks, at the time work was stopped because of lack of funds. Jesup directs Montgomery to have the barracks closed.

The War Department orders Fort Smith abandoned. The Fort Smithites draft a memorial protesting the abandonment of the Garrison. Captain Sibley and Company E leave Fort Smith for Fort Gibson on July 2, 1850. Editor Wheeler's description of the fort. Colonel Arbuckle returns to duty. Arbuckle suspects that Senator Borland is the power behind the withdrawal of the troops from Fort Smith. General Jesup announces that so far as the Quartermaster's Department is concerned, Fort Smith will continue to be the depot for supplying the troops on the upper Red and Arkansas rivers. Senator

Sebastian and Representative Johnson discover that President Taylor is responsible for the order pulling the troops out of Fort Smith. Following Taylor's death, General Scott hints that Fort Smith will be reoccupied.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter XI

#### Fort Smith Becomes a Depot for Advancing the Frontier

Captain Marcy leaves Fort Towson to establish a new post on the Canadian. Marcy visits Fort Smith. Marcy establishes a camp on Mustang Creek. Montgomery sends Marcy a supply train. The drought of 1850. The wagon train returns from Marcy's camp. Arbuckle is disappointed to learn that Marcy has established his camp on Mustang Creek instead of Wild Horse Creek. Marcy is ordered to remain where he is, while the subject is referred to Washington.

Many of the oxen used to pull the train which starts for Marcy's camp on September 27 die of murrain. Montgomery urges the Quartermaster's Department to replace the oxen used to pull the trains with mules. General Jesup likes Montgomery's plan, but reminds the captain that he will have to secure Colonel Arbuckle's approval.

Montgomery receives permission to relocate and rebuild the corn crib. Work is resumed on the Soldiers' Quarters. To assist with this project, Captain Sibley's company returns to Fort Smith on March 14, 1851.

Drought and low water on the Arkansas send the price paid for foodstuffs skyrocketing. Heavy rains during the last week of November 1850 cause the Arkansas to rise and again become navigable for steamboats. Indian agents reach Fort Smith with large sums of money to be disbursed to the Cherokees and Creeks. Because of low water in the Arkansas, Montgomery has trouble purchasing certain items to send to the advance posts. The return of Company E, 5th U. S. Infantry from Fort Gibson compels the post commissary to call for bids to furnish the troops beef.

With the coming of spring 1851, Arbuckle alerts Captain Montgomery to get ready to send a train of supplies to the camp which Captain Marcy is to establish on Wild Horse Creek. Montgomery seeks to get Arbuckle to let him purchase mules to use with the train. Arbuckle agrees to permit Montgomery to fill out his train with mules, provided the wagons are ready to roll as scheduled. Montgomery's agent is unable to purchase the desired number of mules.

Jesup reprimands Montgomery for his failure to submit his reports on time and for employing too many men. Montgomery replies.

The captain reiterates his arguments for replacing oxen with mules.

The War Department orders the 5th Infantry to establish and man a new line of posts in Texas. The 7th Infantry is ordered to the Seventh Military Department. Colonel Arbuckle directs Captain Montgomery to organize and supply the trains which will support the advance of the 5th Infantry. Montgomery calls on the New Orleans Quartermaster's Depot for stores and transportation. Not having a number of the requisitioned items Colonel Hunt asks General Jesup for help. Montgomery's request for wagons is accordingly relayed to Colonel Stanton at St. Louis. Stanton asks Montgomery for an explanation as to why so many wagons are needed. Montgomery points out that a large train will be needed to throw supplies into the posts to be established by the 5th Infantry.

Company F, 7th U. S. Infantry relieves Company E, 5th Infantry at Fort Smith. Colonel Arbuckle dies. With the death of Arbuckle, Montgomery resumes his campaign to replace the oxen used to pull the Department's trains with mules. Cholera breaks out in the three companies of the 5th Infantry which had recently reached Fort Smith from Corpus Christi. A number of Montgomery's teamsters refused to accompany the battalion on its march to Fort Washita.

Montgomery signs a contract with Black and Butt to haul the supplies for the 5th Infantry from Preston, Texas, to the Brazos. When he forwards copies of his correspondence with Stanton to Jesup, Montgomery points out that if he had wanted for the requisitioned wagons, the march of the 5th Infantry would have been delayed. Montgomery informs Jesup of his needs,

if he is to continue supplying the 5th Infantry. The captain describes the steps he has taken to facilitate the transportation of stores to the new posts on the Brazos.

Captains Gatlin and Montgomery seek in vain to get permission from General Jesup to build a new hospital at Fort Smith.

Colonel Hunt inquires into the possibility of sending supplies for the new posts up Red River to Fort Towson. Montgomery replies, pointing out why this is impracticable.

Captain Gatlin asks that the Officers' Quarters be provided with blinds. Jesup gives his approval. Montgomery sends in his reports for the 2d Quarter of 1851.

A large wagon train starts for Preston on July 10. Colonel Belknap returns from Texas and discusses the supply situation with Montgomery. Belknap starts back for Texas on September 13. Montgomery calls for bids to supply the department with forage.

Colonel Thomas reopens the question of supplying the new posts on the Brazos via Red River. Montgomery answers Thomas' questions. The War Department make the Eighth Military Department responsible for seeing that the posts established by the 5th Infantry on the Brazos are supplied. Montgomery writes General Jesup questioning the wisdom of this decision.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter ~~XIII~~ - XVII

#### Fort Smith as Depot for the Seventh Department

The summer of 1851 was hot and dry on the Arkansas frontier. With the water in the Arkansas too low for navigation by steamboats and the crops burning up, commodity prices zoom.

Colonel Henry Wilson takes command at Fort Smith. Wilson receives orders to transfer department headquarters to Fort Gibson. The Fort Smithites protest. Colonel Wilson removes to Fort Gibson on December 27, 1851. Captain Chapman's battalion of recruits, who are scheduled to join the 5th Infantry in Texas, reach Fort Smith.

Captain Montgomery reports the barracks almost completed. The "Officers' Quarters" are fixed up. A shed for the storage of commissary stores is erected against the southeast wall of the fort. Montgomery asks for funds to build a wheelwright's shop. Montgomery describes the Commissary Storehouse, the stables, and the blacksmith shop. The captain has trouble preparing his reports for the 4th Quarter of 1851.

Montgomery reviews the merits of retaining Forts Towson and Washita.

January 1852 is a cold month at Fort Smith. The river gorges. February is mild and spring like. The river rises and a number of steamboats reach Fort Smith. Department headquarters returns to Fort Smith on February 5, 1852.

Montgomery has trouble with his eyes and his reports for January are delayed. Captain Gatlin reopens the question of obtaining shutters for the Officers' Quarters. Montgomery on his return to duty organizes a train to haul subsistence stores to Fort Arbuckle.

Deputy Quartermaster Hunt prescribes the amount of transportation to be retained by the posts of the Seventh Department. Montgomery takes charge of efforts to salvage government property from the sunken steamer Jefferson. Hunt's directive to dispose of surplus transportation embarrasses the Department, when the army is unable to service the new posts in West Texas via Red River.

Montgomery contracts for firewood. Colonel Wilson receives a six-month leave of absence, and Major George Andrews take command at Fort Smith. Andrews tries in vain to get quarters built for the ordnance sergeant. A detachment of recruits slated to join the 7th Infantry reaches Fort Smith during the fourth week of November. Paymaster Reynolds has his problems.

Colonel Wilson returns to duty on May 31, 1853. Company M, 2d Light Artillery pauses at Fort Smith, while en route to Fort Washita. Colonel

Wilson leaves for court martial duty in Florida. Captain Montgomery contracts for hay to carry the Garrison through the winter of 1853-54. Wilson returns from Florida. The Seventh Department is merged into the Department of the West. The Whipple Expedition moves West.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter XIII

#### Low Water in the Arkansas Plagues the Army

Captain Samuel G. French relieves Captain Montgomery as depot quartermaster at Fort Smith. Company F, 7th Infantry is pulled out of Fort Smith on May 8, 1854. With the departure of Company F, Colonel Wilson assigns French additional duties. French is ordered to furnish with transportation the expedition which Captain Marcy is to lead into North Texas. French borrows funds to carry out this task.

Superintendent of Indian affairs Thomas J. Drew is assigned quarters at Fort Smith. French contracts for hay to feed the public animals during the winter of 1854-55.

Lieutenant John Pope passes through Fort Smith on his return from reconnoitering the area between Preston and Dona Ana. French purchases the public transportation used by Pope's command. Major Andrews calls on French to supply transportation for Lieutenant Lewis H. Marshall's party. French uses the wagons and mules purchased from Pope to do this.

French calls for funds. \$9,000 are deposited with one of the New Orleans banks.

The Arkansas frontier suffers from a terrible drought. Commodity prices skyrocket. French is forced to pay a high price for the corn

purchased to forage the public stock through the approaching winter. In November 1854, French requisitions the quartermaster's stores needed to see the posts dependent on Fort Smith through 1855. The fuel supply for the approaching winter is purchased.

Captain French examines the public buildings which had been abandoned at Fort Towson by the army. The captain recommends that the buildings be deeded to the Choctaws as an academy. Secretary of War Davis approved French's suggestion. French's corresponds with Choctaw Agent Cooper regarding the disposition of the buildings at Fort Towson.

The dispute with Kendig & Co. over the forwarding agents' practice of charging the government for freight transshipped from their Napoleon wharfboat to Fort Smith.

Because of the drought, the Arkansas fails to rise during the late fall and winter of 1855. Commissary supplies run short at the Fort Smith depot. French is unable to purchase needed commissary supplies at Fort Smith, Van Buren, and Little Rock. News that the supply boat New World is stranded at Napoleon reaches Fort Smith. French in March 1855 takes a wagon train to Aberdeen to pick up needed commissary stores.

French receives a leave of absence. The captain returns to duty on May 22, 1855, to find that there has been no rise on the Arkansas while he has been away. Before leaving Napoleon, French engages a keelboat to bring up supplies from the New World.

With commissary and quartermaster's supplies getting increasing short at the advance posts, trains are organized and sent down river from Fort Smith to bring up freight from the grounded vessels.

Captain Gatlin and the recruits reach Fort Smith.

A slight rise on the Arkansas enables Captain McClelland of the New World to refloat his vessel. The New World is unable to cross Jackos' Bar. McClelland notifies French of his predicament. Captain McClelland is ordered up the Mississippi and Ohio to purchase keelboats in which to shuttle supplies to Fort Smith. General Jesup approves of French's scheme to transship supplies to the depot.

The Fort Smith depot is made responsible for supplying the advance posts in the Indian Territory with commissary stores. Through the use of keelboats, French is able to shuttle supplies from the stranded steamers to Fort Smith.

With the harvesting of the 1855 wheat crop, the crisis passes. French's efforts to dispose of the flour aboard the New World are unsuccessful.

Six companies of the 2d Dragoons are ordered from Fort Belknap to Kansas.

French contracts for grain to carry his Department through the winter of 1855-56. On December 8, 1855, Companies B and F, 7th Infantry reoccupy Fort Smith. Captain French receives another furlough. The captain has a difficult journey from Fort Smith to Natchez.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter XIV

#### Troubles in Utah Force the Army to Redeploy

Lieutenant N. Bart Pearce take over as depot quartermaster. Pearce contracts for wood to supply the post during the winter of 1855-56. The winter is a severe one on the Arkansas frontier.

As soon as the ice melts, the Arkansas for the first time in 18 months is navigable for steamboats to Fort Smith. By the middle of April 1856, the Arkansas is again too low for steamboating.

Paymaster Hutter has his troubles with the roads. Captain French resigns.

Heavy rains over the middle reaches of the Arkansas during the fourth week of April cause the river to rise. With the river again navigable



a large number of vessels reach Fort Smith. A prolonged dry spell follows the rains. Fears of another drought are raised. On June 13 the river starts to rise rapidly.

Captain Gatlin calls for bunks. General Jesup rejects his request and orders Gatlin to have the men fashion their own.

Lieutenant Pearce is relieved by Lieutenant Edmund C. Jones. Jones contracts for hay and wood to carry the depot through the winter of 1856-57. For a two month period beginning June 21, 1856, the Arkansas is too low for steamboating. A heavy rain on August 18 triggers a rise. Taking advantage of this situation, steamboats again are able to reach Fort Smith. Lieutenant Jones on September 12 calls for sealed proposals to furnish the depot with corn for the winter of 1856-57. Jones finds himself short of operating funds. Jesup sends him \$15,000. Long before this money arrives, Jones is compelled to make arrangements for securing fuel to run the Garrison through the approaching winter.

Large numbers of public animals are wintered at Fort Smith. Jones requests permission to purchase additional grain. General Jesup directs Jones to dispose of the overage horses. The general's directive arrives too late as most of the horses had died of the "staggers".

Jones is compelled to contract for more wood and forage. Complaints are lodged, charging Jones' clerk with dishonesty. Jones comes to the clerk's defense.

Captain Montgomery returns to Fort Smith and replaces Jones as depot quartermaster. Montgomery forwards his estimates for Fiscal Year 1858 and a "Report on the Capacity and Condition of the Barrack and Quarters to Washington."

The War Department orders Fort Gibson abandoned. The troops from Fort Gibson are transferred to Forts Washita and Arbuckle, while the stores are sent to Fort Smith. Low water on the Arkansas hinders the shipment of the stores. Fort Gibson is turned over to the Cherokees.

Captain Montgomery calls on Colonel Morrison to detail troops to help repair the roads from Fort Smith to the advance posts. The bad roads had caused the cost of keeping the trains in operation to zoom. 1857

is a good year for grass, consequently, Montgomery is able to purchase hay on favorable terms.

Companies B and F, 7th Infantry are ordered from Fort Smith to Fort Laramie via Fort Leavenworth. Montgomery outfits the train to accompany the troops as far as Fort Leavenworth. Companies D and H, 7th Infantry take over at Fort Smith.

Captains Gatlin and Montgomery seek to get General Jesup to approve the construction of quarters for the non-commissioned officers and laundresses. Montgomery calls for and receives bids to supply the depot with corn for the winter of 1857-58. The contracts are awarded, Montgomery sends in his estimates of the Quartermaster's stores needed to supply the posts serviced by the Fort Smith depot in 1858.

The captain learns that the train which accompanied Major Lynde's battalion to Fort Leavenworth has gone on to Fort Laramie. To replace these vehicles, Montgomery calls on Jesup for more wagons.

Montgomery asks permission of Colonel Crosman to build a hayshed and wheelwright and carpenter's shop. At the same time, the captain writes of the need to repair the stairs to the Officers' Quarters and the barracks, and for roofing the privies and galleries.

A contract is let for fuel to carry the Garrison through the winter of 1857-58. Jesup rejects Montgomery's and Gatlin's plea for funds to build quarters for the non-commissioned officers and laundresses. Montgomery's request for travel funds is cut. Montgomery feels that Jesup's rebuke regarding the plans for the quarters for the non-commissioned officers and laundresses is unjustified.

In October 1857 Montgomery prepares his estimates to see the depot through Fiscal Year 1859. Montgomery again raises the question of adding a second story to the Soldiers' Quarters.

The War Department issues orders for the remainder of the 7th Infantry to proceed to Utah. Companies D and H, 7th Infantry leave Fort Smith by boat for Benton Barracks on February 8, 1858. With the troops being withdrawn from the old Seventh Department, Montgomery cancels several of his corn contracts. Colonel Morrison reaches Fort Smith with four companies of the

7th Infantry from Forts Washita and Arbuckle. Montgomery makes arrangements for obtaining shipping for Morrison's battalion. Morrison's troops sail from Fort Smith at 8 a.m. on March 1, 1858.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter XV

#### The 1st Cavalry Comes to Fort Smith

Captain Montgomery is sent to take temporary command of the New Orleans Quartermaster's Depot. M. L. Eastin is employed as military storekeeper during Montgomery's absence.

Captain Cabell is directed to secure the Quartermaster's stores at Forts Washita and Arbuckle. General Jesup orders the sale of the Quartermaster's stores at the abandoned posts. Montgomery issues instructions as to how Eastin is to conduct the public auctions. Captain Abraham C. Myers is directed to relieve Montgomery at the New Orleans depot. News that the army is redeploying its troops on the western frontier to cope with the Mormon troubles causes Montgomery to urge Jesup to suspend the order to dispose of the Quartermaster's stores at Fort Smith. The general agrees.

Since it appeared that Fort Smith would be reoccupied, Montgomery on May 28, 1858, recommends that repairs be made to certain of the buildings at the Garrison. Montgomery returns to Fort Smith in July

Difficulties with the Comanches. In view of the increased activity and the probability that Fort Smith would soon be garrisoned, Montgomery contracts for fuel and corn to supply the depot through the winter of 1858-59.

General Jesup calls the captain's attention to the "needlessly large" number of men carried on the Department's payroll for August. Montgomery

defends himself by pointing out that mechanics had been hired to repair the buildings and unskilled labor to police the reservation and assist in handling the stores. To cope with the increased importance of Fort Smith as a depot, Montgomery hires an assistant clerk.

Major Emory makes arrangements which he hopes will result in a peaceful settlement with the Comanches. Major Earl Van Dorn's attack on the Comanche camp dooms the prospect for peace. Edward F. Beale's expedition to open a road from Fort Smith to the Colorado River reaches Fort Smith. Because of the threat of war with the Comanches, Beale's party ask for and receives two pieces of artillery from Captain Montgomery. Beale's expedition on October 28 pushes westward from Fort Smith.

During the final week of October 1858, the Arkansas starts to rise. The army fails to make plans to take advantage of this situation and throw additional supplies into Fort Smith.

The War Department orders Forts Smith and Washita garrisoned by the 1st Cavalry. Companies A and B, 1st Cavalry, Captain Delos B. Sacket commanding, reach Fort Smith from Fort Leavenworth on December 18, 1858. Captain Cabell drives 393 mules and 14 horses to Fort Smith. Most of these animals are in such bad condition that Montgomery has a difficult time selecting 50 to send to Major Emory at Fort Arbuckle. The rest of the mules are turned over to a "responsible citizen" to fatten.

With two companies of cavalry at the post, Captain Montgomery found he didn't have sufficient stabling facilities. Montgomery received permission from General Jesup to build more stables, provided the cavalrymen did the work.

Montgomery was compelled to call for more corn and fuel to carry the depot through the winter. With the approach of spring, Montgomery learned that the army planned an aggressive campaign against the Comanches. Consequently, the captain would need more wagons and harness to keep the troops supplied. Montgomery relayed this information to General Jesup. The general, to remedy this situation, issued a directive for the post quartermasters at Forts Arbuckle and Washita to send their surplus transportation to Fort Smith. At the same time, the Quartermaster at Fort Leavenworth was directed to rush 50 wagons with harness to Captain Montgomery.

Montgomery received orders from headquarters for the Department of the West to lay off all his carpenters except one as soon as the current repair projects had been completed. Such an order would preclude the construction of the hayshed which the captain felt was needed. General Jesup overruled department headquarters; Montgomery was told to proceed with the construction of the hayshed.

Montgomery gets William Geiger to rebuild the steps in front of the Officers' Quarters and in front and rear of the barracks. After work has been started, General Jesup intervened and ordered the project stopped. Montgomery submitted affidavits in support of his having awarded the contracts to Geiger. General Jesup finds the captain's position unsatisfactory.

Captain Sacket seeks in vain to get the Ordnance Department to build quarters for the Fort Smith ordnance sergeant.

June 1859 is a busy month at Fort Smith. Exclusive of the company vehicles, 90 wagons roll westward from the Fort Smith depot with supplies for the troops ordered to Antelope Hills. Captain Sacket's battalion takes the field on June 10. Montgomery contracts for 700 tons of hay. The captain is compelled to go to Little Rock at the end of June to get a draft for \$30,000 cashed. Montgomery on his return finds an order to open "a good road" from Fort Smith to Fort Arbuckle.

Whether the public animals are to receive a full or half ration when working during the summer involves Montgomery in a bitter dispute with headquarters for the Department of the West. Montgomery argues that the public animals if worked should receive a full ration of corn.

Once again, Jesup complains about what he considers to be an excessive number of men on the payroll of the Fort Smith depot. Montgomery answers the general's charges. Learning that two companies of the 1st Cavalry are scheduled to spend the winter of 1859-60 at Fort Smith, Montgomery again broaches the subject of building additional stables at the Garrison. Jesup answers that because of a shortage of funds the stables can't be erected with money budgeted to the Quartermaster's Department. The captain again brings up the question of building a hayshed.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter XVI

#### Fort Smith is Transferred to the Department of Texas

Secretary of War Floyd signs General Order No. 4, transferring Fort Smith from the Department of the West to the Department of Texas. At the same time, orders are issued for Major Emory to establish a new post in the Wichita Country. Instead of returning to Fort Smith, Captain Sacket's battalion is to take post at Fort Arbuckle. Captain Prince at Fort Arbuckle calls on Captain Montgomery for 25 wagons to assist in forwarding supplies to the new post.

The troops and supplies move to the site which Major Emory has selected for Fort Cobb. News that Sacket's battalion will not be returning to Fort Smith, enables Montgomery to breathe easier about the shortage of stables.

With the administrative change, Montgomery will now look to San Antonio rather than St. Louis for instructions. Montgomery contacts Major David H. Vinton, the chief quartermaster for the Department of Texas. The captain cautions Vinton that the navigation season on the Arkansas is erratic.

In October 1859, Montgomery gets rid of the last of the depot oxen. Montgomery asks for bids to supply the depot with corn for the winter of 1859-60. McCarron's bid is rejected, because he had recently failed to execute a contract awarded by Superintendent of Indian Affairs Elias Rector. McCarron protests to the Secretary of War. The Quartermaster General's Office asks Montgomery for an explanation. Montgomery submits affidavits in his support. The argument over the validity of McCarron's bid continues into 1860.

Montgomery forwards a list of the Quartermaster's stores needed by posts dependent on the Fort Smith depot to Major Vinton in November. When March 1860 arrives and he has received no information concerning the supplies, Montgomery begins to worry. Unless they reach Fort Smith within

the near future, Montgomery will be compelled to purchase locally.

Captain Thomas G. Pitcher, the officer in charge of the escort for the commission marking the Texas border, stops at Fort Smith.

The Quartermaster General's Office asks Montgomery to investigate and report on the costs of contracting for the supply of the advance posts as opposed to doing it with military trains. Montgomery's study reveals that it would be more economical to supply the forward posts by contract. At the same time, the captain warns the Department that in the future supplies, to take advantage of high water on the Arkansas, should be forwarded to the Fort Smith depot between December 1 and April 30. After studying Montgomery's figures, the Department decides to advertise for bids to haul the supplies to the dependent posts. The bids were to be in the Fort Smith Quartermaster's hands by February 25, 1860. U. S. Representative Thomas C. Hindman intervenes in behalf of one of his constituents, G. A. Mayer. Secretary of War Floyd disallows the contract which Montgomery has signed with Mayer. The Secretary directs that the hauling contract be awarded to the low bidder, R. C. Armistead. As of May 1 Armistead will be responsible for transporting supplies to Forts Arbuckle, Cobb, Washita,

Low water on the Arkansas threatens to hamstring Armistead's operations. To cope with this situation, Montgomery employs the public transportation to bring up the stores which the steamboat captains have been compelled to put ashore at Lewisburg and Norristown. Montgomery sends Forage Master J. L. Rider to Washington with dispatches concerning the supply problem caused by low water. When Rider reaches Washington, he finds that Joseph E. Johnston has become Quartermaster General. Johnston sends Rider back to the West with instructions to do everything possible to expedite the movement of the stores from the stranded vessels up the Arkansas to Fort Smith. To accomplish this task, Rider charts the light-draft steamer Alamo. Rider and the experienced rivermen were satisfied that the Alamo would be able to ascend the Arkansas to Fort Smith.

Major Vinton inquires into the possibility of Captain Montgomery sending him 40 wagons with teams and harness. Montgomery writes that he will be able to supply the wagons and harness, but not the mules.

Montgomery finally receives permission to allow Geiger to complete the steps in front of the Officers' Quarters and in front and in rear of the barracks.

Johnston finds his Department hard-pressed by finances. He accordingly cautions Montgomery to watch his expenses or it might be necessary to abandon Fort Smith as a depot. Montgomery assures Johnston that he will run the depot in the most economical manner possible.

Companies E and F, 2d Light Artillery pass through Fort Smith.

In October 1860 Montgomery broaches the subject to Johnston of contracting out the care of the loose mules during the approaching winter. At the same time, the captain reports that most of the stranded supplies have been hauled to the depot.

Armistead complains about the use of military trains to take supplies from the depot to the forward posts. Montgomery suspects that Armistead, not finding the contract as profitable as anticipated, was looking for an excuse to withdraw.

Major Vinton complains that Montgomery has been sending to the New Orleans depot for items which could have been purchased from the Fort Smith merchants. Montgomery is reprimanded for his failure to furnish Fort Cobb with all the requisitioned supplies. Montgomery counters by pointing out that the troops at Fort Cobb had been supplied from the depot with "all articles indispensably necessary." The captain in forwarding his correspondence with Vinton to Washington recommends that the depot quartermaster be permitted to send his requisitions directly to Washington rather than through department headquarters.

Johnston wants to know if Armistead is reliable.

Captain Innis N. Palmer reaches Fort Smith from Fort Leavenworth with a battalion of recruits. Montgomery employs Palmer's train to send the recruits to their permanent stations and to bring up supplies from Des Arc. Montgomery opens a road from Fort Smith to Fort Cobb. Captain Samuel D. Sturgis' battalion of the 1st Cavalry takes post at Fort Smith.



## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter XVII

#### The Arkansas State Troops Seize Fort Smith

Abraham Lincoln is elected President. The states of the Lower South secede from the Union. Captain Totten is compelled to surrender the Little Rock Arsenal. The Arkansas authorities at Napoleon seize the quartermaster's and ordnance supplies destined for the Fort Smith depot.

General Scott orders the evacuation of Fort Smith by the military. Local pressure compels Scott to rescind the order pulling the troops out of the Garrison.

Colonel Emory prepares to return to the Arkansas frontier. Before leaving Washington, Emory is briefed as to what disposition he is to make of the troops under his command. Senator Charles B. Mitchell of Arkansas suggests that the army pull its troops out of Fort Smith. Mitchell voices strong opposition to General Scott's plan to give up Fort Cobb. Low water on the Arkansas delays Colonel Emory. The colonel reaches Fort Smith on April 6, 1861. Emory is harassed by the problem of what is to be done for the Reservation Indians.

The firing on Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers weakens the position of the people striving to hold the Upper South in the Union. Before starting for Fort Washita, Colonel Emory orders Captain Sturgis to evacuate Fort Smith upon the receipt of news that Arkansas has left the Union.

The seizure at Cincinnati of a shipment of arms ordered by the Arkansas authorities precipitates a crisis. In reprisal, the Arkansans move to seize the subsistence stores which are en route from St. Louis to the Fort Smith depot. Captain Burns fails to save the commissary stores.

Governor Hector orders an expedition organized to take possession of Fort Smith. Captain Sturgis is alerted to the Arkansans' plans. The garrison evacuates Fort Smith on the night of April 23. Colonel Solon Borland and the State Troops take possession of the Garrison. Major Gatlin and Captain Montgomery are paroled. Secessionists forces pour into Fort Smith.

Lieutenant William W. Averell's ride. Colonel Emory orders the forts in the Indian Territory evacuated. The Federal column starts for Kansas, while the Texans take over Forts Washita, Arbuckle, and Cobb. Confederate efforts to intercept Emory's column are unsuccessful.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter XVIII

#### The Federals Occupy Fort Smith

General Blunt's sickness caused the Federals to pause following their victory at Honey Springs. Blunt, learning of Colonel Cloud's advance, calls on Cloud for help.

General McNeil organized a force to destroy Colonel John T. Coffee and his Confederate partisans. General Schofield alerts McNeil to hold a force ready to rush to Blunt's assistance. Colonel Catherwood marches against Coffee and his partisans. The engagement at Pineville ends in the rout of Coffee's command. Catherwood's column is reinforced by Major Frank Eno and the 8th Missouri State Militia Cavalry.

Cloud's brigade occupys Fayetteville. Blunt orders Cloud to send him the 2d Kansas Cavalry and the 2d Indiana Battery. Hot weather adds to Blunt's problems.

The 2d Kansas raids Prairie Grove. Colonel Cloud reaches Fort Blunt with his "flying column" on the evening of August 21. Blunt issues marching orders to his army. Nightfall on the 22d finds Blunt's army south of the Arkansas. Colonel Catherwood overtakes and reports to General Blunt.

Confederate General William Steele concentrates his troopers on Imochia Creek. Steele asks General Bankhead for reinforcements.

Steele's army fords the Canadian on July 23 and takes position at Prairie Springs. The Confederates advance to Honey Springs on the 28th. Steele calls upon Little Rock for assistance to enable him to smash Blunt's Army of the Frontier.

General Steele alerts his Fort Smith commander to be ready to evacuate. By August 5 the Confederates' horses and mules have overgrazed the prairie in the Honey Springs area. The Confederates are forced to pull back to Soda Springs. Large scale desertions in Cabell's brigade spell trouble for

the Rebels. Steele orders Cabell's troopers to recross the Canadian.

Steele learns on August 7 that Bankhead's Texans will not be coming to his aid. As the same time word arrives that no help will be coming from General Price's force in Arkansas. Steele, fearing the early loss of Fort Smith, directs the post commander to send the surplus public property to Boggy Depot. On August 9, Steele orders Cooper's brigade to retire behind the Canadian. Cooper's and Cabell's brigades halt on the Imochia. Steele has difficulties with his two Creek regiments.

General Bankhead finally receives permission to march to Steele's assistance.

The grass on the Imochia becomes overgrazed by August 11. Steele orders Cabell to march his brigade to the Sans Bois. Cooper's brigade with which Steele travels, takes position on Brookin's Creek. Cabell and Steele have a misunderstanding. Steele arranges to have fortifications thrown up on the Texas road, north of Boggy Depot.

Before abandoning Fayetteville, the Confederates warn General Steele of Cloud's advance. This news causes Steele to order Cabell's Arkansans to Scullyville to cover Fort Smith. Cabell's troopers retire from the Sans Bois to Scullyville. Cabell sends patrols to pinpoint Cloud's column. Cabell's brigade retires to McLean's Crossing of the Poteau.

After fording the Arkansas, it takes Blunt's army 48 hours to reach the Canadian. Steele learns of Blunt's advance on August 23, and he orders Cooper's brigade to fall back to Perryville. Express riders are sent to call in the detached Confederate commands. The Federals cross the Canadian on the evening of the 24th. Blunt pursues Cooper's brigade down the Texas road.

Steele learns on the morning of the 26th that Bankhead's Texans are marching to his aid. Bankhead's command leaves Bonham en route to the Indian Territory. The engagement at Perryville. Evacuating Perryville, Steele's command retires behind the East Boggy. Steele's and Bankhead's columns rendezvous on the Middle Boggy on August 28. Steele plans to recover the initiative.

General Blunt turns his army toward Fort Smith. Evacuating Perryville, the Army of the Frontier retires to the Canadian. Here, Blunt divides his command.

Cabell's scouts pinpoint Blunt's column on August 30. The Federals drive the Rebels from Scullyville. The engagement at McLean's Crossing. The Confederates abandon the line of the Poteau and Fort Smith. Blunt's bluecoats cross the Poteau at McLean's Crossing. Blunt sends Cloud in pursuit of the Rebels. Blunt's troops occupy Fort Smith. The engagement at Devil's Backbone.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter XIX

#### The Garrison Returns to a Peace Time Status

News that General Lee has surrendered reaches Fort Smith on April 10, 1865. General Bussey orders a national salute.

The Fort Smithites learn of the assassination of President Lincoln. Rites are held on April 19 in memory of the martyred president.

Steamboat traffic on the Arkansas is light during the third week of April. Heavy rains drench the area. Partisans raid the Knox farm. The weather in the Fort Smith area improves during the final week of April. Although the river falls ten feet in a week, there is plenty of water for steamboating.

Colonel Levering and a number of General Reynolds' staff officers visit Forts Smith and Gibson. The partisans attack Captain Raymond's patrol on the night of May 1 near the edge of Massard Prairie.

River traffic on the reaches of the Arkansas above and below Fort Smith booms during the second week of May. The army redeploys the 13th and 14th Kansas Cavalry. May 10 is observed at Fort Smith "as a day of mourning and deep sorrow in commemoration of the untimely death" of President Lincoln.

The partisans murder Monroe near the Rogers Cemetery.

News of the capture of Jefferson Davis causes intense excitement at Fort Smith. With the end of the Civil War at hand, many of the volunteers expect to be discharged before their enlistments are up. Four companies of the 2d Kansas Cavalry are ordered to Fort Smith. General Kirby Smith signs a convention on May 26 surrendering all the military forces and public property under his control in the Trans-Mississippi to the authorities of the United States. The Dockery-Reynolds negotiations for the surrender of Confederate forces in Arkansas. With the end of the conflict, hundreds of demobilized Rebel soldiers, along with many families of pro-Confederate proclivities, return to Sebastian and Crawford counties.

The Arkansas rises and falls but remains navigable. The 18th Iowa, and the 12th and 13th Kansas leave for home. Many of the soldiers promised to return to the Arkansas Valley as soon as they had received their discharges. Following the departure of the soldiers, the Fort Smith economy stagnates. With the cut back in the strength of the army, the Fort Smith Military finds its hands full of surplus public property. Survey boards are organized, and the condemned public property auctioned off.

Editor Dell describes the Garrison in the July 22 edition of the New Era.

Demobilization continues. The 2d Kansas Battery leaves for home on July 21. Orders reach General Bussey to see that all Arkansas units still in Federal service in the Frontier District are mustered out. Troops from the 2d Brigade, Second Division, XV Army Corps were to replace the units being demobilized.

General Bussey goes to Little Rock to confer with General Reynolds. High water on the Arkansas facilitates the redeployment of the 2d Brigade, Second Division, XV Army Corps. The 57th U. S. Colored Troops reach Fort Smith. Editor Dell and many of the Fort Smithites are favorably impressed by the Negro soldiers. Bussey returns to Fort Smith.

An unexpected rise on the Arkansas which begins on August 6 causes consternation. The 3d Iowa Battery, three companies of the 9th Iowa

Cavalry, and the 54th Illinois reach Fort Smith. In September 1865, a great Indian Council is held at the Garrison.

General Hunt replaces Bussey as commander of the Frontier District on September 21. Editor Dell commends General Bussey's administration of the district. As soon as agreements with the Indians have been negotiated looking to the settlement of outstanding differences, the council breaks up. With the departure of the Indians, the need for a large number of troops at Fort Smith passes. The 3d Iowa Battery and the 54th Illinois are sent to Little Rock to be mustered out.

Officers' Quarters B burns.

General Hunt on February 16, 1866, orders the 3d U. S. Cavalry to relieve the three companies of the 9th Iowa at Fort Smith. The Iowans are to proceed to Little Rock to be mustered out. The War Department directs the Frontier District be discontinued, and General Hunt is ordered to Washington for a new assignment.

\*Smallpox breaks out at Fort Smith. The New Mexico Expedition. Companies F and G, 19th U. S. Infantry are ordered to Fort Smith to replace the 57th U. S. Colored Infantry which is slated to accompany the New Mexico Expedition.

The War Department on August 6 issues a General Order reorganizing the Military Departments. Arkansas and the Indian Territory are assigned to the Seventh Department. General Ord is placed in command of the new department. Cholera breaks out at Fort Smith in late September. The companies of the 19th Infantry are shifted. Plans are made to transfer General Ord's headquarters from Little Rock to Fort Smith. Major Montgomery returns to Arkansas.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter XX

#### The Army Abandons Fort Smith

General Ord asks Major Montgomery to prepare and submit estimates and plans for the construction of additional storehouses at Fort Smith. Montgomery visits Fort Smith to make preparations to facilitate the transfer of department headquarters. Montgomery opposes Ord's scheme to build additional warehouses and to convert the old Commissary and Quartermaster's storehouses into barracks. While awaiting a reply to his protest, Montgomery collects materials to construct two temporary warehouses. Ord changes his mind; he decides against transferring his headquarters from Little Rock to Fort Smith.

Captain Miner replaces Lieutenant Bennett as post commissary and quartermaster. Miner calls for bids to supply the garrison with forage.

Company F, 19th Infantry returns to Fort Smith. Lieutenant Colonel Delancey Floyd-Jones take command at the Garrison.

Congress passes the Reconstruction Act of March 2, 1867. Arkansas is assigned to the Fourth Military Department. Ord is placed in charge of the newly constituted department. The Sub-District of Arkansas to be commanded by Colonel Charles H. Smith is established by General Ord.

Company B, 19th U. S. Infantry is ordered to Monticello. Floyd-Jones serves as registrar of voting. Floyd-Jones is promoted colonel of the 6th U. S. Infantry. It is October 22, 1867, before Floyd-Jones' replacement, Lieutenant Colonel Pinlmevy Lugenbeel reached the Garrison. For the second year running, cholera breaks out at Fort Smith. The garrison at Fort Smith is increased to six companies.

General McDowell replaces General Ord as commander of the Fourth Military Department. Colonel Smith in May 1868 inspects the military installations at Fort Smith. Smith's report. The sub-district commander recommends a new post hospital be erected. After much correspondence, Secretary of War Schofield on January 18, 1869 approved the construction of a "wooden hospital

of 24 beds." The post, however, was abandoned before funds for the hospital could be budgeted. Assistant Surgeon J. Morris Brown in the latter part of 1869 inspects and reports on medical facilities available at the Garrison.

War Department General Order No. 15 issued at the end of July 1868 constitutes the Department of Louisiana. Arkansas is assigned to the new department, which is to be commanded by Brigadier General Joseph A. Mower. Lieutenant Colonel Romeyn B. Ayres inspects Fort Smith. Ayres recommends a number of changes: the most important being the razing of the wall and the removal of several buildings to make room for a parade ground. Lugenbeel drags his feet on carrying out Ayres' recommendations. As an excuse, Lugenbeel cites General Order No. 95, which provides that because of the reduction of the army no repairs or alterations other than those necessary to keep the posts in good and habitable condition should be undertaken. Adjutant General Thomas visits Fort Smith and gets involved in the dispute between Ayres and Lugenbeel.

To relieve the crowded condition at the post, permission is sought to rebuild Officers' Quarters B. Ayres argues that stone from the walls could be used to build barracks and thus relieve the critical space shortage at the Garrison of which Thomas had complained. Ayres gets his hands on Lieutenant John G. Leefe's inspection report and uses it to support his position. Mower settles the matter by recommending that in view of the reduction of the army, "no repairs or alterations other than those necessary to keep the post in good habitable condition be made." Since the state of Arkansas had been transferred from the Department of Louisiana to the Department of the Missouri on March 16, 1869, the Adjutant General saw that General Schofield was notified of Mower's action.

Colonel Lugenbeel forwards plans and estimates for a new officers' quarters to sub-district headquarters. Quartermaster General Meigs decides to defer action on Lugenbeel's request.

In line with the decision to reduce the strength of the army, the 19th, Infantry is consolidated with the 25th Infantry. Following the consolidation, Colonel Lugenbeel is transferred to the 1st Infantry. Orders are issued



for the 19th Infantry to hold itself ready to proceed to Louisiana. The Fort Smithites express regret at this development. When the 19th Infantry leaves for Louisiana on April 10 and 13, a small detachment remains to look after the public property. Cca

Companies I and K, 6th Infantry reach Fort Smith on April 26, 1869. Orders are received discontinuing the Sub-District of Arkansas. Company D, 6th Infantry joins Companies I and K at the Garrison on June 8. In August, the strength of the Fort Smith garrison is reduced by two-thirds, as Companies I and K are ordered to Table Rock, Kansas.

At an early hour on December 20, 1870, Officers' Quarters A is gutted by fire. The report of the "Board of Inquiry."

The War Department decides to dispose of Fort Smith. Congress passes the necessary legislation, which is signed by President Grant on February 24, 1871. Secretary of War Belknap on March 24 transfers the reservation to the Department of the Interior. Except for a detachment commanded by Lieutenant Thibaut, Company D, 6th Infantry evacuates the fort on July 19 and starts for the Red Hills.

To facilitate the transfer of the Garrison, the Adjutant General's Office calls on Quartermaster General Meigs for a list of the public buildings on the reservation. This list is submitted at the end of October 1871.

General Pope presses his superiors to get Lieutenant Thibaut's detachment out of Fort Smith. Secretary of the Interior Delano asks the Attorney General to have the U. S. Marshal for the Western District of Arkansas take charge of the reservation. Marshal Roots and Judge Story recommend that the Justice Department retain part of the land and several of the buildings thereon for U. S. Court purposes.

John Carnall complains at the end of September 1871 that certain persons are committing depredations on the government property on the reservation. Lieutenant Craft, who has replaced Thibaut, reports that he knows of no depredations.

In October 1873 a commission visits the reservation "to appraise the lands and buildings." The commissioners file their report.

## FORT SMITH 1838-1871

### Chapter I

#### Congress Selects a Site for a Fort

During the 1830's more and more attention was focused on the western frontier of the United States. In 1832, there had been the Black Hawk War. Shortly thereafter, missionaries had started going to the Oregon country. A revolutionary spirit was abroad in Texas. Arkansas and Michigan were pressing for statehood, while plans were afoot to organize Wisconsin Territory. In Missouri settlers were moving steadily westward in the never ending quest for cheap land.

Projects for the defense of the western frontier were becoming commonplace. John Dougherty, Indian Agent at Fort Leavenworth, formulated and presented a plan in December 1834. The following month, the commander of the 1st Dragoons, Colonel Henry Dodge, recommended the construction of a military road connecting Forts Leavenworth and Gibson to facilitate the movement of his regiment. In December 1835, the citizens of Clay County, Missouri, communicated Dougherty's scheme to the United States Senate in the form of a memorial. <sup>E</sup>

Thomas Hart Benton, the powerful senior senator from Missouri, was an ardent spokesman for Manifest Destiny. On February 10, 1836, Benton as chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs asked Secretary of War Lewis Cass to formulate a comprehensive plan for protecting the western frontier settlements against raids by hostile Indians. <sup>2</sup>

Cass submitted his recommendations to the committee on February 19. According to Cass, the time had "arrived when a systematic plan for the protection of our frontiers, ought to be devised and adopted." Heretofore, the Secretary noted, posts had been "established upon our

extensive inland boundary," as circumstances required, without regard to a master plan. It had been impossible up to this time to draw a line dividing the land belonging to the Indians from that open to settlement by whites.

Posts had been selected with reference to their geographical advantages, and "to the moral effect they were calculated to have upon the Indians." Changes in policy had caused the military frontier in the West to advance and then recede. Whenever a post was abandoned, it excited the Indians. Occasionally, the evacuation of a frontier fort had been followed by serious difficulties. The Indians, Cass reported, couldn't comprehend the motives which dictated these operations, and they attributed such measures "to a sense of our weakness or to a fear of them." Cass urged that once a post was established in Indian country it should never be abandoned, except under extraordinary circumstances. If moved at all, the fort should be pushed westward.

Since the inauguration of the removal policy by the government, 31,348 Redmen had been deported from the territory east of the Mississippi River. If the latest figures turned in by the Indian agents were correct, another 62, 181 could be expected to emigrate to the Trans-Mississippi. This would increase the number of Indians living between the Mississippi and the Rockies to over 244,000. Though many of these Indians lived a long distance beyond the frontier, Cass wrote, "all of them are roaming in their habits, and the nature of the country, as well as the general possession of horses, enables them to extend their war excursions to great distances." Cass advocated that the government adopt a policy designed to prevent the Indians from taking the warpath. If this couldn't be done by "remonstrance," it should be done by force. The remote settlements would "never be safe so long as the petty tribes in contact with them, are permitted to engage in hostilities at pleasure...." A war party could not return to its village without scalps, "unless at the Sacrifice of its honor," Cass warned.

Moreover, the Secretary continued, the government had promised the emigrant tribes protection in their new homes west of the Mississippi. Washington would be unable to honor this guarantee, unless it adopted "vigorous measures" and established a "system of defence adequate to any exigency that may arise."

In recent years there had been a steady increase in the number of Indians moving West. When the project was completed, Cass warned, there would be an "immense body of Indians...placed upon the borders of our settlements." He anticipated that many of the Eastern Indians, who were partially civilized, would revert to the mode of life practiced by their fathers. To make matters worse, the Indians' "institutions have a tendency to war."

"No warrior" the Secretary wrote, "arriving at manhood, can enjoy any estimation till he had been present where the blood of an enemy has been shed." From this period he dates his "distinction, and his fame is after that, proportionate to his success in war." The authority of the chiefs was very feeble. In most cases the injured party had to seek revenge. This led to retaliation.

Cass warned Mr. Benton's committee that as the removal of the Indians continued, pressure would increase. There would be friction among the tribes, and between them and the whites. To counteract this discord, Cass strongly advocated, the "distribution along the frontier of a sufficient military force," along with such arrangements for its employment as circumstances warranted.

The senators were cautioned against comparing the strength of the United States as opposed to the weakness of the Indians. Long experience had convinced Cass that the redmen had "no conception of our actual power." They were in the habit of judging the strength of the United States by what they saw. History had demonstrated that the Indians were "prepared to commence hostilities under circumstances" which left them no chance for victory. Being people of impulse, the Indians were frequently "brought into difficulties

by the passions of the young men, who act in opposition to the opinions and advice of their elders.

To cope with this ticklish situation, which would be aggravated as the removal policy was pushed, Cass submitted a series of recommendations to Benton's committee. The country on which the "transplanted tribes" had settled extended from the Red River in the south to the tract west of Prairie du Chien which had been assigned the Winnebagoes by the Treaty of 1832. Cass' object was to establish a line of posts along the Indian frontier. Besides overawing the Indians, the garrisons would be able to intercept war parties as they sought to slip across the line and raid white settlements. Roads linking these forts and affording a means to effect "a speedy concentration of troops" at the point of danger would be opened.

The Secretary argued that the military road should begin on Red River, near Fort Towson, pass to the west of the ceded territory in Arkansas and Missouri, and strike the Mississippi somewhere between the mouths of the Des Moines and the St. Peters.<sup>13</sup> Fortified posts were to be established at strategic points along the military road. Such an undertaking, in Cass' opinion, would afford a high degree of protection to the frontier at a moderate cost to the taxpayer.

According to the latest estimates prepared by army engineers, the military road would be "upwards of 800 miles" in length. After the route had been surveyed, Cass advocated, it be opened for military purposes. To answer for this purpose, it would be necessary to fell trees in timbered areas to give the road its proper width; in marshy places it would be "causeway'd." Smaller streams where there were no fords were to be bridged. Preliminary reports indicated to the Secretary that "a great deal of the Country, over which the road will pass, [is] so favorable, that scarcely any work will be done upon it. It will be seen from this description that such a

mode of construction is contemplated as will be economical and at the same time sufficient for the object."

At suitable points along the projected road, military posts were to be established. These works would be "similar in their character to" the stockaded forts already on the frontier. A strong striking force of dragoons would be stationed at the forts at the termini of the road and at the immediate post. The rest of the posts would be occupied by infantry.

As fast as circumstances permitted, garrisons in the Indian country east of the military road would be transferred to the new posts. Since the projected road might originate a considerable distance west of Fort Towson, that post might have to be abandoned, along with Forts Gibson and Coffee. Advance information reaching Washington indicated Fort Leavenworth, because of its favorable position, would be retained. Fort Armstrong at the confluence of the Mississippi and Rock rivers would be abandoned, and its garrison transferred to Fort Snelling.

Cass estimated it would be a number of years before all the posts (Gratiot, Michillimackinac, Sault Sainte Marie, Chicago, Green Bay, Winnebago, and Prairie du Chien) in the "Old Northwest" could be safely evacuated by the military. As the Indians retired west of the Mississippi, these forts would be given up and the troops sent to occupy the new post proposed by the War Department.

Benton's committee was informed by Cass that until a thorough reconnaissance was made, the War Department had no way of "determining the number of posts" which ought to be occupied between the Mississippi and Red rivers. If Forts Snelling, Leavenworth, and Towson were held, the Secretary presumed that not more than four or five others would be necessary. The department's object would be to establish the new posts "at proper geographical points where the supplies may be most easily furnished, and sufficiently near to the Indian settlements, to produce a proper effect upon them, and also at such

distances from one another, that the necessary communications may be preserved with facility."

After the forts had been laid out, experience might demonstrate that it was advisable for the government to erect blockhouses at intermediate points -- supply depots and ferries. These temporary works could be constructed by the troops.

If the War Department's plan were to succeed, the infantry units stationed at the forts would have to enjoy a high degree of mobility. In case of trouble, they would be prepared to take the field on a moment's notice.

Part of the work contemplated, Cass reported, could be carried out by the troops involved. The extent, however, would depend upon their health and the other duties they were required to perform. Here, the time element would be an important factor.

According to the estimates prepared by Quartermaster General Thomas S. Jesup, the entire project, "including the construction of the road, and the establishment of the posts," might be completed for \$100,000.<sup>4</sup> Cass explained to the committee that the figures for rebuilding Fort Gibson and a new station on the Des Moines River were not included in Jesup's estimate. Separate appropriation bills providing for these two posts had already been presented to Congress.

The figure submitted by General Jesup, Cass cautioned, was "very uncertain, because there is little precise information on the subject" in the hands of the War Department. Colonel Dodge, whose opinion carried great weight in Washington, had stated that the military road could be constructed "at a very little expense." Even if the cost of the project should exceed \$100,000, Cass believed it was of sufficient importance to justify its adoption. The Secretary was "satisfied that no other plan can be devised, which will afford adequate protection to the frontiers, and not involve far greater expenditures than this."<sup>5</sup>

Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky on March 3 speaking for the House Committee on Military Affairs reported a bill for a chain of forts such as recommended by Cass. Eleven days later, Senator Benton's committee reported on a bill for the increase of the army. On March 21 Johnson told the house of a memorial he had received from the Arkansas territorial legislature asking that Fort Gibson be abandoned and a new garrison erected on Arkansas soil. President Andrew Jackson on April 8 submitted to the Senate the annual reports of the Secretaries of War and Navy upon the country's defenses. When the senators studied Cass' paper, they found many references to his report of February 19 to Benton's committee. <sup>6</sup>

Five weeks later, on May 14, an appropriation of \$332,000 <sup>7</sup> was made to the account of the Quartermaster's Department; part of the sum was earmarked for the removal of Fort Gibson to an eligible site near the western boundary of Arkansas. <sup>8</sup>

On July 2, 17 days after Arkansas was admitted to the Union, a bill was enacted for the survey and opening of a military road. This road was to begin on the west bank of the Mississippi at some point between the mouth of the St. Peters and the Des Moines, pass to the west of Arkansas and Missouri, and terminate on the Red River. All military posts west of the projected road were to be removed to it. One hundred thousand dollars was made available for this work by the 1st Session of the 24th Congress. <sup>9</sup>

A number of the country's senior army officers had opposed the legislation. Nevertheless, Secretary of War Cass moved promptly to carry out Congress' mandate. The Secretary on July 16 selected a three-man board of commissioners charged with surveying the road and selecting the sites for the posts to be erected in accordance with the law. Since two of the members declined to serve on the commission, because of the great distance involved in traveling to the frontier, it was November before the board was organized. As finally constituted the commission consisted of Colonel Stephen W. Kearny, and Captains Thomas F. Smith and Nathan Boone.



For their guidance, the commissioners were to keep in mind that the new posts were to be located on navigable streams. Fort Gibson was to be relocated on the Arkansas River near the western boundary of Arkansas. <sup>10</sup>

In December, the commissioners ascended the Arkansas River — their task to select "a site for a Fort 'on or near the Western Frontier line of Arkansas!!" After studying the area, the commissioners recommended Fort Coffee be made a permanent installation. <sup>11</sup> When the board filed its report from Columbus, Arkansas, on December 11, Chairman Kearny wrote, "We are of the opinion...that it [Fort Coffee] combines, more advantages for a Milly. Post, than any other points we have seen or heard of." <sup>12</sup>

Having visited Fort Gibson, the commissioners considered it too important to be abandoned. According to the board, it was "the key of the country around it." Moreover, the government in removing the Indians from east of the Mississippi had pledged "its faith to protect them from each other, and from the wild Indians of the Prairies." The commissioners recommended that new barracks be erected near the site of Fort Gibson. It was the group's opinion, "The presence of a military force, near Fort Gibson is indispensable for the preservation of peace amongst the Indians themselves." <sup>13</sup>

With winter at hand, Kearny and his fellow commissioners decided to wait till spring before continuing their work. As soon as the grass was up, they promised to "resume and prosecute their duties with energy." The commissioners spent the winter of 1836-37 at Fort Leavenworth.

During the winter, Kearny wrote the War Department asking that a topographical engineer be detailed to assist in the survey and for additional instructions on some questionable points which had arisen. Martin Van Buren on March 4 had been sworn in as 8th President of the United States. With the advent of a new administration, Lewis Cass was replaced as Secretary of War by Joel Poinsett of South Carolina. <sup>14</sup> Among the first items of business to which Poinsett

attended on taking office was to turn the project of surveying the military road and locating the new posts over to Quartermaster General Jesup. In the confusion engendered by these changes, Kearny's letter was misplaced.

Not receiving an answer to his communication, Kearny and his fellow commissioners spent many anxious weeks at Fort Leavenworth. Spring arrived and the weather turned warm. Soon the lush prairie grass was up to the horses' bellies. All this time, the Washington authorities believed the commissioners were hard at work with their survey. It was July 12 before the War Department learned that the commissioners had not yet taken the field. As soon as he was advised of the situation, Poinsett cut through reams of governmental red tape. A topographical engineer was called into the Secretary's office and told to report to Colonel Kearny at Fort Leavenworth. As soon as the engineer arrived at the frontier post, the commissioners resumed their duties. Colonel Kearny, Captain Boone, and Charles Dimmock (a former captain in the army) set out from Fort Leavenworth on September 1 with a small escort of dragoons to explore the country to the Arkansas. Between September 27 and November 8, Dimmock surveyed a road from Fort Coffee to Fort Leavenworth. At the same time, Kearny and Boone chose sites for two military posts. One of these was on Spring River; the other was on the Marias de Cygnes. These forts, when constructed, would complete the line to the Arkansas. In April 1838, the commissioners ascended the Missouri River to the mouth of the Platte. A site for a fort was selected at Table Creek.

As the months passed, the people at the War Department began to fret about the progress of the project. Two new surveying teams were ordered into the field on May 1, 1838. One group was given the task of reconnoitering the area from Table Creek to Fort Snelling, the other the country between the Red and Arkansas rivers. <sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, the new Secretary had moved to secure land near the western boundary of Arkansas for a military reservation. Poinsett

on June 28 addressed a note to the commissioner of the General Land Office. The Secretary expressed interest in reserving a tract of land on the south bank of the Arkansas between Vache Grasse Creek and the mouth of the Poteau to a depth of three miles. Replying on July 22, the commissioner attached a map of the area in question. (See Map titled "Diagram accompanying the Acting Commissioner's letter of 22d July 1837 to the Hon. Secretary of War")

By examining the map, Poinsett could see that a large portion of the land needed by the military had been sold. Consequently, the title no longer was vested in the United States. As yet, the commissioner informed the Secretary, the Choctaw lands had not been surveyed, nor could they be until such time as the Indians' title had been extinguished. <sup>16</sup>

Word that the government was planning an extensive complex to protect the frontier from attack by hostile Indians had far reaching repercussions. Vested interests began pressuring their congressmen. They hoped to make their weight felt in the selection of the sites for the new posts. Eight to nine hundred residents of western Arkansas signed a petition, requesting that the new garrison on the Arkansas be at Old Fort Smith. This memorial was forwarded to Congress. A. E. Harrison, a member of the House of Representatives, from Missouri, presented the petition. At the same time, he urged the Quartermaster General to start work immediately on the fort scheduled for construction on the Arkansas.

Congressman Harrison was notified by General Jesup on September 15 that "no subject" under the supervision of the Department "occupies its attention with more interest than the protection of the Frontier." But, the Department's spokesman cautioned, "the fortresses necessary" for the security of the frontier and the military road "ought to be regarded in connexion with each other and be laid out with a view to a complete and efficient plan of defense." A surveying party was already in the field, and the Department was in contact with Colonel

Kearny. Barring unforeseen developments, the Department assured Harrison, it hoped to "present a report on the subject to Congress at an early date." In conclusion, it was pointed out, "A precipitate commencement of a work of such great importance to the whole country would not only involve great and unnecessary expence but might lead to serious errors." 17

John Rogers, who had accompanied Colonel Mathew Arbuckle to Fort Smith in 1822, had in the period following 1826 acquired considerable acreage east of the Choctaw boundary and fronting the Arkansas. Now, a wealthy merchant, Rogers read with interest of the plans to erect a permanent fort in the area. Rogers was elated by this news. During the year, he had inserted advertisements in the Arkansas Gazette and a number of eastern papers telling of his intention to lay off 160 acres of his land at Old Fort Smith into town lots. The first sale of these lots, it was announced, would take place on the first Monday in May 1838. 18

If the military could be induced to locate the proposed fort on the Arkansas near the site of the land which he planned to place on sale, the wily Rogers reasoned, it would insure the success of his venture. Rogers, in September, addressed a letter to the commissioners. He informed them he had heard that Fort Smith had been "spoken of among many others as a suitable site for the erection of the Contemplated New garrison." Rogers was understandably disturbed to learn that the General Land Office had poured cold water on the army's scheme to establish a military reservation in the neighborhood. He accordingly announced he would be willing to sell the government at a fair and reasonable price any of his land in the area in question. Rogers would be glad to receive "the proposals of any authorized Agent appointed to make a purchase."

The commissioners were notified of Rogers' design to lay off a "Town immediately at this point." Rogers wished to give the government first call on the available land as a site for the fort. 19

Lieutenant Colonel William Whistler and Captain John Stuart had been detailed by the Secretary to survey the area between the Arkansas and Red rivers. 20 The two men visited the Fort Smith area at the

end of September 1837. Unlike Kearny's team, Whistler and Stuart were unimpressed with Fort Coffee as a site for a permanent work on the Arkansas frontier. Reconnoitering the area, the commissioners decided Lees Creek Bluff which abutted on the north bank of the Arkansas, seven miles below Fort Smith, possessed all the advantages for which they were searching. Before starting for Fort Leavenworth, they had Lieutenant Gabriel J. Rains survey and map the bluff. (See map titled, "Map of Lees Creek Bluff.") Whistler and Stuart stopped briefly at Fort Smith on the 30th. After walking the area, the officers noted in their journal:

Fort Smith is situated on the south side of the Arkansas river and is immediately below the mouth of the Poteau, the river at this point runs north ten degrees. East for several miles, The ground which is best calculated for a Military site is about 50 or 60 feet above low water mark, there is from this point a handsome view of the river, and the site in a Military point of view is naturally good; the highlands around Fort Smith as well as the river bottom contains pools of standing water. The best timber for miles around the place has been cut, Stone can be procured in the river bank by blasting.

This point we presume is too well known to the Department to require a minute description. The Poteau for several miles up it, during the Summer months, has a still sluggish current and resembles a large mill pond, and is very much of that character. 21

When they filed their report, Whistler and Stuart agreed with Kearny's commission that a large force should be stationed at Fort Gibson. If not there, a new post could be erected at the mouth of the Canadian. Although they believed the friendly Cherokee and Choctaw Nations provided sufficient protection to the Arkansas frontier, they suggested a detachment might be posted at Fort Smith, Lees Creek Bluff, or Massard Bluff. 22

Since the survey party didn't ask any questions while at Fort Smith, Rogers began to fret. This bothered him even more when he learned that this was Colonel Whistler's first visit to this section.

of the frontier. Like many of his fellow citizens, before and since, Rogers determined to see if he could get his senators to bring pressure for the establishment of the projected garrison at Fort Smith.

Rogers on October 13 wrote Senator William S. Fulton. The senator was informed "in the early occupancy of this country, this Post...was started as the most proper point for the Troops & was for many years maintained for that purpose." In 1824 the troops had abandoned Fort Smith and had established Fort Gibson on the Verdigris. Within less than two years, the line separating the Choctaw Nation and the Territory of Arkansas had been redrawn. The 1825 line passed "one hundred yards East of the Fort." Captain Stuart and a company of troops from Fort Gibson had reoccupied Fort Smith in 1833. While Stuart's company was at Fort Smith, Rogers reported, there had been serious disputes between the military and Jonas Bigelow. (The military, with good reason, charged that Bigelow was smuggling whiskey to the Indians.) Rogers felt certain these troubles had aroused strong prejudice against the Fort Smith citizens on Captain Stuart's part. Shortly thereafter, Stuart's company had been withdrawn and a new post, Fort Coffee, laid out.

A number of years had passed since this nasty incident, Rogers wrote his senator, and the military had had a change of heart. Now, he reported, even Colonel Arbuckle was of the opinion Fort Smith "must again be occupied by a considerable force." (At this time, Colonel Arbuckle commanded the Second Department of the Western Division with headquarters at Fort Gibson.) If the government were interested in the site, Rogers was prepared to hold in abeyance his plan to divide his land into lots.

Sounding like the real estate promoter he was, Rogers boasted, the land which he proposed to sell the War Department was worth "much more than the wild lands of the forest, because from its position at the head of safe navigation, it has constantly been the landing & store house of all the immense Country lying to the West, North, & South extending even to the Upper Red River."

Rogers, calling Senator Fulton's attention to the attached map, announced he was willing "to let the government have sufficient land for Military purposes. He would sell the War Department the 80 acre tract outlined on the plat. Moreover, the military was to have the use of a road 80 feet wide which formed the eastern boundary of the tract. As an added inducement, Rogers continued, the government would have the 18 acre triangle bounded by the Choctaw line and the Poteau and Arkansas rivers, where the old fort had stood. (See Blat A) For this land, Rogers wanted \$5,000. He argued that this was very reasonable, as the sum mentioned would barely pay for the buildings and improvements. If the government people believed this figure was too high, Rogers wanted one of their agents to assess the value of the improvements.

Rogers advised his senator that if the grant proposed was deemed insufficient by the military, it could be increased. Indeed, if the government desired, Rogers was willing to dispose of all his land in the area, totalling over 800 acres, "at a fair & reasonable price."

Before posting his letter to Senator Fulton, Rogers was elated to learn that Lieutenant Seneca G. Simmons had reached Fort Smith. Calling on Rogers, the lieutenant announced he was to survey the area.<sup>23</sup> (See map titled, "A Topographical sketch of Fort Smith by 1st Lt. S. G. Simmons, 7th Inftry.")

Since he was absent from his Washington office on a trip through the North, it was almost eight weeks before Senator Fulton read Rogers' letter. When he did receive the communication on December 6, the senator promptly forwarded it to the Secretary of War.<sup>24</sup>

Secretary Poinsett acknowledged the receipt of Senator Fulton's note and Rogers' communication on December 19. On doing so, he noted that if the commissioners recommended the reoccupation of Fort Smith, Rogers' proposal would be "duly considered."<sup>25</sup>

Representative Archibald Yell of Arkansas had learned of the report submitted by Colonel Kearny's group, Yell, citing the enactments passed by the 1st Session of the 24th Congress, wrote the Secretary

of War to reconsider the decision to build the permanent post on the Arkansas at Fort Coffee. This letter was also signed by the Arkansas senators. Since this was supposed to be classified information, Poinsett was undoubtedly miffed at its premature release. Acknowledging the letter on October 16, the Secretary admitted he had directed the new post be erected at Fort Coffee. Upon mature reflection and a careful study of the remonstrance drafted by the Arkansas congressional delegation, Poinsett had suspended the order.

After discussing the situation with Senators A. H. Sevier and W. S. Fulton, and Representative Yell, the Secretary ordered "an examination to be made of a site within the State of Arkansas in order to place the fort in a situation which would be agreeable to the people of that country and conformable to the implied intention of Congress." <sup>26</sup>

Considerable attention was given to the defense of the western frontier by Congress. A resolution was passed by the Senate on October 11 which called on Secretary Poinsett to submit a plan. Before reporting, Poinsett called on Chief Engineer Charles Gratiot and Acting Quartermaster General Trueman Cross for advice. (General Jesup had left his desk job in Washington to take command of the troops campaigning against the Seminole Indians in Florida.) Captain Justin Dimick of the engineers forwarded to Major Cross for his information a copy of a map prepared by Colonel Gratiot. On this map, Gratiot had had his subordinates plot the posts and military road which his department believed were vital to the defense of the western frontier. <sup>27</sup> (See map titled, "Map Illustrating the plan for the defences of the Western & North-Western Frontier....")

Poinsett, after studying the data submitted by Gratiot, drafted a paper which he submitted to the Senate on December 30. <sup>28</sup> The Secretary called for the establishment of six or seven exterior posts, eight garrisons of refuge on an interior line for the people of the frontier, and a number of supply depots. With reserves at



Jefferson Barracks and Baton Rouge, and an efficient volunteer force in the western states, Poinsett believed 5,000 men would be sufficient to carry out this scheme. Major Cross had estimated it would cost \$700,000 to complete the works or build new ones at Forts Crawford, on the Des Moines River, Council Bluffs, Fort Leavenworth, Fort Gibson, Fort Towson, and the eight points of refuge. Cross' figures were communicated to the House on January 18, 1838. 29

The Senate on February 7 was induced by Senators Fulton and Sevier to adopt a resolution calling on Secretary Poinsett "to report whether a site for a new fort had been selected on the western border of Arkansas and the land contracted for and if not, why not." This resolution to gratify vested interests in Arkansas was passed against the advice of the leading military thinkers in the country. Expressing their opposition, the soldiers "contended that there was not the slightest military reason for a fort in or near Arkansas." 30

Secretary Poinsett informed the Senate on February 21 that it would be impossible for his department to afford the protection promised the immigrant Indians in the treaties if Fort Gibson were abandoned. Consequently, he urged that Fort Gibson be retained and another post be established near the western border of Arkansas. At the same time, the Secretary transmitted to the Senate the reports submitted by the Kearny and Whistler commissions from which Congress could secure information to guide it in making its selection for a site on the Arkansas if it were determined to do so. The subject produced in Congress an interesting discussion and a series of documents dealing with the subject. 31

Army officers who were familiar with the purposes and problems of frontier garrisons argued as one that the post should be at least 20 miles west of the Arkansas border. There, it would be well beyond the "reach of the vendors of whisky who were among those urging the location of garrisons in the states." 32

The Arkansas Congressmen, however, knew what they wanted and continued to press for the prompt establishment of a permanent fort on the Arkansas. Both the lawmakers and their constituents were satisfied that the military was dragging its feet. News of the faux pas which had caused Colonel Kearny's party to while away valuable weeks at Fort Leavenworth the previous year caused the legislators to boil. Consequently, Congress on April 4 passed a joint resolution, authorizing "the Secretary of War to purchase a site for a fort at or near the western boundary of Arkansas." Out of the appropriation of \$50,000 which the 24th Congress had earmarked in 1836 to remove the troops from Fort Gibson, the Secretary was directed to use a sum not to exceed \$15,000 for that purpose. <sup>33</sup>

This was in direct violation of the heretofore established military policy of pushing the army posts continually farther west with the advancing of the frontier.

In light of this development, Secretary Poinsett called on Major Cross to report on the sites under consideration as posts on the Arkansas. Cross submitted his findings on April 9. Before doing so, he carefully studied the documents forwarded to Washington by Colonels Kearny and Whistler.

Military principles, Cross reported, dictated that, because of its advance position, Fort Gibson should be retained. Fort Coffee had been designed for the "more immediate protection of the border settlements of Arkansas." Cross felt that Fort Coffee, since it was only eight miles west of the Choctaw-Arkansas line, answered this purpose. But, he cautioned, the people of Arkansas who lived along the border didn't share the military's opinion. They were anxious to have the new post erected nearer than Fort Coffee. Cross accordingly recommended the "site of Old Fort Smith...as the most eligible position." Fort Coffee should be abandoned and its garrison given a new assignment. <sup>34</sup>

Poinsett moved rapidly to carry out Congress' will. Rogers, having been kept abreast of developments in the capital by his

informants, was in Washington. The hard-driving promoter wanted to be "Johnny on the spot" when opportunity knocked. As soon as he had read Cross' report, Poinsett authorized his Acting Quartermaster General to start negotiating with Rogers for the purchase of the necessary land for a military reservation at Fort Smith. Cross and Rogers reached an agreement on April 12. For \$15,000, Rogers agreed to convey to the United States, "clear of all liens or encumbrances 296 acres of land adjoining the public reservation at Fort Smith."

Before leaving the capital on April 14, Rogers called at the Bank of Washington. Arrangements were made with the president of the bank to accept the \$15,000 which the government had agreed to pay Rogers for his land whenever the contract was consummated. Major Cross was notified of this transaction. 35

Having succeeded in getting the government to agree to purchase part of his land for the fort, Rogers returned to Arkansas. The editor of the Arkansas Gazette noted on May 23:

Capt. Rogers passed up [the Arkansas] last week on his return from Washington where we understand from him, he effected the sale to the government of a portion of the tract of land at Fort Smith as a site for a permanent military post on our western frontier. 36

After having the land surveyed, Rogers discovered that the tract which he had bargained to convey to the government contained 306 acres. By June 17, the survey had been completed and the titled searched. After drawing up a bill of sale, Rogers and his wife, Mary, appeared before the Circuit Court for Crawford County. Alexander McLean on June 18 recorded the transaction in the county deed book. Fourteen days later, the United States Attorney for the District of Arkansas, after having examined the documents and finding them in order, certified his approval of the transaction. 37

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Lieutenant Colonel Joseph G. Totten and Major Sylvanus Thayer of the Engineers had been requested in October by the Secretary of War to prepare a comprehensive plan to be used in the construction

of the projected frontier forts. <sup>38</sup> The engineers had forwarded their report to Poinsett on November 5.

When they did, they pointed out that they had made no recommendations as to the "extent of quarters, Barracks, Stables, Stores Rooms and other accommodations." These would be liable to considerable modification, depending on the importance of the work, its object, and location.

It was taken for granted by the two high ranking engineers that the Indians would not have artillery. The most important factor to consider in the design of a fort of the description desired was for it to be large enough to receive and sustain a large garrison, while serving as a refuge for the neighboring settlers. At the same time, it "should be capable of complete defense by a small body of men."

Since it was unlikely that the attackers would have any knowledge of siegecraft, the forts were to be designed with a view to protecting the barracks, stores, and hospital, while the garrison was in the field. The smaller the number of troops necessary to hold the post, the better. It would be desirable, the engineers wrote, if the defense could be left to the militia and the convalescents.

To carry out this object successfully, the engineers would surround the area where the barracks and storehouses were with a "system of blockhouse -- bastions, mutually flanking each other." Each bastion or blockhouse if isolated would be capable of holding out independent of what happened at the others. A "high palisade forming a curtain and sustaining a light gallery, with a banquette" for the use of a file of infantry, would connect the bastions. Under no circumstances was the gallery to be extended closer than 15 feet to the blockhouses.

The engineers recommended that in no case should the interval between bastions be closer than 100 yards or farther than 200 yards, unless dictated by unusual conditions. A "liberal space" would

separate the barracks and storerooms from the bastions and palisades. Such an arrangement would guarantee "free circulation" between the buildings and the defenses at all times, and it would facilitate the extinguishing of fires. Finally, it would leave the location of the barracks and storehouses to the project engineer. The ground was to be allowed to dictate the placement of these buildings, while the "defensive chain" could be thrown up around the space they were to occupy.

Among the more important advantages to their plan, Totten and Thayer observed, was "a defensible condition will be attained at the earliest day; the completion of a single bastion affording security and protection for all future operations." In addition, it wouldn't be necessary to complete the post on one construction program. Once the bastions and curtains had been thrown up, the defenses would be complete and the erection of the buildings on the parade ground could "proceed according to the wants of the service."

Consequently, each bastion should constitute a stronghold, enclosed on all sides and only accessible with the aid of a ladder through a trap in the second story. To be self sufficient, a well or cistern should be dug in the cellar. The lower story and cellar could be used for stores, while the upper served as quarters for the bastion's garrison.

A room "properly protected" would be set aside on the first floor of the bastion as a magazine. Better yet, if the soil were hard and dry, the magazine could be established in the cellar. A tier of loopholes were to be cut in the walls of the lower story about seven feet above the ground. "In the upper story, which should overhang, the lower, in the manner of the common blockhouse, there should be, besides a tier of loop holes, four feet above the floor, at least two Embrasurers in each face." Six howitzers mounted on sliding carriages were to be placed in each bastion. Two of these guns were to be sighted on each flank and one in each face.

The roof of the bastion was to be fireproof -- either sheet tin or some other incombustible material. The walls could be of timber or masonry. If of timber, the eaves would have to overhang to permit water being poured down the outside of the structure to douse a fire. A tank could be placed in the upper story of the bastion to trap rain water off the roof. If there were any overflow from the tank, it could be passed down into the cistern. 39 (See Totten's and Thayer's plan for the Frontier Posts.)

At Poinsett's request, Major Cross examined the plan for the frontier forts prepared by the engineers. The major gave the scheme qualified support. He believed the plan was "admirably adapted" for the larger posts -- Forts Towson, Leavenworth, and Gibson. But, when it came to the smaller garrisons, Cross shook his head. The front of these works "would not exceed 200 yards -- the largest limit prescribed" by the engineers "as the distance between the Block-House bastions." Cross was of the opinion that the configuration of the lesser works should be a square or oblong. Such a fort, he argued, would provide more room in proportion to the area enclosed.

Cross suggested that the post which was to be laid out at Old Fort Smith be enclosed by a stone wall 600 feet long and 400 feet wide. It would be defended by "Block-House bastions at each angle." Barracks for four companies would be constructed on the parade ground. In case of emergency, there would be plenty of room to increase the size of the barracks. 40

A bill had been introduced in the 25th Congress to suspend the law passed by its predecessor in 1836 for "the Defense of the Western Frontier." Congress, however, adjourned without taking action on this measure. Writing Secretary of War Poinsett on July 16, Major Cross reported the teams charged with surveying the proposed military road between the Missouri and upper Mississippi and the Arkansas and Red were hard at work. Cross reminded the Secretary that the middle section of the road between the Arkansas

and the Missouri had been reconnoitered by Colonel Kearny's party. Sites for forts at Spring River and on the Marais de Cygne had been selected. These posts when completed, in conjunction with Forts Smith and Leavenworth and the one on the Illinois River which had been authorized, would in Cross' opinion give adequate protection to that section of the frontier.

Cross thought it would be good policy if the Secretary ordered at least one company of infantry to the sites selected by the commissioners at Spring River and Marais de Cygne. The Quartermaster's Department was ready to start work on these posts as soon as troops could be provided to cover the operation.

After studying the act of 1836, Cross noted, soldiers could be used for opening the military road, provided it didn't interfere unduly with their other duties. Otherwise, the necessary labor force would have to be secured "in such a manner as the President may direct." Since it appeared unlikely that any troops could be spared by the army for work on the road during 1838, Cross wanted to know if it were permissible to contract for the construction of the sections of the road from Fort Leavenworth to the Marais de Cygne and from the Arkansas to the Illinois. <sup>41</sup>

Poinsett, on discussing the situation with Adjutant General Roger Jones, learned that the army did not have any available troops to send to the sites selected the previous autumn by Colonel Kearny's team. Cross was given the go ahead on his plan to let contracts for the portions of the military road mentioned. <sup>42</sup>

## FORT SMITH 1838-1871

### Chapter I

#### Congress Selects a Site for a Fort

##### Notes

1 American State Papers, Military Affairs (1789-1838), V, 730; Henry P. Beers, The Western Military Frontier, 1815-1846 (Philadelphia, 1935), 117-118. Henry Dodge had spent many years on the Western frontier as an officer in the Missouri and Michigan militia. Since March 4, 1833, Dodge had been colonel of the 1st Dragoons. Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, From its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903 (Washington, 1903), Vol. I, 376.

2 Report, Cass to Benton, Feb. 19, 1836 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of the GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File). Lewis Cass of Michigan had succeeded John H. Eaton as President Jackson's Secretary of War on August 1, 1831.

3 Fort Towson, which had been established in 1824, was located on Gates Creek, six miles from the Red.

4 Jesup, a Virginian, had joined the army from Ohio on May 3, 1808, as a 2d lieutenant in the 7th Infantry. Jesup emerged from the War of 1812 as major of the 25th Infantry. During the war, Jesup had been brevetted for gallantry at the battles of Chippewa and Niagara. On May 8, 1818, Jesup had been made brigadier general and quartermaster general of the United States Army. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 573.

5 Report, Cass to Benton, Feb. 19, 1836 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of the GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).

6 American State Papers, Mil. Af., VI, 366-367; United States House Document No. 422, 24th Congress, 1st Session; The Territorial Papers of the United States, The Territory of Arkansas, 1829-1836, Clarence E. Carter, editor (Washington, 1954), XXI, 1151-1152.



7 There was nothing unusual about the size of the appropriations: in 1830 \$407,000 and in 1834 \$344,000 had been made available to the Quartermaster's Department, while a smaller sum \$312,000 had been granted in 1832. Beers, Western Military Frontier, 1815-1846, 119.

8 Statutes at Large of the United States of America, V, 30.

9 Ibid., 67.

10 House Document, No. 278, 25th Congress, 2d Session, 9. Stephen Kearny of New York had entered the army on March 12, 1812, as a 1st lieutenant in the 13th Infantry. After serving 21 years in the infantry, Kearny was commissioned lieutenant colonel of the 1st Dragoons on March 4, 1833. Kearny had been advanced to colonel of the regiment when Dodge resigned his commission on July 4, 1836. Nathan Boone, who had served in the Missouri Rangers during the War of 1812, had been commissioned a captain in the Mounted Rangers on June 16, 1832. Fourteen months later, Boone transferred to the 1st Dragoons. Thomas Smith of Kentucky had served as an officer in the Rifles during the War of 1812. Honorably discharged on June 15, 1815, Smith had been reinstated on December 2, 1815. Smith had been made a captain on April 25, 1819, and was transferred to the 1st Infantry when the Rifles were disbanded in June 1821. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 230, 586, 903.

11 Fort Coffee was on the south side of the Arkansas, about seven and one-half miles west of the western boundary of Arkansas.

12 Commissioners to Secretary of War, Dec. 11, 1836 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of the GLO, Ft. Smith, AHR File).

13 United States House Document, No. 278, 25th Congress, 2d Session, VIII.

14 Poinsett was a world traveler and diplomat. Unlike Cass, Poinsett had made a formal study of military science, and while in office interested himself in improving the administration and

organization of the army. Beers, Western Military Frontier, 1815-1846, 121.

15 "A Statement of fact relative to the preparations for the defense of the Western frontier" (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of the GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).

16 Whitcomb to Poinsett, July 22, 1837 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of the GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).

17 CMG to Harrison, Sept. 15, 1837 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of the GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).

18 Elsa Vaught, "Captain John Rogers: Founder of Fort Smith," The Arkansas Historical Quarterly, Vol. XVII, No. 3, p. 256.

19 Rogers to Commissioners, Sept. 1837 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Rogers listed his holdings as: the West fractional half of Sections 8. The West fractional half of Section 17. The Northeast Quarter of Section 17. The Southwest Quarter of Section 9. The Northwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 20. The West Half of the Southeast Quarter of Section 17. The Northwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 9. The East Half of the Southeast Quarter of Section 17. The Southwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 9. All of the property enumerated by Rogers was in Township 8, North Range 32 West, and totalled 336 acres.

20 William Whistler had joined the army from the Northwest Territory as a 2d lieutenant in the 1st Infantry on June 8, 1801. Rising slowly in rank, Whistler had been made lieutenant colonel of the 7th Infantry on July 21, 1834. John Stuart of Kentucky had enlisted in the army on July 20, 1814, as a private in the 39th Infantry. After obtaining the rank of sergeant, Stuart was commissioned a 2d lieutenant in the 7th Infantry on August 13, 1819. Stuart had been a captain since June 30, 1838. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 925, 1026.

21 Whistler and Stuart to CMG, Sept. 30, 1837 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 22 American State Papers, Mil. Af., VII, 978.
- 23 Rogers to Fulton, Oct. 13, 1837 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of the GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File). A native of Vermont, Seneca Simmons had graduated from the U. S. Military Academy on July 1, 1834. The newly commissioned 2d lieutenant was posted to the 7th Infantry. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 887.
- 24 Fulton to Poinsett, Dec. 6, 1837 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of the GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File).
- 25 Poinsett to Fulton, Dec. 19, 1837 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of the GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File).
- 26 Poinsett to Yell, Oct. 16, 1837 (National Archives, AGO, ORD).
- 27 Dimick to Cross, Feb. 11, 1838 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of the GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File). Trueman Cross of Maryland had joined the army on April 27, 1814, as an ensign in the 42d Infantry. The end of the War of 1812 found Cross a 2d lieutenant in the 1st Infantry. As a captain, Cross was transferred to the 7th Infantry on September 24, 1821. Five years later, Cross was promoted to major and assigned to the Quartermaster's Department. Charles Gratiot had graduated number 6 in the class of 1804 from the U. S. Military Academy. Gratiot had been made colonel and Chief Engineer on May 24, 1828, succeeding Alexander Macomb. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 341, 470.
- 28 American State Papers, Military Affairs, VII, 779-785.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Ibid., 905; Beers, Western Military Frontier, 1815-1846, 128.
- 31 American State Papers, Military Affairs, VII, 974; United States Senate Document No. 224, 25th Congress, 2d Session; Grant Foreman, Advancing the Frontier, 1830-1860 (Norman, 1933), 52.
- 32 Foreman, Advancing the Frontier, 52.
- 33 Copy of Joint Resolution of April 4, 1838 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of the GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File).
- 34 Cross to Poinsett, April 9, 1838 (National Archives, Record

Group 49, Records of the GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File).

35 Deed, Rogers to U. S., April 12, 1838 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of the GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File); Rogers to Cross, April 14, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CNG, Ltrs. Recd.).

The land sold to the government by Rogers was described as: "Commencing on the Arkansas River at the post marking the Indian Boundary, thence South to the South West corner of the South West fractional quarter of Section 17, thence East to the South East corner of the West half of the South East quarter of Section 17, thence due East 440 yards to the West line of the Section No. 16 -- thence North upon the west line of the Section No. 16--440 yard--thence by a line running west of North, so as to strike the Arkansas River 100 yards below the post marking the Indian Boundary upon the River -- and closing by this line running up the Arkansas River 100 yards."

36 Vaught, "Captain John Rogers," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, Vol. XVII, No. 3, p. 257.

37 Deed of Trust, Rogers and Wife to U. S., June 17, 1838 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).

38 Joseph Totten of Connecticut graduated from the U. S. Military Academy as No. 3 in the Class of 1805. Upon graduation, Totten was commissioned 2d lieutenant in the Engineers. It took Totten 23 years to rise to the rank of lieutenant colonel. On December 7, 1838, Totten replaced Gratiot as Chief Engineer. Like Totten, Thayer had entered the engineers as a 2d lieutenant on his graduation from West Point on February 23, 1808. Thayer had been advanced to the rank of major on May 24, 1828. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 952.

39 Totten and Thayer to Poinsett, Nov. 5, 1837 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CNG, Ltrs. Recd.).

40 Cross to Poinsett, May 18, 1838 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of the GLO, AMR File).

41 Cross to Poinsett, July 16, 1838 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of the GLO, AMR File).

42 Ibid. Roger Jones of Virginia had joined the U. S. Marine Corps

as a 2d lieutenant on January 26, 1809. Resigning from the Marine Corps in July 1812, Jones obtained a commission as captain in the 3d Artillery. Jones had replaced Captain C. J. Nourse as Adjutant General on March 7, 1825. Jones had received brevets for gallantry at the battle of Chippewa and the sortie at Fort Erie during the War of 1812. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 582.

## FORT SMITH 1838-1871

### Chapter II

#### Major Thomas' First Year at Fort Smith

As soon as the Joint Resolution authorizing "the Secretary of War to purchase a site for a fort at or near the western boundary of Arkansas" passed, Secretary Poinsett called upon Major Cross to select a capable officer of the Quartermaster's Department to put in charge of the Fort Smith project. Cross named Captain Charles W. Thomas. Undoubtedly, Cross was influenced by the knowledge that Thomas had spent several years at Fort Gibson and could be expected to be familiar with the area and its people. At this time, Thomas was stationed in the Assistant Quartermaster's Office at Buffalo, New York. Writing Thomas on April 10, Cross directed him to wrap up his duties at Buffalo and prepare to go to Fort Smith "for the purpose of erecting barracks." Before starting for the West, Thomas was to submit "an Estimate of the probable expense of the work."

Thomas was advised of the War Department's plans to abandon Fort Coffee and to withdraw its garrison to Fort Smith. Consequently, the soldiers could be expected to "afford important aid in the construction of the new work." The report of Colonel Whistler and Captain Stuart had led Major Cross to believe that stone could be obtained "at a convenient distance." Unless the cost of quarrying should prove too great an expense, stone instead of brick should be employed in the construction.

Replying to Cross' communication on April 20, Thomas announced that he had made some rough calculations on what it would cost to erect the proposed works. But, he cautioned, with the data afforded, he could not arrive at a satisfactory figure. While at New Orleans in June 1837, Thomas had made an estimate of the probable expense

of constructing barracks at Fort Coffee. He had been assisted in this task by Quartermaster Captain John B. Clark, who was well acquainted with the area in question. The cost arrived at by the two officers if brick were used was \$90,000. Thomas believed this figure was excessive, because it was based on what Clark had to pay for timber at Fort Gibson. Since leaving New Orleans, Thomas had learned that timber could be obtained much cheaper in the vicinity of Fort Coffee.

Until he had reached Fort Smith, Thomas wisely refused to say which would be the more economical building material — brick or stone. The cost of quarrying and hauling the stone would have to be taken into consideration. Thomas expressed little confidence in finding much good building timber on the "school section." Experience on the frontier had demonstrated that the settlers considered "timber common property," and cut it wherever it was "most convenient." Thomas felt that lumber for the fort could either be obtained up the Poteau or from the mills on the Arkansas. On his last trip to Fort Gibson, Thomas had been informed that a Mr. Dillard planned to build a steam sawmill on the Poteau. If Dillard had, Thomas would recommend purchasing lumber from him, unless the price was exorbitant. In that case, the captain would advise the United States to erect a mill, as it would soon pay for itself.

Thomas was sorry to learn that pressure groups had dictated the choice of Fort Smith for the permanent post. As he informed Cross, "possibly with good, roomy, & well ventilated quarters, it may prove a much better site...[than] it is now thought to be by the military." When Old Fort Smith had been manned by the army, large numbers of men had been felled annually during the "sickly season."

As soon as he had tidied up his affairs in Buffalo, Thomas would hasten to Washington and discuss the matter at length with Major Cross. Thomas, before leaving for Fort Smith, wanted to visit New York and Boston. At these cities, he would hire mechanics

and workmen, and contract for certain types of building materials. Past experiences had demonstrated that many items which would be needed in constructing the fort could be had at a lower price on the east coast than at New Orleans. <sup>2</sup>

After closing his accounts at Buffalo, Thomas traveled to Washington. Major Cross on May 24 handed the captain his instructions. Thomas was to:

visit the Eastern cities, as far as Boston should... [he] find it necessary to do so, with a view to take with... [him] to Arkansas, to erect the Barracks and quarters, and works of a defence contemplated at the new post to be established near old Fort Smith on the western boundary line of that state.

A plan of the works will hereafter be furnished..., but to guide your arrangements in regard to Mechanics, and the purchase of such stores as it may be expedient to procure in the Eastern cities. I will now apprise you generally of its nature and extent.

The works of defence will consist of a stone wall about twelve feet high, and from two to three feet thick enclosing an area of six hundred feet by four hundred feet, with a block house bastion, two stories high at each angle.

The Barracks & quarters will not for the present exceed the extent required for the accommodation of four companies, two of which will probably be Dragoons, requiring stabling for their horses.

It is desirable, that the work should be commenced as early as practicable & prosecuted with energy. Your arrangements will therefore be made accordingly. Important aid in the way of labour may be relied upon from the Troops, should the army be increased at the present session. Otherwise it would hardly be practicable to obtain more than the company now stationed at Fort Coffee....

The Mechanics should be employed at fixed rates of wages, with a ration to be adjusted by you, and inasmuch as the public will incur considerable expense in transporting them to the West, they should be bound in a reasonable penalty to serve for at least one year, after their arrival, at the rate of wages agreed upon. The right of discharging them at any time being reserved by the U. States.



The necessary funds will be furnished on your estimates.<sup>3</sup>  
After leaving Washington, Thomas proceeded up the Atlantic Seaboard as far as Boston.. In the cities visited, the mechanics refused to sign up to go West, unless promised what the captain considered excessive wages. Thomas accordingly decided to push on to Bangor, Maine. There he had reason to believe he "could get good mechanics" at a moderate wage scale. Thomas was not disappointed. At Bangor, he recruited 39 mechanics and 16 laborers. The skilled mechanics contracted to work for \$150 per day and laborers for \$15 a month.<sup>4</sup>

While at Bangor, Thomas received a letter from Major Cross, dated May 30. Cross after considerable thought had seen the merit in Thomas' suggestion that the government establish and operate a sawmill at Fort Smith. Thomas, following his arrival on the Arkansas, was to see that a mill was erected. Upon receipt of this directive, Thomas wrote McClung, Wade & Co. of Pittsburgh. He asked them to have the engine which would be used to power the mill built and ready for shipment by the last day of June.<sup>5</sup>

Several days later, a packet was delivered to Captain Thomas. Opening it, he found a letter from Major Cross and a plan of the "works of defence and the Barracks and quarters to be erected at the site of old Fort Smith on the Arkansas Frontier." (See Plans for Fort Smith, Arkansas.) Reading Cross' communication, Thomas found that his superior considered the specifications on the face of the plan, plus the instructions contained in his memorandum of May 24, as all the information necessary to enable the captain to start to work. The major noted that the barracks and quarters depicted on the plan were for an eight company garrison. But as present plans called for only four companies at Fort Smith, Thomas was to make the necessary adjustments.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time, Major Cross was writing Lieutenant John P. Davis at Fort Gibson. Prior to leaving Washington, Thomas had informed Cross that there was no limestone in the Fort Smith

neighborhood, but there was plenty at Fort Gibson. If he were to build a stone fort, he would have to have lime. Cross on June 20 wrote Davis directing him to send 500 barrels of lime to Fort Smith. Till he had made some other arrangement for obtaining lime, Davis was to honor all requests which Thomas might make for this necessary building material. <sup>7</sup>

Accompanied by his construction people, Thomas left Bangor and headed west. Reaching Pittsburgh, Thomas was disappointed to discover McClung, Wade & Co. hadn't finished the sawmill engine. Since the season in which the Arkansas could be navigated by steamboats was already advanced, Thomas decided not to wait. The engine would have to be shipped at a later date. At Pittsburgh, the men took passage on the steamboat Dayton, which was chartered to carry them and their supplies to Fort Smith.

A stop was made at Cincinnati, where Thomas purchased "such tools, materials, & provisions" as he judged necessary for his workmen. The Dayton was unable to ascend the Arkansas beyond Lewisburg, because of the low stage of the water. Disembarking, the men were compelled to walk the last 100 miles. It was the last week of July when Thomas and his travel weary men finally reached Fort Smith. Most of the tools and equipment had been left aboard the steamer. <sup>8</sup>

Immediately following his arrival at Fort Smith, Thomas inspected the buildings and the land purchased from Rogers. He was disappointed to discover all the structures, except one, were in wretched repair. The area was "covered with the filth and rubbish of years." Thomas wasted little time in putting his men to work repairing the buildings which he planned to use as quarters and clearing up the grounds. Since the region had a well deserved "reputation of being a sickly spot," the captain was especially solicitous of the health of his construction people. If any of the men became ill, morale would be a problem, because they had been compelled to leave nearly all their clothing and personal

items at Lewisburg. During their first month at Fort Smith, the men "had few or no conveniences for cooking or sleeping." <sup>9</sup>

The site selected for the fort impressed Thomas. The ground was elevated and commanding. Guns in the post's bastions would be able to cover the Arkansas for a considerable distance in either direction. Boats could tie up at the landing in front of the site with no fears, because heavy ordnance on the bluff could command the opposite bank of the Arkansas and the Cherokee Nation beyond.

Despite all this adversity, Thomas had one bit of good news to relay to Major Cross on August 3. A short distance from the site he had found clay which his master brickmaker said was suitable for firing into bricks. A crew was put to work setting up a brickyard. Thomas promised no time would be lost in putting the yard into operation. As yet, the busy officer hadn't had time to investigate fully the possibility of quarrying stone in the neighborhood. A preliminary survey indicated that no difficulties would be encountered.

While in Washington, Thomas had understood Cross to say that he ought to hire a physician to attend the sick workers provided the services of an army doctor could not be obtained. Thomas was understandably delighted to learn that Assistant Surgeon William Hammond was stationed at Fort Smith. Hammond agreed to look after the construction people's health, but remarked that he should be reimbursed. Thomas agreed, remarking he could promise nothing until he heard from his superiors in Washington. When he advised Cross of the situation, the captain noted that at the moment he had several sick. If medical attention were not afforded his crew, Thomas warned, it would "militate very much against the interest of the U. States."

Having arrived at Fort Smith during the "sickly season," Thomas planned to "work the men lightly" during August and "pay every attention to their health." In closing, the captain bragged, "they are an

excellent party, and will do good service if they retain their health this season -- Many of them have come out with the intention of remaining several years if they find employment." 10

As if he were not having enough trouble getting his equipment and building materials in order, Thomas became embroiled in a jurisdictional dispute with the officers at Forts Gibson and Coffee. Colonel Arbuckle, who commanded at Fort Gibson, believed the ordnance stores stockpiled at Fort Coffee should be transferred to Fort Smith. An order from Colonel Cross dated July 11, indicated the arms in question were to be shipped to Fayetteville. 11

Colonel Arbuckle had been notified by the War Department that Fort Coffee was to be abandoned. On July 19 Arbuckle had called Captain Benjamin L. E. Bonneville to his Fort Gibson headquarters. Bonneville was to alert his company (F) of the 7th U. S. Infantry to be ready to march on the morning of the 21st. Bonneville and his troops were to re-establish Fort Smith. At Fort Smith, the soldiers were to prepare suitable structures for the storage of the public property currently at Fort Coffee. This property was to be removed to Fort Smith by Captain Stuart's company in keelboats as soon as Bonneville announced that facilities were ready. 12

Bonneville's small column marched from Fort Gibson a day later than anticipated. This delay was occasioned by the arrival of Captain William G. Belknap with companies E and H, 3d Infantry. Arbuckle had commissioned Belknap and Bonneville on July 21 to survey a military road from Fort Smith to the Red River. Belknap was assigned a detachment of dragoons, five pack mules, and the prerequisite amount of camp equipage to enable his party to carry out this assignment. Because of this interruption, Bonneville's company didn't reach Fort Smith till July 27. 13

When Thomas showed Bonneville a copy of Colonel Cross' July 11 order that the ordnance from Camp Coffee be shipped to Fayetteville, Bonneville shook his head in disbelief. He told Thomas, he would have to take this subject up with Colonel Arbuckle.

Wishing to begin work on the fort as early as possible, Thomas asked Bonneville for a fatigue detail. Bonneville refused. He remarked that he didn't believe he or his men were "to assist in the erection of the New Works." Bonneville in turn showed Thomas a copy of an order from Colonel Arbuckle. The colonel wanted Bonneville to repair the old storehouse at Fort Smith for the use of the troops. Thomas offered to have his men assist but Bonneville refused.

While awaiting Arbuckle's reply, Thomas rode up river to Fort Coffee. The commandant, Captain Stuart, backed Thomas' contention that Cross wanted the ordnance stores transferred to Fayetteville. Writing Cross on August 2, Thomas announced that as soon as the necessary transportation could be secured, he would see that the Department's wishes were carried out. To do this, he would have the ordnance stores sent downstream from Fort Coffee to Van Buren by keelboat. From Van Buren, they would be hauled overland to Fayetteville.

At Fort Coffee, Thomas was introduced to Captain Belknap. Thomas handed Belknap a copy of an order from Cross, stating that he was to detail men to work on the new fort. Belknap remarked, this was certainly news to him. Upon transferring his command from Fort Coffee to Fort Smith, Belknap continued, he would have them erect huts for their own use. The attitude displayed by Belknap satisfied Thomas that the commanding officer at Fort Smith would have to be instructed by the War Department to furnish men to assist with the construction.

Since Fort Coffee was to be abandoned, Thomas suggested the buildings be razed and the materials rafted down the Arkansas to Fort Smith. This would be relatively easy, because most of the timber was cottonwood. The heavy oak beams, he explained, could either be mixed in with the cottonwood rafts or sent down the Arkansas on boats.

As soon as he had a better grasp of the situation, Thomas notified Colonel Cross on August 2, he and Captain Stuart would lay out the new fort. Captains Belknap and Bonneville in the meantime planned to leave Fort Coffee in several days to survey the projected military road linking Forts Smith and Towson. <sup>14</sup>

News that Belknap and Bonneville had rejected Thomas' call for soldiers to assist with the construction projects had immediate repercussions in Washington. Colonel Cross carried the matter to Adjutant General Jones. On September 11, Jones addressed an order to Captain Bonneville. The captain was informed that the War Department was interested in seeing work on the post expedited. Bonneville was to make arrangements so all soldiers who could be spared from their military duties would report to Captain Thomas. <sup>15</sup>

Thomas on August 6 forwarded a request to Colonel Cross, asking that \$10,000 be made available to meet the bills for the "erection of the new Fort Smith." If Treasury notes were sent, Thomas wanted them drawn on the New Orleans banks. Drafts on the receivers, according to the captain, were inconvenient and risky, while Treasury notes could be readily converted into cash. Cross agreed. On September 6, the department notified Thomas that \$10,000 in Treasury notes had been deposited to his credit in New Orleans. <sup>16</sup>

The contracts Thomas had made with his mechanics and laborers were posted on August 23. In a covering letter, the project engineer explained that since his arrival at Fort Smith, he had been busy making preparations to begin work. He complained to Colonel Cross that he had experienced more trouble than had been anticipated. A shortage of planks had hindered the repair of the tumble-down buildings purchased from Rogers. The weather had been terribly hot, and the number of men on sick report was constantly increasing. On August 1 there had been only one man ill enough to be excused from work, in three weeks this figure had increased ten-fold. To make matters worse, September was considered a more sickly month than August. Thomas, in an effort to protect the men's health, was working them as lightly as possible. <sup>17</sup>

When he arrived at Fort Smith, Thomas had been disappointed to discover that the lime which Captain Davis had been requested to ship down river from Fort Gibson had not arrived. Thomas wasted no time in writing Davis, "requesting him to send down some lime as soon as possible." 18

Davis replied immediately. On July 30, he informed Thomas he had received Cross' letter to furnish 500 barrels of lime. At the moment, Davis continued, he had a working party repairing a large keelboat with a capacity of 75 tons. As soon as the vessel was ready, Davis promised to ship 1,500 to 2,000 bushels of lime.

Thomas fretted as the days passed and no lime arrived. Becoming exasperated, he boarded the small Arkansas River steamer Itasca and started for Fort Gibson on August 24. In addition, Thomas wanted to see if Colonel Arbuckle had any surplus wagons. On his trip from the eastern seaboard, Thomas had been able to secure only one wagon. The stops made to purchase supplies had been brief. With the nation in the throes of a serious depression, business had stagnated and the manufacturers had none on hand.

Disembarking at Fort Gibson, Thomas was disappointed to discover that neither the lime nor the keelboat were ready. While Thomas was at Fort Gibson, he learned that on July 7 he had been promoted to major. The new major had to return to Fort Smith on horseback, when the Itasca ran aground and was damaged so badly she had to be abandoned.

By the time, the new major had returned to Fort Smith, the water in the Arkansas had fallen so far that the river was no longer navigable for keelboats. It was January before the river rose enough to permit Thomas to receive the promised shipment of lime. 19

Thomas was delighted to discover that during his absence, the captain of the Dayton had taken advantage of a slight rise on the Arkansas to bring his steamboat up to Fort Smith. The men were as glad to get their personal gear as the major was to see

his tools and hardware.

An important mail reached Fort Smith at this time. Opening the official dispatches, Thomas discovered that he and Captain Stuart were to make a reconnaissance and select a site for the post the government planned to establish on Illinois River. The fort was to be located in Indian country. Previous instructions had indicated the garrison on the Illinois was to be within the state of Arkansas.

When he looked about him, Thomas was discouraged to see that work had lagged during his visit to Fort Gibson. He felt his presence at Fort Smith for the next several weeks was "absolutely necessary." During this period, the groundwork for the next year's construction program would be laid. Since his men were unacquainted with the area and its resources, they operated at a distinct disadvantage, unless directed by some one thoroughly familiar with the region. Though he was anxious to undertake the survey, Thomas explained in a letter to Colonel Cross on September 20, he didn't believe the time was propitious.

For some time, Thomas had been expecting the arrival of an assistant, Captain Edmund B. Alexander. If the captain showed up, Thomas would have a deputy to leave in charge at Fort Smith. <sup>20</sup>

Within the next ten days there was a pronounced improvement in Thomas' prospects. Preparations were pushed vigorously to insure that when spring arrived, construction could be started. Thomas reminded Cross that his men had to fashion almost every kind of building material. The river, not being navigable at the time of his arrival, had kept the major from shipping in supplies from below. Efforts to secure several thousand feet of planks and boards to repair the structures sold the government by Rogers had failed miserably. He had been unable to obtain even a 1000 feet of dressed lumber.

The task of clearing ground for the brickyard had been attended with difficulty. Not only was the ground very broken, but a large number of stumps had to be removed. Worse, the clay which at first appearance had looked "excellent" for bricks, had cracked on drying. Valuable time had been wasted experimenting to find a proper formula.



At first, the major and his master brickmaker were inclined to attribute their trouble to the extreme dryness of the weather. It had not rained in six weeks. Finally, they hit upon a composition which looked as if it would "stand the drying quite well." Unless he should again be disappointed, Thomas advised Cross, he hoped "to burn a good kiln in the course of October." For this purpose a shed, capable of covering 200,000 bricks had been erected. To insure an adequate supply of water, two wells had been sunk at the brickyard.

During September, Thomas had acquired a number of work animals. Captain Belknap had transferred several horses, while a number had been purchased. Through these transactions, Thomas had obtained enough horses for ten teams. Of these, two were first class, while the others could be used to pull carts. Twelve "fine unbroke mules" had been bought. Thomas hoped these animals would soon be gentled and ready for work. For heavy hauling, Thomas purchased 20 good oxen; Captain Bonneville had turned over to him four broken down beasts which had belonged to the Fort Coffee garrison.

With winter approaching, Thomas would have to arrange for forage and shelter for the public livestock. John Rogers had been paid \$2,400 for 200 tons of good hay. Thomas believed this would be sufficient to enable him to work his teams to an advantage until the spring grass was up.

To shelter the horses and mules, a barn (with a capacity of between 40 and 50 animals) with a large loft for hay and grain was built. Sheds were thrown up for the oxen. A well which had been filled up was cleaned cut, and a corral fixed up for the stock.

"A good blacksmith's & carpenter's shop" was built. A number of the mechanics were hard at work manufacturing stone carts, tools, and harness, items which Thomas hadn't seen fit to purchase. Another group had been given the task of repairing wagons.

Reporting to Colonel Cross on September 30, Thomas announced, if all went according to schedule, he planned to start getting out stone in the near future. This stone would be used as foundation for the walls. Other projects which would be given a high priority were: fixing up a hospital for Captain Bonneville's troops and the construction of cribs for grains. 21

Assistant Surgeon Hammond was dissatisfied with the building which Thomas had assigned him as a hospital. Hammond on October 2 wrote a letter of complaint to Surgeon General Thomas Lawson. He reported there had been recently "fitted up" as post hospital "two very indifferent apartments, one as a Dispensary, the other as kitchen and Ward Room conjointly with one door and one window." There was neither sash nor glass in the window. Although repeated requisitions had been made to Major Thomas, benches, tables, and bunks were not forthcoming. "Whilst these things," Hammond complained, were "meeded out to the Hospital of the Army, the common day labourer is both comfortably fixed in quarters and in other accommodations."

For the time being, the surgeon protested, he was quartered in an "old dilapidated building, in a half falling condition -- with five windows, with neither glass, sash or shutters, and from present appearances there is no prospect of having its condition improved before the cold and rainy season sits in." He had no kitchen, but was compelled to prepare his meals, rain or shine, on "an old stack of a chimney without covering."

Repeated entreaties to have his quarters repaired had been directed to Major Thomas. The major, Hammond observed, had treated these with "neglect and indifference." Worse, Thomas seemed to be doing everything in his power "to render the day labourer Comfortable." The other officers fared worse than the surgeon, because they had to live in tents. At the moment, Major Whorton Rector of the Paymaster's Department and Captain Bonneville were living with Hammond. Having learned that these men were ill, the doctor had asked them to share his quarters.

What especially plagued Hammond was the knowledge that Major Thomas was quartered in a building "with five or six comfortable rooms, with a good Kitchen and other out Buildings." A family which had no claim on the army was staying with the major.

Neither the surgeon nor the hospital had been furnished firewood in accordance with army regulations. On several occasions a few chips and "immense logs, twenty and thirty feet long," had been dragged to the door. <sup>22</sup>

Lawson was shocked by Hammond's letter. He wasted no time in bringing the matter to the attention of the Secretary of War. Poinsett referred Hammond's note to Colonel Cross. When he did, the Secretary urged "every effort ought to be made to render the quarters habitable & comfortable for the surgeon & all attached to the army." At posts like Fort Smith great attention would have to be paid to the hospital. Might it not be better, he cautioned, to cease work on the fort until better facilities were available. <sup>23</sup>

Meanwhile, further strain had been placed on relations between the line officers and Major Thomas. Lieutenant Forbes Britton of the 7th Infantry reached Fort Smith during the second week of October. Reporting to Major Thomas on the 10th, Britton requested he be furnished quarters befitting his rank. <sup>24</sup>

Thomas rejected Britton's application. He advanced the argument on doing so that the buildings purchased from Rogers were for the "exclusive use of the workmen and stores employed and required for building" the fort. Because of a shortage of space, the major didn't intend to turn out any of his men for "the purpose of furnishing quarters for the company of Infantry now at this Post." Moreover, the major continued, the government as a fringe benefit had promised the mechanics and laborers quarters. To emphasize his point, Thomas added, should Colonel Enos Cutler or any other officer show up at Fort Smith, he would not evict a single workman. At the same time, Thomas rejected an application by Bonneville for quarters for his company. <sup>25</sup>

As soon as he received Thomas' note denying him quarters, Britton forwarded it to Captain Bonneville. Being a West Pointer, Britton was familiar with army regulations. He called Bonneville's attention to the 44th paragraph of the Quartermaster Regulations. Citing this article, the young lieutenant demanded Bonneville compel Major Thomas to "distribute 'the public quarters' according to Regulations." 26

Bonneville failed to cause the major to change his mind. When Bonneville read him the regulations, Thomas restated his position. There simply was not enough room in the buildings obtained from Rogers to quarter Bonneville's soldiers, he explained. Bonneville disagreed. It appeared, the captain told Britton that Thomas and the construction people occupied "more than quarters enough to make comfortable every individual at this post." Since Thomas refused to yield, Bonneville determined to refer the subject to the War Department. What especially irked Bonneville was that upon his arrival at Fort Smith on August 1, plans had been broached to rehabilitate the old fort. He had then left on survey party. When the captain returned to Fort Smith on September 10, this plan had been dropped. 27

Seeing that Bonneville had failed to get any satisfaction, Britton determined to carry the matter to Acting Quartermaster General Cross. In a letter posted on October 11, Britton observed, Captain Bonneville and Lieutenant James S. Sanderson had stated that a portion of their company (F) had been working on the fort since August 1. Since his arrival at the fort, Britton had seen soldiers "digging at his stables, working at his Blacksmith shop, ... making wheels, ox yokes &c and driving his waggons [sic]." Sanderson had told Britton, "no less than eighteen men" were on extra duty at this very moment. "Yet sir," Britton fumed, "these men 'employed on the public building' are in Tents & Maj. Thomas' laborers are in comfortable houses."

Britton ridiculed Thomas' claim there were only sufficient buildings to accommodate the labor force. He didn't believe the

facts would support the major's position. According to Britton there were:

not less than five principal Houses on the purchase which were used for dwellings & store houses (besides about five or seven smaller huts now used for Kitchens &c.) The one Maj. Thomas occupies, contains six rooms, two down stairs (I should think 20 feet by 24) [.] Two above these & two attached by a shed; there is also one other dwelling house in his yard (about 18 feet by 18) and he has his kitchen & office independent of any of these. I say all these are occupied by Maj. Thomas for I conceive he is the only one whom the army Regulations gives the right of occupancy. Although his acting Qr. master Sergeant & family and a Gentleman (Citizen) and his family are quartered in the Building. Notwithstanding this Gentleman, learning I wished quarters for my family, wished to leave and go elsewhere, but was only induced to remain at the solicitations of Maj. Thomas, and yet Maj. Thomas...says he has only enough room for his laborers & self.

When Captain Bonneville was unable to secure him quarters, Britton had taken two rooms several miles from the post. This was most inconvenient, he wrote, but the weather precluded his family living in tents.

Britton believed that if anyone had to go into tents it should be the construction people, not the military to whom army regulations gave quarters. While the skilled mechanics were getting from \$1.50 to \$5 per day, the enlisted personnel were pocketing from \$7 to \$15 a month. As Britton saw it, the officers and enlisted men were provided quarters and subsistence in lieu of the higher wages paid to the workers.

In bringing this matter to the Department's attention, Britton had taken for his guide the "code of Laws which is given to us for Regulations and Government." "If error of Judgement, petty Tyranny or military power had wrenched" from him his rights, Britton asked redress. 28

While Britton was busy composing his letter of protest, Thomas gave him an assignment. Perhaps, the major reasoned, if the young lieutenant had some work to do, he would be less troublesome.

Britton was to take charge of the extra duty men from Company F. These men were to be put to work repairing the few remaining buildings of Old Fort Smith. If Britton found that he required the services of any of the skilled craftsmen hired to work on the new post, he was to make application. Teams, tools, and hardware would be furnished as needed. 29

There was a rise on the Arkansas in November. With the river again navigable, the keelboat United States reached Fort Smith with the steam engine and the saw machinery Thomas had contracted for from McClung, Wade & Co. While a fatigue party was unloading the engine, Thomas put a crew to work laying foundations for the mill.

A foreman and 12 men were sent up the Poteau to the pine woods on November 27. They were to cut timber for the mill frame and logs for sawing. Thomas was elated when the foreman reported he had found a good supply of high quality timber.

Reporting to Adjutant General Jones on December 10, Thomas promised "to have the mill erected and running in the shortest possible time." All that he had learned from his timber cutters convinced the major that he would be able "to procure much more than a sufficient supply of the best kind of timber for the works" in time for spring operations. Thomas' experience at Fort Smith had reinforced his belief that without the mill, it would be impossible to obtain lumber of the proper dimensions "at any price within a reasonable time." Because his mill would be the nearest one to Fort Gibson, Thomas believed it could supply that post whenever the Arkansas was "boatable."

The failure of the engine to arrive earlier had caused great delay and injury to his operations, it having kept the major from employing his mechanics to the best advantage. With no lumber, Thomas had been prevented from "preparing much of the inside work of the building" as he had intended.

Major Thomas was disappointed by the continued failure of Captain Davis to send him lime. This had serious repercussions, as it prevented him from employing "the masons at their legitimate duties." So their services wouldn't be completely wasted, the major kept the masons "employed as usefully as possible, in preparing for next year's work."

An excellent quarry had been opened on Belle Point from which "an ample supply of good stone" could be procured for the "erection of the new works." Originally, Thomas had not planned to use his mechanics for this type of work, but circumstances had made it necessary.

Thomas in his report to Adjutant General Jones disagreed violently with the line officers on one point. According to the major, he had received "no assistance from the company of infantry stationed at this place as labourers, or otherwise."

If he had received the lime from Captain Davis, Thomas explained, he would have started construction on the walls of the fort. But until the lime arrived, he planned to keep his masons (when not employed on the mill and other necessary projects) in the quarry. The major promised that as soon as the first shipment of lime arrived from Fort Gibson, he would put his crew to work on the walls. If the army still refused to co-operate, additional laborers would be hired.

Thomas, in closing his report lamented, "I am disappointed in the progress I have been able to make this season, but I had to contend with many difficulties which I did not expect, and which I trust I shall be able to surmount hereafter." 30

On December 28, Thomas contracted with Lorenzo Clark to supply the government with 6,000 bushels of corn. The corn was to feed the public animals during the winter. At the same time, the major issued drafts totalling \$4,575.22. Of this amount, the owners of the chartered steamboat Dayton and McClung, Wade & Co. received the lion's share. These disbursements were charged to "the appropriation for erecting a new" work at Fort Smith. 31

Thomas, when he drafted his report for 1838, blasted the line officers for their failure to co-operate. According to the major he had:

received no aid from the Troops. Although...[he] had been informed that...[he] should have "important aid in the way of labour should the army be increased," (and it was). Having engaged mechanics with the expectation of having labourers from the army... [he] had too many of them, and too few labourers. Especially as all the stone had to be quarried — the brick made. A mill erected, saw logs procured — charcoal burned — stone coal dug — and in fact material of every description collected, before the mechanics could be employed at their respective trades. At all this work soldiers could have been employed, equally well, if not to more advantage than the men... [he] had hired. Fortunately...[his] mechanics were all good men, from the north, where during the winter they are generally employed at various kinds of labour different from their trades,...and...[he] found them useful at almost any kind of work....

Yet if he had been furnished troops when he had reached Fort Smith, Thomas complained, the results would have been better. He could then have been able to report better progress with "little additional expense to the U. States." Though Washington had issued orders for the line officers to detail troops to Thomas, they found various excuses to keep from doing so. 32

Major Thomas was elated to learn at the first of the year that Captain Bonneville's company (F) of the 7th Infantry had received its marching orders. (The War Department had decided to send the 7th Infantry to Florida to fight the Seminoles. The companies of the 7th Infantry were to start for Florida as soon as a corresponding unit from the 4th Infantry reached the Second Department. Perhaps, he reasoned, Captain Belknap (whose unit had replaced Bonneville's) would be more co-operative. 33

Belknap and his two companies of the 3d Infantry, Band H, had marched from Fort Coffee to Fort Smith on October 24. On their arrival the troops were disappointed to discover all the available



quarters occupied by Bonneville's troops and Thomas' people. Belknap accordingly put his men to work erecting huts on Section 16, one-half mile southeast of the new fort. Here there was plenty of timber. In addition, the officers believed the site would be more healthful during the "sickly season."

Colonel Arbuckle welcomed this news. He was of the opinion that when the company of the 4th Infantry which was slated to replace Bonneville's unit put in an appearance, it would be sent to Belknap's cantonment rather than into the buildings of Old Fort Smith. <sup>34</sup>

Thomas was so glad to see the soldiers of Bonneville's company leave that he let them use the United States. Since her arrival at Fort Smith, the United States had been of considerable use as the Arkansas was still too low for steamboats. On January 9, 1839, the soldiers boarded the keelboat and started down the Arkansas on the first stage of their long, hard trip to their new station in Florida. 35

At first, Thomas was under the impression that Belknap would be more co-operative than his predecessor. A conversation which the project engineer had with Belknap during the fourth week of January caused him to have second thoughts on the subject. Thomas until then had been under the impression that Belknap would furnish him fatigue details, after he had sheltered his battalion. Since he planned a trip to New Orleans, Thomas decided he had better reach an understanding with the post commander on this delicate subject. On January 28, Thomas wrote Belknap:

As I am now making arrangements for early operations in the spring on the new work now being erected at this place it is necessary that I should know from you at this time, how many men you will furnish me with from your command under the instructions from the Adjutant General's Office...dated 11 Sept. 1838. I request that you will also inform me, how, in what way, and what portion of their time their military duties will interfere with their labour, if at all. I could employ a number of them at present to great advantage, but knowing that you are engaged in quartering them, I do not make the application. I shall want them as soon as they can be spared after the middle of March, or by the first of April at the latest. I can employ at least forty men of your command, with a compliment of non-commissioned officers and if you can supply one, as many as one hundred.

It is necessary that I should be informed what your views and determinations are on the subject immediately, to govern me in hiring mechanics, as it will depend entirely upon the number of men I have from the army. 36

Thomas received an evasive answer to his communication. Without a moment's hesitation, Thomas dashed off a second letter to Belknap. He asked Belknap point-blank whether he would or would not furnish fatigue parties for work on the fort. Seizing on a remark by Belknap that he "deprecated the policy of employing soldiers," Thomas commented, it had always been his impression that troops "were to aide [ sic ] in the erections of the new work." With this policy which had been enunciated by higher authority, he had nothing to do. Nevertheless, he was "decidedly of opinion that it is a good one on this frontier, as it is impossible to keep a sufficient corps of laborers without an extraordinary, and in many cases unnecessary expense, as their places can be better supplied from the army." 37

These arguments failed to sway Belknap. Thomas decided once again to carry the dispute to Washington. On January 31, Thomas forwarded to Acting Quartermaster General Henry Stanton, a copy of the correspondence and a digest of the conversations which he had had with Captain Belknap on the subject. 38 Thomas was convinced that no troops would be forthcoming to work on the fort, unless Belknap received a positive order from Adjutant General Jones. To rally support for his position, Thomas reminded Washington that not only would it be cheaper but progress would be expedited by the employment of soldiers as unskilled labor.

Especially perplexing was Belknap's statement that he would afford Thomas all the assistance in his power. But when Thomas asked for men, the only help asked for, the post commander refused. Unless he was given a 100-man fatigue party, Thomas didn't see how he could "make that expedition in the work" which he knew the Department expected. 39

A mail which arrived from Washington at the end of January brought a letter Colonel Stanton had posted on December 28. Stanton had been displeased by the communication he had received from Lieutenant Britton. He was especially troubled by the lieutenant's complaint that Thomas had done nothing to repair the buildings of old Fort Smith still standing. Taken aback by this charge, Thomas replied, he had directed Britton to repair "all the buildings of, and connected with, Fort Smith." A copy of this order was attached to Thomas' dispatch of February 2.

Since the question had been raised, Thomas had made a thorough examination of the building in question. The structure, he observed, was "not in a dilapidated condition as represented" by the pesky lieutenant. Even if nothing were done to the storehouse, it would probably remain standing for years, the major reported. Being of hewn timbers, the structure was 22 by 65 feet, with basement of stone. When fixed up the main building could be used for storing flour, while vinegar, pork, and soap were stockpiled in the basement. In response to Stanton's request, Thomas promised to have the storehouse repaired with "as little delay as practicable."<sup>40</sup>

Examining his books during the first days of February, Thomas found he was getting short of funds. He intended to forward Washington an estimate of funds required for the quarter, when he was notified by the auditor that \$20,000 would be sent. On the evening of the 4th, Thomas learned that this allotment had been cancelled, because of a shortage of funds. This was a terrible blow. Within the next two months, Lorenzo Clark would deliver 5,000 bushels of corn. The corn would cost upwards of \$6,000. Fixed costs for construction, including day to day purchases, were running about \$2,000 per month. Moreover, Thomas had been compelled to make disbursements on account of the Quartermaster's Department. Unless he received funds in the near future, it would prove very embarrassing.

Consequently, Thomas asked Colonel Stanton to give him \$10,000 from the money budgeted to the Quartermaster's Department. This was

a separate account from the special appropriation set aside by Congress for the construction of the fort. Pending an answer to this request, Thomas would make no new engagements and endeavor to meet the claims of creditors with funds on hand. As soon as the new appropriation bill passes, the major hoped Stanton would waste no time in sending a remittance.

Twenty thousand dollars were forwarded to Thomas by Stanton on March 16. <sup>41</sup>

Thomas, besides having to handle a major construction project, had to assist other officers of the Quartermaster's Department stationed in the area. He had been called on to supply with funds Lieutenant Sanderson at newly established Camp Illinois. Captain Alexander, who had reached Fort Smith in November, had been given \$1,750 with which to pay for moving Belknap's battalion from Fort Coffee to Fort Smith. Five thousand dollars has been paid out to get the ordnance stores shifted from Fort Coffee to Fayetteville. This included the cost of transportation as well as the rent of storage facilities at Fayetteville. Lieutenant William S. Henry, Belknap's post quartermaster, on February 5 handed the harassed major a request for \$3,000. Henry argued it would cost the Department that much to take care of the needs of Belknap's battalion. <sup>42</sup>

Although Thomas believed he could take care of these requests without neglecting his duties, he would need additional funds to replace those paid out to post quartermasters. Hoping to increase the importance of his position, the major suggested to Colonel Stanton that he be supplied with Department funds to meet the requests of Captain Davis at Fort Gibson and Lieutenant Sanderson at Camp Illinois. Drafts payable on the banks at New Orleans or Fayetteville could be sent the major. If this were done, he thought he could keep the post quartermasters supplied with money "at less trouble and expense" than in the past. <sup>43</sup>

It was February 6 before Major Thomas got around to notifying Colonel Stanton of his planned trip to New Orleans. When he had

been assigned to Fort Coffee in 1837, Thomas noted, Quartermaster General Jesup had authorized him to go to New Orleans for supplies and stores whenever necessary. While in Washington the previous May, Colonel Cross had told him there was no reason for altering this policy.

With the building season rapidly approaching, Thomas could see that there was a pressing need for many items which had been exhausted or overlooked. He felt it would be best if the project engineer made the purchases. When he left for New Orleans on his buying trip, Thomas planned to leave Captain Alexander in charge. Thomas promised Stanton, he would remain in the "Crescent City" no longer "than absolutely necessary to make the purchases." At the same time, he could procure such articles as might be required by Captain Belknap. Thomas advised Stanton he would leave for New Orleans as soon as he could "make the proper arrangements for the work during...[his] absence." <sup>44</sup>

Meanwhile, Colonel Stanton had determined to assign Captain Alexander to Captain Belknap's command. A letter to this effect was drafted and posted on January 4. It was the middle of the second week in February before the colonel's communication reached Fort Smith.

Writing to Stanton on the 11th, Alexander announced he had reported to Belknap. On doing so, Lieutenant Henry had turned over to him \$850, all that remained of the \$3,100 allotted in 1838 for survey of the military road connecting Forts Smith and Towson. If Captain Belknap were to resume work on the road in March as planned, additional money would be needed. Alexander requested Stanton forward him additional funds "as early as practicable." <sup>45</sup>

With the approach of spring, the officers and enlisted men began to fret about insects. Checking his records, Captain Otis Wheeler of Company H, 3d Infantry found he had neglected to order any mosquito bars for his unit, when he had sent in his annual clothing estimate for 1839-40. Wheeler forwarded a note to this

effect to the chief of the Clothing Bureau in Washington on February 18. The people there forwarded Wheeler's letter to Major Issac Clark at the New Orleans Quartermaster Depot, with a request that it be complied with. <sup>46</sup>

True to his word, Captain Belknap began work on the military road on March 1. Notifying Colonel Stanton of this on March 4, Alexander observed, in addition to his command, Belknap was assisted by a 30-man detachment of the 4th Infantry from Fort Gibson. Since "many of the articles required for the opening of the road" had to be purchased locally, Alexander urged Stanton to rush funds. Money would likewise be needed to pay the extra duty men. <sup>47</sup>

Steamboats, taking advantage of the winter rise, ascended the Arkansas as far as Fort Gibson. Catching the first boat bound down river, Major Thomas traveled to New Orleans. Quickly completing his business in the "Crescent City," the major was back at Fort Smith by mid-March. <sup>48</sup>

Meanwhile, all the units of the 4th Infantry, except a detachment which was bringing a keelboat up the Arkansas, had reached Fort Gibson on February 6. The next morning, the companies of the 7th Infantry which were stationed at department headquarters started for Tampa Bay, Florida. <sup>49</sup>

Colonel Arbuckle visited Fort Smith during the last week of February. While at the fort, the colonel discussed thoroughly with Captain Belknap the opening of the military road to Fort Towson. <sup>50</sup>

Upon his return to the project, Thomas was disappointed to learn that no orders had arrived from Washington directing Captain Belknap to detail men to work on the fort. Thomas, now that spring was at hand, was unable to delay any longer. He would have to start work without assistance from the army personnel at Cantonment Belknap, as the camp erected by the 3d Infantry at Fort Smith was called. (See Map titled — "Plan of the Cantonment at Fort Smith.")

After staking out the walls, Thomas put his crew to work. First, the men completed the foundation for the sawmill. Using lime forwarded to Fort Smith from Fort Gibson by Captain Davis, the masons began laying the foundations for Bastion No. 1 and part of the garrison wall. Another team was given the task of "grading for the foundation of the wall entirely around the Fort." Timbers to be used for the sawmill's frame were rafted down the Poteau. Taking the rafts out of the river, the carpenters began erecting the frame. 51

Thomas received a long awaited and welcomed letter from Colonel Stanton on April 18, advising him that the Treasurer of the United States was sending him \$20,000. Of this amount, one-half would be drawn on the account of the Quartermaster's Department; the remainder from the appropriation Congress had made for the construction of "Barracks, Quarters, &c on the Western Frontier." The funds were being transmitted to the major as drafts on the banks at Little Rock and St. Louis.

Thomas was disturbed to learn from Stanton that the economy minded Second Session of the 25th Congress had appropriated only \$80,000 for the construction of the frontier posts. Since this was far below the estimated cost, Thomas was thrust in a quandry. He wanted Stanton to let him know how the construction money was to be divided between Fort Smith and the new work on the Illinois.

Unless he were allowed to use military labor, Thomas warned, his expenses at Fort Smith for the year would be large. In view of Belknap's refusal to co-operate, the major had sought to increase his working force by hiring locally. Advertisements calling for workers were inserted in all Arkansas newspapers. No applicants had come forward, however. After talking with the inhabitants, Thomas became convinced that laborers would not "engage to work, unless at extravagant wages." Then, they would only do so on a short term basis. Moreover, they would leave whenever they were offered a few cents more per day or believed they were worked too hard.

The only way additional labor could be obtained, Thomas informed Stanton, was to recruit workers east of the Mississippi. Because of the heavy travel expense involved, he had hesitated doing so. But the situation was getting more critical, and he hoped Washington would come to his assistance. <sup>52</sup>

Major Thomas' repeated requests that soldiers be detailed to help with the work finally generated some action in the War Department. Colonel Stanton in early April brought the problem to the attention of Adjutant General Jones. After studying Thomas' correspondence and the returns filed by Captain Belknap, Jones contacted Stanton. According to the return submitted by Belknap for February, the Adjutant General noted, there were only 64 men present in the two companies of the 3d Infantry stationed at Cantonment Belknap. To bring his battalion up to strength, Belknap required 113 recruits. Jones was satisfied this shortage of manpower was the reason behind Belknap's failure to detail fatigue parties to work on the new post.

Eighty recruits were known to be at New York waiting to embark aboard a ship to carry them to New Orleans. These men were slated to join Belknap's command at Fort Smith. As soon as the newcomers reported, Colonel Jones felt certain Belknap would "apply a considerable portion of his force upon the new work as directed" by his memorandum of September 11, 1838. <sup>53</sup>

A letter also went out from the Adjutant General to Captain Belknap. The captain was notified that the Quartermaster's Department was upset by his failure to co-operate. To insure there would be no future misunderstandings on this point, Colonel Jones informed Belknap the work at Fort Smith had high priority and was of considerable interest to the Secretary of War. Jones was afraid that Belknap had misconstrued a portion of the Adjutant General's September 11 letter to Captain Bonneville. As soon as the recruits reached Cantonment Belknap, the Adjutant General expected Belknap to have "nearly all the old soldiers" report to Major Thomas. "Nor is it doubted," he continued that "you and your command will essentially assist the Quarter Master's Department in building up the fort." <sup>54</sup>



Four weeks passed before the Adjutant General's directive reached Fort Smith. Major Thomas in the meantime had written Colonel Stanton on May 5 that he was making every exertion to expedite the work. But, he complained, progress continued to be retarded by the labor shortage.

The party the major had sent up the Poteau with three ox teams in January to get out timber had felled hundreds of trees. The better grade timber was slated to be used in constructing the frame for the saw mill; the pine logs to supply the mill once it had been placed in operation.

By the end of March, the lumberjacks had cut and skidded about 800 logs to the river. After being lashed together, the logs were to be rafted down the Poteau to Fort Smith. This was easier said than done. There were the sand bars and other natural obstacles that had to be overcome. Finally, whenever there was a heavy rain on the watershed of the Poteau, it was followed by a rapid rise and equally rapid fall.

While waiting for the timbers, the masons were turned to laying the 30 by 80 foot foundation of the mill. The site selected by Major Thomas was on the bank of the Poteau, about 400 yards west of the fort. When the fort was finished, the sawmill could be protected by the troops posted in Bastions 2 and 3. Thomas was proud of the work done by his masons. Inspecting the foundation, he reported:

it is ten feet high, three thick, and is as solid a piece of masonry as could be required for the purpose, being built of large stone bolted to the ledge, which bolts pass through the wall and secure the sills of the wood work by nuts & screws. The work of the mill throughout will be strong and substantial, and equal to any erected in the U. States. I have spared no labour in having it well put together, as its utility depends upon the work being well & firmly erected.

The foundation had been completed by the time the timbers for the frame started arriving at the landing. Sufficient timbers had reached Fort Smith by May 5 to enable the carpenters to erect the frame. Rafts with upwards of 600 logs had been stranded on the

Poteau. Because of the rapid changes in the stage of the river, Thomas realized he would experience considerable difficulty in getting them down to the mill.

Upon staking out the fort, Thomas had kept a sharp watch to make certain he selected the "most suitable site." Consequently, Bastion (No. 2) protruded across the Choctaw line. Thomas, realizing that the Choctaws would undoubtedly protest this intrusion, relayed this information to Colonel Stanton.

Despite the labor shortage, Thomas kept his masons in the quarry. He was happy to advise Stanton in his May 5 letter that 600 feet of wall to a height of four feet had been laid. Work was progressing on two of the bastions. The walls of Bastion No. 1 were 6 feet off the ground, while those of Bastion No. 2 had risen to four feet. Moreover, a large amount of stone had been cut and was ready for use.

Because of the manpower shortage, Thomas was unable to detail more than six men to work the brickyard. During the winter, a large supply of wood had been cut, stacked, and "seasoned." Within the next several days, Thomas planned to have fires kindled and kiln about 100,000 bricks. Fifty thousand of these had been molded the previous year, but the brickmakers had been unable to burn them because of the lack of suitable wood.

Another team of workers had built a boom. As soon as the sawmill was in operation, the boom would be swung across the Poteau to trap the log rafts which the lumberjacks sent downstream. <sup>55</sup>

Thomas on the evening of May 6 received a packet from Colonel Stanton. Opening the dispatch, he found copies of the letters concerning the use by the project engineer of military working parties which Adjutant General Jones had drafted on April 11. Glancing at these, Thomas was elated to learn that he had apparently won his battle with Captain Belknap.

A messenger was sent to acquaint Belknap with the news that he was to supply men to work on the fort. When the man reached

Belknap's command post, he learned the captain had left the cantonment at daybreak. One of the soldiers remarked that Belknap had gone to supervise the opening of the military road.

After several days, Lieutenant Henry, who had accompanied Belknap, returned to the cantonment. When he questioned the lieutenant, Thomas was disappointed to learn the major didn't plan to return to Fort Smith before the end of May or early June. Even more frustrating, Belknap sent Thomas no information pertaining to his orders to assign men to help with the buildings of the fort. Writing to Colonel Stanton on May 13, Thomas fumed, "He [Belknap] has most of his command on the road -- The recruits have not arrived." 56

A large shipment of commissary stores which were landed at Fort Smith at this time all but wrecked Thomas' budget. The freight on the stores which had been sent from Cincinnati came to about \$4,500. Since receiving the draft for \$10,000 in April, Thomas had been compelled to disburse several sizeable amounts for transportation.

Looking ahead, Thomas knew that the money which the government held out of the pay of the men whom he had hired at Bangor, as well as the workers' wages for the first six months of 1839, would fall due in July. All told, Thomas calculated, he would need \$18,000 to satisfy these claims. Furthermore, Lorenzo Clark was expecting to collect \$6,375 for the corn sold the government. The bills for stores and materials purchased at St. Louis and New Orleans, including freight, amounted to about \$6,000.

In view of these heavy expenses, Thomas on May 20 wrote Colonel Stanton. He asked that at least \$30,000 be forwarded to meet expenditures, both those incurred and those anticipated. Thomas wanted most of these funds drawn on banks at New Orleans and St. Louis. Five thousand dollars should be deposited at Fayetteville or at one of the Eastern cities. This money would be used to pay the employees, who planned to return to their homes at the expiration of their contracts.

Thomas promised to confine his "expenditures as much as possible." But, he added, "these claims were unavoidable and must be met especially as my hired men will leave the country when their time expires." 57

The project engineer's letter reached Colonel Stanton's desk on June 17. The War Department decided to give Thomas one-half the requested sum. Ten thousand dollars were made available from the appropriation for "Barracks, Quarters & necessary defences on the Western Frontier;" the other \$5,000 came from funds allotted to the Quartermaster's Department. 58

Writing Colonel Stanton again on June 2, Thomas reported considerable progress in May. Enough work had been done to warrant the preparation of a sketch map. (See map titled, "Sketch of New Fort Smith, Ark.") The frame for the sawmill had been put up. At the moment, the mechanics were installing the steam engine, while the carpenters were roofing the mill. A kiln of bricks had been fired; 50,000 more had been "made and set." Thomas was impressed with the ability of the men assigned to the brickyard. Although the party was not as large as he had wished, yet, he bragged, "it is organized to work to advantage." He had recently increased the strength of the force assigned to the yard by assigning three masons to this work and hiring several laborers.

The rest of the masons were busy in the quarry and on the walls of the garrison. Construction of the walls, Thomas observed, was "proceeding gradually." He hoped work would be accelerated during June. Thomas blamed the apparent lack of progress on two factors: The broken ground and the large amount of masonry utilized in building Bastions No. 1 and 2. Of the three remaining bastions, the major estimated, one would require almost as much material as the two currently being erected.

Throughout May, a large party had been kept in the quarry. A large quantity of stone had been removed and was ready for use.

The efficiency of his labor force had greatly increased during May. As he advised Stanton, he was "able to work the men to better

advantage than at anytime since...[he] commenced." The "difficulties attendant on commencing a work" of this kind on the frontier were gradually being surmounted.

Several weeks had passed since the receipt of information that Belknap was to send fatigue parties to work on the fort, but none had been forthcoming. Belknap had returned to his cantonment on June 1. As yet, he had declined to communicate with Thomas on the subject which had strained relations between them. Since Belknap refused to broach the matter, Thomas planned to discuss it with him on the 3d. Filling Stanton in on the disposition of the troops, Thomas reported that the recruits said to be en route to join the 3d Infantry had not arrived, while most of Belknap's troops he understood were working on the military road.

A troublesome rumor plagued Major Thomas. It was common gossip in the area that Thomas would be superseded by Belknap. Investigating the story, Thomas traced it to Belknap's clerk. When he reported this to Colonel Stanton, Thomas complained:

Feeling conscious of not deserving such treatment at the hands of the Department after nearly a year of incessant labour preparing everything for efficient progress in the works -- of the difficulties of none but the person engaged can properly estimate I place no confidence in it, although from the singular course of conduct he has been pursuing for sometime, I have no doubt he has made, at least, an indirect application to that effect. If so, I am compelled to state that he has not dealt with me as becomes a high minded & honourable gentleman and soldier -- as I have ever since his arrival afforded him every assistance in tools, forage, material &c, as will be seen by my returns. 59

Thomas was unable to get any satisfaction from Belknap in the June 3 interview. In hopes of eventually securing a fatigue party from the army, Thomas continued to work his people without hiring any additional laborers. As the days passed, his feeling of frustration deepened. Belknap resolutely refused to send any men. Finally, on June 8, the harassed major determined to report Belknap to Colonel Arbuckle. The colonel was informed of Adjutant General Jones' letter

of April 11, directing Belknap to furnish the project engineer "all the old Soldiers of his command to labour on the works at this place, as soon as the Eighty recruits... should arrive at this post." Although the recruits had not reached Fort Smith, they were momentarily expected. Even more disheartening, Belknap was said to have written Washington, "applying in an underhand and indirect," manner for Thomas' position. Thomas accordingly had no alternative but to ask Arbuckle to order Belknap "to obey the order of the Adjutant General." <sup>60</sup>

After waiting nine days and receiving no reply from Colonel Arbuckle, Thomas wrote the colonel a second letter on June 17. He again called Arbuckle's attention to Belknap's failure to carry out Adjutant General Jones' instructions.

To make it even more embarrassing, the recruits had finally reached Fort Smith. Instead of detailing Thomas any of his "old soldiers," Belknap had put 40 of the newcomers to work on the road leading from his cantonment to the river, a distance of one mile. It had been Thomas' understanding that this road had been completed. But he presumed Belknap had given the recruits this task, so as to evade the Adjutant General's orders. Thomas inquired, "I respectfully request to know whether I am to be furnished with any men from his [Belknap's] command, or not, and whether you will direct him to comply with the orders of the Adgt. Genl." <sup>61</sup>

Arbuckle's reply was in Thomas' hands on June 21. The colonel's communication was not as satisfactory as the major had wished. Arbuckle had presumed Belknap, on his return to Fort Smith, would comply with the War Department's directive. But, he added, he felt Belknap's soldiers were entitled to a brief rest to recuperate from their arduous duty on the military road. If, in the future, Belknap declined to honor Thomas' call for fatigue parties, the project engineer was to immediately notify Arbuckle. <sup>62</sup>

Because of his inability to pry any troops out of Captain Belknap, Thomas had been compelled to negotiate with private contractors Aaron

Brown and Joshua Smith signed an agreement with the major to raft the pine logs felled by the timber party down the Poteau to the sawmill. With the approach of the hot, dry summer, Thomas was fearful that if he waited much longer the river would be too shallow for rafting.

Relaying this information to Colonel Stanton on June 17, Thomas reported that Belknap remained steadfast in his refusal to give him any men. Belknap argued that he needed all his soldiers for work on the military road. During a heated argument, Belknap had admitted he had asked to have Thomas replaced. <sup>63</sup>

With the construction season going full blast, Thomas didn't have any men to spare for putting up hay. He called for bids. Six men submitted proposals to the major on the stipulated day, June 29. Two days later, Thomas awarded the contract for supplying hay to the post to A. J. Raines. The low bid was \$12.95 per ton. <sup>64</sup>

\* \* \*

Trouble from another but not unexpected source descended on Major Thomas. The Choctaws were shocked to learn the government was to build a garrison at Fort Smith. In May, Colonel John McKenney, the chief of the Mushulatubbee District, which bounded the fort on the west received a message from Mr. Wall. Wall, a member of the Choctaw Nation, claimed title to Belle Point. According to Wall, Major Thomas had repeatedly refused to reimburse him or the Nation for timber and stone taken from his land for construction of the fort. Moreover, McKenney had been informed that the major paid no heed to the opinion handed down by Attorney General Felix Grundy. Mr. Grundy had ruled that if the United States erected a fort outside Indian country, they did not have the right to "take timber, rock &c., as materials" from the Indians' land without making fair compensation. The Attorney General had directed the Quartermaster's Department to bargain with the Choctaws as it would with "citizens of the United States," under similar circumstances.

McKenney forwarded this information to Choctaw Agent Captain William Armstrong on May 27. When he did, he expressed his fears that it would lead to worse if persisted in. It should be apparent to all, McKenney observed that Thomas was "presuming a right not given him by the Treaty." Such unauthorized encroachment would not be "tamely" submitted to. McKenney hoped Agent Armstrong would intervene to settle the difficulties between Major Thomas and the Choctaws. Armstrong was reminded that the Choctaw General Council had notified Thomas in October 1838 that it disapproved of his trespassing on the rights of the Nation and Mr. Wall. Thomas had ignored this memorial. 65

When he investigated the situation, Armstrong found it had aroused the strongest feeling among the Choctaws of the Mushulatubbee District. Indeed, Armstrong had never known "any thing to create such excitement with the Choctaws, as the occupancy of the ground adjoining Fort Smith." Some of the hotheads wanted to take their weapons and defend Belle Point. Hastening to the point of danger, Agent Armstrong calmed the Indians for the moment.

Fearful that the agitators might again make trouble, Armstrong went to Fort Smith to talk with Major Thomas. He suggested to Thomas that they write a joint-letter to the War Department, urging the government to purchase the disputed land. Armstrong thought it would be a wise if the government also bought land on the west side of the Poteau. Altogether the agent advocated that the War Department add 600 to 800 acres to the military reservation. Besides being heavily timbered, the land in question included the quarry from which Thomas obtained stone for the fort. Before agreeing to write the War Department a joint-letter on the matter, Thomas showed Armstrong, Attorney General Grundy's letter of December 11. It was the Attorney General's opinion that the government had a right to obtain lumber and stone for the garrison on the Choctaw cession. The question of occupying Indian land, however, had not been submitted. Inspecting the area, Armstrong was shocked to see that Bastion No. 2 extended about 40 feet across the Choctaw line.



Armstrong returned to the agency and showed the letter from the Attorney General to the Choctaw Council. He assured them justice would be done. Under no circumstances, Armstrong admonished, should they "attempt to use force, whatever violation of their rights they might think was committed." Even so, the situation was so delicate, Armstrong notified Thomas that until relations had improved, it would be unwise to send timber cutting parties into the Choctaw Nation.

Not hearing anything further from Major Thomas, Armstrong relayed this information on June 11 to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Hartley Crawford. <sup>66</sup>

Unknown to Armstrong, Major Thomas had called the Quartermaster General's attention to his dispute with the Choctaws in a letter written May 17. Secretary of War Poinsett had referred Thomas' communication to Commissioner Crawford. According to Thomas, Armstrong, at their Fort Smith meeting, had claimed that the government when it established the new post "within the State of Arkansas...had no right to either the land, stone or timber in the Choctaw nation." Upon studying the matter, Crawford disagreed with Attorney General Grundy's opinion. He was satisfied the United States had the "right to appropriate to military purposes any lands within the Indian Territory, whether the Fort to which such lands may be appurtenant is within the said territory or not." Crawford argued that the fee simple guaranteed to the Choctaws by the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek in the area west of the Mississippi, "to inure to them while they shall exist as a nation and live on it," was not inconsistent with the exercise of this right by the War Department. It was an inherent right provided for in all "civilized governments."

Moreover, Crawford felt that Article 11 of the treaty, independent of what had been said regarding inherent powers, covered the case in question. This article provided that the United States may establish in the Choctaw Nation "such Military post roads, and posts, as they may consider necessary."

Armstrong was told to alter his position on this question to the one outlined by his superior. The land in dispute, Crawford observed, was viewed as of vital importance to the post by the army officers. It was the commissioner's opinion that the army had the right to use Belle Point, "as not only improving, but indispensable to, the efficiency of the said work." 67

The receipt of Armstrong's letter of June 11, reporting that Bastion No. 2 intruded into Indian Territory sent the Washington bureaucrats scrambling for their books. Attorney General Grundy had given his opinion of December 11 on the supposition that the entire fort was in Arkansas. Now that it was learned the post extended across the Choctaw line, Commissioner Crawford feared he might change his opinion. In view of the "considerable excitement prevailing among the Choctaw" in regard to the encroachments, Crawford advised that it would be injudicious "to disturb the decision already made." In reimbursing the Choctaws for the stone and timber, it would be a good idea for the government to be liberal. Such a course, Crawford reasoned, might prevent any complaint by the Indians, because of the fort obtruding on to their land. On the other hand, the government could always insist that the right to erect posts in the Choctaw Nation had been secured by treaty. Crawford forwarded his thoughts on this ticklish question, along with the Armstrong and McKenney correspondence, to Secretary Poinsett on July 10. 68

Poinsett agreed with Crawford that the best policy would be one of moderation. The Secretary believed that in its conduct of business on the western frontier and in the Indian Territory, the War Department must take "great care" not to "infringe on the rights of the Red men." At the same time, it should exercise those belonging to the United States in such a manner as to avoid all appearances of injustice. It was impossible, Poinsett ruled, for the government to waive its right to the occupation of the soil for military purposes. Besides being an inherent power, this right had been given the government by the treaty

of Dancing Rabbit. Poinsett at the same time didn't deem it adviseable to exercise this right to avoid paying for the building materials taken from the Choctaw lands and used in the construction of Fort Smith. He accordingly directed the Quartermaster's Department to pay McKenney a reasonable price for the stone and wood removed from Belle Point. <sup>69</sup>

## FORT SMITH 1838-1871

### Chapter II

#### Major Thomas' First Year at Fort Smith

##### Notes

1 Charles Thomas of Pennsylvania had entered the army as a 3d lieutenant in the Ordnance Department on August 13, 1819. Thomas was made a 2d lieutenant and transferred to the 4th Artillery 22 months later. Within three months, the young lieutenant was reassigned to the 3d Artillery. On October 16, 1822, Thomas was billeted to the 7th Infantry. In April 1833 he became a captain. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 953.

2 Thomas to Cross, April 20, 1838; Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, 1838 to Oct. 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

3 Cross to Thomas, May 24, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).

4 Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, 1838 to Oct. 1840. (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

5 Cross to Thomas, May 30, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).

6 Cross to Thomas, June 3, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).

7 Cross to Davis, June 20, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent). John P. Davis of Maine had graduated from West Point as No. 37 in the class of 1829. Commissioned a 2d lieutenant, Davis was assigned to the 7th Infantry. Davis, now a 1st lieutenant, had been made post quartermaster at Fort Gibson on March 10, 1836. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 359.

8 Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, 1838, to October 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

9 Ibid.

10 Thomas to Cross, Aug. 3, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). William Hammond of Maryland had joined the army as an assistant surgeon on June 11, 1834. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 496.

11 Cross had been promoted to Colonel on July 7. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 341.

12 Arbuckle to Bonneville, July 19, 1838 (National Archives, Order Book, Second Dept. Western Division). Benjamin L. E. Bonneville, who had been born in France, had entered the U. S. Military Academy from New York. Upon graduating in the Class of 1815, Bonneville had received a commission as brevet 2d lieutenant in the Light Artillery. In March 1819, he was transferred to the 8th Infantry. When the 8th Infantry was disbanded on June 1, 1821, Bonneville, now a 1st lieutenant, had been assigned to the 7th Infantry. Bonneville had been made a captain on October 4, 1825. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 230.

13 Arbuckle to Adjutant General, July 24, 1838 (National Archives, Order Book, Second Dept. Western Division). William G. Belknap of New York had joined the 23d Infantry as a 3d lieutenant on April 5, 1813. The end of the War of 1812 found Belknap a 1st lieutenant in the 2d Infantry. Belknap was transferred to the 3d Infantry on June 1, 1822, and eight months later advanced to the rank of captain. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 207.

14 Thomas to Cross, Aug. 2, 1838; Thomas to Stanton, Feb. 2, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). The soldiers were to strip Fort Coffee of all doors, window sash and plank, and remove them down the river to Fort Smith. There was nothing left of the post when it reverted to the Choctaws but the walls of a few buildings. Subsequently, the Choctaws converted these buildings into an Indian school named Fort Coffee Academy. Foreman, Advancing the Frontier, 55.

- 15 Jones to Bonneville, Sept. 11, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 16 Thomas to Cross, Aug. 6, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 17 Thomas to Cross, Aug. 23, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 18 Ibid. Davis had been advanced to the rank of captain on July 7, 1838. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 359.
- 19 Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, 1838 to October 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 20 Thomas to Cross, Sept. 14 and 20, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Thomas advanced the owners of the Dayton \$900 as partial payment for the charter of their boat. On September 10, the major forwarded to the Quartermaster's Department a report "of Persons and articles hired and employed...for the purpose of erecting a Fort near the site of old Fort Smith Arkansas for the Months of June July and August 1838." Thomas to Cross, Sept. 10, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Edmund Alexander of Kentucky had graduated No. 33 in the Class of 1823 from the U. S. Military Academy. He was posted to the 3d Infantry as a 2d lieutenant. On July 7, 1838, Alexander had been promoted captain and assigned to the Quartermaster's Department. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 156. To pick a site for the fort on the Illinois River, Thomas and Stuart left Old Fort Smith on September 25. A point which the two officers believed was favorable was found just west of the Arkansas line near the Illinois River. Shortly after his return from the Illinois, Stuart on October 19 pulled his troops (Company C, 7th Infantry) out of Fort Coffee. Ground was broken at Camp Illinois on October 29. The location proved unhealthy and a number of officers and men, including Captain Stuart, died. Foreman, Advancing the Frontier, 55, 77; Army and Navy Chronicle, VIII, 284.

- 21 Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, 1838 to Oct. 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 22 Hammond to Lawson, Oct. 2, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 23 Poinsett to Cross, Nov. 5, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 24 Britton to Thomas, Oct. 10, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Forbes Britton of Virginia had graduated from West Point with the Class of 1834. Assigned to the 7th Infantry, Britton had been promoted to 1st lieutenant on July 7, 1838. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 246.
- 25 Thomas to Britton, Oct. 11, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Colonel Cutler commanded the 4th Infantry. The 4th Infantry was assisting with the removal of the eastern Cherokees to their new homes west of the Mississippi.
- 26 Britton to Bonneville, Oct. 11, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 27 Bonneville to Britton, Oct. 11, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 28 Britton to Cross, Oct. 11, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 29 Thomas to Britton, Oct. 11, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 30 Thomas to Jones, Nov. 8, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). The keelboat to transport the steam engine from Pittsburgh to Fort Smith had been chartered from Ormsby, Hite & Co. of Louisville for \$435. Thomas to Stanton, Jan. 1, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 31 Thomas to Jones and Thomas to Stanton, Dec. 28, 1838 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). McClung, Wade & Co. received \$1,438,40 for the steam engine and sawmill machinery, while T. J. Clarke & Co. was paid \$2,312,50 for the use of the Dayton.

- 32 Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, 1838 to Oct. 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 33 Thomas to Stanton, Jan. 11, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). With the departure of Company F, a new officer, Lieutenant William S. Henry replaced the troublesome Britton as post quartermaster.
- 34 Belknap to Adjutant General, Nov. 4, 1838 (National Archives, Order Book, Second Dept. Western Division).
- 35 Thomas to Stanton, Jan. 11, 1839 (National Archives, Order Book, Second Dept. Western Division). As his first official act, Lieutenant Henry forwarded an estimate of the funds necessary to operate his department during the first half of 1839 to Washington. Out of this sum, Henry noted, he would have to pay for 1,500 bushels of corn. Henry to Stanton, Jan. 8, 1839 and Belknap to Jones, Jan. 9, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). The Seminole War had broken out three years before.
- 36 Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, 1838 to Oct. 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Henry Stanton of Vermont had joined the army on June 29, 1813, as a 3d Lieutenant in the light artillery. Advanced to the rank of captain on July 12, 1813, Stanton became an assistant deputy quartermaster general. He resigned from the army on December 1, 1817. Two and one-half months later, Stanton re-entered service as deputy quartermaster general. In May 1820, Stanton became a major in the Quartermaster's Department, and on July 7, 1838, he was promoted to colonel. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 916.
- 39 Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, 1838 to Oct. 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 40 Thomas to Stanton, Feb. 2, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). According to Thomas, the storehouse needed new doors and fastenings, and repairs to the roof, floor, and stonework.



- 41 Thomas to Stanton, Feb. 4, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 42 Thomas to Stanton, Feb. 5, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Sanderson had been detached from Company F prior to its departure for Tampa Bay and assigned as post quartermaster at Camp Illinois. Subsequently, Camp Illinois became Fort Wayne. Henry, a graduate of the U. S. Military Academy in the Class of 1835, had been commissioned a brevet 2d lieutenant and posted to the 3d Infantry. Henry had been made a 2d lieutenant on June 15, 1836, and was advanced to 1st lieutenant on July 7, 1838. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 524.
- 43 Thomas to Stanton, Feb. 5, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 44 Thomas to Stanton, Feb. 6, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 45 Alexander to Stanton, Feb. 11, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). When ordered to report to Belknap, Alexander had \$724 in quartermaster funds left in his old account.
- 46 Wheeler to Chief, Clothing Bureau, Feb. 18, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Clark had been promoted to major on July 7, 1838. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 304.
- 47 Alexander to Stanton, March 4, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 48 Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, 1838 to Oct. 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 49 Arbuckle to Adjutant General, Feb. 6, 1839 (National Archives, Order Book, Second Dept. Western Division).
- 50 Arbuckle to Adjutant General, Feb. 24, 1839 (National Archives, Order Book, Second Dept. Western Division).
- 51 Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, 1838 to Oct. 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 52 Thomas to Stanton, Apr. 18, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). On March 3 an appropriation of \$52,125.67 was passed by Congress and earmarked for the better protection of the Western Frontier. This was the balance which was left from the appropriation of \$100,000 made on July 2, 1836, and carried to the surplus funds. On the same day, the 25th Congress made an additional \$80,000 available for "the Barracks, Quarters & necessary defences on the Western Frontier."
- 53 Adjutant General to Stanton, Apr. 11, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 54 Adjutant General to Belknap, Apr. 11, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 55 Thomas to Stanton, May 5, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 56 Thomas to Stanton, May 13, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 57 Thomas to Stanton, May 20, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Thomas asked that \$20,000 be allotted from the funds appropriated by Congress for the construction of "Barracks, Quarters...on the Western Frontier."
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Thomas to Stanton, June 2, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 60 Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, 1838 to Oct. 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 Thomas to Stanton, June 17, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 64 Abstract of Proposals, June 29, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). The other bidders and their bids per ton were: W. H. Bailey, \$16; Brown and Walker, \$13.50; Matthew Moore,

\$16; Israel Morris, \$14.75; J. Millspaugh, \$14.50.

65 McKenney to Armstrong, May 27, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.); Ltr. Henry J. Dubester to Eearss, Nov. 19, 1962 (Files, Vicksburg National Military Park). Dubester is chief of the General Reference and Bibliography Division of the Library of Congress.

66 Armstrong to Crawford, June 11, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

67 Crawford to Armstrong, June 14, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Crawford forwarded a copy of his letter to Captain Armstrong to Colonel Stanton.

68 Crawford to Poinsett, July 10, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

69 Ibid.

## FORT SMITH 1838-1871

### Chapter III

#### Major Thomas Clashes with John Rogers

The contracts which Major Thomas had signed with the mechanics and laborers, whom he had recruited at Bangor, expired on July 1. Most of these men were not interested in remaining on the frontier. Those who did, demanded and received contracts calling for more money. After claiming their pay, the mechanics, who planned to return to their homes in New England, took passage on the first steamboat bound down the Arkansas. Thomas was left with a greatly reduced construction force.

Thomas was sorry to see these men go. For the past year, he had had "a corps of good mechanics and labourers, at lower wages than" replacements could be secured. Yet, he mused, he had been unable to employ many of them at the trades for which they were skilled, because of the acute shortage of building materials. When he had contracted with the mechanics, Thomas had anticipated the Quartermaster General would be able to make good on his promise to have the post commandant supply at least "one company of troops." Thomas accordingly had hired more artisans than was justified by subsequent circumstances. If he had just known that the "important aid in the way of labour from the troops" was to remain a dead letter, Thomas could have recruited additional unskilled workers prior to leaving the Atlantic Seaboard. These men, who would have been willing to work at from \$15 to \$16 per month, could have been used in the quarry, in the brickyard, and to help the masons.

It would have been unjust and bad policy, Thomas reasoned, to have hired workers locally, especially when he would have to pay them wages nearly twice those paid to the laborers who had come west

with him. Not only would the contract employees have become "discontented & nearly useless," but the mechanics would have been dissatisfied to find themselves working alongside unskilled men, who were making nearly the same wage. All this would have been avoided, if Bonneville and Belknap had co-operated. The wages to be paid to the workers who replaced the men who had returned to their homes would have to be kept within reason.

Thomas' difficulties with Captain Belknap continued. The major was satisfied that he would have been better off, if no troops were stationed in the area. Belknap's command, he reported, had squatted on Section 16. Since their arrival at Fort Smith, Belknap's soldiers had felled for their cantonment most of the good timber on the section. This, at a considerable expense to the government, compelled Thomas to go far afield for his timber.

Discontented "speculators & peculators," whose efforts to turn a fast profit had been frustrated, rallied about Belknap. Hardly a week passed without the revival of the report that Thomas was to be replaced by either Belknap or some other officer. These stories had serious repercussions on the morale of Thomas' people. Not knowing what to believe, they became discouraged. If these tales were true, they said, the War Department must have lost confidence in the project supervisor. <sup>1</sup>

At the end of the second week in July, Thomas received an important letter from Colonel Stanton. Thomas, on reading the dispatch, learned that he was scheduled to be relieved in the near future by Captain Samuel McRee. <sup>2</sup> After being replaced by McRee, Thomas was to be assigned to duty at St. Louis. Acknowledging Stanton's communication on the 15th, Thomas announced that as soon as he received the necessary funds, he would pay off all outstanding claims. This he hoped to do by the time McRee reached Fort Smith, so there would be no delay in starting for his new post.

Thomas welcomed news of the change. As he informed Stanton, he was "not satisfied" with the progress of the work. Without doubt, the major admitted, he had "committed in some instances errors, or rather failed," in what he thought at the time were reasonable estimates. Taking deliberate aim at Captains Belknap and Bonneville, Thomas continued, "yet I feel satisfied upon a careful review of the past, that if I had Received the assistance which I had calculated upon from the commanding officers near this post, and which I had a right to expect, instead of being thwarted by them, as frequently stated, a very different result would have been effected."

The only one who could understand the difficulties of erecting a post on the frontier was the superintendent. Speculators and profiteers besieged him on all sides. These individuals asked extravagant prices for their goods and services. The superintendent must either submit to extortion or delay. Thomas had preferred the latter. For example, the customary price for wood suitable for burning bricks and firing a steam engine was \$2 to \$2.50 a cord for cottonwood, and \$2.50 to \$3 for ash. When Thomas had advertised for bids, he received no proposal under \$5. To complicate matters, Belknap's soldiers had cut all the useable timber on Section 16 and the land purchased from Rogers.

There was plenty of timber across the Poteau in the Choctaw Nation, but in view of his difficulties with Armstrong and McKenney, Thomas hesitated to send out the men whom he had hired to fell it. Moreover, it would be unwise to hire men locally for this task, because it was feared these people "would rather seek than avoid collision with the Choctaws." Seeing that Thomas would not give into their demands, the persons who had wood for sale eventually cut prices. An agreement was signed with Dennis Framel to furnish firewood for the brick kiln and the steam engine for \$3 to \$3.50 per cord, a figure which Thomas considered fair. In the future,

if and when soldiers became available, the major was satisfied it would be less expensive if they were sent into the Indian Territory to gather wood.

In closing his letter to Stanton, Thomas reiterated his position that if the post were to be completed at a reasonable cost and length of time, the superintendent "must have the aid, and all the aid of the Military Commandant." Such a course of action, besides expediting the work, would keep wages within reason. <sup>3</sup>

To close out his accounts preparatory to being relieved, Thomas needed cash. At the moment, he held drafts totalling \$40,000 on banks at Natchez, New Orleans, and Ouachita. He determined to make a flying trip to New Orleans to pick up specie. While the major was absent, Captain Alexander would be project superintendent.

Before catching a steamer, Thomas decided to make one more attempt to get a detail from Captain Belknap. On July 31, he notified Belknap that Colonel Arbuckle had indicated that as soon as the soldiers had recruited their strength, a detachment was to be assigned to work on the fort. If this request were complied with, the troops were to report to Captain Alexander.

Belknap wasted no time in rejecting Thomas' application. After reviewing the correspondence bearing on Thomas' request for assistance and discussing the subject with the post surgeon, Belknap replied, because of "recent orders & the present state of my command, I do not feel authorized to furnish you" with any troops. <sup>4</sup>

Not knowing the nature of the "recent orders" of which Belknap wrote, and thoroughly disgusted with his conduct, Thomas resolved not to pursue the subject any further. <sup>5</sup>

The next day, August 1, Thomas boarded a steamboat. Stopping briefly at Natchez, Thomas presented a draft drawn for \$15,000 on the Planter's Bank to the cashier. He refused to honor the draft, but said he might be able to do so when the major returned from New Orleans. At the "Crescent City," Thomas cashed the draft for

\$15,000 which he held on the Citizens' Bank. Major Clark of the New Orleans Quartermaster's Depot talked the treasurer into accepting the draft for \$10,000 which Thomas held on the Receiver for Public Money at Quachita. In case the Planters Bank still refused to cash the draft, Clark transferred \$5,000 from the account of his office to Thomas. The major hoped this would give him sufficient funds to close out his books before turning them over to Captain McRee.

Returning to Natchez on August 16, Thomas hastened to the Planters Bank. The cashier said he was sorry but he could not help the major. Thomas accordingly returned the draft to the Treasury, with a request that it be altered and made payable on either a New Orleans or St. Louis bank. From Natchez on the 17th, Thomas took passage on a steamer bound for Fort Gibson. <sup>6</sup>

Colonel Arbuckle had visited Fort Smith at the end of July. The colonel was distressed by what he saw. When he returned to Fort Gibson on August 3, he wrote Adjutant General Jones. Arbuckle reported that the work on the post "progresses very slowly in consequence of the want of hands, and there is no possibility of it being completed for many years, unless an appropriation can be obtained of sufficient amount to authorize the hiring of two hundred mechanics and laborers." The colonel agreed with Thomas that a construction crew of the size needed couldn't be relied on "to perform faithful service."

Arbuckle believed that hereafter, the commanding officers at the posts which were being constructed on the frontier should have general superintendence of the work. This was a slap at Major Thomas. To augment the hired labor force, the officer in charge could detail soldiers. Officers assigned to this duty, "should receive a suitable compensation for their services." If the War Department adopted the measures urged by Arbuckle, he believed the Adjutant General should order two additional companies to Fort Smith.

When Arbuckle's letter reached Adjutant General Jones, he referred it to Secretary of War Poinsett. The Secretary failed to take any action, and Arbuckle's letter was pigeonholed. <sup>7</sup>



Thomas disembarked at Fort Smith on September 5. Following his return, the major began to increase the size of his working force. Both artisans and unskilled laborers were hired locally by the major. Thomas on September 20 was shocked when a non-commissioned officer reported to him with a 20-man fatigue detail. The man in charge announced that they had been sent by Captain Belknap. Thomas wasted no time in putting the men to work. After a protracted struggle, Thomas had finally succeeded in wearing Belknap down. The soldiers were found to be of "much service." Within a few days, however, Belknap began to drag his feet. The detail assigned to assist the superintendent dwindled to ten or twelve, and these only worked for part of the day. <sup>8</sup>

At the end of the month, Thomas, in accordance with regulations, placed his books in order. Thomas on examining his records found he had paid out over \$16,000 for food and services in the third quarter of 1839. After closing out his accounts of receipts and expenditures for this period, the major forwarded them along with the vouchers, to the Quartermaster General. (See Appendix A.) <sup>9</sup>

Although Thomas didn't know it, the Quartermaster General had decided not to replace him with Captain McRee. Considerable time elapsed before Thomas was notified of this decision. Since he thought he would be replaced at any moment, Thomas waited until November 30 before filing his next report. When he did, the major complained of continued hardships. According to Thomas:

The difficulties in the way of making a rapid progress without assistance from the Troops, or an immense expenditure of money have been so often reported, that I am loth to repeat it -- especially as I have neither been instructed to have, or has a sufficient force been furnished from the troops. Most of the mechanics whom I brought on with me, left at the expiration of their term of service on the 1st July, and I have been unable to supply their place at a time I could have employed them, especially masons.

The masons, who had agreed to remain at Fort Smith another year, had been kept busy on the "foundations of the wall & block houses and necessary work about the mill."

After many months, the sawmill was finally in operation, with band saw. At the time the first timbers were sawed into lumber, the mill was "but a skeleton." The first planks produced were used to complete the mill. Operations at the mill had come to a practical standstill in November, because of the sickness of the engineer and sawyer. Timber for the mill was also short. The contractors, who had agreed to raft pine logs down the Poteau, had failed to live up to their agreement.

For a trifling expense, Thomas wrote, a second band saw and a circular blade could be installed. With the addition of a circular saw, timber could be cut in all sizes "for sashes, doors, window blinds & casings, lathing &c, at a great saving of time & expense." Thomas became so carried away with his sawmill that he seemed to forget about the problems which had heretofore plagued him. More attention in the future would have to be paid to rafting logs down the Poteau.

Upon the departure of the skilled artisans, Thomas had been left with only one brickmaker. Fortunately, a number of the unskilled laborers had picked up a passable knowledge of the trade. During the five months since June, these men had moulded and fired 250,000 bricks.

Because of its broken nature, considerable work had to be done to the ground before foundations for the walls could be laid. An acute shortage of laborers made this project "very tedious." By the end of November, "except a small space on the front, occupied by some buildings," the foundation for the entire wall had been set. According to the lay of the ground, the foundations which were three feet thick varied in depth from two and one-half to five feet. The foundation of four of the five bastions had been alaid and raised up to a level with the walls. Thomas estimated, "the work done on the foundations, including the elevation and embankment," is equal to that required to complete the remainder of the garrison's wall.

Captain Davis at Fort Gibson had fallen down on his job of keeping Major Thomas supplied with lime. When Thomas complained, Davis said he had no barrels. A supplemental source had been found, but the lime had to be hauled 30 miles in wagons across rugged country. Since it was transported in bulk, the lime was not always in good condition when it reached Fort Smith.

If he just had them, Thomas complained, he had work enough to keep 25 to 30 stonemasons employed. As he informed Colonel Stanton, "The stone quarry is well opened, and will afford an abundant supply of Stone. The difficulties of preparing for the erection of so extensive a work are overcome, and there is nothing to prevent a steady and rapid progress & final completion in a short period compared to that already spent. Materials, Tools, Carts, Teams &c &c being ready on the ground." 10

Thomas on December 10 once again called on Captain Belknap for a larger detail of soldiers. Belknap refused to increase the small party which was helping the superintendent on a part time basis. Protesting to Colonel Stanton, Thomas reported, the few soldiers assigned to work on the fort were mostly prisoners and individuals whom Belknap could not "employ at his cantonment." Once again Thomas charged:

Major Belknap had been here upwards of a year, and in lieu of furnishing important aid in erecting the permanent work, he has been (with the exception of the short period part of his men were cutting the road to Towson) building an open & defenceless cantonment near this place. If the troops had been employed, as they might have been without interfering with the comfort of his command in the least, the defences of the Fort could have been nearly, if not quite finished and the men in comfortable barracks within it.

Though the few men supplied by Belknap were apparently the least efficient soldiers, Thomas admitted they had been of "much service." But, he added, many more were required. Colonel Arbuckle had indicated to Thomas that he was in full agreement with him. It

may have been that Arbuckle was only giving lip service to the Quartermaster, because, although requested, he refused to give Belknap a direct order to do so. 11

Before the year ended, Thomas succeeded in recruiting a number of stonemasons. Although this helped alleviate a critical bottleneck, the major when he filed his monthly report on January 12 noted, "I have not half the number I could work to advantage." With the help of the additional masons' work on the walls and foundations was accelerated. Foundations for the fifth and last blockhouse were laid and brought to the same level as the others. About 380 feet of wall, four feet in height, had been completed. Before raising it any higher, Thomas proposed to extend the wall around the entire garrison. In case of difficulties with the Indians, the wall would provide a "good breastwork."

At the moment, four stonecutters were busy dressing stone for the gate posts. The cutters reported that the stone was hard, but worked and looked "well".

During December, the sawmill had been turning cottonwood and oak logs into lumber of "different dimensions." Before being used, the lumber was stacked for seasoning. To cut expenses, Thomas fired the "assistant engineer and sawyer." A new man had been employed at half the wages commanded by his predecessor.

Several men were kept busy getting out and hauling the cottonwoods and oaks to the mill. In the near future, Thomas planned to have these men start felling ash, which was not so convenient to the fort.

There had been a marked rise in the Poteau. For several months, the stage of the Poteau had been sufficient for rafting. Browne and Smith, with whom Thomas had contracted to get out the pine logs cut by his lumberjacks the previous winter, refused to take advantage of the high water. Thomas warned their attorney

that he might be compelled to declare the contract in default and force them to forfeit their performance bonds. The men ignored the major's threat. To assume the task which the contractors had failed to carry out, Thomas recommended the use of from 15 to 100 soldiers under an efficient officer. He believed that the cost of hiring men for this type of work locally would be prohibitive.

Once again, Thomas complained to his superiors about the practice of permitting Captain Belknap's command to fell timber on the public land near the fort. Besides being scarce much of the timber was being wasted. If unchecked, it would compel the United States to purchase timber from the citizens. Thomas was convinced that this promiscuous cutting of trees by Belknap's troops was unnecessary, because the rough timber needed for temporary barracks could be secured at the sawmill.

Belknap remained steadfast in his refusal to furnish Thomas more than 10 to 15 soldiers per day. The most the superintendent could work these men was seven hours. As he complained to General Jesup, on many days it was less or not at all. "This irregularity," Thomas commented, was a source of confusion and delay. He found that the soldiers were willing to work on the garrison. If they were given the opportunity to volunteer, Thomas had no doubt but he could have obtained the services of most of the troops at Cantonment Belknap.

Thomas was forced to acknowledge the failure of a scheme he had worked out for subsisting his construction people. On July 1, he had hired cooks to prepare the men's meals. There had been many complaints. Consequently, Thomas on New Year's Day changed the system. He bargained with a resident of Fort Smith to board the men for 30 cents a day. The contractor was to furnish everything used to feed the men, except the mess hall. In addition, he was permitted to purchase his supplies from the commissary storehouse. Thomas estimated that this system would cost the government about

the same as the one previously employed, but would be "much less trouble to the officer in charge and more satisfactory to the workmen." 12

To cut his expenses still further during the slack winter months, Thomas on December 31 discharged the surgeon, whom he had hired to look after his crews' health. The workmen agreed to pay the physician out of their wages. The master brickmaker was laid off. In the future, Thomas planned to use "a few good workmen" and soldiers, or to contract for the manufacture of bricks. Of these two possibilities, the major preferred the first. 13

Soon after the first of the year, Thomas was confronted by an unexpected problem. A detachment of Dragoons landed at Fort Smith, preparatory to marching for Fort Wayne. Calling on Thomas, the officer in charge announced that his men had no tents and very little other camp equipage. Since he had none of the requisitioned items in the quartermaster's depot, Thomas had to reject the request. The Dragoons had to march to their new station without many necessary pieces of gear.

Notifying General Jesup of what had transpired, Thomas felt it probable that in the future he would encounter similar demands. He accordingly suggested that it might be good policy for the Fort Smith quartermaster's depot to be stocked with camp equipage. 14

As the days passed and the details sent by Belknap shrank, Thomas resolved to carry the matter to Colonel Arbuckle. Thomas, writing to the colonel on January 20, reported it again became his painful duty to apply for "a further detail from the troop stationed near this post to assist in erecting the work...agreeably to the reiterated orders issued by the Adjutant General of the Army."

According to the superintendent, the groundwork had been laid and everything was "in readiness for active and energetic operations." In view of the present disturbed state of affairs on the frontier, Thomas argued, the early completion of Fort Smith should be given a high priority. (The murder of Elias Boudinot, and John Ridge and his son by one of the Cherokee factions threatened civil war. )

Thomas sarcastically observed that Belknap's battalion of the 3d Infantry, during the 15 months which had elapsed since its arrival at Fort Smith, should have had time to build satisfactory billets.

Instead of the "ten men" which Belknap was in the habit of sending, Thomas wrote, he "could employ a hundred, or more, to advantage." Thomas, in a determined effort to secure the colonel's intervention, concluded with a powerful inditement of Captain Belknap. "The service is suffering for want of a compliance with the" order to detail troops to assist with the construction of Fort Smith. 15

Thomas, on January 31, addressed two letters to General Jesup. The first of these was attached to the packet containing the reports of his expenditures and receipts, along with the supporting vouchers and abstracts, for the 4th quarter of 1839. The major's other communication contained an estimate of funds needed to carry on the construction program during the 1st quarter of 1840. (Unfortunately, neither the documents bearing on the bookkeeping for the final quarter of 1839, nor the estimates can be located.)

Within recent weeks, Thomas had received three drafts from the Quartermaster's Department. Two of these which totaled \$10,000 were on Arkansas banks; the other was on the Citizens' Bank of New Orleans. Thomas had been unable to collect the drafts on the banks at Washington and Helena, Arkansas. Prior to their receipt, the Arkansas banks had suspended specie payment. When he wrote the receiver of the Bank of Washington, Arkansas, on which he held a draft for \$2,400, Thomas was informed that most of the funds on hand were in notes on other Arkansas banks. The cashier estimated it would be at least a month before he could honor the draft. Thomas accordingly had forwarded the claim which he held on the Helena bank to the Bank of Washington. As of the last day of January, he had not received a reply.

When he informed General Jesup of his financial difficulties on the 31st, Thomas asked that in the future all his drafts be

made on New Orleans banks. Although it was a considerable distance to the "Crescent City", Thomas could either negotiate or send for the funds with little delay or expense. Furthermore, he felt it would be wise, if he were empowered to draw on Quartermaster Clark at New Orleans for funds in case of emergency. Such authority would eliminate the necessity of keeping a large amount of quartermaster's funds on hand at Fort Smith. On occasions, Thomas continued, this type of credit would be as good as specie to pay steamboat captains for hauling freight from New Orleans to the garrison. 16

During the winter of 1840, a number of weeks passed in which no mail reached Fort Smith from the Atlantic Seaboard. Finally, on February 28 a large mail reached the distant outpost; included were letters and papers from December 14 to February 3. Opening the official dispatches, Thomas was "shocked and mortified" to learn on reading a message from General Jesup of February 3 that his accounts for the 3d quarter of 1839 hadn't reached Washington. Consequently, the major had been listed as "a delinquent" for about \$33,000.

Replying, Thomas enclosed copies of documents which proved that the missing accounts had been posted in October. Though some of the papers had been mailed as much as 18 days after the time prescribed in the regulations, Thomas attributed this to the nature of his operations and his not having sufficient time to devote to paper work. He had believed it best to delay a little rather than risk forwarding incorrect accounts.

Thomas was at a loss to say where the errant reports might have gone. He trusted they would be in the general's hands by the time that he received this letter. As of late, the major explained, mail sent to the Arkansas frontier had been "irregular to a degree never before known at this place." In addition, Thomas continued, he was aware that certain parties wished to embarrass him. Angling for a trip to Washington, Thomas noted that nothing would give him



more satisfaction than a visit with the general. If this could be arranged, he promised "to explain fully every transaction which has happened since my station at this post." 17

Thomas seemed to have a knack for antagonizing people. In February, Thomas Earhart called on the major and announced that he wished to establish a ferry across the Arkansas at Fort Smith. If Thomas would grant him the privilege of landing and securing his boats at the government landing, Earhart promised to transport free all troops traveling under orders and their baggage across the river. This looked as if it would work to the advantage of the government. Thomas told the man to go ahead. At the same time, the major notified Colonel Arbuckle what he had done. Arbuckle gave his approval.

Earhart wasted no time in starting work on his boats. He planned to employ two flatboats (one capable of crossing a heavily loaded wagon and team and one for horses or light carriages) and a skiff for pedestrians.

Word soon reached Thomas that John Rogers, who claimed an exclusive franchise for operating the ferry at Fort Smith, was dissatisfied with the new arrangement. He complained that neither Thomas nor the United States had the right "to grant such a privilege or establish a ferry" on the reservation. Informing General Jesup of this development, Thomas stated, Rogers was understood to have threatened to employ political pressure to have him removed, unless the agreement was annulled. As Thomas explained to Jesup, he was unaware at the time he had given the franchise that he had trespassed "on the rights of any one," nor was he at the present time. Since his arrival, the major commented, there had never been "an efficient & well run ferry" at Fort Smith.

The Fort Smithites had been in the habit of using the government landing for, the major complained, all purposes. On numerous occasions, Thomas had found that this useage was adverse to the

public interest. Moreover, the townspeople hadn't spent any money or expended any labor to improve the town's landing in the 19 months Thomas had been in the area. Now, Thomas warned, "they claim as a right what has been granted them as an accommodation and deny the exclusive right of the United States to their own landing."

Thomas didn't want to deprive the citizens of the use of the government landing, unless they pushed him too hard. Unless directed otherwise by Washington, Thomas would not withdraw Earhart's franchise.

General Jesup agreed with Thomas. When the superintendent's communication reached Washington on March 26, he advised the major to have the agreement with Earhart drawn up in the form of a contract. The general wished the privilege to use the reservation as a terminal for the ferry to be construed as a guarantee to transport "all persons in the public service" and their gear across the Arkansas free of charge. 18

Lieutenant Henry also received an important dispatch in the mail which reached Fort Smith on February 28. From this message, Henry learned that a large shipment of commissary supplies was en route to Fort Smith. As commissary officer on the Arkansas, Henry was responsible for seeing that the garrisons at Forts Smith, Gibson, and Wayne were supplied. Among the items expected were: 1,000 barrels of pork, 2,000 barrels of flour, 900 bushels of beans, 15,000 pounds of soap, and 400 bushels of salt. 19

Henry called on Major Thomas for help. The lieutenant told the major that he was momentarily expecting the arrival of a steamboat loaded with 3,500 barrels of subsistence stores. This request was very disturbing, because the two post warehouses used for rations were too small to insure proper storage for so large a quantity of provisions. Upon taking stock of the situation, Thomas decided to retain the warehouse nearest the landing. This structure would enable the Quartermaster's Department "to receive & transport Stores with convenience and dispatch." A thorough

examination satisfied Thomas that the second warehouse was unsatisfactory for the purpose for which it was intended. He decided to have it razed. The logs would be salvaged and used to construct the frame for a new and more commodious storehouse. If he were to do this on such short notice, the superintendent would require assistance.

Though it galled him, Thomas addressed a note to Captain Belknap on March 3. To facilitate the construction of the new storehouse, a large detail would be required. These men would be used for a number of tasks. Since the new structure would be larger than the one scheduled to be tore down, additional timbers would be needed to enlarge the frame; planks would have to be sawed; for a covering, clapboards and shingles were to be hewn. Thomas, recalling their past difficulties, was willing for Belknap to retain supervision of the men assigned to help with the construction of the new warehouse. <sup>20</sup>

Despite Thomas' concession, Belknap refused to extend Thomas any help in the form of additional men to erect the new storehouse. Moreover, a request for clapboard to cover the building of which Belknap had a large supply was rejected.

Writing to General Jesup of this development on the 6th, Thomas assured his superior, he would "use measures to have a sufficient [warehouse] prepared in time to keep & preserve the stores expected." To demonstrate just "how unaccommodating our polite major [sic] commanding is," Thomas attached copies of his and Belknap's correspondence to Jesup's letter.

Once again, Thomas complained bitterly about Belknap's failure to co-operate wholeheartedly in the construction of Fort Smith. Every day from 30 to 40 of the "worst men" available in the battalion would report to the superintendent. The rest of Belknap's command (which had been increased recently from two to five companies) spent its time, Thomas reported, "making farms,

cutting unauthorized roads, grubbing up stumps, &c. &c. at his cantonment on the sixteenth section." On several occasions, Belknap had been notified that "nothing but his cordial cooperation prevents the quarters being erected during" 1840. Unless directed otherwise, Thomas planned to keep hiring workers locally. <sup>21</sup>

Jesup was dismayed to learn that Belknap, in spite of repeated orders, continued to drag his feet when asked to supply men to assist Major Thomas. Referring Thomas' letter to Adjutant General Jones, Jesup asked that it be shown to General in Chief Alexander Macomb. The commanding general declined to intervene in the dispute, and Thomas' communication was returned to Jesup's desk. <sup>22</sup>

Thomas, complying with a request from Jesup, forwarded a ground plan of the works to Washington on March 2. (See plan titled, "Thomas' Sketch of the Work at Fort Smith.") This sketch showed the outline of the walls and the progress made. In a covering letter, the major explained that the "whole of the foundation has been laid & brought up to the level." Two buildings which were found to be in the way of construction had been taken down. One of these had been used by Thomas and Alexander as their quarters. Since housing on the reservation was at a premium, Thomas had his carpenters and laborers reconstruct the buildings about midway between Bastion No. 1 and Belle Point. The superintendent would live in one; the workers were to be quartered in the other. In explanation of his actions, Thomas noted, "They being good buildings of logs, I thought it most advisable to put them up, in case a large force was employed or soldiers stationed here to work."

Upon the plan Thomas had sketched in barracks, storehouses, and a hospital sufficient to accommodate a regiment. This was in accordance with Jesup's ideas. Previous instructions on the subject, however, had led the superintendent to believe that the fort was to be garrisoned by a maximum of four companies. Since the number of buildings to be erected would regulate the cost of the project, Thomas announced, he was preparing detailed estimates of "the probable amount required to complete the whole or any part" of the fort by hired labor. "Because of the many variables

that had to be taken into consideration, the major doubted he could submit an accurate figure. There were many costs which would be difficult to ascertain. For one thing, he didn't know what type of materials would be used for the roofs. He thought Jesup ought to ask for an appropriation of at least \$100,000.. This sum, in Thomas' opinion, could be used before December 31, especially if he were to continue to rely on hired hands. Nevertheless, Thomas promised to supply Jesup with the prices of labor and materials in the near future. Any error in his estimates could be adjusted by the Washington office.

No floor plans of the buildings were sent to Jesup. It was Thomas' understanding that the officers' quarters were to follow the plan for Fort Coffee approved by Secretary of War Poinsett on May 26, 1837. If so, they would have piazzas the whole length. The barracks would be larger, "with the positions reversed so as to occupy less room in front & offered more for sleeping." To guide him in the construction of the blockhouses, Thomas planned to use the drawing furnished by the Chief Engineer to Lieutenant Colonel Richard B. Mason for Fort Wayne. The interiors would be varied to accord with the shape of those at Fort Smith, which had to be made to conform to the configuration of the walls of the garrison.

During recent weeks, Thomas wrote Jesup, he had continued to add stonemasons and laborers to his crew. Work on the wall had proceeded. Since the second week of January an additional 510 feet of wall had been raised to four feet above the "foundation or interior of the works." Unless directed differently by Washington, Thomas planned to work on the wall until it was about eight feet above ground level. At such time, the garrison would be secure against an assault by the Indians, and "the erection of the Barracks, Quarters &c." could be safely undertaken.

Colonel Arbuckle had spent February 17 to 20 at the fort. From all that he could learn, Thomas reported to his superior, the

colonel seemed satisfied "with the progress of the work." While Arbuckle was at the post, Belknap had increased the size of the fatigue party assigned to assist with the construction from 12 to 40 men. Following the colonel's return to Fort Gibson, the number dwindled rapidly. If it were storming or if the weather looked bleak, it was sufficient excuse to send none. The troops detailed to him by Belknap were used by Thomas in the quarry and to level the ground within the walls. Arbuckle, however, refused to shoulder the responsibility for ordering Belknap to send a detachment to work on the fort. In Thomas' opinion, all the men at Cantonment Belknap "could be usefully employed on the work." <sup>23</sup>

Thomas received a letter from Jesup on March 13 which had taken four weeks to reach the Arkansas frontier. Before authorizing Thomas to declare Browne's and Smith's bond for rafting logs down the Poteau forfeited, Jesup wanted to know the terms of the contract. Thomas, in reply observed that he had "endeavored to word it as definite as possible." Browne and Smith were to take charge of, and prepare the logs for rafting by removing the bark. "With as little delay as practicable," they were to take advantage "of each & every rise" of the Poteau to drive or raft the logs down, to the sawmill. Thomas was satisfied that it would have been impossible for him to have spelled out more clearly the contractors' obligations. No man in Thomas' opinion could have been induced to raft logs down the Poteau or the Arkansas "within a stipulated time without a provision regarding the stage of water."

Prior to drawing up the contract with Browne and Smith, some of Thomas' people had rafted down the Poteau the logs used in erecting the frame of the sawmill. Many of these were much longer than those cut for sawing. This, in Thomas' opinion, was a clear indication that rafting on the Poteau was feasible when the river was up.

If Browne and Smith protested that the water had fallen since the frame timbers had been rafted down, Thomas had a ready answer.

At least two heavily laden flatboats and between 60,000 and 80,000 feet of sawed timbers in rafts had descended the Poteau since then. Oldtimers had told Thomas that never in their experience had the stage of the Poteau been better for rafting for as many weeks as it had been in 1839. Whenever Thomas sought to discover if the contractors planned to fulfill their agreement, he encountered evasive answers.

Meanwhile, Hull and Hixon had built a sawmill in the area where Thomas' lumberjacks had felled the pine logs. Reports filtered down to Fort Smith that Hull and Hixon were stealing the government's timber. After cutting the logs into timber, they were rafting it down the Poteau. Thomas' protests had been brushed off. The operators of the mill told the major that they had as good a right "to the pine timber as the United States, and no power shall stop them cutting." Not wishing a collision with Hull and Hixon, Thomas did not press the matter.

Thomas believed the construction of the new mill might have had some effect of inducing Browne and Smith "to utterly neglect their contract." He knew that John Rogers, one of their suretors, was purchasing lumber from Hull and Hixon. At this time, Browne was working for Rogers as a carpenter, while Smith had drifted away from the area. The other guarantor, Warren, had also left Fort Smith, reportedly bound for the Indian country or Texas to trade with the Indians.

Thomas was anything but impressed with the town which was growing up east of the reservation. It was, he said, of the "worst kind & description." According to Thomas, it was "inhabited by persons of every kind and character." "Grog shops" where the shiftless congregated, were springing up like mushrooms. Many men whom Thomas had fired for misconduct had moved into town, "some as whiskey venders, others mere loafers."

It was very difficult, Thomas continued, to get along with these people. As yet, he had not had any serious trouble with them. But, this was because he avoided them. Except for business, Thomas doubted he had been off the reservation more than half a dozen times since his arrival. Up to this time, his only bone of contention with the citizens had been over their use of the government landing. <sup>24</sup>

\* \* \*

Thomas had made a powerful and dangerous enemy when he clashed with John Rogers over the franchise which he had given for Earhart's ferry to use the government landing. Rogers wasted no time in contacting two powerful allies -- Elias Rector and A. Harris. The three influential men addressed a letter to Senators Sevier and Fulton on February 10. When they drafted their protest, they blasted the superintendent for the way work was apparently lagging on the fort.

According to the men, more than two years had passed since money had been appropriated and an officer detailed to supervise the building of the garrison. The intervening months, they believed, should have seen the fort nearly completed. Yet this was not the case. "Either from mismanagement or a wilful desire to procrastinate" on Major Thomas' part, they charged, the wall "is hardly seen above ground and not a stone is laid for a single building." Rogers and his confederates felt that this situation was not in accordance with the wishes of the War Department. If made known to Secretary Poinsett and a new superintendent appointed, the men argued, the change would work wonders.

Major Thomas was, in their opinion, "the most unfortunate selection that could have been made to construct" the garrison. His temperament was such "as to involve him in constant broils and unnecessary contests with the people about here and to make himself so obnoxious to the citizens generally as to operate seriously



against the interests of the government." To solve this problem, it was urged that Captain Belknap, whom the conspirators described as one of the "most active and energetic officers in the army," be immediately placed in charge of the work. If this were done, the men were satisfied that under Belknap's supervision the fort would be completed "in half the time and with half the expense the present superintendent will require." <sup>25</sup>

Upon receiving the letter of complaint against Thomas, the Senators carried it to the War Department. There, it was referred to General Jesup, who filed it away with his other papers.

On Friday, March 13, there was a serious dispute between Earhart and M. Hemby, a rugged frontiersman who ran Rogers' ferry. A gentleman who was en route to the Choctaw Agency had engaged Hemby to ferry him and his horse across the Poteau. At the time that Hemby's boat tied up to the landing on the west side of the Poteau opposite Belle Point, Earhart was engaged in hauling wood in his flatboat across the stream for Major Thomas. While Hemby landed his passenger, the men who had been detailed to load the wood had to stop work.

Before casting off, Hemby was hailed by Captain A. Harris' Negro boy. The slave was returning to Fort Smith from the Choctaw Agency with a team of horses. After taking the Negro and horses aboard, Hemby recrossed the Poteau. When he did, he put the boy and the team ashore on the right bank of the river. A number of carts and men were at the landing waiting to take the wood which Earhart was ferrying to the sawmill. These men had to stand aside while Hemby's boat tied up.

Whereupon Earhart told Hemby that he could not interrupt the work. Furthermore, Earhart continued, Hemby had no right to land at the fort.

Hemby retorted that "he would ferry as much as he pleased there."

"I will see Major Thomas," Earhart replied.

Having worked himself into a rage, Hemby shot back that "he did not care for Maj. Thomas that Capt. Armstrong had told him that he could ferry as many people through the Fort as he saw fit, and by God... [Earhart] nor all the United States should not stop him." 26

Upon being notified of Hemby's trespass, Thomas hastened to the landing. When he arrived, Hemby had moved his ferry to the government landing on the Arkansas. Thomas asked Hemby to move his boat below the reservation line, and fasten it "at the junction of the Military road and the Arkansas River."

Hemby refused. Employing foul language, Hemby shouted vile threats against the major's life. He swore that he would occupy any United States land he wished.

At this, Thomas called for several soldiers who were loitering nearby. They were ordered to see that Hemby and his boat were removed from government property. Except for violent words, Hemby offered no resistance as a soldier untied the ferry, while his companions pushed it out into the river. Holding on to the rope to keep the vessel from drifting free, the soldiers kept pace as it floated downstream. As soon as they were below the reservation, the troops secured the tow rope to a tree and returned to their tasks at the fort. On learning what had happened, Hemby told Thomas that he had better look out because if he didn't get him, Captain Rogers would. 27

Thomas, on returning to his quarters, addressed a letter to Captain Rogers, complaining of Hemby's conduct. According to the major, from the time of his arrival at Fort Smith in July 1838, to the present, he had sought to avoid a collision with Rogers. Although Rogers had stepped on his toes on several occasions, Thomas had kept quiet. For example, he had allowed Rogers to live in his house on the reservation from July to September. Prior to his arrival at Fort Smith, Rogers had failed to prevent Wood and Harris

from removing a building from the land purchased by the United States. Moreover, Rogers had failed to report this dishonest act to the proper authorities. Until recently, Rogers had been permitted to use the government landing. On numerous occasions, this was at great inconvenience to the public. Thomas warned Rogers that neither he nor any other private citizen had "any right to occupy the U. S. landing." But when "abuse was bestowed, instead of thanks," Thomas fumed, "forebearance ceases to be a virtue."

The major informed Rogers that he had good reason to believe the merchant was aware of Hemby's "riotous, abusive, and almost brutal conduct." After describing what had happened, Thomas requested Rogers to make certain that in the future Hemby refrained from mooring boats of any description "at the Shore belonging to the United States." If Hemby persisted, as he had threatened, Thomas deemed it his duty to have the boat cast loose. In closing, Thomas, drawing careful aim on his real target, observed, "His [Hemby's] conduct, I disregard, as well as his threats. I look higher — to his employer." <sup>28</sup>

Rogers failed to acknowledge Thomas' note. Instead, Rogers carried his case to his friend, Captain Belknap. Rogers complained bitterly that Thomas had interfered with the ferry which he had established at the point where the Military road struck the Arkansas River. What especially provoked Belknap was the news that Thomas had used some of the troops detailed to work on the fort to remove Hemby's boat.

Declining to write Thomas directly, Belknap asked Lieutenant Henry to draft and sign the letter. Thomas was informed that Belknap had given Rogers written permission to operate a ferry, provided he didn't interfere with the construction of the fort. More important, Belknap wanted it understood that in the future Thomas would not employ the soldiers assigned to him "in any conflict with the citizens." <sup>29</sup>

Upon the receipt of the letter signed by Lieutenant Henry, Thomas retired to his quarters and addressed messages to Rogers and Belknap.

In his communication to Rogers, Thomas took sharp issue with the story which the Fort Smith merchant had told Belknap. There had been no interference with the ferry at the "junction of the Military Road & the Arkansas River." The difficulty between Earhart and Hemby had commenced on the Poteau and had ended at the landing in front of the garrison.

Thomas had never questioned Rogers' or anyone's right to establish a ferry at the foot of the Military road. But at the moment, Thomas observed, Hemby's boat was moored in front of the works on the reservation. It would be for the best if Rogers didn't send Hemby to remove the ferry. After yesterday's nasty incident, Thomas would construe the boatman's appearance on the reservation as interference with the work in progress at the post. Thomas requested that Rogers send another man, without delay, to remove the craft from government property. By his prompt attention to this matter, Rogers could prevent relations from deteriorating any further. <sup>30</sup>

Once again, Rogers refused to answer Thomas' letter. A man, however, was sent to remove the boat. <sup>31</sup>

Writing to Belknap, Thomas expressed surprise the commandant should side with Rogers without investigating what had happened. To make certain Belknap understood the dispute, Thomas devoted considerable space to the incident.

Next, he turned to Rogers' right to operate a ferry at Fort Smith. Thomas had never questioned the merchant's franchise. The superintendent, however, denied Rogers had any right to trespass upon the military reservation "in person or by proxy and interfere with and abuse and threaten" his life or those of his employees. Thomas assured Belknap that he wouldn't submit to such conduct. He and not John Rogers would judge when and if the work in progress was obstructed. Belknap must be aware, Thomas caustically noted, that cases could arise when the project might be "interfered with"

anywhere on the reservation, as well as on the walls of the fort and in the workshops.

Since Belknap had taken up the cudgels for the "Fort Smithites," Thomas would like to know why they hadn't built a landing for themselves in front of the town. Thomas believed that with little trouble, the townspeople could have as good a landing as the one in front of the fort. Indeed, at some stages of the river, it would be better. Such action "would quietly and effectually prevent any interference with the progress of the work at the Fort."

It would be better for all if there were two landings, Thomas argued. To strengthen his case, the major reported a disagreeable situation which had happened several times in 1839. Steamboats arriving with large shipments of government stores had found the landing crowded with property being received or shipped by private individuals. Thomas knew of instances when public property had remained on the landing exposed to the elements through the night. If he had had free access to the landing during the day, this wouldn't have occurred. With the Arkansas again navigable to steamboats, Thomas was daily expecting the arrival of "large quantities of stores." When the vessels tied up, he would "want all the U. S. landing without interference from any one." Such a development had led to a riot at Fort Gibson several years before in which a soldier had been killed. A sure way to prevent a similar tragedy at Fort Smith was for Belknap to use his influence to persuade the citizens to construct a landing for their use.

Miffed by Belknap's willingness to take sides with Rogers, Thomas noted that he had never interfered with the commandant's duties. He accordingly would appreciate it if Belknap would not trespass on his. Such petty difficulties, Thomas argued, "may tend to render the Army and its officers unpopular with the Citizens of worth, and are always disgraceful when enacted

before such, as you well know, form a large portion of those in the town of Fort Smith."

Before drawing his lengthy letter to a close, Thomas turned to Belknap's complaint that he had used soldiers sent to work on the fort against the citizens. Thomas heatedly denied this charge. Neither the soldiers nor the private individuals would be allowed to clash, if he could possibly prevent it. "But," Thomas warned, "I must beg leave to remark, that I shall take all legal and practicable means to maintain the interests of the United States at the Work." <sup>32</sup>

Thomas' communication caused a commotion at Belknap's headquarters. It was two days before the captain answered. As before, Lieutenant Henry signed Belknap's letter. Belknap started off by pointing out that he was not disposed to investigate the quarrel between Thomas and Hemby. It was merely sufficient to learn that the superintendent had employed soldiers assigned to work on the garrison to remove by force the ferry. Belknap's object was "to preserve good order and harmony between the troops under his command and the Citizens." Since the difficulty, one of his soldiers had been assaulted and knocked down in the streets of Fort Smith by an irate citizen. As he beat the soldier, the man accused him of helping to remove Hemby's boat.

So far as Captain Rogers' ferry was concerned, Belknap had only one interest: The ferry provided the best means for rapid communication between his cantonment and Fort Gibson. It was a matter of deep regret to think that Thomas supposed he had intervened in the dispute on the part of the "Fort Smithites." According to Belknap his only interest in the affair was to "preserve the reputation and good order of his command." <sup>33</sup>

Thomas resumed his battle of words with Captain Belknap on March 17. Once more, the superintendent heaped scorn upon Belknap's failure to investigate personally the events of four days before.

The information on which the commandant relied had been obtained from Rogers and the non-commissioned officer in charge of the fatigue party, neither of whom had been present. Thomas reiterated his story that no force had been required or used to remove the ferry from the reservation. Moreover, the superintendent considered at this time, and nothing Belknap had written since had caused him to change his mind, that the soldiers when removing the ferry had carried out a legitimate assignment. Thomas felt that this was as much a part of the detail's duty as filling carts with dirt and working in the quarry.

When he investigated the altercation between citizen and soldier mentioned in Henry's dispatch, Thomas found that Belknap had been deceived. Thomas was unable to discover any evidence of an attack on a soldier by a civilian. Instead, Private Dennis Byrnes, the soldier involved, had been struck and seriously injured by Corporal George H. Babcock. At the time, Thomas did not know of the trouble between the two men. Returning to camp, Byrnes had reported first to Lieutenant William H. Gordon and then to Captain Belknap that he had been beaten by a Fort Smithite. Thomas was satisfied that Byrnes' object was to "produce mischief & difficulty" between himself and Belknap. The superintendent thought Byrnes ought to be punished for lying. <sup>34</sup>

Evidently bested by Thomas in the exchange of notes, Belknap decided to drop the subject. The commandant called on the major on the 20th. At the meeting, Belknap told the superintendent that he wanted to hear no more of the dispute.

Thomas, in an unsuccessful effort to pour oil on the troubled water, notified Rogers that his ferry could resume using the government landing. Rogers and Hemby were cautioned that this permission would be withdrawn if they misbehaved or interfered with the superintendent or any of his employees. <sup>35</sup>

Thomas, on March 22, wrote General Jesup. He warned his superior that Rogers and others had advanced a claim for free use

of the government landing. The landing, Thomas reported, had been built by the United States. In his opinion, the citizens could construct one equally good in front of the town. He didn't know what Rogers and his associates intended, but, Thomas assured Jesup, no act of theirs would induce him to infringe "their least rights" or disturb the peace of this place." Copies of the correspondence bearing on the row with Rogers and Hemby were attached to the dispatch. 36

Rogers wasted no time in carrying his case to Washington. On March 20, he addressed a letter to his friend Captain Harris who was visiting the capital. Besides giving Harris a brief, distorted account of the incident, Rogers asked him to see the Secretary of War. Rogers feared Thomas' design was to prevent the use of the government landing by all steamboats and ferries except those hauling cargos for the military. Harris was to tell the Secretary of an agreement which Rogers had made with Thomas in regard to the landing. According to Rogers, he had given the United States a strip of land two feet in depth bounding the Arkansas "for the express purpose of making a mutual landing for the benefit of the town as well as the fort." In addition, he had given the government more land than it had bought and paid for along the eastern boundary of the reservation. This, he claimed, was to enable the military to construct a road from the landing to Cantonment Belknap.

The merchant wanted Harris to assure Secretary Poinsett that there was ample room on the landing for both the military and the civilians. Surely, he pointed out, the mooring of a small ferry would not cause the government any inconvenience.

If it were at all possible, Rogers wanted Thomas transferred. "I do most sincerely hope," he wrote "that this man will not be permitted to remain here to annoy us in this way, he seems to be continually getting into difficulty" with the townspeople. 37

When Rogers' letter reached Washington, Harris showed it to the members of the Arkansas congressional delegation. On April 13,



a letter signed by Senators Fulton and Sevier and Representative Edward Cross was transmitted to Secretary of War Poinsett. A copy of Rogers' message of March 20 was attached. After briefly touching on the trouble between Hemby and Thomas, the congressmen observed that Captain Harris would be able to explain to the Secretary the terms of the agreement worked out between Thomas and Rogers for mutual enjoyment of the landing. In this respect, it was pointed out, the use of the landing was "highly important to the citizens." They hoped the War Department would not back Thomas on his decision to restrict the landing to the military.

Getting around to their principal reason for writing, the congressmen observed, their constituents were constantly importuning them to have Major Thomas transferred. In view of the latest difficulties, they were "compelled to beg that a change may be made as speedily as possible." <sup>38</sup>

After thinking about what the congressmen had to say, Poinsett contacted General Jesup. The general was to ask Thomas to file an "Official Report," describing what had transpired. Thomas was to be notified that the War Department was desirous of affording accommodations to the citizens at the government landing, provided it was not incompatible with public interest. <sup>39</sup>

Poinsett held Jesup's memorandum for over six weeks before he incorporated it in a letter to the Arkansas congressmen. <sup>40</sup>

As the weeks passed and no answer was received from Washington, Rogers decided to see if he could get Colonel Arbuckle to intervene in his behalf. Writing to the colonel on May 26, Rogers charged that Thomas had refused to let the townspeople use the government landing. Rogers didn't get much satisfaction from the department commander. Arbuckle promised to direct Thomas not to "deprive the citizens of Fort Smith of the use of that landing, when this can be done without absolutely inconvenience to the public interest." Like Thomas, the general thought, the townspeople ought to be thinking about building a landing of their own. <sup>41</sup>

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As an upshot of his dispute with Rogers, Major Thomas determined to get permission from General Jesup to fence the reservation. Such action would confine the Fort Smithites to a town landing.

Thomas, to strengthen his case, reported that almost every boat which tied up at the government landing put ashore whiskey, destined for sale in the Indian country. On March 8, the steamer Pauline had landed a number of barrels at the section of the government landing which was within the Choctaw Nation. Forty-eight hours later, the whiskey was still there. Consequently, Thomas on the morning of the 10th asked the consignee, Mr. Heard, to have it removed by nightfall.

Heard replied, "he would have it removed when convenient."

The major replied that the whiskey was in the Indian Country & already forfeited; and that any officer of the United States had authority to seize, and destroy it, if necessary."

He would shoot anyone attempting to do that, Heard declared.

"Your threats," Thomas retorted, "will avail nothing with me, and only act as an incentive to do my duty more rigidly, if it becomes necessary."

Thomas eased the situation by assuring Heard that all that was required was for him to remove his whiskey by sundown. This he did.

On March 12, Thomas watched the Trident put ashore a number of barrels of whiskey belonging to Bigelow. <sup>42</sup>

Upon the receipt of Thomas' letter, Jesup gave him permission to fence the public grounds. <sup>43</sup>

Thomas' project to fence the reservation precipitated the next clash with John Rogers. Prior to putting up the fence, Thomas had the reservation boundaries marked. On doing so, he was shocked to discover that the lines as run in the original survey did not embrace as much land as Rogers' bond to the government described. (See

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The next time the major saw Rogers was at the race course, a mile or two from Fort Smith. When Thomas broached the subject of the survey to Rogers, the merchant became abusive. In front of a large number of bystanders, Rogers shouted, he had not sold the government any part of the Arkansas shore. He swore that the first survey had been made in "strict conformity with the wording of the Bond & contract made & entered into" between himself and the government. Not wishing to have a collision in public, Thomas asked Rogers to come to his office where they could discuss the subject in private. <sup>44</sup>

When he returned to his home, Rogers began to have second thoughts on the subject. He decided it might be wise to contact General Jesup ahead of Thomas. Addressing a letter to the Quartermaster General, Rogers pointed out, he had no wish or design to interfere with the construction of the garrison. Moreover, he didn't want to deprive the government of any advantage to which it was entitled. He was willing to compromise. The fence which Thomas had erected would be allowed to stand. This would give the United States a small wedge of land belonging to him west of the Military road. Rogers would turn over to the government "a Quit Claim Deed to all the privileges" he was entitled to on the river front as surveyed and deeded. If the government accepted his proposal, Rogers wished it understood that the Military road which was 120 feet wide would constitute the boundary between the reservation and the town. Furthermore, he added, the Military road was to be open to public use. <sup>45</sup>

Thomas, having failed to receive a copy of Rogers' letter to Jesup, wrote the merchant on May 20 regarding the conflicting claims. The superintendent was aghast to learn that Rogers contended the fact which he had sold the government did not front on the Arkansas. A thorough investigation of the transaction had divulged a number of interesting facets to Thomas. First, there were several discrepancies in the wording of the deed and of the document which Rogers had given at the time he had posted his bond. Second, Thomas discovered that the surveyor had erred in running the line from Section 16

to the Arkansas. The line as deeded struck the river some distance below the point marked on the surveyor's plat.

Notifying Rogers of what he had discovered, Thomas felt certain the merchant would agree to correct the mistakes with as little delay as possible. A copy of the deed in which the boundaries were described in the exact words of the bonding agreement was attached to Thomas' message. Several gentlemen who were familiar with the local land laws had assisted Thomas in his work.

Thomas observed sarcastically that he couldn't believe Rogers would "intentionally wrong the United States out of a single-foot of land." He therefore trusted Rogers would waste no time in having the "enclosed deed property executed, and returned without delay." If Rogers disagreed with his findings, Thomas suggested the merchant have the line rerun and a corrected plat forwarded to Colonel Cross in Washington. Cross, who had been party to the original negotiations, would be in position to refer the question to the Attorney General.

While on the subject, Thomas wanted Rogers to know his reasons for fencing the reservation. (A) It was to define the government landing and prevent unnecessary intrusions. (B) He wished to provide a secure area in which to pasture the public livestock. If he could have secured the proper materials, Thomas would have had the reservation fenced months before.

Thomas wanted Rogers to understand that he had no desire to "enter into any altercation" with him "on this or any other official business." As an agent of the United States, Thomas didn't want to be drawn into any quarrels. He, however, warned Rogers against disturbing any part of the fence that his men had recently erected bounding the Military road. <sup>46</sup>

Rogers rejected the questions raised by Thomas. Replying to the superintendent on May 22, Rogers tersely noted:

I have only to state, that the matter alluded to by you has long since been settled: a deed was made to the Government for the land purchased, and approved

by the authority appointed to examine the same and therefore do not feel disposed, at this late date, to renew the subject. 47

Thomas pronounced Rogers' answer unsatisfactory. On the 25th, he reminded Rogers, "errors in Deeds, Land titles and boundaries, where they are defective, or lines incorrectly run, or unsettled, when reference can be had to previous titles, as in the case of the bond, can...be legally investigated, after a lapse of many years." Thomas didn't feel the United States would quietly submit <sup>to</sup> Rogers' design to let the subject rest, without an investigation. This was especially true, where the question involved would subject the government to the loss of its frontage on the Arkansas, below the line run by the county surveyor in 1838.

Unless Rogers co-operated in settling the difficulty, Thomas proposed to have the eastern boundary of the reservation resurveyed. The surveyor's report and plat would be forwarded to the proper authorities in Washington. Pending their decision, Thomas would warn the people occupying the area in question that they were living on land belonging to the United States.

In accordance with authority given him by General Jesup, Thomas notified Rogers that the fence was to be extended to the Arkansas. Henceforth, Rogers would cease cutting timber on the strip of land east of the Military road claimed by the United States.

The Fort Smith merchants and traders would be allowed to use the government landing, but only when it wasn't needed or occupied by stores belonging to the United States. To emphasize his point, the major cited a recent occurrence. On Saturday a shipment of 450 barrels of lime had been put ashore at the landing between 2 p.m. and sunset. Crews were turned out, and by nightfall all the barrels were undercover. If control of

the landing had not rested with the army disaster could have resulted. The landing might have been obstructed with trade goods. Consequently, it would have been impossible to store all the lime, a large part of which would have been ruined by the heavy rain that fell during the night. <sup>48</sup>

Learning that Rogers planned to leave for the east, Thomas knew that he had better get the correspondence concerning his latest troubles with the powerful Fort Smithite to Washington as soon as possible. The major was elated to discover that Lieutenant John F. Lee would be departing from Little Rock for Washington within ten days. (Lee was supervising the building of the Little Rock Arsenal.) Thomas requested Lee to deliver the package containing the documents to General Jesup.

In a covering letter, dated June 3, Thomas observed that Rogers now claimed he had never sold any land fronting on the Arkansas to the United States. Thomas reported that in his opinion Rogers was guilty of drawing a faulty deed for the conveyance of the land purchased by the government for the reservation. Worse, in an effort to cover up the error, the merchant had had the surveyor run an incorrect line. In view of Rogers' failure to agree to have the land resurveyed, Thomas was compelled to believe that he planned to defraud the United States. <sup>49</sup>

Following Rogers' departure from Fort Smith, Thomas heard tales that the merchant had changed his story. Rogers now denied he had told the major he hadn't sold the government any frontage on the Arkansas. A visit by Thomas to Van Buren and the Crawford County Courthouse had yielded an interesting document. It was a plat of Fort Smith made by Rogers' direction in 1838. On the plan the boundaries of the land sold to the United States were clearly indicated. Thomas, on studying the sketch, saw that the landing was depicted as belonging to Rogers. (See map titled, "Plot of the Land purchased by the United States from John Rodgers ~~at~~ sic at Fort Smith, Arkansas.")

Thomas lost no time in relaying this additional evidence of Rogers' perfidy to General Jesup. At the same time, he reviewed for his chief the steps that had led to this new clash. After failing to answer Thomas' letter of May 25 and prior to his departure for Washington, Rogers had reportedly sought to organize a "cabal" against the superintendent. Rogers had told anyone who would listen that he had never sold the land to the United States. The major was roundly denounced for extending the fence to the river. Threats were voiced to tear down the fence.

Soon after Rogers had boarded the steamboat which would take him down the Arkansas, Thomas had the reservation boundaries resurveyed. Just as he suspected, the survey did not "vary in quantity more than an acre or two from that which... [Rogers] agreed to sell, and that his calculation in his deed" were incorrect. (See sketch of area in dispute prepared by Major Thomas.)

Upon studying the plat, which he forwarded to Washington, Thomas found that Rogers had made an "injudicious sale." As it approached the Arkansas, the eastern boundary of the reservation cut into the town. Thomas was satisfied that this mistake seriously hurt Rogers' interests. Questioning people who were familiar with the situation, Thomas learned that at the time Rogers made the sale to the United States, he "did not know exactly how his town would be laid off." When he discovered his mistake, Rogers had been unwilling to come forward and ask that the government agree to draw a new line from the river to Section 16 which would parallel the town. Instead, he had sought to make it appear that he had never sold the land in question.

A Military road, 120-feet wide, had been constructed from Cantonment Belknap to the Arkansas River. This road which followed the line as claimed by Rogers separated the town from the reservation. Thomas' survey indicated that the eastern boundary of the government's land crossed the Military road and struck the Arkansas some distance to the east. Thomas felt that it would be wise to reduce the width of the road to 60 feet. Once this had been accomplished, the United States would own a pie shaped piece of land fronting on the Arkansas east of the Military road. Rogers had divided this property

into lots which had been sold for about \$10,000. This was in addition to the house which Rogers had recently erected and the one he had built in 1839, after moving from the reservation.

Not wishing to injure any citizen unnecessarily, Thomas proposed to Jesup that the government deed to Rogers all the reservation land east of the Military road in exchange for the ground held by the merchant west of it. The value of the land released by the government, in Thomas' opinion, far exceeded that to be yielded by Rogers. But, he continued, it was not needed for military purposes, and much of it had been sold by Rogers to innocent third parties. Finally, the suggested compromise would place a street (the Military road) between the reservation and the town.

Thomas was satisfied that this proposition was "highly favourable to Rogers." If Rogers rejected it, Thomas suggested, "some disinterested officer of the Department be sent to examine and report on the subject." Moreover, Thomas thought it would be wise if Jesup discussed the question with Colonel Cross. Since Cross had made the purchase, the general could see if his and Thomas' views of the boundaries coincided. 50

Before going to Washington, Rogers stopped in New York City. While there, he learned from the newspapers that Congress was about to adjourn. Fearing that he would not reach the capital in time, Rogers, on July 14, addressed a letter to Representative Cross. Once again, the legislator was informed that in his constituent's opinion, work on Fort Smith was progressing very slowly. Even worse, Rogers' complained, was "the great source of annoyance the Citizens of that place & neighborhood" were subjected to by Major Thomas.

The people of western Arkansas had hoped Thomas would have been relieved after they had lodged their initial protests.



But, Rogers' observed, he was sorry to say all their appeals to the government on this subject had apparently gone unnoticed. Undoubtedly with tongue in cheek, Rogers continued, "It is an unpleasant task for me to undertake to lodge complaints against any individual, but it does appear impossible for the Citizens to get along quietly with this man." According to Rogers, Thomas could find "more ways & means to render himself offensive to the people than any person" he had ever encountered.

Warming to his subject, Rogers fumed, "no man in charge of Public trust" was as universally unpopular or despised as Major Thomas. His fellow army officers were said to share in this opinion. Rogers expressed himself as satisfied "if an inquiry was strictly made into this matter that the government would see the necessity of removing him from" the superintendency at once.

Since reaching New York City, Rogers had received a letter from Fort Smith, reporting that the government landing had been fenced. This latest action on the major's part, Rogers informed his congressman, had been "done entirely through ill feelings as the government" has as yet very little use for the landing. With a reckless disregard for the truth, Rogers added, as far as he knew there had never been the slightest conflict of interest between the military and the civilians over the river front.

Rogers begged Representative Cross to see if he could get Thomas transferred before he left Washington and returned to Arkansas. Taking a parting shot at the superintendent, Rogers reported that he had found him "unqualified in every respect for as important a trust as he is placed in charge of." <sup>51</sup>

Cross carried out Rogers' request immediately. On July 15, he addressed a note to Secretary of War Peinsett, to which he attached Rogers' letter. Congressman Cross informed the Secretary

that the reports he had been receiving from other respectable people of the Fort Smith area accorded with those expressed by Rogers. Cross threw his weight behind the movement to sack Thomas. The congressman pointed out that he firmly believed the public interest would be materially injured by retaining Thomas "as superintendent of military operations in progress at that post." If the garrison were to be completed in a reasonable length of time, Cross stressed, good relations between the superintendent and the Fort Smithites must prevail. Cross believed that when the Secretary investigated the Fort Smith situation, he would find that Major Thomas "cannot be useful where he now is." 52

Once again, Poinsett ignored the request for Thomas' removal. Since Congress was in a rush to adjourn, Representative Cross left Washington without getting an answer to his letter. Poinsett, knowing that construction would soon be stopped at Fort Smith because of lack of funds, decided to let Thomas stay where he was for the time being. As soon as the project had been shut down, Thomas could be transferred.

General Jesup acknowledged Thomas' June 24 letter regarding Rogers' claim to the landing on the Arkansas on August 4. The general pointed out that the contract had been carefully prepared by the personnel in his office. In addition, it had been Thomas' duty to see that the "deed of conveyance conformed to it." Since Thomas had apparently accepted a deed not in accordance with the contract, Jesup was afraid the government had been "deprived" of the river front. Jesup believed that the land claimed by Rogers belonged to him, although it should "belong to the United States." To make matters worse, the general felt the United States had no remedy.

"Free access to the river being all important," Jesup had written Secretary Poinsett recommending steps be taken to

either purchase or lease Belle Point from the Choctaws. The general presumed that a good landing and site for a public wharf could be found on the point. 53

Thomas was understandably miffed when on September 2 he received Jesup's dispatch. The major replied immediately. He asked Jesup to study the documents carefully. The superintendent, as well as others, who had examined the bonding agreement and the deed were convinced it was only by the "veriest quibble" that Rogers could advance a claim to the disputed land which fronted on the Arkansas. Thomas in his own mind was satisfied Rogers planned to defraud the government.

Not until the previous May, Thomas reported, had Rogers made any claim to the ownership of the land in question. The discovery of a plat of the town drawn in 1838 had convinced Thomas that Rogers would have claimed the disputed land by adverse possession if he hadn't fenced the reservation. Since his letter of June 24, Thomas had discussed the problem with Colonel Arbuckle and Judge Bales. The colonel agreed that the "true line should run and does run" as Thomas claimed.

To enable Jesup to get a better understanding of the situation, Thomas prepared a table. The "Bonding Agreement" and the "Deed" were written side by side and analyzed phrase by phrase. (See Appendix B.) Thomas believed that after studying this document, Jesup could only conclude that Rogers was trying to cheat the government.

Next, Thomas reviewed for his superior his efforts to effect a compromise with Rogers. Thomas was convinced that throughout the affair, he had treated the influential merchant "in a frank and friendly manner." Yet this was not enough. Thomas charged that Rogers, believing he had successfully defrauded the United States, hoped to seriously injure if not ruin the major's career. Thomas had sought to get Rogers'

brother-in-law to try and talk the merchant into "meeting the subject fairly." He failed. This only inflamed Rogers. Rogers and his son, whom Thomas referred to as the "vilest slanderer" of them all, continued to curse and abuse the superintendent on the streets of Fort Smith and in the grog shops. This was all because the United States had fenced part of the land purchased from Rogers.

Thomas in conclusion wrote, "the evidence, petitions, and statements of persons with regard to my conduct at this place, should be critically examined & the motives known." For example, Captain Harris, who had carried one of Rogers' letters to the Arkansas Congressional Delegation, was the merchant's "joint proprietor" in the founding of the town. Thomas suspected Harris was associated in Rogers' scheme to swindle the government. U. S. Marshal Elias Rector's ire had been aroused because the superintendent refused to allow him to use the public wheelbarrows for building his racecourse. Thomas was satisfied that these men and others "would be glad to have an agent of the U. S. at this place, whom they could use for their benefit." <sup>54</sup>

Following Thomas' departure for Florida in the fall of 1840, the boundary dispute was allowed to simmer. In January a letter from one of his Fort Smith friends reached Major Thomas at Palatka, Florida Territory. When he glanced at the message, Thomas almost hit the ceiling. According to the major's informant, the "land claim" was about to be settled by Captain Rains. Senator Fulton and his colleagues had reportedly pledged it would be adjusted as Captain Rogers wished.

Thomas immediately brought this information to General Jesup's attention. If the news which he had received from Fort Smith were correct, Thomas wrote, Rogers seemed determined "by all and any means in his power to keep the United States out of part of the land purchased of him in 1838." Hardly had he left

Fort Smith, Thomas complained, before the wily Rogers had launched a new scheme for getting possession of the landing. His agent, Rains, was said to be carrying to Washington evidence that Thomas had agreed to let Rogers have the landing in exchange for a strip of ground near the brickyard. Thomas warned the Quartermaster General to beware of any documents or papers which might have been "manufactured" and presented to him by Rogers' "Envoy".

Because of these developments, Thomas thought it might be wise for the Department to refer all correspondence relating to the Fort Smith land problems to him for comment. Past associations with Rogers and Rains had satisfied the major that in their efforts to defraud the government, they would not "confine themselves to truth or justice."

If the United States determined to alter the line separating the reservation from the town, Thomas suggested, the new boundary begin at the Arkansas River. It should run up "the center of the Military road as fenced (making no angle) until it reaches the Sixteenth Section."

As the months had passed, Thomas had become embittered. If he had his way, he would certainly recommend against the proposal as outlined, because the land which would be yielded by the government east of the Military road was more valuable than that which would be received in exchange. 55

At the beginning of February 1841, Thomas traveled from Palatka to his Cedar Keys headquarters. En route, he encountered Colonel Whistler, who five years before had served on the commission which selected the Fort Smith site. Thomas and Whistler discussed the Fort Smith problem at length. The former superintendent told Whistler of Rogers' claim to the land on the Arkansas fronting the garrison. Whistler was shocked. As the colonel recalled, the United States had "a full front of one hundred yards on the

river at the water's edge," below the point where the Choctaw boundary if extended would strike the Arkansas.

Thomas relayed this information to Washington on February 4. <sup>56</sup>

Jesup finally determined to have a ranking officer of his department make an on the spot investigation of the boundary difficulties. Colonel Cross, who had been assigned to inspect the operations of the Quartermaster's Department on the Western Frontier, was given this task. Jesup felt Cross' selection was ideal, because he had been acting chief when Rogers' bond had been posted. To insure that Cross would be familiar with the dispute, Jesup, using Thomas' letter of September 2 as a guide, reviewed the sections of the "Bonding Agreement" which differed with the corresponding portions of the "Deed!"

The crux of the matter, Jesup pointed out was, "What is the precise location of the starting point of the survey, as described in the Agreement and Deed." Rogers' contended it was a post on the Indian boundary, 165 feet from the river, while Thomas maintained it began at the point where the Choctaw line struck the Arkansas. If Thomas' view prevailed, it would extend the northeastern boundary of the land conveyed across the Military rand and take in a brick building recently erected by Rogers. But, if Rogers were correct and the post was the point of beginning, the northeastern line of the land sold would intrude even farther into the town.

Cross was to file a report of the facts and his opinion as to the "true boundary," as soon as practicable. Jesup mailed the letter containing Cross's instructions on March 20. <sup>57</sup>

Jesup's message to Cross was addressed to him in care of the New Orleans Quartermaster's Depot. By the time the dispatch reached the "Crescent City," Cross had left for the Arkansas frontier. Since Cross returned to Washington via the Ohio River, the general's communication did not overtake him until April 27. Cross, however, had anticipated he would be required to report on the situation at Fort Smith. Consequently, he was able to furnish his chief the

desired information without retracing his route.

Reviewing his role in the transaction by which the government had agreed to purchase the land for the reservation from Rogers, Cross reported, his part had been passive. He had discussed no terms and made no bargain with Rogers. Colonel Cross had merely reduced to writing a proposition of sale advanced by the merchant to the U. S. Commissioners. Although he had not played an active part in the negotiations, Cross would have considered himself derelict in his duty, if he had drawn up an instrument which did not secure the United States "an adequate front on the river." It was impossible for the colonel to comprehend how a tract of land that started on the Arkansas and ended on the river 100 yards below the point of beginning, could possibly be without a river frontage of 100 yards.

If there had been any doubts on this question, the reports of the commissioners who had visited the area would have removed them. They had observed in the closing paragraph of their report, which Cross had before him at the time the contract was drafted, "Included one hundred yards of space mentioned in Mr. Rogers' proposition, together with the point belonging to the Choctaw Nation, there will be five hundred yards of space open on the Arkansas river, and applicable to Military purposes." Since this report was published in Senate document No. 224, 2d Session, 25th Congress, Cross felt certain Rogers was aware of the interpretation given his proposition by the U. S. Commissioners.

Cross believed that all the ensuing trouble could have been avoided if the first survey had been attended to properly. Instead of awaiting the arrival of Major Thomas, Rogers had caused an *ex parte* survey to be made of the tract to be transferred to the government. When he did, he had the county surveyor begin at the post on the Choctaw boundary, 165 feet from the river. Thomas had accepted the land, and the \$15,000 was paid to Rogers. Cross

was satisfied that this was the cause of all subsequent difficulties. The government had thus lost its most effective means of coercing Rogers into a proper execution of his contract.

Notwithstanding this error on Thomas' part, Cross didn't concur with the opinion advanced by Jesup in his letter of August 4 to Thomas that the United States was without remedy. Though he made no pretensions to being a lawyer, Cross refused to believe the reception by a subordinate of an imperfect title released one of the principals from the obligations of his contract. This was especially true when it deprived the government of its original rights. At no time had this authority been delegated to Major Thomas. The United States, as Cross pointed out, still held Rogers' bond for the faithful performance of his agreement.

Cross was convinced Rogers intended his proposition precisely as the commissioners had understood it: That he was to convey 100 yards of river front on the Arkansas. Moreover, the colonel felt Rogers would have agreed to a survey if it had been made before the town was laid off. In marking out his town, Rogers had relied on the ex parte survey.

When Cross had discussed the situation with Rogers before returning to Washington, he had admitted as much. Rogers had declared that 20 or 30 feet of frontage would have been sufficient. He had only advanced his claim to the strip of land between the river and the fort, when Major Thomas had run his survey which threw the eastern boundary of the reservation into the town. These lots, several of which had houses on them, had been sold by Rogers under "an honest conviction" that the public tract had been correctly located by his 1838 survey.

Cross was satisfied the government could win its case if it were taken to court. Under the existing circumstances, however, he thought it would be best to compromise and thereby avoid litigation. The solution advanced by the colonel was similar to the one previously



broached by Thomas. He recommended that the Military road be the eastern boundary between the reservation and the town. Rogers had indicated a willingness to accede to this settlement.

In a letter to General Jesup, Rogers promised to convey to the United States the 58.149 square feet of land claimed by him west of the Military road. Rogers announced that he would give a quit claim "to all privileges he may be entitled to, if any, to the river front of the survey as made and deeded, on condition, that the...Military road, as at present established between the town and the enclosure of the public land, is to stand open and to remain a public highway." <sup>58</sup>

Thus, after ten months of bitter wrangling, the boundary dispute was finally settled. The final solution was identical to the compromise advocated by Major Thomas the previous June.

## FORT SMITH 1838-1871

### Chapter III

#### Major Thomas Clashes with John Rogers

##### Notes

1 Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, 1838 to Oct. 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

2 Samuel McRee of North Carolina graduated from the U. S. Military Academy in the Class of 1820. The new 2d lieutenant was posted to the 8th Infantry. When the 8th Infantry was disbanded on June 1, 1821, McRee was reassigned to the 1st Infantry. McRee had been promoted to captain on December 31, 1831. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 682.

3 Thomas to Stanton, July 15, and July 20, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

4 Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, 1838 to Oct. 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Two of the drafts were for \$15,000, one on the Planter's Bank of Natchez and the other on the Citizen's Bank of New Orleans. The draft on the Receiver of Public Money at Ouachita was for \$10,000. In May, Thomas had sent an agent to collect the funds at Ouachita. The agent had been turned down, the receiver, stating that he had no advise that the draft had been drawn. Thomas to Stanton, Aug. 17, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

5 Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, 1838 to Oct. 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

6 Thomas to Stanton, August 17, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

7 Arbuckle to Jones, Aug. 3, 1839 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

8 Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, 1838 to Oct. 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

9 Thomas to Jesup, March 12, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

10 Thomas' Report of Operations at Fort Smith, 1838 to Oct. 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Since he still thought he would be relieved at an early date, Thomas recommended that his successor hire "a sufficient number of good mechanics in one of our Eastern cities, to serve for at least one year -- part of their pay being retained until discharge. A few laborers and quarry men, should also be hired on the same terms, and at least one hundred soldiers employed constantly. If soldiers cannot be obtained all the laborers sh. be bought on -- Such as are obtained here are not to equal to those to be obtained at the North and demand higher wages for the same service."

11 Ibid.

12 Thomas to Jesup, Jan. 12, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

13 Thomas to Jesup, Jan. 10, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

14 Ibid.

15 Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, July 1838 to Oct. 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

16 Thomas to Jesup, Jan. 31, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

17 Thomas to Jesup, Feb. 28, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

18 Thomas to Jesup, Feb. 28, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

19 Henry to Thomas, March 1, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

20 Thomas to Belknap, March 3, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Since the new warehouse would be used for the receiving and storage of rations destined for delivery to Forts

Gibson and Wayne, Thomas felt its construction costs should be charged against the Quartermaster's Department and not against the appropriation made by Congress for erecting new works on the frontier.

21 Thomas to Jesup, March 6, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Thomas assured Jesup that except for the dispute regarding the detailing of men, no difficulties existed between himself and Belknap. "This business, being purely diplomatic," didn't interfere with their intercourse on other matters. Companies D, F, and K had reached Fort Smith on December 28, 1839.

22 Ibid.

23 Thomas to Jesup, March 2, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

24 Thomas to Jesup, March 13, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

25 Rogers to Arkansas Senators, Feb. 10, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).

26 Earhart to Thomas, March 14, 1840; Rogers to Harris, March 20, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).

27 Ibid.

28 Thomas to Rogers, March 13, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).

29 Henry to Thomas, March 14, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).

30 Thomas to Rogers, March 14, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).

31 Ibid.

32 Thomas to Belknap, March 14, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).

33 Henry to Thomas, March 16, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).

34 Thomas to Belknap, March 17, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).

35 Thomas to Rogers, March 14, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).

36 Thomas to Jesup, March 22, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).

- 37 Rogers to Harris, March 20, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).
- 38 Fulton, Sevier, and Cross to Poinsett, Apr. 13, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Poinsett to Fulton, Sevier, and Cross, June 4, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).
- 41 Arbuckle to Rogers, June 1, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).
- 42 Thomas to Jesup, March 13, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.), Thomas to Belknap, March 14, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Thomas to Jesup, June 3, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).
- 45 Rogers to Jesup, May 15, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 46 Thomas to Rogers, May 20 and May 21, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).
- 47 Rogers to Thomas, May 22, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).
- 48 Thomas to Rogers, May 25, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).
- 49 Thomas to Jesup, June 3, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).
- 50 Thomas to Jesup, June 24, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 51 Rogers to Cross, July 14, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).
- 52 Cross to Poinsett, July 15, 1840 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).

- 53 Jesup to Thomas, Aug. 4, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent.).
- 54 Thomas to Jesup, Sept. 2, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 55 Thomas to Jesup, Jan. 21, 1841 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File). When Thomas had left Fort Smith, the Military road had veered to the west at a point about one-third of the way from the river to the Section 16. It was his thinking that the road should be straightened and kept at its present width, 120 feet.
- 56 Thomas to Jesup, Feb. 4, 1841 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).
- 57 Jesup to Cross, March 20, 1841 (National Archives, Record Group 49, Records of GLO, Ft. Smith, AMR File).
- 58 Cross to Jesup, May 15, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). In return, the United States would give up its claim to 29.070 square feet of land east of the Military road.

## FORT SMITH 1838-1871

### Chapter IV

#### The Funds are Curtailed and Work on Fort Smith is Stopped

At the time of his dispute with Rogers over the ferry in March 1840, Thomas made an arrangement with Lieutenant Lee, who was in charge of the construction of the Little Rock Arsenal. This understanding would enable the officers to avoid competing against one another for the limited labor available. Neither project superintendent was to employ men discharged by the other for misconduct. Individuals released because of bad health or because they were surplus were to receive certificates attesting to this fact. <sup>1</sup>

In April a steamboat reached Fort Smith from New Orleans. Aboard the vessel were a number of stonemasons, whom Major Clark had hired and sent to help Thomas. The additional masons enabled Thomas to increase the number of men working on the walls of the garrison.

Observing that Hull and Hixon were rafting timber down the Poteau, Thomas called on Browne repeatedly and sought to talk him into honoring his contract. Browne continued to balk. Another appeal to Captain Rogers, who was one of Browne's guarantors, had no effect. Neither Browne nor Rogers would put their reasons for the failure to raft the logs down to the sawmill into writing. Consequently, Thomas was unable to forward documentary evidence to Washington, regarding Browne's refusal to fulfill his contract. A shortage of manpower kept the major from sending any of his crew to get out the logs.

A shipment of empty barrels was sent to Captain Davis at Fort Gibson. After being filled with lime, the barrels were returned to Fort Smith. <sup>2</sup>

Thomas, on May 1, mailed a lengthy report to General Jesup. In the two months since his last report, work on the walls had progressed rapidly. The post was now completely enclosed: 700 feet of wall to four feet, 400 feet to five feet, 492 feet to six feet, and 350 feet to seven feet above the level of the parade ground. Four of the gateposts which were of hewn stone had been erected to heights of from six to seven feet. Working parties had begun filling up the blockhouse gorges. As soon as this project was completed, the post with the addition of a garrison would be ready for defense in case of attack.

Except for some unlooked for misfortune, even more could have been accomplished. There had been a rapid rise on the Arkansas during the second half of April. On the final week of the month, the water was the highest it had been in the 21 months Thomas had been at Fort Smith. Most of the quarry was inundated. The stonecutters could work only the upper fringes of the quarry and hauling had to be suspended. There was very little stone on hand at the time of the rise, so the masons were compelled to slow down. While the major had added to his force of stonemasons, the strength of the quarry detail had remained constant. Consequently, at the time that the quarry was flooded, the supply of cut stone on hand was small.

The high water likewise kept Thomas' from getting logs from the bottom lands on the left bank of the Poteau. Heavy rains had pelted the area. Even the high ground on the Fort Smith side of the Poteau was "so wet and miry" that it was almost impossible to snake logs to the mill. Within a short time, the sawyer had exhausted the small number of logs on hand, along with those sent by Captain Belknap to be turned into lumber for use in constructing quarters at Cantonment Belknap. The mill had to shut down. Thomas utilized this opportunity to install a second saw. At the same time, the sawyer undertook to fit up and gear the circular saw and lathe.



As soon as the water dropped, Thomas assured Jesup, he would detail the maximum number of men possible to get out logs. Undaunted by his sad experience with Browne and Smith, Thomas welcomed applications from several individuals to supply pine logs to the mill. Before executing a contract, the men ascended the Poteau. After reconnoitering the resources of the area, they promised to return and negotiate an agreement with the government.

As planned, the old log storehouse at the landing on the Arkansas River had been taken down. It was replaced by a substantial frame building, 110 feet in length and 25 feet in width. The new structure which was one and one-half stories was covered with weatherboarding and was underpinned with stone. As of May 1, the upper floor had not been laid. Even so, the warehouse was ready to receive the commissary stores when they arrived.

Thomas' efforts to contract out the manufacture of bricks had failed. All the interested parties asked a price which Thomas felt was unfair. He accordingly issued instructions to get the brickyard ready for operation. Several thousand bricks had been burned in April. The weather, however, was so wet and gloomy that Thomas ordered work suspended. Meanwhile, the laborers assigned to the yard were kept busy digging clay. This would expedite production when work at the yard was resumed.

The incessant rain which drenched the Fort Smith area in April brought to a stop work on another project which Thomas had undertaken. A large number of men had been put to work digging cellars for the barracks and quarters. Thomas had hoped to wall the cellars, and "raise the buildings ready for the first floor." Since there was a large amount of stone on hand suitable for cellars, Thomas planned to have the crew continue this work as soon as the weather permitted.

Having received Jesup's note granting him permission, Thomas had detailed a number of laborers with teams to build the fence along the Military road between the town and the fort. All told, the fence

which commenced on the bank of the Arkansas and ended on the Poteau, enclosed about 130 acres. Hereafter, Thomas wouldn't have to fret about the public cattle straying off the reservation when turned out to pasture. At the same time, the citizens' livestock would no longer be permitted to graze around the workshops and buildings.

After completing the warehouse, Thomas found that he had little use for carpenters. All but five were discharged. The ones retained were put to work repairing carts, wheelbarrows, and any other tasks which men of their trade could be expected to do. The blacksmith found plenty to keep him busy. Many hours were spent sharpening the masons' and stonecutters' tools. Because of its hardness, the tools used for splitting the stone required constant attention.

The coal burned in the smithy was mined eight miles from the reservation. Since work on the post had started, the blacksmith had used over 3,000 bushels.<sup>3</sup>

With the approach of summer, grass on the prairies near Fort Smith grew rapidly. It soon touched the horses' bellies. The haying season was at hand. Major Thomas announced that he would receive proposals for supplying 100 tons of hay for the public livestock. The hay would be stacked near the stable on or before August 15. People wishing to bid on this contract were to have their sealed proposals on the major's desk by June 29. Fourteen individuals submitted proposals, which ranged from \$15 to \$9.50 per ton. As soon as L. M. Allison and Crosby, who had filed the low bid, had put up a performance bond, Thomas awarded them the contract.<sup>4</sup>

Much of Thomas' time during the first three weeks of July was spent balancing his books for the 2d Quarter and preparing estimates of the funds required to carry him through the 3d Quarter.

On July 13, Thomas informed Jesup that he needed \$49,200. Of this, \$9,200 should be charged to the Quartermaster's Department and the balance to the appropriation for constructing barracks and quarters on the frontier. Thomas complained to his superior that progress was being retarded, because of a shrinkage of construction

funds. By the time his communication reached Washington, the major trusted, Congress would have made a new appropriation for building posts on the frontier. Within the near future, Thomas promised to send the Department a breakdown on the cost of the various projects scheduled. <sup>5</sup>

The 26th Congress in its first session was plagued with fiscal difficulties. On July 21, the House of Representatives took up the bill appropriating money for military construction. Fort Smith was allotted \$50,000 by the legislators. Before the bill could clear the floor, Congressman Nathaniel Jones introduced a provision "empowering the President, in case of a deficit in the Treasury, to postpone until the close of next Congress, unless Congress shall sooner act on the subject such of the works provided for in the bill as he might deem the state of the Treasury to require." Jones' rider was adopted, and the appropriation bill passed by the House and the Senate. <sup>6</sup>

Although Congress had allotted funds to carry on construction at Fort Smith, the Jones' rider would compel the Quartermaster's Department to take drastic action. General Jesup was unable to send Thomas the \$40,000 needed for work on the garrison. On August 17, the general mailed the superintendent \$10,000 to be used in making disbursements for the services for which the Department was responsible. <sup>7</sup>

Thomas on July 22 forwarded his accounts for the 2d Quarter to Washington. (Unfortunately, only the major's "Monthly Summary Statement" for June can be located. [See Appendix C]). He called Jesup's attention to a discrepancy which he would find. Under the heading "Special Appropriation Barracks &c. on Western Frontier," Thomas had shown that he was due \$10,384.75 from the United States, while the accounts current indicated a balance of \$557.61. The reason: Thomas had been paying the construction people from accounts which were not charged in his accounts current against the United States. A shortage of construction money had compelled him to adopt this approach.

Expecting daily to receive additional funds, the harassed superintendent had refused to lay off any workmen. He knew that if they were discharged, it would be difficult to collect another group. To pay the men, the major had borrowed heavily from George and Charles Birnie. The remainder, Thomas had paid out of his own pocket.

Thomas felt confident that Jesup would approve his action, especially since he had received no orders to lay off any men. He had explained to his people that they would have to wait for Congress to act before they could draw "a large part of their pay." <sup>8</sup>

Colonel Arbuckle inspected the work in August. The colonel was "much gratified" with the progress of the fort. Most sections of the wall had been raised to seven feet. He found the stone work had been erected "in a very handsome and durable manner." Arbuckle was especially impressed with Thomas' sawmill. According to the colonel, it was the best he had ever seen. If it could be furnished with logs, Arbuckle believed the mill could easily supply enough lumber to complete the public buildings at Forts Smiths and Gibson.

Arbuckle, who had spent many years on the Arkansas frontier, was familiar with the vast pine forests on the upper Poteau. The only problem he could foresee was getting the logs to the mill. He knew that for many months of each year the Poteau was unsuited to rafting. Arbuckle recommended to the War Department that a company of soldiers be detailed to clear the obstacles in the river. He felt it would take the men about one month to complete the task.

Returning to Fort Gibson, Arbuckle wrote General Jesup on August 24 of his visit to Fort Smith. Arbuckle was very complimentary of Major Thomas and his work. He had been disappointed to discover that a shortage of construction funds was threatening to prevent the early completion of the garrison. It was the colonel's considered opinion that Major Thomas had "with energy, skill and propriety discharged his duty at Fort Smith and that he will do much credit to himself and benefit to the country if he receives the necessary support from the Government to enable him to complete the duty required of him at the Post."

Arbuckle was well aware of the misunderstanding between Belknap and Thomas. It was a matter of deep regret to him that Belknap seemed unwilling to co-operate to assist the superintendent in completing the fort. "He is a good officer," Arbuckle observed, "yet he is of the opinion that the Commanding Officer ought to have direction of the work." The colonel was satisfied that this was the explanation of Belknap's lack of interest.

If there were no troubles with the Indians or foreign powers, Arbuckle felt, "the troops...ought to give efficient assistance in the collection of Lumber and materials, and in all respects when their services are required and may be useful...." <sup>9</sup>

When the mail reached Fort Smith on September 6, Major Thomas found a message from General Jesup dated August 11. The contents of this letter all but floored Thomas. Because of the passage of the Jones rider, work on Fort Smith was to be suspended. After placing his books in order, Thomas was to proceed to Florida Territory.

Thomas immediately acknowledged Jesup's dispatch. On doing so, he reported, work would be stopped as soon as possible. The only additional money which he would spend was to pay the men needed to stabilize and protect the public property during the winter.

Thomas was disturbed about the many stories which were being circulated regarding his operations at Fort Smith. In addition, there were the "unjust and illegal claims" preferred by the owners of the Dayton and the Itasca, and John Rogers. If feasible, Thomas would like to visit Washington, before going to his new station in Florida. This would afford him an opportunity of explaining his actions to his superiors.

The major notified Jesup that he was in need of money to pay off his people and the claims against the government for expenditures charged to the construction of the garrison. If these funds were not received in the near future, it would "be very injurious to the

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interest of many industrious and hard working men" who could not obtain additional work in the area and would have to move. 10

Jesup turned down Thomas' request to travel to Florida by way of Washington. There would be plenty of time to discuss his problems with the Department after he had completed his tour of duty in Florida. Apparently, the Department didn't place much credence in the rumors which cast aspersions on Thomas' official conduct at Fort Smith. 11

As the days passed and no funds arrived, Thomas grew desperate. He decided to turn to Colonel Arbuckle for assistance. Thomas visited the colonel at his Fort Gibson headquarters on September 19. He informed Arbuckle that he had been required to discontinue work on Fort Smith. Worse, he would have to discharge his mechanics and laborers without giving them their back pay.

When he learned of the major's difficulties, Arbuckle determined to approach Choctaw Agent Armstrong. The colonel knew the agent had a large sum of money on hand. He notified Armstrong on September 19 that Thomas needed \$30,000 to settle his accounts. The superintendent had assured the colonel that the 26th Congress on July 20 had appropriated \$50,000 for military construction at Fort Smith. As yet, Thomas hadn't received any of this money. He had been led to believe by his Washington sources that this money would soon be forthcoming. When it did, he would see that the funds borrowed from Armstrong were repaid. Arbuckle urged Armstrong to come to Thomas' assistance. If he didn't, the public credit would suffer; loyal employees who had worked long hours on the fort would be discharged without their hard earned wages. 12

Armstrong agreed to help. Thirty thousand dollars were turned over to Major Thomas. The major signed a receipt to repay this sum out of the "appropriation for Barracks and Defences at Fort Smith" for which he was accountable to the Treasury of the United States. 13

Writing to General Jesup of his good fortune on October 16, Thomas reported, through Arbuckle's intercession he had been able to borrow \$30,000 from Indian Superintendent Armstrong. This sum, plus the \$10,000 sent by the Treasury in accordance with Jesup's request, had enabled Thomas "to settle, and pay off all debts" accrued in the construction of the garrison. Not only had he paid off the special account for military construction, but also the disbursements made in favor of the Quartermaster's Department.

If he had failed to settle the expenditures made to carry out the normal functions of the Department, Lieutenant Henry would have been saddled with numerous unsettled commissary and quartermaster's accounts. Heretofore, Henry had been dependent on Thomas for funds used to purchase rations.

At the time work was stopped on the fort, the construction crew numbered upwards of 90 men, some of whose pay was nine months in arrears. Except for a few lucky individuals, the men had been unable to find employment in the Fort Smith neighborhood.

Captain Alexander had returned on September 30 from a tour of duty at Towson, and Thomas notified Jesup that he would be ready to leave as soon as he received his orders. The major promised to forward his accounts and returns by the next mail. In case there was a miscarriage, Thomas wanted the Quartermaster General to know that they had been sent. <sup>14</sup>

Four days later, Thomas mailed his "Semi-Annual Return of Stores on Hand" at the post as of September 30, to the Department. The stores had been inventoried and turned over to Captain Alexander.

The \$5726.94 which had been previously reported as due the superintendent had been more than balanced by the draft for \$10,000 from the Treasury Department which had reached Thomas' desk on October 5. As of October 20, the government's outstanding obligations were \$3,970. Thomas proposed to pay these claims before he left, provided the people to whom they were due returned from leave. If they didn't, he would let Captain Alexander settle their accounts. <sup>15</sup>

Thomas on October 26 mailed his final report of operations at Fort Smith to General Jesup. Work, he wrote, had been stopped on September 6 following the receipt of Jesup's letter to suspend operations. A few men had been retained for a week to ten days to place "the work in such a state that it could remain during the winter without injury." Before turning over the carts and wagons to Captain Alexander, Thomas had seen that they were repaired and painted. All the tools had been cleaned and stored. The steam engine used to run the mill had been "laid by, and every care taken to keep and preserve it...for future operations."

During the past building season, the walls of the garrison had been raised to seven feet above the foundations. (The foundations varied from two and one-half to five feet according to the configuration of the ground.) The wall presented an even surface. When work was resumed, the loopholes could be added.

Before receiving the stop order, rapid progress had been made on the five blockhouses. The gorges of two had been filled to the same level as the walls, "breaking off on the flanks and faces, upon which the piers for the arches are laid, and raised two or three feet" above the top of the foundation. The foundations were solid and about five feet wide and from two and one-half to nine feet high. Work on a third blockhouse had been commenced. At the time he was directed to suspend the project, the piers had been raised about two feet, but the gorge hadn't been closed.

The high water from the Arkansas which had flooded the quarry in April fell in May. As soon as it subsided, Thomas reinforced the detail assigned to the quarry. Large amounts of stone had been cut. Thomas wanted to make sure that never again would work lag because of a shortage of stone. When construction was stopped, between 7,000 and 8,000 cubic feet of stone was stacked on the parade ground within the walls.



Thomas was pleased with the operation of the quarry during his final months on the Arkansas. It had been opened so 100 men, with a requisite number of teams, could be employed in it without interfering with one another. The empty carts could enter by one road and leave by another. In the future, the major informed Jesup, stone could "be obtained at much less labour and expense" than before the expansion of the quarry.

With the advent of dry weather in May, a detail had resumed digging the cellars for the barracks and quarters. At the same time, the masons worked on the walls. The masons were kept at this task until they had finished the basements and were ready to start on the first floors. The structure slated to be occupied by the commandant had a front of 44 feet and a width of 38 feet. Flanking this structure (two on each side) were the company officers' quarters. Each of these had a frontage of 25 feet and a depth of 38 feet. Officers' row would be "on the side or front next the Arkansas river." On the opposite of the parade ground, (30 foot by 60 foot) basements for two barracks had been built. The distance between the barracks and quarters was 200 feet.

The first floor of the buildings would be four feet above the parade ground in front and six feet in the rear. Three stairs would be required to descend into the kitchens and messrooms which were to be in the basements. According to Thomas, the barracks and quarters would be "well lighted & ventilated -- the windows in front, will contain 9 lights each; in the rear 12 lights each -- of the required size," with the entrances in the rear. The walls were to be two feet thick, while the height of the first story was to be eight and one-half feet in the clear.

"These buildings, or rather basements," Thomas explained: contain sufficient material and work, to have completed the walls [of the fort] to the height of twelve feet, had it been placed upon them. The stone being of smaller

kind than I thought advisable to put in the lower part of the walls, (below the loopholes) I carried on the building at the sametime with the walls, until I had completed them for the present. Yet I do not wish you to understand that it is of a description unsuitable for either, but having large stone it could be used to more advantage, with the labour; on the walls than on the buildings, and having commenced them I judged it best to precede as reported.

Thomas announced that the past season had been unfavorable for brickmaking. He accordingly had kept only a small force in the yard. Nevertheless, 220,000 bricks had been moulded and placed in the kiln, ready to be fired. These bricks, Thomas advised, should be kilned during the winter, especially since there was plenty of wood available at the yard.

Because it was less expensive, Thomas recommended that, except for the basements, all the buildings be constructed of stone. The brick should be used for partition walls, chimneys, &c.

It was June before the water had drained off the bottom lands west of the Poteau. This had prevented Thomas' loggers from getting out timber in that area. Even after the ground had dried, Thomas was confronted with difficulties when he sent men across the Poteau for logs. They returned to the post, complaining of the heat, the mosquitos, and fever. Such logs as could be obtained for the mill had to be purchased or cut on Section 16. Because of the operations of Captain Belknap, the timber which remained on Section 16 had little value. Many logs had to be sawed to obtain a small amount of useable lumber. When work was stopped, the lumber on hand was chiefly of the type used for flooring joists. Because of a shortage of timber, Thomas had had to close the mill on several occasions. On doing so, the men who worked there were assigned other tasks.

At the time that operations were shut down in September, two hand saws were running, while the machinery used to turn the circular saws had finally been installed. Thomas suggested to Alexander that to prevent injury to the saws and lathe, he had better disassemble and store them.

Continued efforts on the part of Major Thomas to get Browne and Smith to honor their agreement to raft the timber down the Poteau had been rebuffed. When he tried to talk contract with others, they refused, pointing out that through neglect the logs had been scattered.

His discussions with Browne convinced Thomas that the guarantors, especially Rogers, were more culpable than the contractors. He was satisfied that if Rogers had wished, he could have compelled Browne to fulfill his agreement. Upon leaving Fort Smith, Thomas planned to turn the contract and bond over to the U. S. Attorney at Little Rock. He would be guided by his advice on the subject.

The few men detailed by Captain Belknap had been used to grade the ground in and around the work and at the mill. Thomas found their services very helpful. According to camp rumor, Belknap had said that the men sent to work for Thomas were his misfits and would never make good soldiers. 16

After being formally relieved by Captain Alexander on October 26, Thomas took passage on a steamboat.

It was January 1844 before Thomas got around to drafting his "Official Report" of the operations which he had superintended at Fort Smith. He relied heavily on the reports previously forwarded to the Quartermaster General. Thomas wanted this document to be more than just a narrative history of the project. He wished his superiors to know why the work had cost more than the estimates had anticipated and the reasons for delay. An addendum (See Appendix D) was attached to the report, showing in condensed form the nature and extent of the work done under Thomas' supervision. 17

A review of his papers strengthened Thomas' view that the failure of the commandants (first Bonneville and then Belknap) to detail large numbers of men as repeatedly directed to assist with the construction had "caused confusion, delay, and unnecessary expense, to the United States." Thomas was satisfied that "upwards of twenty thousand dollars... would have been saved by the U. States by the employment of one company of troops, and that double the amount of work would have been done."

If the troops stationed near Fort Smith had been "undergoing, or receiving military instruction," during this time, Thomas wrote, there might have been some excuse for not complying with Adjutant General Jones' orders to assist with the construction of the garrison. Far from carrying out an intensive training program, Belknap kept most of his battalion on fatigue duty. The men of the 3d Infantry had been detailed to build "an open and defenseless cantonment of logs, within a mile of the new work." When not doing this, they were clearing land for cultivation and opening unauthorized roads. Branding these projects an unnecessary expense to the government, Thomas charged, they were absolutely useless, because as soon as the new fort was ready for occupancy, the cantonment would be abandoned.

Since he hadn't been in charge of construction at Cantonment Belknap, Thomas was unable to ascertain the expense of the labor involved. A table prepared for General Jesup by Thomas, however, contained an estimate of the funds spent on the cantonment in the period 1838-39. Without taking into consideration the pay for "extra duty," the figure came to \$9,759.37. (See Appendix E).

When the figure for the cost of the construction at Fort Smith up to the time work was suspended in September 1840 was turned over to the War Department, Thomas believed a considerable deduction should be made because of the property on hand. The building materials and tools which had been turned over to Captain Alexander would be used when construction was resumed. 18

## FORT SMITH 1838-1871

### Chapter IV

#### The Funds are Curtailed and Work on Fort Smith is Stopped

##### Notes

- 1 Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, 1838 to Oct. 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Thomas to Jesup, May 1, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 4 Thomas to Jesup, July 3, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). At the same time, Lieutenant Henry had called for proposals to supply Cantonment Belknap with 100 tons of hay. Henry was unable to get his hay on as good terms as Thomas. He was forced to pay \$10.75 per ton. Henry to Jesup, July 11, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 5 Thomas to Jesup, July 13, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Of the \$9,200 to be charged to the Quartermaster's Department: \$1,600 were for Barracks and Quarters; \$1,000 for transportation of baggage; \$6,000 for transportation of troops and supplies; \$600 for contingencies.
- 6 The Congressional Globe, Containing Sketches of the Debates and Proceedings of the 26th Congress, First Session, Blair and Rives, editors, Vol. VIII (Washington, 1840), 544-546.
- 7 Thomas to Jesup, July 13, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 8 Thomas to Jesup, July 22, 1840; Monthly Summary Statement for June 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 9 Arbuckle to Jesup, Aug. 24, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 10 Thomas to Jesup, Sept. 6, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Arbuckle to Armstrong, Sept. 19, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 13 Receipt for \$30,000, signed by Thomas, Sept. 19, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). When news that Armstrong had advanced Thomas \$30,000 reached Washington in November, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Crawford addressed a note to General Jesup. He asked the Quartermaster General to replace this sum by a remittance to Fort Gibson. Crawford changed his mind three days later when it was discovered that the money loaned to Thomas to settle his accounts had been obtained from the U. S. Bank of Pennsylvania. Getting in touch with Jesup, Crawford asked him to have the draft drawn on that bank. Jesup on December 15 referred the note given by Thomas to Armstrong to the Treasury Department. It was accompanied by a request that the \$30,000 borrowed by Thomas and expended on account of the "Barracks and Quarters" at Fort Smith be credited to the Indian Department. Crawford to Jesup, Nov. 19, 1840; Jesup to Treasury Dept., Dec. 15, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 14 Thomas to Jesup, Oct. 16, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 15 Thomas to Jesup, Oct. 20, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 16 Thomas to Jesup, Oct. 26, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 17 Thomas to Jesup, Jan. 8, 1844 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 18 Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, 1838 to Oct. 1840; Thomas to Jesup, Jan. 8, 1844 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). The public property turned over to Captain Alexander

by Major Thomas included: "steam sawmill with engine of 30 horse power & two [band] saws, [two] circular saws, Turning lather &c. &c. -- Brick, Lime, Stone (cut & rough), Lumber, Iron, Nails, Irons, Paints, oil, Powder, Locks, Hinges, Rope, Steel, Lead, copper, Carts, wagons, Drays, Wheelbarrows, Horses, Mules, Oxen, Harness, Hay, &c. &c. and a large supply of Carpentry, Masons, Brick Layers, Blacksmiths & other mechanics, and Laborers tools of all kinds, many of them new, and all in good order for service."

FORT SMITH 1838-1871

Chapter V

Captain Alexander Runs into Troubles

News that Major Thomas was to be relieved of duty at Fort Smith was not long in reaching Colonel Arbuckle at Fort Gibson. Past experiences had convinced Arbuckle that the complaints lodged against Thomas by "a few citizens residing at or near Fort Smith" were unjust. Writing General Jesup on November 24, Arbuckle expressed doubt whether there was another officer in the Quartermaster's Department as well qualified as Thomas to "complete the military work under construction at Fort Smith." Arbuckle hoped Thomas would be required to complete the project. If so, the colonel was satisfied that he would do credit to the service and himself. <sup>1</sup>

Before turning over his duties at Fort Smith to Captain Alexander, Thomas had discharged all the employees, except three men. These would be retained on the Quartermaster's payroll, one as forage master and the others as hostlers. These men would be used to take care of the public horses and oxen. <sup>2</sup>

With work on Fort Smith suspended, Alexander could look forward to a quiet winter on the frontier. Beyond watching for trespassers and persons who might have designs on breaking into the storehouses and stealing government property, there would be little Alexander in his capacity of project supervisor would have to do. As "Quartermaster", however, he would have to look after the numerous requisitions made by the post quartermaster and commissary officers at Cantonment Belknap.

One of Alexander's first official acts on relieving Major Thomas was to examine the proposals received for supplying corn to the livestock for which he was responsible. Of the four men submitting



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1841

bids, J. T. Main's price of 62½ cents per bushel was low. Main was given a contract for 1,000 bushels of corn. Soon after, he had bargained with Main, Alexander received a request from Lieutenant Henry at Cantonment Belknap for 500 bushels of corn. Alexander promptly ammended the contract to read 1,500 bushels, which was agreeable with Main.

The heavy rains which drenched Crawford County at the end of October and during the first days of November 1840, worried Captain Alexander. He feared that the 200,000 bricks which had been moulded would be ruined. Alexander on November 4 signed a contract to have the bricks burned. The price asked and paid was \$150. <sup>3</sup>

Captain William W. Lear of the 4th Infantry had replaced Captain Belknap as commander at Cantonment Belknap on September 25, 1840. Lear had been accompanied to his new station by his company, E. At the time of Lear's arrival, there were only four companies of Belknap's battalion at the cantonment. Company D, 3d Infantry had left for Fort Jesup on July 10. As soon as the soldiers of the 4th Infantry had moved into the camp, Belknap's battalion started for Tampa Bay, East Florida. <sup>4</sup>

Upon reaching his new post, Captain Lear was shocked to discover that the commandant's quarters had not been completed. Since the autumn was unusually mild, Captain Lear was not too concerned at first. But with a change in the weather, he lost no time in calling this situation to Colonel Arbuckle's attention.

The colonel on January 13, 1841, had his adjutant draw up a set of instructions for delivery to Captain Alexander. To assist Lear in rounding out his quarters, Alexander was to supply him with planks, glass, nails, tools, &c. Lime would be shipped from Fort Gibson. <sup>5</sup>

Realizing that there was little business requiring his attention at Fort Smith during the winter, Alexander left for St. Louis at the end of January. His purpose was to secure operating funds for

his department. After drawing the necessary money from the officer in charge of the St. Louis Quartermaster's Depot, Alexander prepared to return to his station. He was delayed by low water in the Arkansas, and it was the end of March before the captain was back at the garrison.

Before tending to anything else, Alexander had to catch up with his paper work. The report of persons hired and articles expended in February had to be filled out and signed. Since it would be late in reaching Jesup's desk, a note explaining the reason for the delay was attached.

The supply of corn on hand for the livestock was getting short. Alexander accordingly issued a call for bids to deliver 5,000 or more bushels of corn to the army. When he examined the six proposals submitted, the captain decided that they were all unreasonable. He resorted to a policy of making a number of private contracts. In this way, Alexander was able to secure the desired quantity at 62½ cents per bushel. <sup>6</sup>

Colonel Cross of the Quartermaster's Department reached Fort Smith on April 3. Accompanied by Captain Alexander, Cross inspected the reservation.

Cross found the exterior walls, bastions, and foundations of the barracks and quarters just as they had been when Superintendent Thomas' construction crew had stopped work. The colonel observed that the materials used in building the walls and basements was "good, and the workmanship faithfully executed."

The sawmill was not in operation, so Cross could not judge its efficiency. Cross was told by several men who had been at the post the previous summer that the mill "performed well."

Grave doubts were expressed to Cross by people familiar with the area whether an adequate supply of logs could ever be rafted down the Poteau to keep the mill in full time operation. This difficulty they attributed to the Poteau's crooked course and the rapidity of the current when the stream was high. The consensus was that if logs in sufficient quantities were to be rafted, the channel would have to be cleared of obstructions.

Since the Poteau was "a very inconsiderable stream, subject to sudden and high rises of short duration," Cross knew that the rafting season would be short. Since there wouldn't be sufficient time in 1841 to carry out a project to improve the channel, Cross recommended to Alexander that he close a contract with a local man who had offered to bring down a raft.

Cross expressed keen regret that it had been impossible to keep the mill in operation during the winter. Since it hadn't, there would be no opportunity to season the lumber before it was used.

Surveying the building materials which were on hand and ready for use when work was resumed, Cross found: 450,000 bricks, 49,858 feet of oak boards, 11,140 pounds of nails, 10,289 pounds of assorted iron, 1,348 pounds of steel, and 300 perch of prepared stone.

At the public stable, Cross counted 14 horses, 11 mules, and 16 oxen. These animals had been on forage since work had been suspended. Cross pronounced them well groomed and in excellent condition. Out of the hay cut the previous summer on the prairie, about 100 tons remained.

If work were resumed on the fort, Cross reported, the principal difficulty to be encountered by Captain Alexander would be in obtaining a "sufficient number of good mechanics." The ones discharged by Major Thomas had for the most part left the area. Cross, on reporting to General Jesup, recommended that if operations were resumed the recruiting of a good labor force should be given top priority. <sup>7</sup>

Shortly after Colonel Cross' departure, Alexander had another visitor. Colonel Arbuckle had been thinking about the possibility of transferring the arms for the Arkansas Militia currently stored at Fayetteville to Fort Smith.

The colonel felt that the government might be able to make use for this purpose of the building on the reservation which had been built as a "Sutler's Store" by Harris and Labut a number of years before. As Arbuckle recalled, Harris in erecting the store had been

given permission "to use the best of the logs of the old Block Houses" which had been "thrown down." The expense incurred by Harris and Labut, who had used the storehouse after his partner had moved to Fort Gibson, had been considerable. Harris and Labut had told Arbuckle that they would be willing to sell the building for half what they had invested.<sup>8</sup>

Before deciding anything definite, Arbuckle requested that Lieutenant Lee of the Ordnance Department visit Fort Smith and report if there were any suitable buildings available for that purpose. Lee found that there were none. He believed that Alexander could erect an ordnance depot at slight expense. Writing to Chief of Ordnance Colonel George Bomford on April 23, Lee recommended that General Jesup be asked to direct Alexander to "erect a proper log or frame building, as an ordnance Store House."

Bomford referred Lee's letter to General Jesup. The Quartermaster General on May 13 issued instructions for Captain Alexander "to prepare a suitable building for the reception of arms."<sup>9</sup>

As the months slipped by and there was no resumption of work on Fort Smith, the Arkansans began to fret. The representatives of the western counties carried their complaints to the state capital. Governor Archibald Yell wrote John Bell, who had recently replaced Poinsett as Secretary of War. (On March 4, William Henry Harrison had been inaugurated as ninth President of the United States. Harrison had appointed Bell, Secretary of War.)

In his June 5 letter to the Secretary, Yell reported that the citizens of the frontier settlements were becoming alarmed because the work on Forts Smith and Wayne had stopped. He believed this sufficient reason to call Bell's attention to these posts which were "so essential to the Security and peace of the Citizens of Ark." According to the governor's Fort Smith informants, no part of the appropriation made by the 1st Session, 26th Congress, or instructions relating to it had been received at that point. Yell was satisfied

That the only excuse the government had for the failure to spend the \$50,000 earmarked for construction at Fort Smith was the embarrassed state of the nation's finances. The Arkansas chief executive felt Bell wouldn't "hesitate [sic] to put the Country in a state of defence at least equal to the Means furnished you by the Government. "

Although no specific appropriation had been voted for Fort Wayne, Yell believed, if Bell would just consider the exposed condition of the western border of Arkansas, he would "forward its Completion as rapidly as your limited means will allow."

If the War Department encountered any difficulty in finding a suitable officer to supervise the work at Fort Smith, Yell suggested that Lieutenant Lee would be a good choice. Yell had been informed that by July 1 the funds allotted for the construction of the Little Rock Arsenal would be exhausted, Lee and his construction people would then be available to send to Fort Smith. <sup>10</sup>

Bell referred Yell's letter to General Jesup. Along with the message went a request: The Secretary wanted to know how much money had been spent and how much more it was estimated would be needed to complete Forts Smith and Wayne. Jesup on checking with his clerks report that \$151,844.49 had been spent to date on Fort Smith and \$38,311.38 on Fort Wayne. No reliable figures were at hand as to what it would cost to complete the two posts. At present, the department had \$56,667.98 available for use at Fort Smith and \$6,046.73 on Fort Wayne. <sup>11</sup>

Jesup was unhappy to discover there were no estimates on hand as to what it would cost to finish Fort Smith. A letter was forwarded to Major Thomas on July 19, asking him to submit a detailed estimate of the sum required to complete the works.

Over two months elapsed before Thomas received Jesup's communication. When Thomas replied on October 5, he announced that he could not give his general the requested data. The major admitted that he had spent considerable time working on the desired information during the spring and summer of 1840. Much of the requisite information had been collected by the time work had been suspended and he had been relieved.

On transferring to Florida, Thomas had not brought his papers with him. Consequently, he had no data on which to base an estimate. The major hoped Jesup would understand his reluctance to send in figures which he was satisfied could not be relied upon. <sup>12</sup>

Letters such as the one sent in by Governor Yell were not the only ones received by the Secretary of War regarding Fort Smith. President Harrison had died on April 4. Vice President John Tyler had become chief executive. Harrison had at least one ardent admirer at Fort Smith. On August 9, Thomas Earhart wrote Bell proposing that the post under construction at Fort Smith be named Fort Harrison in honor of the late President.

Earhart's letter reached the Secretary's desk on September 8, five days before Bell resigned from Tyler's cabinet. It was October 12 before Tyler appointed John C. Spencer to Bell's place as Secretary of War. A Democratic administration was not likely to name the fort in honor of a Whig. Consequently, Earhart's proposal was quietly placed in the letters received file. <sup>13</sup>

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In June, Captain Alexander advertised for proposals to furnish 75 tons of hay to the Fort Smith Quartermaster's Department. Nineteen men sent in bids. Alexander on June 25 accepted A. Copeland's proposal to supply the designated amount of hay at \$7.93 a ton. <sup>14</sup>

Succumbing to the pressure exerted by Governor Yell and others, the government finally decided to release the \$50,000 which the 1st Session of the 26th Congress had appropriated for construction of barracks and quarters at Fort Smith. Before doing so, Jesup restudied Cross' report. He agreed with Cross that it would be wise to first recruit mechanics and laborers. Lieutenant James R. Irwin was given the task of engaging the necessary personnel at Cincinnati and Louisville.

On August 21, Jesup sent Lieutenant Irwin his instructions. The lieutenant was to:

employ for work at Fort Smith an Engineer, a fireman and two sawyers for the public Steam Saw mill -- A competent master carpenter, and from six to eight good carpenters -- A master mason & Brick layer, and from ten to fifteen masons & brick layers: also five black smiths, ten teamsters & Hostlers, and twenty five labourers.

All persons employed were to be "competent, sober, honest, good tempered & industrious." References would be required of all applicants. "Liberal but not extravagant wages" would be allowed, the pay beginning when the men left the port of embarkation. Irwin was to charter a boat to provide the men with transportation for themselves and their baggage. A clause would be inserted in the mechanics' contracts that "when there is no employment for them in their respective branches of Service they are to perform the Service of laborers if required by the Quarter Master or other superintendent." 15

In accordance with Jesup's instructions, Irwin proceeded to Cincinnati. Irwin, on his arrival in the Ohio River City, was disappointed to discover that wage scales were higher than on the Atlantic coast. "Good mechanics" demanded and were paid from \$1.75 to \$2.50 per day. Irwin considered himself fortunate to secure and organize a balanced construction party. To get the necessary men to agree to go to Fort Smith, Irwin contracted to pay the "master-workmen" \$90 and two rations; the journeymen \$55 and one ration; the bricklayers \$45 and one ration; and the laborers \$25 and one ration per month. (For a copy of a contract signed by Irwin with one of the men see Appendix F.) The lieutenant on September 8 notified General Jesup that he had hired the stipulated number of mechanics and laborers and was ready to send them to Fort Smith. A steamboat, the Rialto, had been chartered for this purpose.

Because of low water on the Arkansas, Irwin determined to postpone the boat's departure from Cincinnati until the end of the third week of September. 16

General Jesup had written Captain Alexander on August 18, alerting him to the decision to "resume operations on the works at Fort Smith at as early a day as practicable." Arbuckle was notified that Lieutenant Irwin had been ordered to the Ohio River cities to employ a corps of mechanics and laborers. If any of the men who had worked for Major Thomas had remained in the vicinity or were at Little Rock, Alexander was authorized to secure their services. Alexander was to make a survey to ascertain the number of men which he could "advantageously" employ on the works.

Prompt measures would be instituted to obtain a supply of logs so the sawmill could be put back into operation. Alexander was to discuss with Colonel Zachary Taylor, who had been ordered to Fort Smith, as "to the particular finish" for the barracks and quarters. As soon as possible, Jesup wanted "a detailed report of the present state of the works, together with an estimate of the probable amount that will be required to complete them according to the original plan, for four companies." 17

Alexander received Jesup's dispatch on September 10. After making a number of inquiries, the captain replied on the 19th that he was unable to estimate how many mechanics and laborers could be hired locally and at Little Rock. Alexander felt confident that as many as could be "advantageously" used could be secured as soon as construction was resumed. Most of the men who had worked for Thomas and had remained in Arkansas were known to be anxiously awaiting employment.

An engineer had been hired and given the task of putting the sawmill back in operation. Rumors that work was about to be resumed on the garrison had sent a number of the settlers scurrying up the Poteau. Correctly deducing that Alexander would need timber in large quantities, these people had started felling trees. Alexander felt that for the time being he could purchase logs to supply the mill from these people.



When he searched the files, Alexander was unable to find any plans or drawings of the buildings and works. He recalled that Thomas had taken these documents with him. Thomas had announced that he wished to show them to Jesup; after which he promised to see that they were returned to Alexander. Since this had not been done, Alexander "respectfully requested" Jesup to have a search made of his files. Alexander hoped the missing drawings would be returned at the general's "earliest convenience." 18

A number of the men hired by Lieutenant Irwin reached Fort Smith on October 8. The Rialto, they reported, was hard aground, 60 miles below Fort Smith. Not wishing to wait for a rise, they had left their comrades and made their way to Fort Smith as best they could. 19

On the following day, the rest of the construction people arrived. All told, Irwin had sent 94 mechanics and laborers from Cincinnati. Alexander was dismayed to learn that according to their contracts, the men were entitled to pay from the day the Rialto cast off from Cincinnati. It had taken them almost four weeks to reach Fort Smith. Thus, before they had done an hour's work, they had accrued \$3,038.89 in wages. In addition, it had cost the government \$4,200 to charter the Rialto.

When he inspected the men, Alexander was favorably impressed. He was afraid of just one thing, he notified General Jesup on the 14th, that there were too many brickmakers and bricklayers. The season was too far advanced for firing bricks and there were too few bricks to lay. Since he wouldn't be able to employ the men practicing these trades to an advantage, Alexander feared it would be necessary to discharge them.

Work was recommenced on October 11. The first stonework scheduled would be on the barracks. This was necessary to protect

the foundations which had been built under Thomas' supervision. Colonel Taylor had let it be understood that he wished this project given a higher priority than the completion of the outer wall. Taylor argued successfully that stone should be used in the construction of the barracks, because of the ease and facility with which it could be secured. Alexander agreed.

A reconnaissance of the Poteau to the first rapids, about 20 miles above the sawmill, had been undertaken. Alexander was elated to discover that oak, ash, and elm were plentiful near the banks of the river. These trees were considered the best sources of lumber to be used for framing, joists, and flooring. A detail (bricklayers, carpenters, and masons) was organized by Alexander and given the task of cutting and rafting timber.

Several citizens examined the Poteau with a view to entering into contracts with the government to supply pine logs to the mill.

Alexander had five questions regarding the construction of the buildings he wished answered. He referred these to General Jesup on October 14.

- A. Should he build the Officers' Quarters of brick or stone?
- B. Should the blockhouses be finished after the original plan?
- C. Which of the materials named in Order 51, Nov. 28, 1838, should be selected for covering the buildings?
- D. What should be the material for the mantles? Stone of the specified type (marble or some other incombustible material) could not be obtained at Fort Smith.
- E. Were the men hired by Lieutenant Irwin to receive their monthly pay if prevented from work by rain or sickness? <sup>20</sup>

Now that construction had been resumed, there was a tremendous increase in Alexander's paper work. Besides a monthly summary statement, a report of persons hired and stores received had to be prepared. When he forwarded these documents to Washington on November 30, the captain sent a covering letter. The stonecutters

1841  
1842

were hard at work in the quarry. Three hundred and thirty six perch of stone had been quarried and hauled. About half of this stone had been laid "on the buildings and Block houses."

Enough oak and ash had been cut and rafted down the Poteau to keep the sawmill running full blast. Better yet, the logging operations were so successful that a surplus of timber had been accumulated.

John McKenney's ire had been raised when he heard that Alexander's lumberjacks were felling timber on the Choctaws' land. He visited Fort Smith during the fourth week of November. Calling upon the superintendent, McKenney expressed dissatisfaction in no uncertain terms. The fact that the government had been slow in paying for timber and stone taken while Thomas was in charge of operations didn't help matters. According to McKenney, he had already brought the subject before the Choctaw Council. The Choctaw Council had reportedly sent an agent to Washington to secure redress.

When he advised Jesup of his troubles with the Choctaws, Alexander observed that he was compelled to procure the logs from their lands. So far, neither the settlers nor the Indians could be depended upon to furnish a supply. As yet, no pines had reached the mill. According to the latest reports from the upper Poteau, several men were preparing to send a raft down at their own risk. <sup>21</sup>

Alexander had other urgent business that required his attention besides supervising construction. Corn was starting to run short. A notice that he would receive bids to supply the government with from 3,000 to 5,000 bushels of "good sound merchantable corn" had been circulated. The proposals were to be in Alexander's hands no later than noon on January 12. Of the corn contracted for, 1,000 bushels were to be delivered at Cantonment Belknap and the remainder at the "New Works."

Of the seven people who submitted bids, Lorenzo Clark's proposal of 43 3/4 cents per bushel was the lowest. As soon as Clark had posted his bond, Alexander awarded him a contract for 5,000 bushels of corn. <sup>22</sup>

Alexander found himself in dire financial straits at the end of February. No remittance had been received on his estimate of funds needed to carry operations through the 1st Quarter of 1842. Moreover, money was needed to pay for the "large purchases of slate for covering two Blocks of Quarters" which would be ready to be roofed by July 1. Alexander wanted to take advantage of the months during which the Arkansas would be open for steamboat navigation to stockpile building materials that had to be shipped in. <sup>23</sup>

Actually, this request for funds by Alexander was unnecessary. The Quartermaster General on February 23 had forwarded drafts for \$27,000. <sup>24</sup>

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Seven angry Choctaws called on Agent Armstrong in the first week of March. They complained to Armstrong that a timber cutting party from Fort Smith had killed some of their hogs. Armstrong addressed a letter protesting this action to Captain Alexander. Heretofore, the agent had refrained from complaining about the government felling timber on the Choctaws' land. He had held to this policy despite heavy pressure from the Choctaw Council. Armstrong trusted that Alexander was aware of the Indians' past difficulties with Major Thomas and the decision of the Attorney General. If he wasn't, Armstrong informed him, the Choctaws were to be treated like any other citizen. They were to be reimbursed for whatever was taken from their land.

As he construed the Attorney General's ruling, Armstrong didn't believe Alexander had any right to send his logging parties as much as 20 miles into the Choctaw Nation. Cases had been called to Agent Armstrong's attention where camps had been established and timber cut in the Choctaw settlements. Such practices were calculated to produce hard feelings. Armstrong hoped Alexander would withdraw these groups at once. He was not so much worried about the logging operations close to Fort Smith, because the lumberjacks would be under some restraint and away from the Choctaws' farms.

While awaiting Alexander's reply, Armstrong would determine the value of the hogs killed. If the men responsible refused to pay, the bill would be forwarded to the War Department for redress. Armstrong wrote that the Choctaw Council expects the government to pay them for all the timber cut since the beginning of construction at the garrison. An inspection had satisfied the agent that the amount cut was "very considerable." Worse, the loggers had felled every tree, leaving to rot that which was not taken to the mill.

Armstrong had hardly finished his letter, when he received fresh information regarding the harassment of the Choctaws by the Fort Smith lumberjacks. Several loggers, who had been cutting timber above Mrs. Johnson's cabin at the site of Fort Coffee, had asked Mrs. Johnson to lend them her dugout. They had told the woman that they wanted to get some logs off a bar. The vessel wasn't returned. On the night of March 4, the flatboat which was used as a ferry at old Fort Coffee disappeared. There was no doubt in Armstrong's mind as to the identity of the thieves.

Adding a postscript to his communication, Armstrong notified Alexander of this latest outrage, and added, "Mrs. Johnson is a respectable woman, her husband is a white man on the Red River on business." At the next complaint, Armstrong warned, he would take action against the culprits with whatever force he could muster. <sup>25</sup>

Alexander promptly investigated the transgressions of which Armstrong wrote. He called in the young man who was in charge of the ten men sent to cut timber near old Fort Coffee. When questioned, the man admitted that his detail had killed one hog. Of this he was much ashamed and promised to satisfy the owner. He heatedly denied that his people had committed the other depredations cited by Armstrong. The dugout and flatboat were said to have been borrowed by a squaw man, who lived in the Indian country, or by men employed by Agent Armstrong.

Reporting this information to Armstrong on the 6th, Alexander sarcastically observed that the men who had taken the boats were "under your direction not mine." The government was aware that he was cutting timber in the Indian country, and he proposed to continue until ordered to cease. Alexander hoped Armstrong would not intervene with such force as he could collect, until he was instructed to do so by the War Department. If he did, Alexander would be required to meet force with force.

Alexander disclaimed that his men were cutting trees promiscuously. No timber except that which was absolutely needed for construction purposes had been felled. A strict count of all logs taken from the Choctaws' land was kept. <sup>26</sup>

His failure to obtain any satisfaction from Alexander determined Armstrong to bring the dispute to the attention of Commissioner of Indian Affairs Crawford. Writing Crawford on March 14, Armstrong forwarded the correspondence between himself and the superintendent. He informed his Washington superior that as long as Alexander had been content to cut timber within four or five miles of Fort Smith no difficulty had occurred. Now that the captain had started sending parties 20 miles into Indian country, "it surely could not be expected that every thing would go on well."

Although Alexander claimed that only one Indian family lived near where his loggers were operating, Armstrong knew differently. Besides the four or five families settled there, the area in question served as range for a large number of cattle and hogs. The agent refused to believe that the lumberjacks had nothing to do with the disappearance of the boats. He felt they would have denied stealing the hog, but two Indians had seen them with the evidence.

Armstrong had heretofore thought it the government's duty to protect the Indians from being despoiled. If the thefts of which Armstrong complained had been committed by people disconnected from the military, the agent could have called on the army for assistance. As it was, however, the trespassers were protected by the military. Despite Alexander's failure to co-operate, Armstrong

was satisfied it was his duty "to protect the Indians in their own country from depredations." If white men were permitted to cross into the Choctaw Nation and cut timber and steal, Armstrong couldn't see what rights the Indians had left. Answering the appeals for assistance from the redmen, the agent could only remonstrate and say that he had laid their complaints before the War Department.

Armstrong wanted Crawford to answer one question. Did the government sanction the action pursued by Captain Alexander in sending details deep into the Choctaw Nation to cut timber? <sup>27</sup>

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As if the troubles with Indian Agent Armstrong were not bad enough, another storm was about to break. Thomas Earhart, who had been employed by Alexander as assistant superintendent, was dissatisfied with the way work was progressing on the works. On March 6, Earhart wrote a long letter of complaint to Colonel Cross. According to Earhart, the 100 mechanics and laborers who had commenced work on October 11 had been "cutting and slashing away, without any order, system, or plans, to work by or from." Earhart had little doubt but that \$5,000 to \$6,000 had been squandered. Alexander appeared to be hopelessly lost by the immensity of the undertaking.

Earhart wanted Cross to study Alexander's report of persons employed at the garrison for February. When he did, Cross would find one master craftsman in each of these professions: carpenter, stonemason, bricklayer, blacksmith, and brickmaker. In addition, there were two engineers. These men received \$90 per month and two rations per day. The master stonecutter was paid \$55 a month and issued one ration per day. Of these eight master craftsmen, Earhart wrote, only two were capable of fulfilling their duties. <sup>28</sup>

Evaluating the men's qualifications, Earhart reported:

One carpenter is a chair maker by trade and is not required on this work, four are boys -- and are not able to do one day's work in a week. This is only one case, the master brick layer, is not a mechanic of any kind, he has always been a bar keeper in a grog shop. Six brick layers

are pork packers, employed from a pork packing house kept by Captain [sic] Irwin's brother in Cincinnati-- The master and one brick maker are plasterers by trade, the other five are laborers....The master black smith is a cast iron stove maker and is of no use in building forts -- One black smith is cooper by trade -- and his services are not required. Two black smiths are boys-- who never worked except at filing in an engine shop. There is only one black smith out of five who can discharge duty, (Mr. Roberts)....One engineer is all sufficient for the mill, and Mr. [Robert] Handy should for the good of the service, be discharged. Out of all the stone cutters employed at Cincinnati, not one can discharge his obligations. The only man employed at Cincinnati, who can cut stone, engaged as a brick layer.... There are two boys on the work, one at twenty-five and one at twelve dollars per month and one ration per day. One Hugh Kelter, was employed at Cincinnati, as a brick maker at forty five dollars per month and one ration per day. On arrival of the men at this place, I put them in classes as per agreement. (Kelter) stated that he was only a laborer. After a long time I got Superintendent, to fix his pay at the laborers' wages, (he has since been discharged.) 29

Earhart proposed a drastic solution to the problem. If he were delegated the necessary authority, he would institute mass firings. He would release the master and six carpenters, the master and five bricklayers, the master and three blacksmiths, the master and seven brickmakers, the master and two stonecutters, one engineer, and two boys. With the money saved, \$1,900 per month, he would hire, "one good master builder, one good black smith, two laborers -- who could blow and strike, eight stone masons and thirty laborers."

Since it was Earhart's opinion that good bricks could not be manufactured at Fort Smith, no brickmakers should be employed. Casting a baleful eye at Superintendent Alexander's activities in this field, Earhart reported, 3,000 cart loads of clay had been hauled from the bank of the Arkansas to the brickyard, a distance of one-fourth mile. Enough clay had been accumulated to mould 600,000 bricks. It would require 500 cords of wood to kiln that quantity. Out of the 600,000 only about one-sixth could be used. The price of these brick would



would be \$50 per thousand. At present, the inventory listed 450,000 bricks on hand. Not more than one-third of these could be used for building. It was Earhart's opinion that brickmaking should be stopped and an order issued to finish the garrison with stone. <sup>30</sup>

Colonel Cross received Earhart's letter during the first days of April. He delayed replying until May 18. When he did, the colonel expressed keen regret that the project was progressing "badly." Unfortunately, Cross continued, he wasn't in position to correct any of the abuses of which Earhart complained.

Cross had thought of showing Earhart's letter to General Jesup. But on mature reflection, he decided that Earhart's motives might not be appreciated. He accordingly placed the loaded document in his private files.

Though he was satisfied Earhart could support his charges, Cross had a few words of wisdom for his old army friend. It was a rare occasion when a subordinate who criticized the arrangements made by his superiors reaped any benefit. It would be far better for his career if Earhart contented himself with a "faithful discharge" of his duties, and left "the responsibility for higher arrangements upon those who make them." <sup>31</sup>

Cross was unable to keep Earhart's letter suppressed. On February 2, 1843, Jesup accidentally saw the document. When he did, the general felt that Captain Irwin may have been imposed upon while employing the men at Cincinnati. Earhart (who was in Washington at this time) was shocked when he learned the interpretation placed on the subject by the Quartermaster General. He sought to get the general to see it in the same light as he. Earhart informed Jesup on February 3 that he should call for the duplicate contracts which were on file at Fort Smith. If he did, the general would discover that Captain Irwin hadn't engaged all the men. A number of them had been hired by W. F. Irwin and others by John Meeke. Earhart charged that Captain Irwin had signed his name to blank agreements, and allowed Meeke and his brother to get the men. <sup>32</sup>

A friend of Captain Irwin's, Captain Alfred Mordecai, was in Washington at this time. Mordecai, learning of the charges voiced by Earhart, lost no time in alerting Captain Irwin.

Irwin, who was stationed at Fort Monroe, wrote General Jesup on February 8 regarding the situation. If the general thought it necessary, the captain was willing to make a full explanation. Otherwise, he begged to be excused from taking any notice of the troublemaker. To ease Jesup's peace of mind, Irwin noted, his brother and several other reputable business men had given him the names of some of the principal mechanics in Cincinnati. He had relied on the recommendations of these people in recruiting the skilled craftsmen which had been sent to Fort Smith. When he hired the laborers, Irwin had been guided by personal appearances -- robustness and sobriety. <sup>33</sup>

Returning to Fort Monroe on February 27, after sitting on a court martial in North Carolina, Irwin was shocked and angered to find a letter awaiting him from General Jesup.

General Jesup had written Captain Irwin on February 14, enclosing a copy of Earhart's March 6, 1842, letter. A hasty survey by the general had indicated that Earhart's charges had been "widely circulated." Consequently, Jesup wished Irwin to make an explanation of the part he had played in employing the Fort Smith construction crew. <sup>34</sup>

Replying immediately, Irwin branded Earhart's communication a "tissue of falsehoods from beginning to end." For example, the master carpenter of whom Earhart had complained had been the "master-carpenter at Mr. Girard's college in Philadelphia." Before being hired this man had shown the captain strong letters of recommendation.

The tale that he had hired men from his brother's packing house was completely without foundation. <sup>35</sup>

Not receiving an answer to this letter, Irwin presumed that the subject had been dropped. He was therefore disappointed when on April 13 he received a letter from Captain Alexander enclosing a copy of Colonel Cross' reply to Earhart. Up to this time, Irwin

had been determined to treat Earhart's charges with contempt. After reading Cross' communication, Irwin decided to change his tactics. He wrote Cross, inquiring "if he intended to give the sanction of his name to Mr. Earhart's allegations." Cross replied that he had not. Furthermore, he added, he had endorsed Earhart's March 6 letter to that effect.

Irwin was still worried, however. He feared that if somebody read the letters, they might assume from "the manner of the Col's. address to Mr. Earhart, that he was really a man of respectability and worthy of credit." Captain Irwin resolved to secure affidavits to place in their proper prospective the charge that he had hired six porkpackers as bricklayers and an incompetent as master carpenter. Letters were written and affidavits obtained. <sup>36</sup>

William Watkins and James Reynolds, who held offices of trust in the Cincinnati packing house run by Irwin's brother, swore that none of their hired hands had signed contracts with the captain to go to Fort Smith. <sup>37</sup>

The captain's brother stated positively that no men employed as "Brick Layers or in any other capacity had ever worked as hands in our Pork House." All the men recruited by the captain had good recommendations. Since William F. Irwin was better acquainted with people in Cincinnati than the captain, he had interviewed most of the men desiring to go to work at Fort Smith. The meatpacker was satisfied as to the good character and capabilities of the people hired. <sup>38</sup>

When he forwarded these affidavits to the captain, William F. Irwin wrote, he thought these documents would prove beyond any reasonable doubt that "Mr. Earhart has stated a wilful falsehood; and if incorrect in this part of his story, why not in all." <sup>39</sup>

From Professor A. D. Bache and Architect Thomas Walters of Girard College came letters vouching for Master Carpenter Joseph Sawyer. Bache observed, "He [Sawyer] was one of the best workmen

in small & in large that I ever met with & one of the best tempered gentlemanly men I have ever seen in his calling which embraces an unusual number of mechanics of intelligence." 40

According to Architect Walters, "as a carpenter Mr. Sawyer is inferior to none in his profession; and as to his character it is unexceptionable." Walters was of the opinion that his "superior is nowhere to be found." 41

Captain Irwin forwarded these dispositions to General Jesup on May 19. He explained on doing so that he had also written Major Cornelius A. Ogden of the Engineers. He hoped to get a statement from the major on the qualifications and character of Mr. Handy, who had been employed as engineer for the Fort Smith sawmill. Handy had stated to Irwin that he had worked for Ogden for three years as engineer aboard one of the snag boats which operated on the Western Waters. As yet, no reply had been received from Major Ogden.

Irwin hoped the evidence he had submitted would make it unnecessary for him to pursue the subject any further. Since Jesup had already been satisfied that nothing was amiss, the correspondences was filed away and no further action taken. 42

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General Jesup had written Captain Alexander on March 12, 1842. It had become necessary to reduce expenses in the Quartermaster's Department so the general urged that "all agents not indispensable to the public service" be discharged. Jesup felt that the duties currently being performed by Assistant Superintendent Earhart could be assigned to Forage Master Meeks. 43

Alexander, who knew nothing of Earhart's double-dealing, disagreed with Jesup. Taking up the general's proposal in a letter dated April 11, Alexander remarked that the suggested change would result in great injury to the service. Alexander had found Earhart "a prompt faithful and energetic man." The same could not be said of Meeks, who lacked energy.

If the Department wished to send one of the men to Fort Towson, Alexander suggested it be the forage master. Captain Osborn Cross, who was stationed at Fort Towson and was visiting Fort Smith, had told the superintendent that a forage master was needed there. <sup>44</sup>

Alexander drafted his progress report for the quarter ending March 31 on April 12. Since January 1, the stonemasons had been busy on the blockhouses. The walls of four had been raised to seven feet above the ground. As soon as the fifth had been brought to this height, Alexander would put the masons back to work on the wall. Loopholes would be added, and the wall raised to its proper height -- 12 feet.

Another project that would be started immediately were "two blocks of Soldiers' quarters and one block for officers." Brick would be used. The joists for the first floor of each of the barracks had been laid, while the brick which had been stacked in the yard had been used for partitions. 184 ✓

Eight hundred and forty-five oak and ash logs had been cut on the Choctaws' land, and rafted down the Poteau by logging crews sent out by the superintendent. Another 750 pine logs had been purchased from private loggers, who had brought them down the Poteau from the Ouachita Mountains. This enabled Alexander to keep the mill running full time. Almost 123,000 feet of lumber had been sawed.

The stonecutters had quarried 1,020 perch of stone. The stone had been hauled from the quarry on Belle Point to the places where it was to be used. Of this stone, 726 perch had been laid and 1,519 "superficial feet cut."

In the 1st Quarter, 48,400 cubic feet of earth had been hauled for grading. At the same time, 81,142 cubic feet of clay had been transported from the bank of the Arkansas to the brickyard. One hundred and twenty thousand bricks had been moulded and kilned. Of these, 18,740 had been laid.

Large stockpiles of critical construction materials had been built up. If the Department wished, Alexander believed he could increase the size of his labor force.

There had been some difficulty with a few of the men hired by Lieutenant Irwin in Cincinnati. The trouble arose because of the words, "The ten hour system to be followed" had been written into their contracts. To make up time lost during the winter months when the men had been able to work only eight and one-half or nine hours, the superintendent announced that on April 1 the working day would be increased correspondingly. Eleven mechanics and six laborers balked. Alexander countered by handing these men their discharges. Several days later, two or three others who seemed dissatisfied were likewise given their walking papers. The captain encountered no difficulty in replacing these men from the numerous applicants who assembled daily at his office asking for work. <sup>45</sup>

Upon returning to Cincinnati, 11 of the men fired by the captain took their case to the law firm of Riddle & Roll. On April 26, they signed a letter outlining their grievances against the government. According to the men, all had gone well and they had fulfilled their contracts until Captain Alexander announced they would be required to work from "Sun to Sun for the residue of the Year."

This being a departure from the contract which they had signed with Lieutenant Irwin, the workers refused and were fired. Because of this precipitant action on the superintendent's part, the men believed they were entitled to compensation for the entire year. They declared that they were ready and willing to comply with their contracts, and hoped General Jesup would make the necessary inquiries and let them know the Department's intentions. <sup>46</sup>

General Jesup answered the letter from the Cincinnati lawyers on May 7. He informed them that he wouldn't be able to take any action in behalf of their clients until he received an "Official

Report" from Captain Alexander. <sup>47</sup> At the same time, the general wrote Alexander, sending him a copy of the correspondence from Riddle & Roll. To enable him to act on the case, Jesup asked the captain to "report all the circumstances connected with it...." <sup>48</sup>

Alexander prepared and mailed his comments on May 30. The new working day which he had instituted, he observed, was 11 hours. He didn't feel the men had any gripe, because they would be merely making up time lost during the winter and on the boat trip from Cincinnati to Fort Smith. Many of the people who objected to the new schedule had already given evidence of dissatisfaction with conditions at Fort Smith. Consequently, the superintendent was convinced these individuals had used the longer hours as an excuse.

Moreover, Alexander continued, out of the 90 men hired by Lieutenant Irwin only 12 had the clause "ten hour system to be followed" written into their contracts. These persons had been made to understand on their arrival at Fort Smith that this clause couldn't be honored, because they would have to make good the time lost during the winter. No objections had been raised when the men were working less than ten hours, Alexander added. To make matters more disagreeable, these people hadn't been satisfied to quit work on their own accord, but had sought to encourage others to do likewise.

The men represented by Riddle & Roll had been dropped from the rolls and their accounts settled. In the captain's opinion, they had no claim whatsoever against the government. Before discharging them, the superintendent had discussed the problem with Colonel Taylor. The colonel had approved his action.

Alexander hoped that none of these men would be permitted to return to Fort Smith or "receive any compensation whatever as they were all regularly and duly settled with." <sup>49</sup>

As the weeks passed and no additional letters arrived from Washington, the principals and their agents began to fret. In

mid-July, the lawyers heard that Captain Alexander had stopped briefly in Cincinnati, while en route to Washington. A communication was sent to Jesup on the 25th, notifying him of this development. At the same time, the attorneys reminded Jesup that their clients had been discharged in consequence of new duties being imposed upon them by the superintendent. The men, they continued, were ready and eager to comply with their written agreements. 50

When General Jesup reviewed Captain Alexander's report of the incident, he rejected the claims advanced by the discharged workers. He informed Riddle & Roll that the superintendent had "full authority to discharge them at any time the public interests rendered it necessary." Had the claimants on their arrival at Fort Smith, when informed by Captain Alexander that the ten hour system couldn't be observed, raised an objection and refused to work unless it was honored, it would have been different. If Alexander had fired them because of this refusal, they would have had a claim against the government. 51

Alexander, like his predecessor, had to wage a constant battle with the Department in Washington to get sufficient cash to meet his obligations. On May 26, the superintendent notified Jesup that he needed a remittance on his estimate of funds needed to carry him through the 2d Quarter. While his monthly statement for April would show a large balance on hand, the figure was deceptive. The credit had been in the form of a draft for \$27,000 on the Union Bank of Louisiana. He had sent the draft to Major Clark at New Orleans for collection, but he hadn't received the money. After paying the men for the 1st Quarter, and reimbursing Major Clark for the purchases he had made for Fort Smith, Alexander would be left with only a small balance.

In the future, Alexander suggested that the Department send him Treasury notes of \$50 and \$100 instead of bank drafts. These notes, could be exchanged for silver at Fort Smith. Thus, a long delay which always resulted when the drafts had to be sent to New Orleans to be cashed by Major Clark could be avoided. 52



News that Alexander was running short of funds reached the Quartermaster General on June 18. Seven days later, the Department sent the superintendent \$13,000. <sup>53</sup>

The funds forwarded to Alexander by the Department hadn't arrived when Alexander posted his monthly report on June 30. An estimate of money needed to carry his office through the 3d Quarter was enclosed. On doing so, the captain called General Jesup's attention to another problem which had developed. Although he reported a balance of \$2,036.58, it was an illusion. A sum in excess of that figure had been paid to men for services rendered in the 2d Quarter, which he had been unable to post.

It was desirable, the superintendent wrote, to keep a small amount of cash on hand, because it was frequently necessary to fire men from the project for various irregularities. On several occasions, not having enough liquid assets on hand to pay off the culprits, he had been compelled to overlook grave infractions. Moreover, during the 3d Quarter, the men hired by Lieutenant Irwin would claim their discharges. Alexander firmly believed the government would be able to negotiate contracts on more advantageous terms than the ones Irwin had made with the people who chose to remain on the Arkansas. <sup>54</sup>

Haying season was at hand, so Alexander called for bids to supply 100 tons of prairie hay to the post. James Thomas' proposal to furnish the hay for \$4.88 per ton was accepted by the captain on July 1. <sup>55</sup>

The \$50,000 appropriated by the 1st Session of the 26th Congress for military construction at Fort Smith, along with a like amount made available by the 1st Session of the 27th Congress, had been exhausted when Jesup sent Alexander the June draft for \$13,000. It began to look as if the 2d Session of the 27th Congress wouldn't make any additional funds, available for Fort Smith. General Jesup, after studying Alexander's estimates for the 3d Quarter, came to the conclusion that he had better alert the captain to the situation. On July 28, the general wrote Alexander to "reduce the force employed

on the works at Fort Smith as rapidly as possible, as it is not probable that an appropriation will be made by Congress for continuing them..." To cut expenses further, Alexander was to sell a number of the public animals. 56

In obedience to the Quartermaster General's instructions, Alexander prepared to shut down the project. On August 31 he discharged all the stonemasons and laborers employed in the quarry, about 60 in all. Alexander would hold up on laying off the men employed in the brickyard until a large "kiln was secured." This would leave him with but a small force -- carpenters, bricklayers, and helpers. The services of these men would be needed to close in the two buildings (a barracks for the soldiers and a quarters for the officers) which were nearing completion. Alexander recommended he be allowed to complete these structures. If finished, he argued, they would provide ample quarters for the officers and men stationed at Cantonment Belknap. Their cost would be less than the repair of the temporary huts currently occupied by Lear's command.

At the moment, there were a large number of logs behind the boom on the Poteau. If not turned into lumber, the logs would be a total loss. The captain accordingly would continue to operate the mill until directed differently. The lumber if not used for the works could be sold for more than it cost to saw.

Reporting these developments to General Jesup, the harassed captain called his superior's attention to the estimates. The \$13,000 forwarded in June had barely sufficed to pay off the men just discharged. A number of other obligations had to be met. The want of funds would compel the superintendent to keep many men on the rolls who might otherwise be laid off.

Alexander regretted that work had to be stopped at this time, because it left the garrison "in a very unfinished state." 57

Financial matters continued to dog Alexander. When he posted his accounts for the 3d Quarter on October 11, the superintendent

urged General Jesup to make a remittance in his favor as soon as practicable. Although he had reported upwards of \$13,000 on hand, he had paid out "considerably more than that amount to discharged men." These employees had been on the payroll from April to September 30, but the rolls couldn't be closed because of a lack of funds.

"One more block of buildings (Officers' quarters)" making two in all, Alexander reported, would be closed in within the next several days. If he had the necessary funds this would enable him to pay off all the men, except the carpenters and their helpers who were engaged at the sawmill. But, the superintendent continued, to discharge the workers without paying them their back wages would be "great injustice." Worse, the men would be put to a great expense to return to the fort to collect their pay in case they had the means to leave Crawford County.

The account from which Alexander drew to take care of the expense of transporting troops and their gear through Fort Smith had also been exhausted. Four companies (D, E, F and G) of the 6th Infantry reached Fort Smith from Jefferson Barracks, on the morning of September 17. The 6th Infantry had been ordered to the Second Military Department to relieve the 4th Infantry. Because of the low stage of water in the Arkansas, the soldiers had had to march all the way from Napoleon. Colonel William Davenport of the 6th Infantry told Alexander that the bills incurred during the march hadn't been paid. These accounts would be presented at the captain's office for payment. To make matters more difficult, Alexander had been called on to hire teams and wagons to haul provisions to Camp Washita. 58

Companies D and F of the 6th Infantry were directed to replace Company E, 4th Infantry as the garrison at Cantonment Belknap. On being relieved, Company E was to proceed to Florida. Major William Hoffman of the 6th Infantry would be the new commander at Fort Smith. At the same time, the two other companies of the 6th, B and G, which

had accompanied Hoffman's battalion up the Arkansas, marched for Fort Gibson.

Following the arrival of the 6th Infantry on the Arkansas frontier, the 4th Infantry left the department. On September 19, six companies of the 4th passed through Fort Smith on their way to Florida. Company H on being relieved at Fort Gibson started for Eaton Rouge. Since the personnel of Company E, 4th Infantry were short of shoes, the men left Fort Smith on September 19 in a keel-boat bound for the mouth of the Arkansas. <sup>59</sup>

Congress on August 23 had appropriated \$10,000 "for carrying on the works at Fort Smith." When he mailed this money to the captain on October 3, Jesup inquired, "What amount will complete the two blocks of buildings...?" Would the enclosed sum be sufficient? To obtain additional construction funds, the general had determined to transfer the sawmill to the Quartermaster's Department. He accordingly wanted Alexander to let him know what the mill was worth. <sup>60</sup>

After the \$10,000 sent by Jesup had been paid to the discharged men, Alexander found the obligations remaining on his books totalled about \$12,000. This money had been used for labor and material.

Writing to the general on November 14, Alexander estimated that \$9,966 would enable him to satisfy these claims, and complete the two blocks of buildings.

In response to Jesup's request for a valuation of the sawmill, Alexander calculated it was worth about \$15,000. Since it had been constructed during the superintendency of Major Thomas, the captain had been unable to ascertain its original cost. He had written Major Thomas in an effort to obtain that figure. The mill, he added, was currently in excellent repair and doing good work. <sup>61</sup>

Upon receipt of Alexander's letter of November 14, General Jesup recommended the Quartermaster's Department take over the mill. This would enable the Department to credit the special appropriation for

constructing barracks and quarters at Fort Smith with its reasonable value. In view of Alexander's estimate that the mill was worth \$15,000, the general proposed that it be transferred at \$10,000. Secretary of War Spencer approved the transfer on December 17. Thus by shifting assets, the Quartermaster General was able to get another \$10,000 to help Captain Alexander weather his difficulties. 62

\* \* \*

Although he didn't know it, the captain was about to encounter troubles of a different nature. Assistant Superintendent Earhart had decided to institute charges against his immediate superior. On October 22, Earhart had written Jesup that for the good of the service, he was bringing the following charges against Captain Alexander:

- 1st I charge him, with keeping horses, cows, hoggs [sic], negroes and dogs at the public expense:
- 2nd I charge him, with perverting public property to his private use:
- 3rd I charge him, with furnishing public quarters to Citizens, at a time when required for public service:
- 4th I charge him, with bartering public property for his private use:
- 5th I charge him, with lending public teams to citizens:
- 6th I charge him, with lending a public horse to a citizen for 2 years:
- 7th I charge him, with keeping men at work in his garden and reporting them at work for the United States:
- 8th I charge him, with keeping and employing men who could not, and did not render any service to the government:
- 9th I charge him, with demolishing the works and putting the government to an unnecessary expense.
- 10th I charge him, with allowing men their pay when not at work:
- 11th I charge him, with squandering several thousand dollars:
- 12th I charge him, with ungentlemanly and unofficer like conduct.

Earhart reported that should an investigation take place, he had the necessary evidence to back up his complaints. 63

Fearful lest some clerk pocket his letter before the general saw it, Earhart enclosed it with a note addressed to Colonel Cross. If he were not detained at Fort Smith because of an investigation, Earhart planned to leave for Washington about December 10. <sup>64</sup>

Colonel Cross was embarrassed by the receipt of Earhart's letter. He, however, didn't feel at liberty to pocket it. Referring the enclosure to General Jesup on November 18, Cross wished it understood that he didn't concur in the charges Earhart had brought against Alexander. He identified Earhart as a man who had once served under him. At that time he had found the assistant superintendent "faithful and competent." <sup>65</sup>

General Jesup wasted no time in mailing a copy of the charges preferred by Earhart to Captain Alexander. In a covering note, the general observed, "The charges are of so grave a nature, that although they are mostly without sufficient specification, they should meet prompt attention." <sup>66</sup>

Captain Alexander was understandably shocked by what he read. Replying on December 19, Alexander described Earhart's charges as "false from beginning to end." He attributed his trouble with Earhart to the assistant superintendent having been recently discharged. As soon as Colonel Taylor returned from Fort Gibson, Alexander would ask for a court of inquiry.

Alexander informed Jesup that all his "public acts had been above board and in the presence of witnesses." The captain denied speculating or using public money and property for personal gain. He would be deeply hurt, Alexander wrote, if the general's "good opinion" of him should be biased "by any charges or representations" made by a man such as Earhart. <sup>67</sup>

In response to Alexander's request, Colonel Taylor established a court of inquiry on his arrival at Cantonment Belknap. Captain Joseph D. Searight of the 6th Infantry as President convened the

1842  
1843

court on December 30. Besides the principals, the court questioned a number of witnesses who appeared in Alexander's behalf. After listening to two days of testimony, the court announced its decision. (See Appendix G.)

It was the opinion of the court that "the charges preferred against Captain Alexander by Thomas J. Earhart are in a great part frivolous and generally not sustained by the evidence." Far from squandering public funds or "misapplying public property," Alexander had prudently administered both so as to promote the public interest.

It appeared to the court that Earhart in instituting charges against Alexander had been actuated by feelings other than those prompted by a keen regard for the public good. Otherwise, it was difficult to see how one whose official position brought him into such close propinquity with his superior could have made such vague and unfounded allegations. 68

Upon being exonerated of the charges brought against him by the court, Captain Alexander took action against Earhart. Robert Handy and E. Goble approached the captain. They told him that the former assistant superintendent had some dirty linen which ought to be exposed.

According to Handy, some time before he had determined to improve his quarters by building himself a cot. To do so, he required canvass. Handy knew that Earhart had a cot. He accordingly asked the assistant superintendent where he obtained his material. Earhart reportedly told Handy that during the spring of 1841, he had taken four and one-half yards of canvass from the public storehouse. At that time, Earhart carried a key to the building in question. Earhart had taken the canvass to the mill and had the sawyer, Goble, make it into a cot. If Handy wanted to do the same, Earhart was said to have remarked, he could go to the storehouse which was unattended and get the necessary canvass.

Alexander took Handy and Goble before a justice of the peace. On January 4, 1843, their statements regarding Earhart's "purloining" of the canvass was made a matter of record. 69

When questioned by Alexander, Earhart claimed Handy and Goble had lied. He said the canvass had been used at the mill for public purposes.

The affidavits attested to by Handy and Goble were forwarded to General Jesup on January 5. On doing so, the superintendent observed, he didn't intend to prosecute Earhart, but he did want to "prevent his being Employed in the public service as unworthy of confidence or trust." Since the court of inquiry, the captain had heard that the theft of the canvass was not the only "rascality" of which Earhart was guilty. 70

Having postponed his projected trip to Washington to testify against Captain Alexander, Earhart left for the capital shortly after the first of the year. With him the ex-assistant superintendent carried important estimates which he had prepared of the materials and disbursements necessary to complete the garrison. (See Appendix H.) He left these important papers at the office of the Quartermaster General on January 26.

Earhart was still in Washington at the time Alexander's January 5 letter reached General Jesup's desk. On February 22, Earhart, on learning of its contents, wrote the general. He questioned Handy's and Goble's veracity. Earhart informed Jesup that the two men who had signed affidavits against him had not reached Fort Smith until October 1841. Consequently, they could know nothing of what he "might or might not have done in April or May." Instead of their sworn statements being "matters of fact," they weren't even "reasonable lies." Earhart hoped Jesup would file his communication along with the affidavits and furnish him with a certified copy of Alexander's covering letter. 71



When he checked the records, Jesup found that Earhart was correct. Handy and Goble had made a disposition that they had witnessed a "transaction" which had reportedly taken place five months before they reached Fort Smith. <sup>72</sup>

The general called to Alexander's attention the discrepancy in the affidavits filed by Goble and Handy.

Alexander sent for Goble. Since Handy had left Fort Smith, it would be impossible for the superintendent to contact him. Upon being questioned by the captain, Goble said there had been a mistake -- the theft of the government property by Earhart had taken place in 1842, not 1841. Goble swore out a statement to this effect before Justice of Peace Samuel Edmondson on March 22.

Alexander attached Goble's revised disposition to his March 24 letter to General Jesup. The superintendent informed the general that he had been actuated in the affair by no other motive than a sense of duty to place the Department on its guard respecting Earhart's character. The incorrectness of the date in the affidavits mailed to Washington on January 5 was an error on his part. In his hurry to get them ready for transmission, the captain had failed to verify the dates. <sup>73</sup>

FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

Chapter V

Captain Alexander Runs into Trouble

Notes

1 Arbuckle to Jesup, Nov. 24, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

2 Alexander's Report of Operations at Ft. Smith from October 11, 1841, to August 31, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

3 Alexander to Jesup, Nov. 4, 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

4 Returns, 3d Infantry, August - September 1840 (National Archives, War Dept. Files). William Lear of Maryland had served as an enlisted man in the light dragoons during the War of 1812. He was commissioned 2d lieutenant in the 4th Infantry on February 13, 1818, and made captain of Company E six years later. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 621.

5 Simmons to Alexander, Jan. 13, and Alexander to Jesup, Jan. 17, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

6 Alexander to Jesup, March 30, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Recd.). The bids ranged from 99 cents per bushel to 69½ cents.

7 Cross to Jesup, May 15, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

8 Arbuckle to Alexander, April 17, 1841 (National Archives, Order Book, Second Dept. Western Division).

9 Lee to Bomford, April 23, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Recd.). George Bomford of New York had graduated from West Point as No. 1 in the class of 1805, and was commissioned

a 2d lieutenant in the Engineers. Rising slowly in rank, Bonford had been made colonel on May 30, 1832, and placed in charge of the Ordnance Department. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 44, 228-229.

10 Yell to Bell, June 5, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Yell had been elected governor in 1842.

11 Ibid.

12 Thomas to Jesup, Oct. 5, 1841, (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Thomas was at Cedar Keys when he received Jesup's letter. His reply was drafted at Tampa.

13 Earhart to Bell, Aug. 9, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

14 Alexander to Jesup, July 4, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

15 Jesup to Irwin, Aug. 21, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent.). James R. Irwin of Pennsylvania graduated from West Point in the class of 1825. He had been commissioned 2d lieutenant in the 2d Artillery, and was promoted to 1st lieutenant in the 1st Artillery on May 31, 1833. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 565.

16 Irwin to Jesup, Sept. 8 and Oct. 13, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

17 Jesup to Alexander, Aug. 18, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent.).

18 Alexander to Jesup, Sept. 19, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). General Jesup had written Captain Alexander on August 19, requesting that he forward to Washington a copy of the joint-report prepared by Colonel Totten and Major Thayer "on the subject of works of defence suited to the inland frontier." Jesup to Alexander, Aug. 19, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent.).

- 19 Alexander to Jesup, Oct. 8, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 20 Alexander to Jesup, Oct. 14, 1841; Alexander's Report of Operations at Ft. Smith from Oct. 11, 1841, to Aug. 31, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 21 Alexander to Jesup, Nov. 30, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 22 Alexander to Jesup, Jan. 12, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). While Clark had made the low bid, M. Moore's proposal of 75 cents per bushel had been the highest.
- 23 Alexander to Jesup, Feb. 28, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Along with this letter, Alexander mailed his Monthly Summary Statement, Report of Stores Received and Distributed, and Report of Persons Employed and Hired.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Armstrong to Alexander, March 5, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). The flatboat was valued at \$60. To make matters even more deplorable, the men who had made off with the dogout had taken breakfast with Mrs. Johnson.
- 26 Alexander to Armstrong, March 6, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 27 Armstrong to Crawford, March 14, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 28 Earhart to Cross, March 6, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). The two master craftsmen who in Earhart's opinion were competent were: Elliott, the master stonemason, and Chick, one of the engineers.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Cross to Earhart, May 18, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 32 Earhart to Jesup, Feb. 4, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Irwin had been promoted to captain on May 6, 1842. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 565.

- 33 Irwin to Jesup, Feb. 8, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Alfred Mordecai of North Carolina had graduated No. 1 in the class of 1823 from West Point, and was commissioned 2d lieutenant in the Engineers. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 724.
- 34 Jesup to Irwin, Feb. 14, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent.).
- 35 Irwin to Jesup, Feb. 27, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 36 Irwin to Jesup, May 19, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 37 Affidavit signed by Reynolds and Watkins, May 11, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 38 Affidavit signed by William F. Irwin, May 11, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 39 W. F. Irwin to Capt. Irwin, May 11, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 40 Bache to Irwin, May 1, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 41 Walters to Bache, Apr. 29, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). While at Girard College, Sawyer had demonstrated "skill and energy" in the heavy and difficult centering for the construction of vaults.
- 42 Irwin to Jesup, May 19, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Cornelius Ogden of New Jersey had graduated from the U. S. Military Academy in 1819 as 2d lieutenant in the Engineers. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 757.
- 43 Jesup to Alexander, March 12, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent.).
- 44 Alexander to Jesup, Apr. 11, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 45 Alexander to Jesup, Apr. 12, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 46 Petitioners to Jesup Apr. 26, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). The men signing the bill of complaint

were: Thomas Hilton, Frank Decker, William Whiteside, Lewis Todhunter, Thomas McDonough, M. Leach, Chas. Biles, Patrick Torpy, James Starr, H. Guild, and Justin Jenkins.

47 Jesup to Riddle & Roll, May 7, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Sent.).

48 Jesup to Alexander, May 7, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Sent.).

49 Alexander to Jesup, May 30, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

50 Riddle & Roll to Jesup, July 25, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

51 Jesup to Riddle & Roll, Oct. 13, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Sent.).

52 Alexander to Jesup, May 26, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

53 Ibid.

54 Alexander to Jesup, June 30, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

55 Alexander to Jesup, July 1, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Recd.). All told, 19 individuals submitted proposals. The high bid was M. Leeper's of \$14.99 per ton.

56 Jesup to Alexander, July 28, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Sent.), The 1st Session of the 27th Congress had appropriated \$50,000 for continuing the works at Fort Smith on March 3, 1841.

57 Alexander to Jesup, Aug. 31, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

58 Alexander to Jesup, Oct. 11, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, CMG, Ltrs. Recd.); Taylor to Jones, Sept. 21, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 59 Hoffman to Adjutant General, Sept. 19, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Recd.); Taylor to Jones, Sept. 21 and 23, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Recd.). William Hoffman had entered service as 1st lieutenant in the 1st New York Artillery on January 3, 1813. The end of the War of 1812 found Hoffman a lieutenant in the 2d Infantry. Hoffman had been major of the 6th Infantry since November 4, 1838. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 535.
- 60 Jesup to Alexander, Oct. 3, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent.).
- 61 Alexander to Jesup, Nov. 14 and Dec. 19, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 Earhart to Jesup, Oct. 22, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 64 Earhart to Cross, Oct. 22, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Jesup to Alexander, Nov. 23, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent.).
- 67 Alexander to Jesup, Dec. 19, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 68 Report of Court of Inquiry, Dec. 31, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 69 Affidavits made before Justice of Peace Smith Elkins, Jan. 4, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 70 Alexander to Jesup, Jan. 5, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 71 Earhart to Jesup, Feb. 22, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 Alexander to Jesup, March 24, 1843; Affidavit made before Justice of Peace Edmondson by Goble, March 22, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

FORT SMITH 1838-1871

Chapter VI

Colonel Taylor Commands the Second Department

Adjutant General Jones on May 1, 1841, issued orders sending Colonel Zachary Taylor to Fort Gibson to take command of the Second Military Department. <sup>1</sup> At this time, the vast Second Military Department embraced all territory south of the 37th Parallel of Latitude, from the Mississippi River to the Mexican and Texas frontiers. A number of days elapsed before this dispatch reached Colonel Taylor's Baton Rouge headquarters. Although Taylor regarded the assignment to this important post on the frontier as a mark of the confidence the War Department had in him, he was disappointed, because he had hoped to remain at Baton Rouge for another year. He was anxious to pay off the \$4,000 due his creditors, and to put his affairs in such a condition that he might soon retire and "make room for younger & better soldiers." Already Taylor was beginning to feel some of the infirmities of age, and he was starting to think of retirement. "I do not wish to continue a day longer than I am qualified for the active duties of the field," he wrote his friend, Major Ethan A. Hitchcock. He was of the opinion, "The army is now paralyzed by too many broken down officers...who must be gotten clear of in some way or other, before it can be restored to a proper state of health & efficiency." <sup>2</sup>

Taylor was not the only person disgruntled by his assignment to the Second Military Department. Colonel Arbuckle's friends felt that he had been disgraced by the transfer from departmental command to being in charge of the post at Baton Rouge, where there was not even a company of troops and no duties to perform. Senator Sevier of



Arkansas offered a resolution calling upon President Tyler to explain the reasons for the transfer. Speaking in behalf of its adoption, the senator declared, Arbuckle has been exiled to Baton Rouge. After a brief but spirited debate, Sevier's resolution was tabled. <sup>3</sup>

Taylor regarded Sevier's object as political. He believed the senator had no real interest in "the old gentleman," but merely desired to harass and annoy the new Secretary of War, John Bell. This may have been Sevier's purpose, but Arbuckle had served on the Arkansas frontier for the past 19 years. During this period, he had made many influential friends who were displeased by his replacement. <sup>4</sup>

As soon as Taylor could secure passage, which was June 2, he reluctantly embarked with his family for Fort Gibson. Because of the low stage of the water in the Arkansas, the vessel carrying the Taylors encountered considerable difficulty in reaching Little Rock. There, they "found the water so low that steam boats of the smallest class could ascend no higher." Taylor accordingly "hired land transportation" and proceeded to Fort Smith, where he relieved Arbuckle on June 27. Leaving his family at Cantonment Belknap, the colonel continued on to Fort Gibson. Because of a lack of comfortable officers' quarters at Fort Gibson, Arbuckle had previously received permission to transfer his headquarters to Cantonment Belknap.

A thorough inspection of the post satisfied Taylor that Arbuckle had made a wise decision. Taylor determined to act on this authority and returned to Cantonment Belknap, where his headquarters were located for the next three years. At the same time, Taylor indicated his willingness to "go to Fort Gibson at any moment should I deem the public service benefitted by doing so, or should the dept, prefer my being there, as I have but little choice as a residence between the two posts...." <sup>5</sup>

Colonel Taylor, who frankly declared that he was "a decided advocate for the most rigid economy in the management of all cur

political and public concerns," was shocked by what he regarded as the useless expenditure of public funds at Fort Smith. Not only was the fort located too near the Arkansas River and the adjacent marshy lands, but it was being constructed on such a grand scale that he declared if finished it would "serve as a lasting monument to the folly of those who planned, as well as him who had executed."

"The plan...is highly objectionable," he wrote his friend Hitchcock:

& if carried out will cost three times as much, or even more than there was any necessity for; the buildings...are to be enclosed with a thick stone wall fifteen feet high, with two large bastions, & the like number of immense stone blockhouses at the angles, which...will cost...more than an hundred thousand dollars; a more useless expenditure of money & labor was never made by this or any other people....The sooner it is arrested the better.

Shortly after establishing his headquarters at Cantonment Belknap, Taylor received official notification of the death of General Macomb, who had been commanding general of the army for 13 years. On July 27 the garrison paid the departed general "the last sad honors...by firing a six pounder during every half hour from the rising to the setting of the sun." The vacancy caused by Macomb's death was filled, as Taylor expected it would be, by the promotion of Winfield Scott who for 13 years had been chafing over the fact that Macomb, rather than he, had been made commanding general in 1828. <sup>7</sup>

As commander of the Second Military Department, Colonel Taylor's principal concern was with the never ending problem -- the Indians. Fort Gibson was in the Indian Territory near the new homes of the Cherokees and Creeks. This post was regarded by Taylor as one of the most important on the entire Indian frontier. A respectable garrison there, he believed, would do more to preserve peace among the most formidable tribes of the border as well as to prevent any general attack by the redmen on the whites. <sup>8</sup> One hundred and forty miles south of Fort Gibson in the Choctaw Nation was Fort Towson near the Red River, the boundary at this point between the United States and Texas.

One of Taylor's first tasks following his assumption of command was to establish a new post farther up the Red to protect the emigrant Choctaws and Chickasaw from the wild plains tribes and the depredations by Texas adventurers in pursuit of maruding Indians. For years there had been a realization that such a fort was needed. But it was 1841 before any definite steps in this direction were taken. Captain Benjamin D. Moore in the spring of 1841 had reconnoitered the country between the Blue and Washita rivers. He recommended that a fort be constructed near the mouth of the Washita.<sup>9</sup> Colonel Taylor on July 21, 1841, urged the War Department to approve the building of a fort in the country of the Chickasaws.<sup>10</sup> On August 14, instructions were issued in Washington for Taylor to make a definite selection of a site and to proceed to establish a fort.<sup>11</sup> Taylor left Cantonment Belknap on September 25 for the Washita.<sup>12</sup> He examined the area on both sides of the river for 20 miles above the mouth and approved the site selected by Captain Moore. It was on "a high well-timbered ridge" on the east side of the Washita about one and one-half miles from the stream, and nearly 20 miles up river from its confluence with the Red.<sup>13</sup>

Construction was begun at the site by a party under Captain George A. H. Blake in the spring of 1842 and continued for more than a year. Before the new fort (which was designated Fort Washita by Taylor)<sup>14</sup> was completed it came close to being abandoned. Despite its strategic location, the War Department notified Taylor in March 1843 that General Scott was inclined to abandon the new fort.<sup>15</sup> Prompt and vigorous protests by Taylor, who argued that no post on the frontier exerted a more salutary influence, convinced Washington of the value of the post and the order to suspend work was revoked.<sup>16</sup> Fort Washita, 100 miles up the Red from Fort Towson, was an important advance of the military frontier. By curtailing the predatory raids across the Red by Indians and Texans, it contributed in large measure to the preservation of peace in that quarter.<sup>17</sup>

Taylor was also involved with plans to abandon Fort Wayne. Soon after assuming command of the Second Military Department, Taylor recommended that the site of the post be changed, because it was occupying some of the best Cherokee lands and interfering with the efforts of the mixed bloods to improve their farms. The Cherokees, he wrote, were very much opposed to its selection as well as its continued occupancy. Within 15 or 20 miles another site, with all the advantages and none of the disadvantages could be found. <sup>18</sup> At the close of 1841, Taylor was authorized to abandon Fort Wayne in the spring of 1842 and to establish another post wherever he might decide. <sup>19</sup>

Shortly thereafter, Major Hitchcock visited the Indian Territory as a special agent of the War Department. He reinforced Taylor's arguments that Fort Wayne be given up. Hitchcock suggested that the new fort be established much farther north where it could control the Osages, "the greatest thieves near the frontier." <sup>20</sup> These recommendations found favor with the War Department. Under Taylor's instructions, Fort Wayne was evacuated on May 26, 1842, and the garrison marched to a site on the Marmiton River, where a new post—Fort Scott—was established on the Military road linking Forts Towson and Leavenworth. <sup>21</sup>

The white settlers and traders of the area near Fort Wayne were displeased by the evacuation of the post, because they had been profiting through the sale of whiskey and other supplies to the regulars. Twice through their governor and legislature, they protested the defenseless state of their frontier and petitioned President Tyler to re-establish the fort. The slightest disturbance among the Cherokees, their nearest Indian neighbors, was the occasion for renewed appeals for protection against "the bloodthirsty savages" who had been set down at their very door. <sup>22</sup>

These pleas, along with the concurrent demands of the authorities of the Texas Republic that the United States be more vigilant in preventing Indian raids into their territory, resulted in heavy

reinforcements being sent to the Second Department in March 1842. The 6th Infantry and five companies of dragoons were ordered from Jefferson Barracks and Fort Leavenworth to Fort Towson. At one step the force at Taylor's disposal had been increased from less than 700 to 2,000. <sup>23</sup>

Despite these reinforcements, the Arkansans continued to cry for protection. Taylor was well aware of their motives. He stood firm. In December 1842, he urged Secretary of War Spencer to disregard these representations of the dangerous state of affairs on the frontier "unless confirmed by the reports of the officer commanding on the frontier, and responsible for its safety." Taylor declared these representations rested upon the false assumptions that the tribes on the Arkansas border retained their warlike habits and that they would combine in an attack upon the settlements. "By far the strongest tribes," he pointed out:

on this frontier are the Cherokees, Choctaws, and Creeks; without the consent or cooperation of one or all of them, no hostile combinations against the states can possibly be formed in this quarter. Now, anyone who had visited these people in their new homes, knows that they have completely laid aside their warlike habits, and are assiduously cultivating the arts of peace. For more than one hundred miles, the state of Arkansas has for neighbors the Choctaws, whose boast it is, that they have never killed a white man; for the remainder of its frontier, it has the Cherokees, who are quite too intelligent whatever may be their internal quarrels, to meditate a war against the whites. The Creeks, who lie farther back from the frontier, are not at all behind the other two tribes in their disinclination to war. The improbability, I might almost say, impossibility, of any one of these tribes taking arms against us, is only exceeded by that of a hostile combination among them, the declared apprehension of which is really too preposterous to merit notice. <sup>24</sup>

In spite of this clear-cut statement by Taylor, the War Department couldn't entirely ignore the petitions and protests from Arkansas. When Taylor three months later received instructions relating to anticipated troubles among the Cherokees, he replied that his previous

report had been made with the "view of sparing the Department the needless anxiety often caused by the representations of ignorant or interested persons." But, he added, it had apparently failed to accomplish what had been intended.

Once again, Taylor asserted, no intelligent citizen of Arkansas honestly entertained apprehensions of trouble among or with the Cherokees. "The War Department may rest assured that such fears are seldom or never expressed here; and if they reach Washington, it is with a view to some ulterior and private object -- in this case, very evidently, the reoccupation of Fort Wayne, and consequently expenditures of public money in that quarter." After a denial of any need for the re-establishment of Fort Wayne, Taylor recommended that all "citizens of Arkansas" expressing alarm of probable Cherokee excitements be referred to the commanding officer of "this Department, who is responsible for the security of the frontier, and who will not fail, on proper applications, and probable grounds of danger, to take the most efficient measures to preserve the peace." This policy, he declared, would not only save the War Department much trouble, but would satisfy the applicants if they were really sincere. <sup>25</sup>

Washington heeded Taylor's counsel. Fort Wayne was not re-established, and the "probable Cherokee excitements" never materialized.

Colonel Taylor's resolute opposition to these frontier demands and his advocacy of rigid economy in all public concerns won the admiration of his adjutant. At the outset, Captain William W. Bliss had hoped his stay on the Arkansas frontier would be brief. <sup>26</sup> In time he came to feel that association with Taylor was full recompense for isolation. He wrote Hitchcock on April 30, 1843:

We have the usual annual excitement about Cherokee affairs -- Petitions for the re-establishment of Fort Wayne &c, &c. The Gen'l's reports are not at all in accordance with the wishes of the miserable population on the frontier who cannot live, but on public expenditures. He neither wishes more troops, nor more forts, nor more money spent, and tells the dept. plainly that it will be soon enough for them to be alarmed, when he

reports danger. I consider it one of the most fortunate circumstances of my life to have been brought in near official relation with so singlehearted a man. 27

Taylor, Bliss, and Indian Agent Armstrong attended a "Grand Council" which assembled on the Deep Fork of the Canadian in May 1842. This meeting was planned to promote good will between the civilized Indians and the plains tribes. In attendance were representatives of the Creeks, Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Seminoles, Shawnees, Delawares, Peankashaws, Kickapoos, Quapaws, Kichais, Witchitas, Pawnees, Osages, Caddoes, Senecas, and Tawakonis.

A correspondent for the Arkansas Intelligencer told his readers of a encampment, two miles in circumference, filled with lodges:

The woods and prairies, for three or four miles, were crowded by horses "hobbled" and feeding upon the rich succulent herbage....On Wednesday [May 15] the council met; the Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Caddoes sitting in front of the Creek chiefs, whose post was in the center of an outer side of the council-house. There was a vast concourse in the imperturbable gravity and decorum belonging rightly to an Indian council. The civilized tribes now arose en masse, and passing behind the chiefs' seats, formed in surgle file, headed by Gen. Rolly Mc Intosh, who was followed by...[Col.] Taylor, U. S. Army....These coming round on the opposite side, gave to the other tribes a genial shaking of the hands, bestowing on each individual but a single shake. After them came the Shawnees and Delawares, in like manner going round and shaking hands. When these tribes had thus paid their salutation, Gen. Chilley Mc Intosh<sup>28</sup> arose and welcomed his white brethren.

Zachary Taylor addressed the "Grand Council" through interpreters and urged the Indians to keep the peace. He questioned representatives of the wild tribes, from whom he learned that a number of white children carried off from their homes in Texas were being held by the Comanches. A ransom was promised, and inside of two years the youngsters were released.

Another accomplishment scored by Taylor was to get the Kichais, Kiowas, Tawakonis and Wichitas to agree to go to Fort Gibson to

1842  
1843

receive presents and renew their allegiance to the U. S. Government. 29  
Taylor remained two days at the Deep Fork, and reported, "None but  
the most friendly feelings were exhibited toward the United States...  
all seemed animated with a desire to cultivate peaceable relations  
with our Government and with each other." 30

Taylor and Bliss attended a second "Grand Council" in June 1843.  
This time 18 tribes met at Tahlequah. "As far as I can learn their  
object," Cherokee Agent Pierce M. Butler wrote Crawford, "is to renew  
old customs and friendships and to enact some international laws for  
the government of each and all. There are some three or four thousand  
persons daily in attendance. Their deliberations, and the company  
present, are quiet and orderly." 31

The spirit of the Indians so impressed Colonel Taylor that he  
wrote Adjutant General Jones:

Its results can be no other than beneficial, as  
well to the red man as to us. Pacific relations will  
be established and confirmed among the different tribes —  
and the wilder ones, having ocular evidence of the  
advantages enjoyed by the more civilized will be more  
ready to follow their example. International relations  
will be adopted for the preservation of property and  
perpetuation of fellowship and peace. 32

Added responsibility as commander of the Second Department  
didn't cause Taylor to lose the essential simplicity of manner which  
distinguished him from many other senior officers, who too often  
confused the dignity of rank with the pompous stiffness of a martinet.  
Much of the time, Taylor wore civilian garb. His taste ran to  
jean trousers, undress coats without insignia, and a broadbrimmed  
palmetto hat. Rough in appearance, unassuming in conversation, the  
colonel talked in terms of crops, field hands, and the stage of  
the Arkansas rather than of arms or military activities. On more  
than one occasion, strangers mistook him for a farmer.

According to one story, two 2d lieutenants, fresh out of West  
Point and faultlessly attired, encountered a plain-spoken, heavy-



1841-  
1842  
1843

set man on their first morning in Fort Smith.

They called out, "Good morning, old fellow!"

"Good Morning," came the reply.

"How's crops?"

"Purty good."

"Come on, take a drink with us."

The old gentleman joined them, though presumably he didn't indulge. Never guessing his identity the lieutenants amused themselves at Taylor's expense.

Finally, when the "farmer" rose to leave, one of the lieutenants remarked, "Give our love to the old woman and the gals."

Later in the day, the lieutenants called to pay their respects to Colonel Taylor — the department commander. At the Cantonment Belknap headquarters, they found their "farmer" of the morning.

Concealing his amusement at their chagrin, the colonel gravely acknowledged their salutes. Presenting them to Mrs. Taylor and to his attractive daughter, Betty, the colonel casually remarked, "Here are the old woman and the gal." 33

Three times during his assignment to command of the Second Department, Taylor received leaves of absences to visit his fertile Mississippi Valley plantations. The first of these occurred in November and December 1841, the second in January - March 1843, and the last in January 1844. On each of these occasions, Lieutenant Colonel Gustavus Loomis commanded the department during Taylor's absence. 34

Throughout the years Taylor was in command in the Southwest, the United States - Texas relations were a significant factor in all military policies in that section. When the colonel took command of the Second Military Department in 1841, it included Louisiana as well as Arkansas and the Indian Territory. Consequently, the entire border between the United States and Texas came under his supervision. In 1842, Louisiana was detached and included in the limits of the

1844

reorganized First Department. Even so, a large section of the Texas - United States border still fell within Taylor's jurisdiction. During the spring of 1844, when border disputes were becoming critical, Taylor was transferred to command of the First Department. Subsequently, he established his headquarters at Fort Jesup.

The transfer of Colonel Taylor from the Second Military Department to command the troops on the Louisiana - Texas boundary at a critical time in United States relations with Mexico is evidence of the high regard in which he was held by the officials in Washington. With great confidence in Taylor's "judgement and discretion" and "full reliance" in his "prudence," the Secretary of War in consultation with General Scott had handpicked Taylor to take charge of the most important military operations undertaken by the United States since the War of 1812.

Upon Taylor's departure for his new command, Colonel Arbuckle on May 23, 1844, returned to Cantonment Belknap and once again took charge of the Second Military Department. 35

FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

Chapter VI

Colonel Taylor Commands the Second Department

Notes

- 1 Adjutant General to Taylor, May 1, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Sent).
- 2 Taylor to Hitchcock, May 19 and July 28, 1841 (Library of Congress, Taylor Papers). Taylor had been stationed at Baton Rouge since Nov. 20, 1840.
- 3 Congressional Globe, 27 Cong., 1 Session, 14, 29, 43.
- 4 Taylor to Hitchcock, July 28, 1841 (Library of Congress, Taylor Papers).
- 5 Ibid.; Taylor to Jones, July 8, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 6 Taylor to Hitchcock, Nov. 3, 1841 (Library of Congress, Taylor Papers).
- 7 Taylor to Hitchcock, July 28, 1841 (Library of Congress, Taylor Papers). Macomb had died at Washington on June 25.
- 8 Taylor to Hitchcock, Nov. 3, 1841 (Library of Congress, Taylor Papers).
- 9 H. P. Beers, Western Military Frontier, 1815-1846 (Philadelphia, 1935), 161.
- 10 Taylor to Jones, July 21, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 11 Taylor to Armstrong, Sept. 22, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, Ft. Smith Ltr. Bk. 111A).
- 12 Adjutant General to Taylor, Aug. 11, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Sent).

- 13 Taylor to Adjutant General, Oct. 14, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Recd.); Foreman, Advancing the Frontier, 1830-1860, 100.
- 14 Taylor to Adjutant General, May 31, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 15 Adjutant General to Taylor, March 9, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Sent).
- 16 Taylor to Adjutant General, March 29, 1843, and Adjutant General to Taylor, May 12, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Sent and Ltrs. Recd.).
- 17 Rex W. Strickland, "History of Fannin County, 1836-1843," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXXIV, 54.
- 18 Taylor to Hitchcock, Nov. 3, 1841 (Library of Congress, Taylor Papers); Adjutant General to Taylor, Sept. 11, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Sent).
- 19 Adjutant General to Taylor, Dec. 1, 1841 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Sent).
- 20 Hitchcock to Secretary of War, Jan. 9, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. S of W Files, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 21 Foreman, Advancing the Frontier, 78-80.
- 22 Ibid., 81-82.
- 23 Secretary of War to Taylor, March 26, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. S of W Files, Ltrs. Sent).
- 24 Taylor to Adjutant General, Dec. 23, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 25 Taylor to Adjutant General, March 28, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 26 Bliss to Hitchcock, July 29, 1842 (Library of Congress, Hitchcock Papers).
- 27 Bliss to Hitchcock, April 30, 1843 (Library of Congress, Hitchcock Papers).
- 28 Arkansas Intelligencer (Van Buren), May 27, 1842.

- 29 Armstrong to Crawford, Aug. 14, 1842 (National Archives, Indian Affairs, Choctaw Agency).
- 30 Taylor to Adjutant General, May 31, 1842 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 31 Butler to Crawford, June 21, 1843 (National Archives, Indian Affairs, Cherokee Agency).
- 32 Taylor to Adjutant General, June 14, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO Ltrs. Recd.).
- 33 Fred W. Allsopp, Folklore of Romantic Arkansas (Little Rock, 1931), 130-135.
- 34 Bliss to Adjutant General, Jan. 7 and March 11, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 35 Arbuckle to Adjutant General, June 4, 1844 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Recd.).

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

## Chapter VII

## The Garrison Moves In

Although he had bested Earhart, Alexander was still beset by tangled finances. On February 3, 1843, he was finally able to shut down the sawmill, since the last log on hand had been cut into lumber. He would hold the engineer and one or two men for several days to put the "mill in a state of preservation." All would then be discharged and the project, except for finishing the barracks and officers' quarters, closed. This was very embarrassing, because he would be unable to pay these men their back wages. In addition, the government owed several months pay to a number of workers previously laid off. These people called at the superintendent's office almost every day, asking for their money.

Once again, Alexander on February 3 was compelled to bring this subject to General Jesup's attention. He informed the general that it was "extremely unpleasant to have so many daily demands made for service rendered and not the means to satisfy them." If Jesup would just examine his reports for January, he would see that Alexander had borrowed heavily to meet the government's obligations. <sup>1</sup>

Alexander needn't have written this letter. Six days later, long before the captain's communication reached Washington, General Jesup had seen that a draft for \$12,862 was posted to the superintendent. <sup>2</sup>

The captain had encountered difficulties when he prepared to fix up the interiors of the two buildings which had been closed. On January 1, the superintendent had reduced the wages of his carpenters to \$1.75 per day. This made them disgruntled and desirous of quitting. Alexander planned to discharge them at the earliest opportunity, so he wrote

Captain Nathaniel C. Macrae at Newport, Kentucky. He wanted Macrae to hire him 15 carpenters, "competent men of sober and industrious habits and good tempered." The carpenters would be paid a maximum of \$1.75 a day and furnished board and room. Macrae was to explain to the men seeking employment at Fort Smith that the government couldn't pay their transportation.

Three plasterers were also needed. One of the plasterers would be designated foreman and paid slightly higher wages. Alexander estimated he had about 7,300 yards of plastering and 1,280 yards of stucco cornice for the plasterers to do. Macrae would ask them the number of barrels of line and plaster required for such a project. The superintendent wanted Macrae to order the needed material and ship it to Fort Smith with the plasterers. <sup>3</sup>

Alexander sent a copy of his letter to Macrae to General Jesup. In a covering memorandum, the captain noted, he hoped the general would approve his requests. If so, Alexander wanted the Department to provide Macrae with the funds to purchase 300 to 400 barrels of lime. <sup>4</sup>

When Jesup received Alexander's communication on the last day of February, he vetoed the request to allow Macrae to hire mechanics. At the same time, he sanctioned the purchase of the lime. <sup>5</sup>

General Jesup, upon studying the payrolls submitted by Alexander, determined that the wages paid at Fort Smith were out of line with those at other Department projects. A letter to this effect was sent to the superintendent on January 23. He warned Alexander on January 23 that "the time has come when every practicable reduction must be made." According to the general, "nothing can save the Army in the impoverished condition of the Treasury, but prompt and energetic reduction in every branch of the service." <sup>6</sup>

The general's communication reached Fort Smith on February 14. In accordance with Jesup's wishes, Alexander reduced his clerk's

wages to \$50 per month, Master Carpenter Sawyer's to \$2, and the rest of the carpenters to \$1.50 per day. This added cut in salary increased the carpenters' dissatisfaction. As Alexander informed Jesup, they would have walked off the job if he could have paid them their back wages. Not knowing that funds were en route, the captain repeated his request for a remittance to enable him to pay off the obligations he had assumed in name of the United States. 7

Captain Alexander had advertised on January 1 that proposals for supplying the post with 3,000 to 4,000 bushels of "good sound merchantable corn" would be examined on January 20. Only four men submitted proposals. S. N. Clark was low bidder. Alexander contracted with Clark to supply the government with 4,000 bushels of corn at 27¢ per bushel. Since Clark lived some distance from Fort Smith, it was February 16 before the necessary documents were signed and forwarded to Washington. 8

A letter written by Jesup on February 8 caused Alexander additional headaches. The general reminded Alexander that Congress at its last session had appropriated only \$10,000 for Fort Smith, and he should have been less extravagant. On the receipt of this letter, the captain was to discharge all his carpenters, except the master carpenter and two others. To replace the carpenters laid off, Alexander was to apply to Colonel Taylor for soldiers. The compensation paid the blacksmith, coppersmith, teamsters, and laborers was to be drastically reduced. If possible the teamsters and laborers were to be laid off and their places taken by soldiers.

The expense of the quarters recently constructed for Colonel Taylor at Cantonment Belknap was to be charged to the Quartermaster's Department and not the special Fort Smith appropriation. According to Earhart, \$4,000 to \$5,000 had been spent on Taylor's quarters. 9

Replying on February 27, Alexander announced that he had discharged the men as rapidly as possible, only retaining enough "to put



the two blocks of buildings then nearly completed under cover." This had been done only after discussing the situation with Colonel Taylor.

Alexander had told Taylor of Jesup's instructions to lay off all the carpenters but two. Taylor was opposed to Jesup's plans. He advised the superintendent to hold on to all the carpenters until the Quartermaster General could be acquainted with the situation. There just weren't any carpenters among the personnel of the 6th Infantry stationed at Cantonment Belknap. The only man having a pretension as such had deserted.

Except for ten men stacking lumber, all the people assigned to the mill or logging operations had been discharged. The laborers who had been retained were paid one dollar a day.

The quarters occupied by Colonel Taylor, which consisted of two rooms connected by a passage, had been built for Colonel Arbuckle by Captain Lear. Since Taylor had taken command of the department, two small bedrooms had been added. Soldiers from the cantonment had furnished the labor. Alexander calculated the cost of construction, including the extra pay of the soldiers, at \$1,200. <sup>10</sup>

Congress on March 3 appropriated \$20,000 "for the completion of the works at Fort Smith." The estimate which Jesup had forwarded to Congress was "for continuing the works." In view of the title given the appropriation, the general was doubtful whether any further money could be obtained. Relaying this information to Alexander on the 10th, Jesup warned, "Your measures must therefore be taken accordingly, and the sum granted by Congress must not be exceeded."

Alexander was authorized to call on Colonel Taylor "for all the laborers and mechanics required." In the future no workers or mechanics, except a master builder, were to be hired. The captain was given permission to pay his master builder from \$75 to \$90 per month.

Already, the general observed, "The expenditures have been enormous at Fort Smith. Major Thomas expended...about \$120,000; and your expenditures...exceed ninety thousand dollars -- One hundred and twenty thousand dollars should have completed all the works."

All means of transportation "not absolutely necessary in carrying on the works" were to be sold. Henceforth, greater energy and "economy must characterize the future progress" of Alexander's operations at Fort Smith. "

Jesup's letter was opened by Captain Alexander on March 31. Before discharging the few remaining artisans on the payroll, Alexander discussed the communication with Colonel Taylor. The colonel cautioned Alexander that a survey indicated that he wouldn't be able to assign any mechanics from the battalion of the 6th Infantry stationed at Cantonment Belknap. None of the men seemed to possess the necessary skills. Nevertheless, Taylor continued, Alexander had better carry out his superior's instructions, although this would put a stop to all construction at Fort Smith.

When he advised Jesup of his conversation with Taylor, Alexander pointed out, the department commander had been co-operating wholeheartedly. During March, he had detailed a number of soldiers to report to the superintendent as laborers. Alexander assured Jesup that Taylor certainly demonstrated no disposition to throw any roadblocks in his way.

Since there would be little use for the public livestock at Fort Smith, Alexander planned to send a six-mule team to Captain William S. Ketchum at Fort Gibson. Alexander intended to sell most of the remaining work animals. A few would be retained for the time being in case Jesup reversed himself and ordered completed the "two blocks of buildings now up." Both Taylor and the superintendent strongly endorsed such a course of action.

A set of quarters, Alexander continued, had been floored and was ready for plastering. If finished, these could be turned over to

Paymaster David Hunter. This would enable the government to save the money disbursed each month to secure Hunter an office and quarters in the town of Fort Smith. <sup>12</sup>

During April, Alexander started to dispose of the surplus transportation. On the 22d, 16 head of livestock were sold at public auction for \$309.58. The money received was credited to the appropriation Congress had made for the construction of new works on the frontier. At the time the six-mule team was sent to Captain Ketchum, Alexander also transferred one wagon, six sets of harness, one ox cart, two horse carts and harness, six wheelbarrows, and two pair of dray wheels. Following this transaction, the superintendent was left with just seven horses and four mules charged against the appropriation for new works. These he determined to retain as essential.

The arrival of the draft for \$20,000 enabled the captain to settle with all the discharged workers but six. These, had left Fort Smith without leaving any forwarding address. The money due these individuals totalled \$182.76. Out of the \$20,000, Alexander, after settling all the outstanding accounts, had a small balance.

Meanwhile, a problem had arisen to which the superintendent didn't know the answer. In August 1842, one of the hired hands, \_\_\_\_\_ Fisher, had died. At the time of his death, Fisher had \$111.93 on the books. Fisher, before passing on, had requested that this money be paid to John Griffin, a fellow worker who had taken care of him in his final hours. Alexander wrote General Jesup on May 3 requesting guidance. He wished to know if he should allow Griffin to sign the roll and collect his deceased friend's money. <sup>13</sup>

Jesup referred Alexander's question to the comptroller. The comptroller urged caution. He suggested that the amount due Fisher be withheld from Griffin pending further investigation. It should be determined, the comptroller ruled, whether Fisher had any outstanding debts at the time of his death. If so, the money owed Fisher by the United States should be made available to the creditors first. A check should be made to see if Fisher left any close relatives. <sup>14</sup>

General Jesup was impressed with Alexander's March 31 dispatch. He agreed with Taylor and Alexander on "the propriety and necessity of finishing the blocks of buildings...." If a small number of mechanics could be employed, Alexander would undertake to do so, provided he didn't exceed the appropriation. An office and quarters for Major Hunter would be prepared in accordance with the superintendent's suggestion. 15

The general had not acted fast enough, however. By the time, his communication reached Fort Smith, the master builder and the carpenters had been paid off and had departed. To complete Hunter's quarters would require "the purchase of glass, locks, hinges, &c., and the hire of some 5 or 6 carpenters & 3 or 4 plasterers." It was Alexander's opinion that the cost would "much exceed" the available funds.

If the sawmill could be transferred to the Quartermaster's Department as Jesup had suggested, Alexander observed, it would enable him to resume operations and complete "the two blocks of buildings under cover so they could be occupied by the troops." If this were impossible, nothing further could be done at Fort Smith until Congress appropriated additional funds. 16

Since summer was at hand, Captain Alexander called for proposals to supply his department with hay. J. W. Seaman's bid of \$4.97½ per ton was accepted by the captain. As soon as Seaman had made the necessary bond, he was awarded a contract for 80 tons.

After making arrangements for the purchase of Seaman's hay on June 28, Captain Alexander took passage on a steamboat bound down the Arkansas. The captain carried a draft for \$17,500, which he planned to cash at one of the New Orleans banks. 17

Alexander, on his return from New Orleans at the end of the second week in August, found several messages from General Jesup. The general in his letter of July 15, inquired into the possibility of Alexander

finding a local buyer for the sawmill. If sold, the funds obtained should prove sufficient to complete "the quarters for the officers and troops at Fort Smith." 18

While Alexander was in favor of disposing of the mill, he recommended against selling unless it was removed. If it remained where it was, the owners would have to lease additional land on the reservation to carry out operations. Moreover, the superintendent was afraid that he would be unable to find a local purchaser who could give a fair price for the mill.

At present, Alexander continued, there was sufficient lumber on hand to finish "the two blocks of buildings already under cover," and the other barracks and two officers' quarters, the foundations of which had been laid under Major Thomas' supervision. It would be in the public's interest, Alexander argued, to complete the two blocks. Alexander estimated the cost to the government would be less than needed to repair and winterize the huts at Cantonment Belknap. 19

The second letter from Jesup told of new arrangements the Department had worked out for forwarding and depositing funds for the use of officers in the field. In the future, the government checks would be drawn on the New Orleans banks. Alexander was elated by this news. Unlike Major Thomas, Alexander had usually been able to exchange the Treasury drafts for specie at Fort Smith. The Fort Smith merchants, however, had been unable to cash the large draft which had reached the captain in June. He accordingly had to take it to New Orleans. Alexander was satisfied that the new procedures worked out by the Department would enable the officers in the field to handle their transactions without the necessity of expensive trips to financial centers to get Treasury drafts exchanged for funds. 20

1843

Captain Alexander, in response to a Quartermaster's Department circular of April 7, submitted a detailed report of the work accomplished and the estimated cost of completing Fort Smith, if the labor were done by soldiers.

Before describing the projects undertaken under his administration, the captain gave a brief summary of what had been accomplished while Major Thomas had been in charge. According to the calculations of Master Carpenter Sawyer, the walls and the foundations of the blockhouses contained 3,384 perch of rough stone. Alexander brought out the point that the wall of the garrison hadn't been raised to seven feet at all places as reported by his predecessor. About ten feet of wall on each section at the angles had been left open to provide room for the construction of blockhouses. About 40 feet of wall at Gate A had not been raised. This was to facilitate the passage of vehicles onto the parade ground. (See Alexander's Map of Fort Smith.)

At all gates, except Gate A, the posts had been raised to a height of eight and one-half feet. The stone for the posts for Gate A had been prepared and was stacked nearby.

1843

The foundations and first course of stone had been laid at blockhouses Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4. At Blockhouse No. 5, no work had been done above the foundation.

Twelve hundred and eighty-six perch of rough stone had been used by Major Thomas in building the foundations for two barracks and three Officers' Quarters. These foundations had been raised to the top of the basement story.

1843

There had been about 300,000 bricks of inferior quality on hand when Alexander took charge. Part of these had been used to build partitions in the two "blocks" which had been erected under his superintendency. Out of the 49,000 feet of oak lumber turned over to him by Thomas, Alexander discovered that very little was "suitable for building purposes."

Since he had taken charge, 686 perch of "rough dressed" stone work had been laid in the blockhouses. All five of which had been raised to seven feet. Alexander was satisfied that if these buildings were to be completed in accordance with the original plan it would cost not less than \$100,000. He recommended this plan be abandoned and the blockhouses "be raised to the height of the wall [12 feet] & finished in the same manner."

Four hundred and twenty perch of rough stone had been used on the wall. Sections 5, 6, 7 and 8 had been raised to 12 feet. Alexander was of the opinion that this was "ample for any purpose of defence." All that was necessary to complete these sections was the capping. At the angles, the wall had been raised to seven feet. Like Major Thomas, Alexander had refrained from closing the gap at Gate A. At present, the superintendent wrote, there was on the ground and ready for use 400 perch of stone. According to his figures, this was about half of what was needed to build the remaining sections of the wall to 12 feet.

In the barracks and quarters 310 perch of rough stone had been used. Large amounts of cut stone had gone into the two blocks which were under roof. Included were: 772 feet of water tables, 100 sets of window sills and caps, 28 door sills and caps, 70 privies, 44 caps for porches, and 310 feet (running measure) capping for walls. Continuing his summary of the materials which had been used to close in these structures, Alexander observed:

in these buildings there has been laid 950 thousand brick, 134 Squares of Slate. Copper gutters & pipes have been manufactured & put up. All the joists & roofing has been framed & put up. 450 feet (running measure) gutter cornice has been prepared & used. 72 window frames made & used. The joists bridged & counterceiling put in. More than half the flooring of these buildings prepared & part laid. All the work had been got out for preparing for plastering & part put up.

Turning to Barracks D, Alexander advised Jesup that the first floor joists were in position, and the stone water tables up. Material for the window frames had been prepared. Bricklaying could be stated as soon as the necessary funds were available. At the moment, there was enough brick and nearly enough slate on hand to complete the barracks.

Calling the general's attention to the attached estimates (See Appendix H), Alexander pointed out, the only additional lumber required to finish all the barracks and quarters was about 30,000 feet for the interior of Officers' Block A. The superintendent reported plenty of superior ash, pine, and oak lumber on hand for joists and roofing.

If he were given an appropriation of \$60,000, Alexander felt certain he would be able to complete the two blocks already under cover, as well as building Officer's Quarters B and C, and Barracks E. Besides affording sufficient room for all the officers who might be stationed at the post, these buildings could be used as storehouses for commissary and quartermaster's supplies. <sup>21</sup>

\* \* \*

Captain Alexander left Fort Smith for Washington on November 15. Before leaving the frontier, Colonel Taylor had spoken with the captain. He told Alexander that his quarters were "rendered almost uninhabitable" because of smoke from the chimneys. He wanted Alexander to secure four ventilators while he was in the east. Reaching Washington on December 7, Alexander relayed Taylor's request to General Jesup. <sup>22</sup>

It was several weeks before Jesup acted. On December 30, he authorized Alexander to purchase and send the ventilators to Taylor. <sup>23</sup>

Before returning to his station in January 1844, Alexander drafted a report covering operations at Fort Smith from October 11, 1841 to August 31, 1843. The captain, after detailing what had been accomplished, urged that construction be resumed. In case of war on the frontier, he wrote, the garrison would provide a haven of refuge for thousands of families. Consequently, it was only proper that the work should



be of "considerable size." Alexander was satisfied that the location of the post was "highly proper" to carry out the two-fold purpose for which it was designed — a place of refuge in times of trial and a depot for military stores.

Alexander was convinced of the absolute necessity of completing the fort "at an early a day as practicable." If work were started in May, he believed, the post could be finished before cold weather brought the building season to a close. 24

Major Thomas, who was in Washington at this time, agreed with Alexander as to the importance of Fort Smith. Recent arguments advanced by the military and in the halls of Congress to abandon Fort Smith bothered Thomas. Fort Smith, in the major's opinion, was far different from the temporary posts erected to guard against the hit and run raids of the plains and forest Indians. As soon as the Indians' claims to the lands in the neighborhood had been extinguished and the frontier pushed back, these garrisons were abandoned. Thomas, for one, didn't feel that the Cherokees, Choctaws, and Creeks who lived in the Indian Territory could be classed with "the uncivilized and roving bands living on the Northwestern boundary." The Indians west of Arkansas were "partly civilized" and farmers. Thomas doubted they would sell an acre of their land. Although they were currently on good terms with the whites, the Cherokees, Choctaws, and Creeks were powerful Nations and could cause trouble if provoked.

Thomas thought it would be false economy if Fort Smith were not completed. Without Fort Smith hundreds of valuable lives and hundreds of thousands of dollars would be sacrificed in event of a war on the Arkansas frontier. Because of its location at the normal head of navigation on the Arkansas, Fort Smith would become the principal base of operations in case of hostilities with the great "Indian Nations" of the southwest. Reinforcements of men and matériel could be rushed to Fort Smith with little expense and "in perfect security." Except in times of very low water, steamboats of light-draft could

ascend the Arkansas as far as Belle Point. From Fort Smith, expeditions could be sent deep into the Indian country. At times when the stage of the Red kept boats from passing above the "raft", reinforcing columns could be rushed to Forts Towson and Washita.

Fort Smith would become at the outbreak of war both a rallying point for the troops and a place of refuge for the "defenceless women & children." While Indians would have to cross the Arkansas and Poteau rivers to attack the garrison, reinforcements approaching the post from Arkansas could do so without encountering any difficulties or delays. Within the commodious walls of the stronghold, several thousand people could be comfortably quartered. An equal number could find shelter on Belle Point. Here, they would be protected by the guns of three of the five bastions.

Thomas argued that a regiment of infantry stationed at Fort Smith would serve as an excellent deterrent for preventing "any outbreak or hostilities on the part of the Indians." An Indian war, according to the major, was much easier prevented than ended. It was simply good policy to be ready for an active and energetic war. Thomas reminded Jesup that the expense of rushing troops to Fort Smith in 1838 when internal troubles in the Cherokee Nation made their presence necessary, and those incurred in transporting the 6th U. S. Infantry from Fort Jefferson to Fort Towson when difficulties had occurred with Mexico had cost the government more than it would to finish Fort Smith if the troops were employed on the works. When the fort was completed, upkeep would be "very trifling." Fort Smith, in Thomas' opinion, "must remain an important point (if not the most important one) on the Southwestern frontier as long as the three great nations of Indians [the Cherokees, Choctaws, and Creeks] hold the country they now occupy." <sup>25</sup>

Opposed to Major Thomas and Captain Alexander as to the importance of Fort Smith was General Scott. Echoing the arguments advanced previously by Colonel Taylor, Scott discounted the importance of Fort Smith. On February 14, 1843, Scott had prepared an interesting memorandum for Secretary of War Spencer on the subject. Spencer had been asked for such a report by one of the Senate committees. He informed the Secretary that he was "personally acquainted with the topography of the Arkansas river about Forts Smith and Gibson." Scott was convinced that the expenditure of public funds upon Fort Smith far exceeded "the military value of the position." The general argued that Fort Smith was too far removed from the lands belonging to the Seminoles, Creeks, Cherokees, and the plains Indians. While the post was located on the Choctaw line, Scott continued, it was the boast of this Nation that their warriors had never "shed the blood of the white-man."

During the late summer of each year, there was a "sickly season" at Fort Smith. For this reason, Scott was opposed to stationing the ready reserve there. Scott informed the Secretary that the reserve should always be held in "cheap & healthy positions" like St. Louis' Jefferson Barracks. The expenditure of \$50,000 to \$80,000 to erect permanent quarters at Fort Gibson, Scott believed, "would be worth for military purposes, thrice the \$300,000 at Fort Smith."

In view of the large sum already spent on Fort Smith, Scott was not prepared to recommend its abandonment. He thought it would be wise to reduce the scale of the works at Fort Smith. A small supporting garrison could be kept there, pending the enlargement of Fort Gibson. The only funds which ought to be allotted to Fort Smith in the future, Scott commented, were those to "preserve & to render of some little use what has already been done." <sup>26</sup>

As the 28th Congress prepared to convene, the Arkansas delegation determined to push for funds for Fort Smith. A joint-letter was written by Senators Fulton and Sevier to Secretary of War William Wilkins

on February 20, 1844. (Wilkins had been appointed Secretary by President Tyler on February 15.) The senators urged steps be taken to secure the early completion of the works at Fort Smith. The Secretary asked Scott's advise on the subject. Repeating the arguments he had used in his letter to Spencer, Scott announced his opposition to spending additional funds on the fort. Once again, he urged that the money be used to repair and expand the accommodations for troops at Fort Gibson. Upon referring to the report Jesup had prepared from the information submitted by Captain Alexander, Scott saw that the Quartermaster's Department had asked for \$60,000 to finish Fort Smith. The commanding general was of the opinion that "half of that sum expended at Fort Gibson would be of much greater value to the public service." Unless the "transplanted Indians" were incorporated into the Union, Scott was satisfied, the army would be compelled to keep a strong garrison at Fort Gibson for a century or more.

Scott reported to the Secretary that the first time the Fort Smith problem had crossed his desk was the previous year. He therefore disclaimed any responsibility "for the false position selected, & the enormous expenditure of money on Fort Smith."

A review of the figures submitted by Jesup showed the commanding general that beginning in 1838, \$245,000 had been spent on the post. (See Appendix I) This included \$5,000 recently forwarded to Captain Alexander out of an appropriation of \$30,000 made by the 2d Session of the 27th Congress. Scott pronounced himself satisfied that it would probably take the remaining \$25,000, plus another \$100,000 to complete the garrison. All told, \$370,000 would have been poured into a fort which when finished will be "totally useless for any important military purpose."

Scott in closing exonerated the Quartermaster General of any responsible for the selection of the site or the plan for the post. As far as Scott could determine, Secretary of War Poinsett, succumbing

to pressure exerted by the Arkansas congressional delegation, had determined to locate the fort slated to be erected on the Arkansas River at Fort Smith. <sup>27</sup>

Meanwhile, pressure for the government to provide better quarters was mounting among the officers stationed at Cantonment Belknap. On January 7, Major Hoffman submitted a request to Captain John P. Davis (the acting quartermaster in Alexander's absence) that he be provided quarters in town. Hoffman complained that there was an "insufficiency of Suitable quarters at this post for the accommodation of the officers." <sup>28</sup>

Captain Davis determined to refer the problem to General Jesup. He pointed out that not only were the officers quartered at Cantonment Belknap confronted by "a very great insufficiency of Quarters," but the quarters were in a "very dilapidated condition." Within a short time, Davis believed, they would be unfit for occupancy. The quarters had been constructed of "very small, light material," a large part of which was in an advanced state of decay. To make matters worse, the rooms were small and inconvenient. At present two officers were quartered to a room. <sup>29</sup>

When he learned of Hoffman's request, Jesup instructed Davis to provide the commandant quarters in the town. <sup>30</sup>

Two months later, Captain Davis addressed a second note to General Jesup. The captain this time complained about the lack of space at Fort Smith in which to store subsistence supplies. According to Davis, there was a pressing need for a "large commodious" warehouse. For the past six or seven years, Fort Smith had been the depot from which supplies were sent to the troops at Fort Gibson. A large steamboat had just reached Fort Smith, and the roustabouts were unloading 2,400 barrels of commissary stores. The storehouse built by Major Thomas in 1840 was described by Captain Davis as inadequate to handle more than 800 barrels. Consequently, he had been compelled to store a large quantity of salt pork in the town. Upon the first requisition by the Fort Gibson commissary officer, the pork would be shipped.

Davis complained to Jesup that it had been seven years since the Commissary Department had contracted for the delivery of supplies to Fort Gibson. The necessity of distributing these stores was not only an inconvenience, but it caused the Quartermaster's Department to bear an added expense. Davis felt that the subsistence stores could be delivered on contract as cheaply to Fort Gibson as to Fort Smith. 31

General Jesup was impressed with Davis' logic. Before forwarding the letter to Commissary General George Gibson, Jesup added his endorsement, "Cannot contracts be made to deliver subsistence at Fort Gibson?" If so, the expense and difficulty of storing and transhipping the rations could be avoided. 32

Replying, Gibson pointed out that for many years there had been doubt as to the fate of Fort Gibson. All the ranking officers in the army, except Colonel Arbuckle, Gibson mistakenly reported were in agreement that the post should be abandoned. His Department for this reason had failed to arrange with the contractors to deliver the prerequisite subsistence stores to Fort Gibson. Moreover, Gibson felt that the warehouse built by Thomas ought to be large enough to take care of the commissary supplies in question. Taking a potshot at Captain Davis, Gibson questioned why a building which had heretofore been adequate should suddenly become obsolete. 33

\* \* \*

Captain Alexander returned to Fort Smith from Washington on January 10. Before giving his attention to anything else, the captain put his books for the 4th Quarter of 1843 in order. These along with the reports which were due were forwarded to Washington. Next, Alexander prepared his travel vouchers, preparatory to applying for his travel allowance. On consulting the "Post Office Records," he found that it was 1,226 miles from Fort Smith to Washington. Several officers from the 6th Infantry told Alexander that Paymaster Hunter had been in the habit of permitting them to claim a considerably greater

distance which had been honored by the Quartermaster's Department. Although he used the figure provided by the Post Office in making out his papers, Alexander requested a table to guide him in the future. 34

Ignoring General Scott's and Colonel Taylor's views, the Arkansas congressional delegation succeeded in getting funds to complete Fort Smith added to the bill for military construction which passed the 1st Session of the 28th Congress.

General Jesup on October 26, 1844, wrote Captain Alexander that it had been decided to "recommence operations on the New Works." When making the new appropriation, Congress had declared it "the duty of the Secretary of War to employ the troops in all the labors required." As soon as Alexander could recruit a "sufficient force" from the garrisons in the department, he was to begin work. The general advised that "one block of soldiers' barracks, the commanding officer's quarters, and sufficient quarters for the officers of one company be completed as soon as practicable." A few mechanics, with one or more master builders, might be hired to "facilitate the labors of the troops." No money would be spent for the repair of the buildings at Cantonment Belknap. 35

At the same time, Adjutant General Jones had written Colonel Arbuckle informing him that he was to comb his department for troops possessing skills which would be of assistance to Captain Alexander.

When he notified Alexander of this action on Colonel Jones' part, Jesup told the captain that he "was to consult" with Arbuckle "on all matters relating to the work confided to your superintendence." Since no further construction funds for Fort Smith could be expected, Alexander was warned, he must be careful not "to exceed the present appropriation -- the buildings must all be finished in the plainest manner -- and no expensive or extra ornament can be permitted." 36

Captain Alexander lost no time in contacting Colonel Arbuckle. Writing the colonel on November 23, the superintendent informed him

that Jesup wanted the two blocks which were under roof finished with the least possible delay. If this were done, Cantonment Belknap could be abandoned and the troops shifted to Fort Smith. Thus, the government could be spared the expense of repairing the huts. Alexander announced himself prepared to take charge of any number of soldier-mechanics Arbuckle might be disposed to place under his control.

Since there weren't any soldiers at Cantonment Belknap who were skilled carpenters, Alexander wished Arbuckle to send him some from Forts Gibson and Towson. Alexander hoped for a prompt reply as to the number of mechanics and laborers he might expect, so he could write the master builder (who had gone home to Cincinnati) when to return. <sup>37</sup>

Replying immediately, Arbuckle announced that he interpreted his instructions from the Adjutant General to imply that he wasn't to detach mechanics from other posts to complete the buildings at Fort Smith. Major Hoffman had been directed, Arbuckle noted, to furnish Alexander "all the aid his command will admit of". <sup>38</sup>

Alexander waited until November 28 before calling on Major Hoffman to let him know how many mechanics and laborers from his battalion of the 6th Infantry could be detailed to work on the fort. <sup>39</sup> Hoffman was unable to give Alexander much encouragement. Since his command was badly understrength, there were hardly enough men to "admit of a relief for a small guard." At the same time, these same soldiers had to gather fuel for their companies and officers. Hoffman, on checking with his company commanders, had learned that there was only one man who had been a carpenter before enlisting. This individual had already been detailed to the Quartermaster's Department. He along with the few men employed at the public stable and the teamsters were all Hoffman could spare. <sup>40</sup>

Jesup was promptly notified of the difficulties Alexander was encountering in getting Arbuckle and Hoffman to release troops with necessary skills. The carpenter mentioned by the major was employed



to repair wagons, while the teamsters were engaged in hauling fuel. In Alexander's opinion these men couldn't be released from their present duties. He accordingly suggested that eight or ten carpenters and his former master builder be employed immediately. Besides preserving the buildings from injury by the elements, they could use up materials which were starting to deteriorate. <sup>41</sup>

General Jesup was disappointed to learn that Captain Alexander had been unsuccessful in his efforts to get the army to detail him mechanics and laborers. A number of months passed while Jesup struggled in vain to get Adjutant General Jones to change his policy regarding the transfer of soldiers skilled as craftsmen from Forts Gibson and Towson to Cantonment Belknap. Failing to accomplish this, Jesup finally authorized Alexander to hire a few mechanics. Several carpenters were employed. On May 1, 1845, these men were put to work completing the "two large Blocks of buildings." From time to time during the summer additional carpenters were added to the payroll. <sup>42</sup>

With only a small number of men to supervise, Alexander found plenty of time to devote to his other duties. On June 28, he closed a contract with H. Mickel to supply the post with 110 tons of "prairie hay." Of the eight men who had submitted proposals to the captain, Mickel's bid of \$3.97 3/4 per ton had been low. <sup>43</sup>

During the summer of 1845, General Jesup visited the Arkansas frontier. The general arrived at Fort Smith on the afternoon of July 8. He found an order from the Department in Washington to investigate the need for a new storehouse for commissary and quartermaster's supplies. Accompanied by Captain Alexander, the general inspected the reservation the following day. He described the storehouse of which Captain Davis had complained as a "most wretched affair, not fit for any kind of public property." The general was convinced that a new storehouse would have to be built.

His tour of the area had divulged there was a large quantity of construction material on hand which had not been earmarked for any

projects. Jesup told Alexander to make use of these items to complete Blockhouse No. 1, the first story of which had been raised to seven feet. This blockhouse could be used as a storehouse by the Commissary and Quartermaster's Departments. Since lumber and stone were available, Jesup was satisfied the only expense would be "the labour of completing the work, and the glass, nails and shingles, (or slate) that may be required." A building affording as much space as the blockhouse would cost at least \$3,000. The blockhouse, the general believed, could be completed by contract for \$1,050.

At the same time, the general noticed that no arrangements had been made for the care of the sick. He told Alexander to see that Officers' Quarters C, the walls of which had been raised to about six feet, was completed as a hospital and quarters for the surgeon. Like the storehouse, the work on the hospital would be contracted.

Jesup, writing to Colonel Henry Stanton of his visit to Fort Smith, complained of the enormous waste of money and materials. (Stanton was acting as Quartermaster General during Jesup's absence.) But, he added philosophically, "it is useless to grieve for that which cannot be remedied." In the future, the Department would have to make better use of its resources. He felt that his presence would enable Captain Alexander "to accomplish half as much more with the appropriation than he could have effected had some officer of rank in the Department not been on the spot to decide what was proper to be done with the materials on hand." <sup>44</sup>

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Before leaving Fort Smith for Fort Gibson, Jesup called on John Rogers. For some time, the government had been interested in purchasing the land where Cantonment Belknap was situated. Captain Belknap had built the camp on Section 16, which was a school section. The Arkansas legislature in January had appointed a three man commission headed by Rogers to negotiate with the United States. Meeting with Rogers and his fellow commissioners, the general announced, the Federal government would pay \$6,000 for Section 16.

Rogers said he would have to discuss the proposal with the township voters. He found on doing so that they were agreeable to the sale at the stipulated price. Jesup had gone to Fort Gibson, so Rogers forwarded this information. <sup>45</sup>

Returning to Fort Smith on July 27, Jesup acknowledged the receipt of the commissioners' letter. Since he had been away from Washington for several months, the general didn't know whether Congress had made an appropriation for the purchase of the School Section. If not, the general promised to include the \$6,000 in his estimate of funds needed for the coming year. <sup>46</sup>

Just as Jesup had feared, the 28th Congress had adjourned without making funds available for the purchase of the desired land. In March of 1846, Rogers visited Washington. Rogers, before returning to Arkansas, planned to pressure the War Department into taking some action.

On March 12, Rogers informed Secretary of War William L. Marcy (Following the inauguration of James K. Polk as President, Marcy had succeeded Wilkins as Secretary of War.) that his colleagues had written him to declare the agreement entered into with Jesup void, unless the government was prepared to turn over \$6,000 to the commission. Since the money from the school section was to be used for education, Rogers observed, the commissioners were "bound to dispose of it to the best advantage to promote that object." Rogers was satisfied the "public service" wouldn't suffer because of the commissioners' withdrawal of their offer to sell, because the Fort Smith reservation was a source of fuel. But in recent years, Rogers added, most of the trees had been felled by soldiers from Cantonment Belknap. <sup>47</sup>

Marcy asked Rogers to wait and see if the 1st Session of the 29th Congress would approve Jesup's request for funds to purchase Section 16.

Colonel Arbuckle hoped the government would secure the school section. He wrote General Jesup on May 9 inquiring if any steps had been taken to consummate the agreement. For \$6,000, Arbuckle didn't believe the government could go wrong. He felt that the Cantonment Belknap buildings were worth at least half that amount. In addition, he feared the commissioners would claim huge damages for the timber which had been cut. Finally, Arbuckle got around to admitting that he had a personal interest in the matter. The quarters he currently occupied, with which he was well satisfied, were on Section 16. If the land were not secured, and he was compelled to move into one of the buildings under construction at the new work, it would cause great inconvenience to the regular garrison. <sup>48</sup>

With the outbreak of war with Mexico, Congress refused to make the requested appropriation. Rogers, accompanied by Commissioner Burney, returned to Washington in September. Jesup told them that since Congress had failed to act, the contract for the sale had been voided. The government having reneged, the commissioners announced they were desirous of obtaining possession of the section to build a school. Moreover, they declared, they wanted the land as is. The War Department was asked not to remove the buildings.

Jesup decided he had better refer the matter to Secretary of War Marcy. On doing so, the general observed, he had had no part whatever in taking possession of the school section. No one in the Quartermaster General's office could say whether Captain Belknap had secured the school commissioners' permission before establishing the cantonment. Jesup recommended to Marcy that the army surrender the section to the commissioners, along with the improvements. An understanding would be secured that the buildings be taken as "full compensation for the use of the land by the troops and the timber cut by them." <sup>49</sup>

Marcy approved Jesup's proposal on September 10. <sup>50</sup>

Colonel Arbuckle on March 26, 1847, notified the commissioners that the United States was now ready to turn over to them Section 16. At that time Cantonment Belknap was occupied by the Battalion of Arkansas Volunteers.

The commissioners advised the general that there had been a marked change in conditions since their visit to Washington the previous September. A favorable opportunity for disposing of the land for a considerable sum had been lost. Furthermore, the quartering of the volunteers on the section had caused considerable damages to the land and premises. Nearly all the land which had been under fence was now open as "Common land." Additional timber had been cut, while the "fences and buildings had gone to waste." Thus, the value of the property had been greatly reduced, much to the detriment of its future sale.

Consequently, the commissioners hoped the government would reimburse them for the injuries and damages. Arbuckle referred their letter to the Quartermaster General. <sup>51</sup>

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While Jesup had been at Fort Smith, he had told Alexander to prepare figures on what it would cost to complete one of the block-houses as a storehouse. The work would be done by contract. On August 6, 1845, when he forwarded his reports for July to Washington, Alexander attached his estimate of the amount necessary for the raising of the warehouse. Colonel Stanton was notified that Augustus A. Blumenthal of St. Louis had agreed to undertake the project. <sup>52</sup>

Copies of the contracts which Alexander had signed with Blumenthal for the erection of the storehouse and of the block of "buildings intended for officers' quarters & hospital" were mailed to the Quartermaster General's Office on September 9. Colonel Stanton was informed that General Jesup had approved the terms of these agreements while he was at Fort Smith. Before returning to Washington, the general had suggested several slight changes in the wordings.

As the contractor had already left for St. Louis to recruit mechanics, the captain had to await his return before incorporating these items in the agreement. It was the first week of September before Blumenthal returned. After agreeing to the changes, Blumenthal put his men to work. 53

A copy of a circular issued by the Quartermaster General's Office on July 25 reached Fort Smith in late September. Washington wanted to know what "improvements, alterations, and repairs" had been made at the post since October 1, 1844. Alexander was also called on to inform the Department what was necessary to complete the fort, and the probable cost of doing so. 54

Alexander informed the Department on October 2 that beginning May 1, 1845, a few carpenters had been employed to complete Officers' Quarters A and Barracks D. As the summer progressed, additional carpenters had been signed on. The flooring, and window and dooring casings had been installed. The lathing had been nailed in position and a coat of plaster added. Most of the sashes were up. All told, the cost of the labor and materials since work had been resumed amounted to about \$6,000. Alexander calculated it would cost an equal sum to complete the two blocks. 55

With the approach of winter, Alexander issued a call for bids to supply the Quartermaster's Department at Fort Smith with 2,000 bushels of corn and 2,000 bushels of oats. The captain, upon examining the proposals, found that A. S. Mayers' bid of 40¢ per bushel for the oats was low; P. Hanger and G. W. Knox had each said they could supply the government with corn for 34½¢ per bushel. Alexander solved this problem by agreeing to purchase half the corn from Hanger and the remainder from Knox. 56

General Jesup, following his return to Washington in January 1846, reported to Secretary of War Marcy on the situation at Fort Smith. Prior to Jesup's departure from the capital, the Secretary had asked him to examine "the site of Fort Smith in its relation to the line of defence of the South Western frontier." In a memorandum dated

January 9, the Quartermaster General wrote, Fort Smith, since it was the head of steamboat navigation on the Arkansas, was "an important point for a depot of supplies for a force operating on that frontier as well as for the posts in advance on Red river, and Fort Gibson."

Jesup argued that from its position, Fort Smith had a decided advantage over any other garrison in the southwest as a supply depot. The works, he admitted, had been commenced on too vast a scale. Consequently, too much money had been expended. The buildings which had been started, however, were necessary. The amount needed to complete them, in Jesup's opinion, "could not be more judiciously applied to the public service than in finishing them."

Jesup advised Marcy of the arrangements he had worked out with Captain Alexander to have the storehouse and hospital erected by contract. The general thought that the buildings which had been started as the commanding officer's quarters and barracks E should also be finished. At the time of his visit, the foundations of these two structures had been raised to six feet. The completion of these two edifices would ensure sufficient accommodations for "any garrison which the circumstances of the country might require."

If necessary, Jesup continued, one or more of the remaining bastions "might be completed...and would afford room for all the Stores which could at any time be required on that frontier, either for the militia or the regular troops."

To finish these buildings would require an additional appropriation. Jesup however, didn't think any work ought to be undertaken on these structures, until those currently under construction and contract had been completed. It could then be ascertained whether any of the current appropriation remained. Jesup accordingly didn't believe it would be advisable at the moment to present an estimate of what it would cost to undertake the proposed projects. 57

Marcy referred Jesup's letter to General Scott. The commanding general hadn't altered his views in regard to Fort Smith. It was still his opinion that the works in question "were commenced on a scale much too large for the wants of the service." Scott thought in view of the vast sums of money already lavished on the buildings at Fort Smith, it might be a good idea to finish some of them.

Scott took issue with Jesup's claim that Fort Smith was the head of steamboat navigation on the Arkansas. He was familiar with the area, having traveled to Fort Gibson on a steamer of "good size." His experiences on the Arkansas led Scott to believe that the river was navigable to Fort Gibson for a good part of every year. 58

When Jesup learned of Scott's comments, he observed that he should have said, Fort Smith is the head of "active Steam Boat navigation" on the Arkansas. While steamboats could reach Fort Gibson during periods of high water, there were many months of each year when this was impossible. During the previous summer, Jesup had been compelled to travel to and from Fort Gibson on horseback. He agreed with Scott that except as a depot, Fort Smith had no strategic importance. 59

After re-examining Jesup's communication and Scott's comments, Marcy advised that for the time being the government do nothing more than complete some of the buildings currently under way in an economical manner. Under no condition should any projects be undertaken beyond those recommended by Jesup. 60

Meanwhile, Contractor Blumenthal had pushed his men hard. Lieutenant Edward Johnson, the post commissary at Cantonment Belknap, informed Commissary General Gibson on January 11 that the new storehouse would be completed in a few days. Several nights before, the old storehouse had been broken in and a barrel of sugar and some soap stolen. Because of the dilapidated condition, the lieutenant was astonished that this had not occurred before. To prevent a repetition, Johnson had stationed a guard near the storehouse. A request had been forwarded to Captain William Hoffman to have the post made



permanent, pending the completion of "the new Store," which in Johnson's opinion, "will be a very fine one." <sup>61</sup> 1846

Captain Alexander notified General Jesup on February 2 that Contractor Blumenthal had finished the storehouse. The building had been turned over to Lieutenant Johnson. Alexander and Johnson were impressed. Alexander reported that what had started out to be a blockhouse had been turned into "a large and fine building and is well calculated for the preservation of stores." <sup>62</sup>

Writing to Colonel Gibson on February 6, Johnson announced the "new Commissary Store is completed -- it is a very commodious and suitable building." <sup>63</sup>

Contractor Blumenthal didn't drag his feet. Captain Alexander notified General Jesup on March 4 that he needed \$5,000 of the appropriation Congress had made for the completion of the works. In accordance with his contract, Blumenthal had requested the \$3,000 which he was to be paid as soon as the walls for the projected post hospital had been raised.

Alexander was pleased with the way things were developing. Within the next several days, the contractor would have the roof on the hospital. During the winter, Blumenthal had had his carpenters prepare "the interior fixtures." These were ready and would be put in position as soon as the edifice was closed in.

Information had reached Alexander that glass, locks, hinges, paints, &c. could be obtained on very favorable terms in St. Louis. Consequently, the captain had ceased ordering these items from New Orleans. <sup>64</sup>

The carpenters and soldiers working on Officers' Quarters A and Barracks D were kept employed through the winter and into early spring. Writing General Jesup on April 12, Alexander announced, within the next few days these two buildings would be finished. They would then be reported ready for occupancy to Major Bonneville.

(Bonneville had succeeded Major Hoffman as commandant at Cantonment Belknap on August 30, 1845. On December 21, Bonneville had obtained a short leave, he had returned to duty on January 15, 1846. During Bonneville's absence, Captain Hoffman had been in command.)

Having lain dormant since Major Thomas' departure six years before, the dispute with John Rogers over the eastern boundary of the reservation flared up once again. Early in April, Alexander caught one of Rogers' employees removing dirt from what he believed to be government land. The captain made the man stop.

Since Rogers was known to be in Washington, Alexander determined to see if a permanent solution to the long standing dispute could be arranged. Alexander wrote General Jesup, notifying him that Rogers was in the capital city, and suggesting that he try to reach an understanding with the merchant as to the boundary of the tract he had conveyed to the United States. As matters now stood, the captain continued, the dispute would be a constant source of "annoyance and vexation" to the military. Alexander wanted Jesup to press Rogers for a "faithful fulfilment of his contract."

Briefing Jesup on the status of the dispute, Alexander reported, in the spring of 1843 he had proposed to Rogers that the Military road serve as the boundary between the reservation and the town. Rogers had refused to listen to Alexander's proposition. <sup>65</sup>

The captain when he posted his reports for April, informed General Jesup that he was short of funds. A remittance would be required to meet both the Quartermaster accounts and the debts accumulated on behalf of the new works. Alexander hoped to settle with and discharge all the mechanics and laborers hired to complete Officers' Quarters A and Barracks D by May 15. The buildings would then be turned over to Major Bonneville.

In addition, Blumenthal's people were making rapid progress on the hospital. The floors had been laid, the lathing was nearly completed, and the door and window casings were being put up.

Unless some unlooked for bottlenecks were encountered, the contractor told Alexander the building would be finished by August 1. To insure he would be through by the date indicated, Blumenthal had sent to St. Louis for more men. 66

As predicted, Officers' Quarters A and Barracks D were finished on May 15. Cantonment Belknap was evacuated and the officers and men of Companies D and F, 6th Infantry eagerly moved into their long awaited permanent quarters. 67

With the outbreak of the Mexican War in April 1846, Captain Alexander was confronted by a barrage of requests for funds to facilitate the movement of troops. A battalion of Arkansas Volunteers was ordered to assemble at Fort Smith. At the same time, the War Department began calling in and concentrating the regular units. To take care of these unexpected expenses, the captain disbursed the small amount of funds on hand which had been appropriated for the construction of Barracks and Quarters. One thousand dollars were advanced to Lieutenant John W. Gardiner, the post quartermaster at Fort Wayne. Gardiner needed the money to settle his accounts, his company of the 1st Dragoons having been ordered to Fort Leavenworth to join Colonel Kearny. Alexander hoped the Department would send him sufficient funds to cover this transaction.

At the same time, Alexander had called on the officer in charge of the New Orleans Quartermaster's Depot, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas F. Hunt, to supply him with camp equipage to prepare the volunteer battalion for field service. 68

Alexander on June 20 forwarded to General Jesup a contract he had signed with Blumenthal for finishing the northwest bastion as a storehouse. (For a copy of contract see Appendix J) When authorized to undertake this project, Alexander had made a survey to see which of the four remaining bastions best served that purpose. He had found the foundations of Blockhouse No. 2 best "calculated for a Store house."

As the general would notice, Alexander wrote, the cost of turning Blockhouse No. 2 into a storehouse (\$2,156.50) was appreciably higher than the amount spent altering and completing Blockhouse No. 1 as a commissary storehouse. Because of the war, trouble would be encountered in recruiting mechanics and laborers. With men flocking to the colors, wages demanded and received had risen sharply on the Arkansas frontier. It was almost impossible to get unskilled men to assist the masons.

Since it would be difficult to employ men to reopen the quarry, Alexander would be hard-pressed to get stone with which to build the storehouse. He decided to raze the foundations for the Commanding Officer's Quarters and Barracks E.

Before doing so, the captain discussed the matter with Colonel Arbuckle. He told the colonel that the foundations in question would "never answer to build upon, were it ever the intention of the government to erect these buildings." Arbuckle agreed, and the captain was told to proceed.

Men were turned to tearing them down.

When he informed Jesup of this development on June 20, Alexander announced, work on the new storehouse was progressing rapidly and would be "completed in the least possible time." At the same time, the captain wrote that he was "ready and anxious" for service in the field. If the Department decided to transfer him, Alexander hoped he would be ordered to rejoin his regiment (the 3d Infantry) which was serving with Colonel Taylor's army on the Mexican border. <sup>69</sup>

Alexander on May 13 had advertised that bids to supply the Fort Smith Quartermaster's Department with 150 tons of hay would be received and opened on June 13. Thirteen men had their proposals on Alexander's desk on the designated day. The three low bids had to be rejected, because two of the men refused to put up the prescribed security and the other individual had left the country. The contract was awarded to James W. McKinney, who had agreed to furnish the hay for \$4.23 a ton. <sup>70</sup>

Contractor Blumenthal worked his men hard. Within four months, the new warehouse had been completed. On September 30, Alexander notified Jesup that the storehouse which he had ordered erected on the northwest blockhouse had been finished. <sup>71</sup>

Five days before, the Quartermaster had returned from Little Rock to discover that during his absence Colonel Arbuckle had signed a contract to have a "Stone Magazine" erected on the site of the southeast bastion. Work had already started on the magazine. Notifying General Jesup of this development, Alexander pointed out, a magazine was "absolutely necessary for the safe keeping and preservation of the large quantity of ammunition on hand, as well as that recently received on account of Mexican hostilities." <sup>72</sup>

Before going to Little Rock, Alexander had broadcast that bids for supplying the post with 3,000 bushels of corn and 2,000 bushels of oats would be received on September 26. When he arrived back at the garrison, the captain discovered that during his absence Company D, 1st Dragoons had been assigned to Fort Smith. The mounted unit had left Fort Gibson on August 7, and had reached its new base 48 hours later. Companies D and F, 6th Infantry had left Fort Smith for the Mexican border on July 13. Major Bonneville had accompanied the battalion. On the major's departure, Captain Alexander, in addition to his Quartermaster duties, had assumed those as post commander. He accordingly estimated that at least 2,000 additional bushels of corn would be required to take care of the increased number of horses. Contracts were signed on September 26 with the low bidders for the desired amount of corn and oats. <sup>73</sup>

Colonel Arbuckle received a letter from Adjutant General Jones on October 1 which undoubtedly made Captain Alexander beam. Alexander was to turn over "all Public property, books, papers, and money" pertaining to the Quartermaster's Department to Lieutenant John W. T. Gardiner. As soon as he had closed out his "public business," Alexander was to consider himself relieved of duty at Fort Smith. He would report to his regiment. <sup>74</sup>

FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

Chapter VII

The Garrison Moves In

Notes

1 Alexander to Jesup, Feb. 3, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

2 Ibid.

3 Alexander to Macrae, Feb. 7, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Alexander affixed a list to his letter containing names of men whom he didn't wish Macrae to engage. His previous experiences with these individuals had been unsatisfactory. They were: W. Whiteside, T. J. Milton, M. Leach, P. Torpy, J. B. Alexander, P. T. Malin, and H. Jacox. Nathaniel Macrae of Virginia had graduated from West Point in the class of 1826. Macrae had been made a captain on December 18, 1839. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 682.

4 Alexander to Jesup, Feb. 7, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

5 Ibid.

6 Jesup to Alexander, Jan. 23, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).

7 Alexander to Jesup, Feb. 14, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). At this time, Alexander asked that he be allowed to increase Master Carpenter Sawyer's wages to \$3 per day. If he didn't, he was afraid Sawyer, whom he described as an "intelligent gentlemanly man," would return to his home in Philadelphia.

8 Alexander to Jesup, Feb. 16, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 9 Jesup to Alexander, Feb. 8, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 10 Alexander to Jesup, Feb. 27, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 11 Jesup to Alexander, March 10, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 12 Alexander to Jesup, March 31, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 13 Alexander to Jesup, May 3, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Jesup to Alexander, Apr. 19, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 16 Alexander to Jesup, June 1, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 17 Alexander to Jesup, June 28, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Sixteen men had advanced proposals for supplying hay to the Quartermaster's Department at Fort Smith. Wall A. Ring's bid of \$8 per ton was the highest received by Captain Alexander.
- 18 Jesup to Alexander, July 15, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent.).
- 19 Alexander to Jesup, Aug. 11, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 20 Alexander to Jesup, Aug. 13, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 21 Alexander to Jesup, Sept. 30, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 22 Alexander to Jesup, Dec. 7, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Alexander's Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, Oct. 11, 1841, to Aug. 31, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 25 Thomas' Report of Operations at Ft. Smith, 1839 to Oct. 1840; Thomas to Jesup, Jan. 8, 1844 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 26 Scott to Spencer, Feb. 14, 1843 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 27 Scott to Wilkins, March 24, 1844 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 28 Hoffman to Davis, Jan. 7, 1844 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 29 Davis to Jesup, Jan. 9, 1844 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Davis to Jesup, March 2, 1844 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid.; Jesup to Alexander, Oct. 26, 1844 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 34 Alexander to Jesup, Jan. 10, 1844 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 35 Jesup to Alexander, Oct. 26, 1844 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 36 Jesup to Alexander, Nov. 1, 1844 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 37 Alexander to Arbuckle, Nov. 23, 1844 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 38 Arbuckle to Alexander, Nov. 25, 1844 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.); Arbuckle to Adjutant General, Nov. 23, 1844 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 39 Alexander to Hoffman, Nov. 28, 1844 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 40 Alexander to Hoffman, Nov. 30, 1844 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 41 Alexander to Jesup, Nov. 30, 1844 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).



- 42 Alexander to Jesup, Oct. 2, 1845 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 43 Alexander to Jesup, June 28, 1845 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Mickel's closest competitor in the bidding had been B. Jefferys, who had proposed to furnish the hay for \$3.98 3/4 per ton.
- 44 Jesup to Stanton, July 9, 1845; Jesup to Marcy, Jan. 9, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Henry Stanton of Vermont had entered the service as 3d lieutenant in the 3d Light Artillery on June 29, 1813. Rising slowly in rank, Stanton had been made colonel and Assistant Quartermaster General on July 7, 1838. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 916.
- 45 Rogers to Jesup, July 23, 1845 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG Ltrs. Recd.). The other members of the commission were: Joseph Bennett and \_\_\_\_\_ Burney.
- 46 Rogers to Jesup, July 27, 1845 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 47 Rogers to Marcy, March 12, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 48 Arbuckle to Jesup, May 9, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 49 Jesup to Marcy, Sept. 8, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Commissioners to Arbuckle, April 7, 1847 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 52 Alexander to Stanton, Aug. 6, 1845 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 53 Alexander to Stanton, Sept. 9, 1845 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 54 Circular, QMG, July 26, 1845 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 55 Alexander to Stanton, Oct. 2, 1845 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 56 Alexander to Stanton, Oct. 2, 1845 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 57 Jesup to Marcy, Jan. 9, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Johnson to Gibson, Jan. 11, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Edward Johnson of Kentucky had graduated from the United States Military Academy in the class of 1838. Commissioned 2d lieutenant, Johnson was assigned to the 6th Infantry. Johnson had been made 1st lieutenant on October 9, 1839. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 575. Captain William Hoffman had assumed command at Cantonment Belknap on December 21. Hoffman was the son of Major Hoffman who had died on November 26, 1845.
- 62 Alexander to Jesup, Feb. 2, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 63 Johnson to Gibson, Feb. 6, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 64 Alexander to Jesup, March 4, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 65 Alexander to Jesup, April 12, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 66 Alexander to Jesup, May 1, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 67 Alexander to Jesup, June 1, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 68 Alexander to Jesup, June 7, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 69 Alexander to Jesup, June 20, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 70 Alexander to Jesup, June 20, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Halsey Smith and W. H. Titchenal couldn't give security, while Samuel A. Allen couldn't be located.
- 71 Alexander to Jesup, Sept. 30, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 72 Alexander to Jesup, Sept. 25, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 73 Alexander to Jesup, Sept. 30, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). J. W. Leaman was given a contract for supplying 3,000 bushels of corn at 26 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ per bushel, while Peter Hanger promised to deliver 2,000 bushels at .29 9/10¢ per bushel.
- 74 Special Order 23, 2d Military Dept., Oct. 1, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). John Gardiner of Maine had graduated from West Point in the Class of 1836. Commissioned a brevet 2d lieutenant, Gardiner was assigned to the 1st Dragoons. Gardiner had been made 1st lieutenant on April 21, 1846. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 445.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter VIII

#### The 5th Infantry Comes to Fort Smith

Colonel Arbuckle was impressed with the way Lieutenant Gardiner discharged his duties as post quartermaster. Independent of these tasks, he was post commissary, and as senior officer he commanded his company (D, 1st Dragoons) and the post. Long experience in the army had convinced Arbuckle that it was impossible for one man to discharge properly all these responsibilities. The department commander called this situation to the attention of the Adjutant General Jones in a letter posted on November 21, 1846. At the same time, he suggested that Gardiner be relieved of his duties as commissary officer and allowed to receive the added pay of a post quartermaster.

According to the information reaching his office, the colonel noted, Gardiner was desirous of obtaining the appointment as assistant quartermaster. Arbuckle, during their brief association, had found the lieutenant to be an extremely intelligent, hard working officer. It would be impossible, the general added, to relieve Gardiner of the command of Company D, pending Captain Henry S. Turner's return. <sup>1</sup>

Lieutenant Gardiner lost no time in getting into trouble with his superiors in the Quartermaster's Department. Unknown to Washington, he had signed a contract for the construction of a stable. The first General Jesup knew of this business was on January 21, 1847. On that date a letter mailed by Gardiner on December 29 reached the general's desk. Glancing at the piece of paper, Jesup discovered that Gardiner, with the approbation of Colonel Arbuckle, had signed a contract for the "building of a Dragoon Stable at this Post, similar in every respect" to the one just finished. <sup>2</sup>

Jesup called for the regulations. He suspected that post commanders had no authority to erect permanent buildings. After studying the book, it looked to Jesup as if Gardiner had violated the spirit, if not the letter of paragraph 970. <sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, Gardiner had forwarded a second communication to General Jesup. Attached was a plan for a guardhouse, and a request for permission to build. (See Plan for a Guard-House at Fort Smith) The lieutenant informed the Quartermaster General that Colonel Arbuckle had seen and approved the drawing. Pointing out the need for a guardhouse, Gardiner observed, "The guard at present occupies a tent, and, the vicinity of the town of Fort Smith renders it very desirable to provide a more secure place for the prisoners." <sup>4</sup>

Upon the receipt of Gardiner's letter concerning the guardhouse, Jesup returned it to Fort Smith with a request for an estimate of the cost of construction. <sup>5</sup>

The months slipped by rapidly. Before Colonel Arbuckle realized it, the time was at hand when the soldiers of the Battalion of Arkansas Volunteer could claim their discharges. The officers and men had enlisted for one year. To obtain the money needed to pay off the soldiers, Arbuckle on April 8 ordered Lieutenant Gardiner to turn over \$10,000 in Quartermaster's funds to Paymaster Sackfield Maclin. This money would be returned to Gardiner as soon as the paymaster received a draft for the payment of the battalion from Washington. <sup>6</sup>

Lieutenant Gardiner and his company of dragoon left Fort Smith for good on May 10. Following the departure of the dragoons, the fort would be garrisoned by Arkansas volunteers. Lieutenant Franklin F. Flint of the 6th Infantry took over as post commander and quartermaster. <sup>7</sup>

When he sorted through Gardiner's papers, Flint discovered that his predecessor had submitted plans to General Jesup for a guardhouse. After looking over the sketch, Flint determined to

make a few changes and forward an estimate of the cost of construction to Washington.

Since the nation was at war, the lieutenant had to marshal strong arguments to support the undertaking. In a letter dated February 28, 1848, he pointed out to Jesup that as commanding officer at Fort Smith, he was frequently called on to take charge of persons "apprehended in the Indian Country and in this immediate vicinity accused of capitol [sic] offences, or other high crimes." This was besides the military prisoners sent to Fort Smith by the commanders of the other posts in the department, preparatory to turning them over to civil authorities.

Because of the national emergency, the commandant had few men to spare for guarding prisoners. Flint believed that several alterations designed to strengthen the guardhouse planned by Gardiner ought to be made. The cells and room intended for the prisoners should be lined with hewn oak logs, eight inches in diameter. These logs were to be covered with oak planks, two inches thick, fastened with spikes. The iron grating covering the single window was to be set in the logs, instead of the brick outer walls. Finally, the floor was to be built of "roughly hewn logs."

Flint was satisfied that the proposed guardhouse would be "sufficiently strong & secure" so as to alleviate the necessity of detailing a large number of men to guard prisoners. At present, he observed, there was no place in the area to "securely confine men."

If Jesup approved the construction of the guardhouse, Flint wanted to do the work by contract. As the general no doubt realized, labor and construction materials were very dear on the frontier. Flint had accordingly based his estimate on this factor.

The blacksmith shop at the post had all but collapsed. Flint was of the opinion that it would cost more to repair the old one than build a new shop. Should Jesup agree, the lieutenant planned to erect a new smithy of brick. <sup>8</sup>

\* \* \*

News of the death of John Quincy Adams reached Fort Smith on March 14, 1848. In accordance with orders from the War Department, minute guns were fired at the post throughout the day as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased former president. <sup>9</sup>

There was a brief flurry of excitement at the fort during the second week of July. On the night of the 12th, a detachment of soldiers from the "Garrison" led by Lieutenant Flint seized a flatboat loaded with whiskey which belonged to several Cherokees. The whiskey was turned over to the U. S. Marshal. Two night's later, Deputy Marshal Patterson confiscated several canoe loads of whiskey from some Creeks. These raids, which were carried out in a high-handed fashion, caused wide spread indignation among the Fort Smithites against the men enforcing the laws. <sup>10</sup>

Lieutenant Abraham Buford with his company of dragoon left Fort Gibson for Santa Fe at the end of the third week of July. The editor of the Fort Smith Herald didn't pay much attention to this story. Buford's line of march would be up the valley of the Canadian. People familiar with the Indian Territory felt the route taken by the dragoons would prove superior to the Santa Fe Trail. <sup>11</sup>

His term of service had expired with the end of the Mexican War, but Paymaster Maclin was reappointed. The residents of Crawford County were elated to learn of this development, because they regarded Maclin "as a gentleman in every respect and worthy of confidence." <sup>12</sup>

Tragedy struck on August 25. A man named Boyle, who had been discharged from the army several days before, was found in the bushes near the town in a critical condition. He was carried to Mr. Harrington's house on Front Street, where he died. One of the deceased's drinking companions was suspected of poisoning him and stealing his money. The suspect was arrested, and an inquest held. After examining the body, Drs. Main and Bailey announced Boyle had died of intemperance. Whereupon, the man was released. <sup>13</sup>

The Arkansas River was very low in August and September. It could be forded with ease at Fort Smith. A number of the older residents expressed fears that the river might "dry up." <sup>14</sup>

On the evening of October 1, a Creek shot and killed a Seminole on the rocks at the mouth of the Poteau. Although the foul deed was committed within sight of the "Garrison," the murderer escaped. <sup>15</sup>

The Fort Smith merchants were delighted to learn on reading the Herald for October 4 that the army had started redeploying the troops which were being pulled out of Mexico. Several regiments would be sent to the Second Military Department. In the near future Fort Gibson would be garrisoned by one company of the 1st Dragoons and four companies of the 5th Infantry, Fort Towson by two companies of the 5th Infantry, Fort Washita by one company of the 1st Dragoons and two companies of the 5th Infantry, and Fort Smith by two companies of the 5th Infantry. The editor of the Herald expressed disappointment because no dragoons would be posted at Fort Smith. He believed they would be needed at department headquarters for escort and courier duty. Moreover, the quarters at Fort Smith were better and more comfortable than those at the other posts. Even so, the Fort Smithites were gratified to hear that at last they were to have some troops. <sup>16</sup>

Lieutenant Flint on September 27 placed an advertisement in the Fort Smith Herald announcing, "Sealed Proposals" for furnishing the government with 1,600 bushels "of good merchantable corn" and 700 bushels "of clean merchantable oats" would be received at his office until 10 a.m. on October 7. The delivery of the grain was to commence on October 20, with the entire amount to be in the hands of the post quartermaster by January 1, 1849.

The Department being hard-pressed for funds, Jesup had vetoed Flint's request for funds to build a guardhouse.



Colonel Arbuckle, upon receiving information that two companies of the 5th Infantry had been ordered to garrison Fort Smith, decided to press for the early construction of the guardhouse. He was convinced that if two infantry companies were coming to Fort Smith, no post on the frontier would be more in need of a place to confine wrong doers. The closeness of the town with its "many temptation to the soldiers," in Arbuckle's opinion, would be "prejudicial to good order & military discipline."

He told Lieutenant Flint to relay this information to General Jesup. Flint, on doing so, broached the question of being allowed to erect a small brick building at the same time as the guardhouse. This structure which was to have four rooms would be used as offices by the department and post officers. Office space would be at a premium following the arrival of the 5th Infantry on the Arkansas frontier.

Flint forwarded this information to Washington on October 6. He suggested that for data relative to the cost and appearance of the guardhouse, Jesup refer to his letter of February 28 and the plan submitted by Lieutenant Gardiner. <sup>17</sup>

Jesup approved the request to erect the guardhouse and a small office building on October 30. <sup>18</sup>

Because of low water in the Arkansas, the steamboats which transported the 5th Infantry were unable to pass above Rock Roe, 230 river miles below Fort Smith. Major Dixon S. Miles and six companies disembarked and took up the march. The troops spent the night of October 20 camped across the river from Little Rock. Pushing on, Miles' column reached Fort Smith on the last day of the month. A contract had been signed with the captain of the Alert No. 2 to bring the sick and the men who had dropped out on the march up the river on the first rise.

Major Miles and the soldiers of Companies C, F, G, and I rested at Fort Smith for two days. On November 2, they started for their new station at Fort Gibson. Companies B and E remained behind to garrison Fort Smith. Captain Caleb C. Sibley of Company E, relieved Lieutenant Flint as post commander on the 3d. <sup>19</sup>

The Alert No. 2 ascended the Arkansas as far as Moore's Rock, 20 miles below Fort Smith. Unable to get over the rock, the master notified Captain Sibley to come get his casualties. A number of wagons were sent from the Garrison on November 8 to pick up the men. <sup>20</sup>

On the previous evening, Captain James Belger of the Quartermaster's Department reached Fort Smith with a train of 1,260 government mules. After spending the night at the post, Belger and his drovers pushed on for Fort Leavenworth. <sup>21</sup>

Shortly before being replaced by Captain Sibley, Lieutenant Flint had inserted announcements in the Fort Smith Herald for October 25 and November 1. The lieutenant's office would be open until noon on the 4th for the receipt of sealed bids for furnishing the troops at Fort Smith "with the best quality of FRESH BEEF, stall-fed," for the calendar year beginning November 10. The post commissary would let the contractor know the amount of beef required by the garrison. <sup>22</sup>

The Arkansas River remained very low until the beginning of December. As the time for the annual rise approached, the masters of the steamboats lying idle at the Fort Smith landing kept tabs on the stage of the river. During the second week of December, the Fort Smith merchants and the river men had cause for jubilation. The river rose five feet. Boats which had been stranded at Fort Smith since summer "cast off" and headed downstream. Within a short time, these same vessels would be coming up the Arkansas with their decks stacked high with an abundance of "Dry goods, Groceries, and every other thing needed in the land." <sup>23</sup>

Major Miles passed through Fort Smith in early December en route to Washington. One of the first boats, the J. B. Porter, to reach Fort Smith had a well known officer aboard. William Belknap, now a lieutenant colonel, was going to Fort Gibson to take command. <sup>24</sup>

Captain Sibley had named Lieutenant John C. Robinson to replace Lieutenant Flint as post quartermaster. One of Robinson's first official duties was to secure bids for furnishing his department with hay, corn, and oats. When the lieutenant opened the bids on December 16, he found that none had been received for supplying hay. On making inquiries, Robinson learned, because of the severe drought little hay had been made in the Fort Smith area during the summer of 1848. Nevertheless, he was able to contract for 30 tons of timothy at \$10 per ton.

A number of proposals for the sale of corn and oats were studied by the lieutenant. William B. Sutton's offer to sell the government 1,600 bushels of oats at 36 cents a bushel was accepted. Two men were given the contract for supplying the corn. Between them, Washington Duval and Henry Benton sold Robinson 3,600 bushels of corn. <sup>25</sup>

Robinson used the Fort Smith Herald of January 4, 1849, to announce that "Sealed Proposals" would be received at his office until January 11 for the delivery at Fort Smith of "One Hundred Barrels of Best Corn Fed Mississippi Pork." The pork was to be "well salted and packed in good strong barrels." When being delivered the pork was to be subject to inspection by the post commissary officer. <sup>26</sup>

\* \* \*

General Jesup determined to appoint Captain Arthur B. Lansing Quartermaster for the newly constituted Seventh Military Department. The captain proceeded to Fort Gibson as directed. He reached his new station at the end of January, 1849. On the 30th, Lansing reported to Colonel Belknap and handed him his orders. Belknap was astonished to have such a high ranking staff officer assigned to his command.

Belknap informed Lansing that so far as he knew no appropriation for the completion of the barracks at Fort Gibson had been included in the budget which Secretary of War Marcy would present to Congress. Unless the captain had been sent to supervise a construction project, Belknap observed, he was occupying a subordinate position as post quartermaster. Since Lansing was to take charge of the operations of the Quartermaster's Department on the Arkansas frontier, Belknap believed his proper station was Fort Smith. Besides being departmental headquarters, Fort Smith was the normal head of navigation on the Arkansas. From there, supplies were customarily forwarded to Forts Gibson, Towson, and Washita. Furthermore, Lieutenant Robinson, the acting department quartermaster, had been recently ordered to Fort Gibson from Fort Smith.

Lansing agreed, but added, General Jesup had sent him to Fort Gibson.

Replying, Belknap remarked that the Quartermaster General probably thought Fort Gibson was department headquarters.

Lansing assured Belknap he was not aware of Jesup's views except as seen in his written orders.

Belknap closed the interview by saying he would bring the matter to Colonel Arbuckle's attention.

The next morning, the 31st, Belknap sent for Captain Lansing. He informed the captain that he had determined to assume the responsibility of sending him to Fort Smith, without checking with Colonel Arbuckle. <sup>27</sup>

A special order was drafted directing Captain Lansing to repair to Fort Smith and report to the commander of the Seventh Military Department. <sup>28</sup>

Writing to General Jesup of the decision to proceed to Fort Smith, Lansing pointed out that he would notify the post quartermasters of his whereabouts. They could then forward to Fort Smith their requests for supplies. <sup>29</sup>

The winter had been very inclement. According to old-timers it was the severest in 16 years. Captain Lansing found the road from Fort Gibson to Fort Smith almost impassable for wagons. In some places, it was very "rough & rocky," in others (especially the Arkansas bottom) it was frightfully muddy. Some of the streams "were deep & without ferries." Leaving the wagons with his baggage, the captain pushed rapidly on toward his new station. Before reaching Fort Smith, Lansing's horse gave out and he had to hire a pony from an Indian.

The captain entered Fort Smith on the evening of February 8. Early next morning, he reported to Colonel Arbuckle. The colonel after reading Jesup's letter, told Lansing that he had better return to Fort Gibson. Like Belknap, Arbuckle was satisfied that since Fort Smith was the "Chief Depot" for the department, it should be Lansing's post. But, in view of Jesup's instructions, Arbuckle thought Lansing had made a mistake in leaving Fort Gibson.

After sending an express rider to turn back the wagons with his baggage, the captain wrote Jesup, Lansing notified the Quartermaster General of his conversation with Belknap and the reasoning behind the decision to move to Fort Smith. Lansing put himself on record as agreeing with Belknap "so far as the relative importance of the Posts were concerned." He cited his reasons: From Fort Smith supplies were forwarded to the other posts in the department; at Fort Smith money could be easily procured by drafts on the New Orleans banks; Fort Smith was department headquarters. If he were stationed at Fort Gibson, he would be subject to the orders of the post commandant, as well as the department commander.

While awaiting further instructions from Washington, Lansing announced, he was returning to Fort Gibson in obedience to Arbuckle's orders. <sup>30</sup>

Lansing's letter was read by General Jesup on March 7. The general had ordered the captain to Fort Gibson under the assumption that the appropriation for construction of barracks and quarters there would be large enough to keep him busy. Jesup wrote Lansing that he and Belknap should have a conference. If they agreed that the regimental quartermaster could take care of this task, Lansing was to return to Fort Smith. For the time being, until he had discussed the situation with George W. Crawford, who was slated to replace Marcy as Secretary of War, Jesup couldn't say how much would be spent at Fort Gibson. <sup>31</sup>

Captain Lansing lost no time in moving to Fort Smith when given the go ahead by General Jesup. On doing so, he issued a directive for all post quartermasters in the Seventh Department to send "all the good surplus transportation" to Fort Smith. These teams and wagons would be turned over to Lieutenant William W. Burns. The post commanders were to retain only such transportation as was deemed absolutely essential. Since Fort Smith was the point of departure

for troops and supplies moving to Forts Gibson, Washita, and Towson, the captain correctly believed it was the place where the surplus teams and wagons would be based. <sup>32</sup>

Captain Sibley had delayed until February 1 before selecting a replacement for Lieutenant Robinson who had been transferred to Fort Gibson. The new post quartermaster at Fort Gibson would be Lieutenant Burns. <sup>33</sup>

\* \* \*

Cold weather hindered navigation on the Arkansas. By the end of the third week of February, the stage of the river was unseasonably low. Fear was expressed that if the cold snap continued much longer, boats would be unable to reach Fort Smith. So much ice came drifting downstream on the 18th and 19th that it became too hazardous to run the ferries. <sup>34</sup>

Fortunately for the Fort Smithites the weather moderated. On the last day of February the river began to rise. Heavy rains pelted the area in the week of March 1-7, causing many of the lesser streams to flow bank full. <sup>35</sup>

For some time no flag had flown over the Garrison, because the staff needed fixing. Lieutenant Burns in the second week of March saw that the flagstaff was repaired. The townspeople were pleased to see the "Stars and Stripes" once more unfurled to the breeze. <sup>36</sup>

Captain and Mrs. Sibley experienced a personal tragedy on April 13. On that day, their little daughter Marion Louisa, age 3 years and 7 months, died of the croup. <sup>37</sup>

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter VIII

#### The 5th Infantry Comes to Fort Smith

1 Arbuckle to Adjutant General, Nov. 21, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). According to War Department General Order No. 30, dated July 17, 1846, First Lieutenant Henry S. Turner was promoted to captain to date from April 21, 1846, vice Thomas Swords who was made quartermaster with the rank of major, and Second Lieutenant John W. T. Gardiner was promoted to first lieutenant vice Turner. Captain Turner never joined Company D, having been appointed Acting Assistant Adjutant General, Army of the West, commanded by Brigadier General Stephen Watts Kearny, per Orders No. 1, Army of the West, dated June 19, 1846. The command of Company D, and of the post of Fort Smith consequently devolved upon Lieutenant Gardiner. Parker to Bearss, April 23, 1863. (Elmer Parker is on the staff of the Army and Air Corps Branch, National Archives.)

2 Gardiner to Jesup, Dec. 29, 1846 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). An examination of the letters received by the Quartermaster General has failed to disclose any information regarding the construction of a stable at Fort Smith in 1846.

3 Ibid.

4 Gardiner to Jesup, Jan. 17, 1847 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

5 Ibid.

6 Special Order, No. 9, 2d Military Dept., April 8, 1847 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Sackfield Maclin of Arkansas had joined the army as paymaster of volunteers on July 2, 1846. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 676.

7 Franklin Flint of Massachusetts had graduated from the U. S. Military Academy on July 1, 1841, as 2d lieutenant in the 6th U. S. Infantry. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 425.

8 Flint to Jesup, Feb. 28, 1848 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

9 Fort Smith Herald, July 16, 1848.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., July 26, 1848.

12 Ibid., Aug. 23, 1848.

13 Ibid., Aug. 30, 1848.

14 Ibid., Sept. 27, 1848.

15 Ibid., Oct. 4, 1848.

16 Ibid.

17 Flint to Jesup, Oct. 6, 1848 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

18 Ibid.

19 Fort Smith Herald, Oct. 25, Nov. 1 and Nov. 15, 1848. Company D, 5th Infantry had been sent to Fort Towson and Companies A and H to Fort Washita. These three units had marched to their new stations up the valley of the Red. Caleb S. Sibley of Massachusetts had graduated from West Point in the class of 1829. Commissioned a brevet 2d lieutenant, Sibley had been assigned to the 5th Infantry. Sibley had been a captain since September 22, 1840. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 885.

20 Fort Smith Herald, Nov. 8, 1848.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., Oct. 25 and Nov. 1, 1848.

23 Ibid., Dec. 6 and 13, 1848.

24 Ibid., Dec. 20, 1848. Colonel Belknap stopped briefly at Fort Smith on December 13.

25 Robinson to Jesup, Jan. 8, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Duval sold 1,000 bushels of corn for 35 cents a bushel and Benton 2,600 bushels at 39½¢ per bushel.



- 26 Fort Smith Herald, Jan. 4, 1849. The 7th Military Department had been constituted on August 31, 1848. The department included the country west of the Mississippi, south of the 37th degrees of north latitude, and north of Texas and Louisiana. GO No. 49, AGO, 1848.
- 27 Lansing to Jesup, Jan. 31, and Feb. 9, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 28 Special Order No. 7, Fort Gibson, Jan. 31, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 29 Lansing to Jesup, Jan. 31, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 30 Lansing to Jesup, Feb. 9, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Lansing to Jesup, April 6, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). William Burns of Ohio had graduated from West Point on July 1, 1847. Commissioned a brevet 2d lieutenant, Burns had been assigned to the 3d Infantry. On September 8, 1847, he had been transferred to the 5th Infantry and made 2d lieutenant. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 266.
- 33 Sibley to Jesup, Feb. 6, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Lieutenant Robinson would be regimental quartermaster.
- 34 Fort Smith Herald, Feb. 21, 1849.
- 35 Ibid., March 7, 1849.
- 36 Ibid., March 14, 1849.
- 37 Ibid., April 18, 1849.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter IX

#### The Santa Fe Expedition Rolls West

Many Fort Smithites, following the ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo which ended the Mexican War and the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill, began to think of their town as the ideal jumping off place for a road to the Golden West. The Alabama born editor of the recently established Fort Smith Herald, John F. Wheeler, urged his fellow townspeople to hold a mass meeting for the purpose of getting up a petition for the next session of the Arkansas legislature to lay before Congress and the President.

The memorial would ask that a road be surveyed and opened up the valleys of the Arkansas and Canadian rivers to Santa Fe. Wheeler was convinced that such a project would be of tremendous interest throughout the state. With the United States now in possession of vast areas on the Pacific coast, there would soon be a great western migration. It was necessary, Wheeler urged that "the best and shortest route" to the far West "should be made known and a road opened for the accommodation of emigrants."

Persons familiar with the Indian Territory had asserted that the best and shortest route to Santa Fe was up the Arkansas and Canadian rivers. Moreover, this route was said to possess advantages exceeding those of any others. The terrain over which the wagons would have to roll was reportedly free of mountains and hills. Better yet, it abounded in "the best of range, the grass springing up from one month to six weeks earlier" than on the Santa Fe Trail. If a road were opened westward from Fort Smith, Editor Wheeler mused, the town would become the "principal place of rendezvous every spring, for emigrants....,

such being the case, a great deal of benefit will result to this place therefrom." <sup>1</sup>

Wheeler's editorial had immediate repercussions. On Saturday, September 23, 1848, a large gathering assembled at the church. John Rogers was called to the chair and Wheeler was appointed secretary. Chairman Rogers wasted no time in explaining the purpose of the meeting. A petition was to be drafted calling on the legislature to ask the "General Government to open a road to Santa Fe and California, up the Arkansas and Canadian rivers."

General W. C. Jones and Solomon F. Clark asked for the floor. One after the other, they made short speeches extolling the advantages of the projected route.

Next, Rogers appointed a five-man committee to report a set of resolution expressive of the views of the meeting. After retiring for several minutes, the committee returned and reported a preamble and a series of resolutions to the group. <sup>2</sup>

The committee recommended that "a National road, commencing at or near Fort Smith," and running westward along the valley of the Canadian in nearly a "direct line to Santa Fe" and on to California "would be for numerous reasons of greater convenience to all parts of the Union, than one established upon any other known route." Not only would such a road be of tremendous value to the people of Arkansas, but also "to those of every portion of the Union, as a National means of developing the resources of the important territory lately acquired from Mexico, and the vast country bordering on the Pacific, and of reducing them to a state of civilization and improvement."

The Fort Smithites prayed that the Arkansas legislators would cause their petition to be laid before Congress at the beginning of the next session. <sup>3</sup>

As soon as the committee had reported, the set of resolutions was unanimously adopted. Upon being properly inscribed, they were forwarded to Little Rock. <sup>4</sup>

Even before the mass meeting, a number of Fort Smith businessmen had decided to organize a California Company. A subscriber to the Fort Smith Herald on glancing at his September 20 edition read:

HO FOR CALIFORNIA!!!

A company is now forming in this place for California, which will start about 1st of April next. There is already from 15 to 20 names of heads of families, living in this place, and vicinity enrolled. Persons wishing to attach themselves to this company, will have an opportunity of doing so, by applying either to Mr. J. R. Kannady, Capt. John J. Dillard, or John F. Wheeler.

Every able bodied male emigrant, will be required to furnish himself with a good rifle gun, and plenty of ammunition, also to each emigrant, rations for the journey, consisting of 180 lbs. of flour, 100 lbs. of bacon, and the transportation of same in wagons, to be drawn by horses, mules, or oxen, and no wagon to haul more than 2,000 lbs. The whole party to rendezvous at Fort Smith, by the 1st of April next, and choose their officers, and make all the necessary arrangements for the trip. 5

As requested by the petitioners, the Arkansas General Assembly drafted a memorial asking Congress to open a military road from Fort Smith to California by way of Santa Fe. This memorial was forwarded to the members of the Arkansas congressional delegation. They in turn laid it before the 2d Session of the 30th Congress, where it was referred to the Military Committees.

To expedite the affair, Senator Solan Borland of Arkansas wrote Secretary of War Marcy on January 10, 1849. Borland asked that a detachment of mounted troops be detailed to escort "the party or parties, of citizens, desirous to trade or migrate in the direction of New Mexico, Oregon, and California." According to the senator's informants, it was understood that a large group of emigrants were scheduled to rendezvous at Fort Smith in early spring.

These people, Senator Borland observed, believed the route westward from Fort Smith to Santa Fe through the valley of the Canadian was "shorter and better" than the one heretofore followed

by emigrants and traders using the Santa Fe Trail. Moreover, they would feel far better about the success of their venture if assured of a military escort. Since the emigrants planned to assemble at Fort Smith early in April, prompt action on this request was necessary. If the War Department were agreeable, the news that there was to be a military escort would be "made public so persons desiring to go West" would have sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.

Borland deemed it superfluous to reiterate the reasons which "gave interest to the proposed expedition," and invested with "great importance to our country, alike in a military point of view, and as a means of developing, and making available, the true character and value of our new western acquisitions."

Marcy was reminded by the junior senator from Arkansas of the resolution reported from the Committee on Public Lands at the last session of Congress. This resolution had called for the survey and exploration of routes for a railroad linking the Mississippi Valley with the Pacific coast. <sup>6</sup>

The Secretary of War referred Borland's letter to Adjutant General Jones. When he did, Marcy told Jones he had a two-fold interest in the project. Besides being eager to secure information regarding the route from Fort Smith to Santa Fe, he was desirous of "affording proper facilities for such explorations" as suggested by Senator Borland. The Secretary hoped to open "new avenues" for emigration to the lands recently acquired from Mexico. Marcy believed it would be beneficial to the country's interest if the War Department authorized a military escort as requested by the Arkansas senator. <sup>7</sup>

Colonel Jones on January 22 wrote Colonel Arbuckle. The department commander was "to organize a suitable party to accompany the expedition as far as Santa Fe." There being no dragoons at the moment in the Seventh Military Department, an officer with a 30-man detachment from Company F at Fort Scott was to report to Arbuckle.

An officer of the Topographical Engineers would be sent from Washington to accompany the detachment and report on the route. Arbuckle was authorized to let the Fort Smithites know when his troops would be ready to march. <sup>8</sup>

Letters from his constituents and mature deliberation convinced Senator Borland that the military had made a serious mistake in ordering the emigrants to be escorted only as far as Santa Fe. On March 13, the senator addressed a letter on this subject to Secretary of War George W. Crawford, who had taken office five days before. To be of any benefit to the country and the emigrants, Borland argued, the military escort should accompany "the expedition entirely across the continent."

The War Department acted promptly on Borland's new request. Orders were addressed by Adjutant General Jones on March 16 to the army commander at Santa Fe. He was notified that Colonel Arbuckle had been directed to send a "suitable escort" to accompany a large number of emigrants from Fort Smith to the Rio Grande. Lieutenant James H. Simpson of the Topographical Engineers had been detailed to accompany the expedition all the way to the Pacific coast. The troops from Arbuckle's department were not to proceed beyond Santa Fe. Consequently, a small detachment would be drawn from the troops posted in New Mexico to escort the emigrants on to California. <sup>9</sup>

\* \* \*

News that the army would send an escort to accompany the Fort Smith emigrants was eagerly received on the Arkansas. By the end of the third week of February, forty-niners had started to pour into Fort Smith. Questioning the newcomers, Editor Wheeler learned that emigrant companies were being formed at Little Rock, Batesville, Clarksville, and Fayetteville. <sup>10</sup>

If the Fort Smithites were to capitalize on the project which they had inaugurated, they would have to move promptly. Three Fort Smith civic leaders (Wheeler, Dillard, and Kannady) met on March 5 to plan for an expedition to the California gold fields. These

men had been in the forefront of the scheme to have their city replace Independence, Missouri, as the jumping off place for Western emigration. A letter was addressed to Colonel Arbuckle, notifying him that the Fort Smith California Emigrating Company would be organized within a several days. As soon as this had been done, officers would be elected. The officers would inform the colonel when the emigrants were ready to start. <sup>11</sup>

To assist them in formulating plans, the committee asked Arbuckle to let them know when the military escort would ready to start. Since the colonel was known to have had "great experience in forming expeditions for marching," the group would appreciate his advice "as to the best manner of organizing an expedition." <sup>12</sup>

Colonel Arbuckle answered the committee's questions on March 7. Unless delayed by the current high stage of the rivers and streams of the area, the colonel reported, the escort should be ready to leave Fort Smith about April 1. According to the plans Arbuckle had worked out with his subordinates, the soldiers would precede the emigrants several days. This was to insure that the military could select the most "practicable route." Arbuckle was of the opinion that the forty-niners ought not start for California before April 10. In which case, they would overtake the escort about 120 miles west of Fort Smith.

In regard to the organization of the company, the colonel recommended the one employed by the military. Captain Dillard having served in the Mexican War, Arbuckle didn't feel it was necessary to go into detail in relation to this subject. <sup>13</sup>

By March 14, Fort Smith was becoming crowded with people clamoring to head for California. Editor Wheeler of the Herald estimated there were 300 persons anxiously waiting for the time to start. A number of additional companies from Arkansas, along with ones from other states, were expected to arrive before April 1.

Even the weather seemed to co-operate. The days were very warm, with frequent "gentle showers." A lush growth of prairie grass seemed to spring up overnight. <sup>14</sup>

Colonel Arbuckle, in response to an inquiry, outlined for the members of the committee, the route he planned to open for the emigrants. The projected California road would be on the south side of the North Canadian. As a rule the road was to follow the watershed, thus avoiding the bottoms with their numerous creek crossings. The general told his callers that Lieutenant Frederick T. Dent of the 5th Infantry had left Fort Smith several days before to reconnoiter the best route for the California road.

Editor Wheeler of the Herald came away from the meeting with the colonel with a deep feeling of respect for his knowledge and ability. He informed his readers:

We feel every confidence in the judgement of... [Col.] Arbuckle, and we know he will use every exertion in his power to ascertain the best, and nearest way to New Mexico, and thence to California. His long acquaintance with the west, will enable him to do more than any other person. 15

Despite the influx of forty-niners, there were no incidents calculated to mar the "peace and harmony" of the city. To the Fort Smithites this spoke "volumes in favor of those persons that are emigrating to the golden land of the west." According to one of the Herald's correspondents, "Not a single riot or difficulty, so far has occurred." To insure peace and safety to the emigrants and the citizens, Editor Wheeler urged the police to be on the lookout, and to arrest "any riotous persons forthwith, and thereby maintain the character of our city for peace and order." 16

A number of army officers passed through Fort Smith going to and from their stations during the third week of March. The steamer Alert No. 2 arrived from Little Rock with Major John J. Abercrombie and Captain John A. Whitall of the 5th Infantry aboard. Disembarking, the major procured a horse from the post quartermaster and started for Fort Towson, while the captain headed for his Fort Washita station.



Regimental Quartermaster Robinson reached Fort Smith from Fort Gibson on the 14th on the Robert Morris. After transacting his business with Captain Lansing, Robinson returned to his station three days later aboard the Dispatch.

Of much more importance to the Fort Smith promoters and the emigrants was the arrival from Fort Towson on March 15 of Company D, 5th Infantry led by Lieutenant Joseph Updegraff. This company was scheduled to escort the California emigrants to Santa Fe. <sup>17</sup>

Every steamer which ascended the Arkansas carried people eager to be on their way to the land of gold. A small company from Kentucky and Tennessee arrived on the Orella. The Cella No. 2 brought 12 adventurers from Helena. Nine men came from far off Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and announced they planned to join the Fort Smith Emigrant Company. <sup>18</sup>

Two men, E. Houston and E. H. Williams, representatives of the "Memphis Company for California" disembarked on March 20 from the Orella No. 2. Meeting with the Fort Smith merchants, Houston and Williams announced they planned to purchase for their company equipment needed to outfit 100 persons. Moreover, they continued, their group would be joined by a company of about 60 from Holly Springs and 30 from Pontotoc, Mississippi. The two men from Memphis told their willing listeners that the people of West Tennessee and north Mississippi were acutely interested in having a road to the Pacific opened from Fort Smith. <sup>19</sup>

"The Fort Smith California Emigrating Company" met on the evening of March 14 at the "church." Editor Wheeler presided. As the first order of business, a committee of five was appointed to draft rules and regulations for the company. Pending the receipt of the committee's report, Wheeler adjourned the meeting until the 28th. <sup>20</sup>

Major Bonneville had returned to Fort Smith from Washington on the Alert No. 2. Although the major wasn't feeling too well, he was said to be in excellent spirits. A number of Bonneville's Fort Smith friends thought he would be an ideal choice to command the troops charged with surveying and opening the road to Santa Fe. <sup>21</sup>

Six of these men on March 14 forwarded a letter to Colonel Arbuckle. Having heard that Arbuckle would designate the man to command

the escort, the group desired "to give expression to the sentiment of the public thereupon." Before doing so, they wished to disclaim any intention of dictating to the department commander how he should discharge his duty. They hoped Arbuckle would receive their suggestion in that "spirit of kindness and good feeling which prompts their utterance."

The signatories suggested "the propriety of employing" Major Bonneville to command the expedition. Bonneville, the men observed, had been one of the first army officers stationed on the Arkansas frontier. During those years, "his uniform, faithful, and prompt discharge of official duties, and his urbanity in the social circle," had won the confidence and esteem of the Fort Smithites. Furthermore, they felt certain Bonneville's general knowledge of the country west of Fort Smith and the proposed route to the Pacific guaranteed the success of the venture. 22

Arbuckle answered the pressure group's letter on March 16. Information which had reached department headquarters from Washington, the colonel noted, was that an officer of the Topographical Engineers had been detailed to have charge of opening the road. Consequently, he didn't have the authority to appoint Bonneville as engineer to the Santa Fe Expedition. At the same time, Arbuckle continued, the War Department had placed Major Bonneville at his disposal for duty with the military force ordered to Santa Fe. Prior to Bonneville's arrival at Fort Smith, Arbuckle had accepted the services of Captain Randolph B. Marcy of the 5th Infantry as commander of the escort. Marcy, Arbuckle informed Bonneville's backers, "enjoys a high reputation as an officer of experience and judgement." Such being the state of affairs, the colonel couldn't with "propriety, accept the services of another officer." 23

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Lieutenant Dent returned to Fort Smith from his reconnaissance on March 23. Accompanied by a corporal and three privates, Dent had

left the Garrison on the morning of the 14th. Dent and his detail after crossing the Poteau took the road which paralleled the Arkansas to the Choctaw Agency. At the agency, the lieutenant had closely questioned all persons familiar with the country to the west. A number of routes were recommended, but the one referred to as the Delaware Trace seemed to present the fewest obstacles.

The patrol spent the night at Strickland's, one-half mile west of the agency. Strickland, in response to Dent's request, agreed to guide the party. Leaving Strickland's on the morning of March 15, the patrol headed southwestward. A 12-mile ride brought the men to Cache Creek, which they forded. The guide led the soldiers up the West Fork of Cache Creek. Near the head of the stream, the trace passed through a gap in the Sans Bois Mountains. Lieutenant Dent was deeply impressed with the ease with which a fine wagon road could be cut through the gap. Not only were the ascent and descent gradual, but a large number of excellent springs abounded in the area.

After crossing the Sans Bois Mountains, the Delaware Trace entered a prairie. North of the route followed rose a "low dry ridge." In wet weather, the projected road would follow the ridge, in dry it could cross the prairie. When they left the prairie, the explorers traveled a low, sandy ridge which brought them to the Sans Bois. Dent was waxed enthusiastically over the easy grades, the fine springs, and the good grazing found along this portion of the Delaware Trace.

Three fords (the upper or Delaware, the middle or Round, and the lower or Rock) were examined on the Sans Bois. In periods of low water, Rock ford would be best, and Round ford when the creek was booming. Leaving the Sans Bois, the trace paralleled the left bank a short distance to Beaver Creek. Here, Dent was confronted by a problem. If the emigrants followed the trace, they would have to cross the Sans Bois twice and drive their wagons up a steep grade. To bypass these difficult physical features, Dent mapped a detour

to the northwest. The new route re-entered the trace. After crossing a "fine prairie" the patrol reached Gaines Creek, where Lieutenant Dent found a ferry. A short distance above was a ford. According to several Creeks who lived nearby, the ford was passable for wagons except in times of extremely high water. Before reaching the ford, a small slough was crossed. The approaches to the slough, as well as those to Gaines Creek, would require some work before they could be negotiated by wagons.

Fording Gaines Creek, Dent's party turned into the Texas road. The Texas road was followed to Coal Creek. After crossing the stream, Dent changed in course to 25 degrees south of west. A six mile advance brought the patrol to a commanding range of hills. A "good gap" enabled Dent and his people to pass the summit. An easy descent brought them out into a prairie. The prairie was followed until Strickland informed Dent that Edwards Trading-House was on the opposite side of a ridge, north of the party's line of march. Scaling the ridge, Dent was able to see the trading post.

Since his party was running out of forage for the horses, the lieutenant decided to return to Fort Smith. Before doing so, Dent spoke with several people who were familiar with the area. They told him that near Edwards' he would strike Cedar Creek, across which there was a good ford. Beyond was Delaware Mountain which could be passed. Once by this obstacle, a traveler would be on the "Great Prairie."

\* \* \*

Dent's report was well received by Colonel Arbuckle, who released it for publication in the Fort Smith Herald. The Fort Smith merchants and the emigrants were delighted to discover on reading the newspaper that the lieutenant considered the route as far as he had reconnoitered "the best natural location for a road in the western country." Indeed, Dent observed, "between Fort Smith and Edward's Trading-House, there was no obstacle worth mentioning." <sup>24</sup>

When he published Dent's account in the Herald, Editor Wheeler noted, "An Engineer is looked for daily, who will make a minute survey of the whole route, which we confidently believe, when made, will prove this route to possess advantages superior to any other to the Pacific." <sup>25</sup>

Additional good news had been brought from the west by a Fort Smithite, W. Steinthal, who had just returned from a trip up the Canadian. While in the Indian Territory, Steinthal had met Jesse Chisholm, a Cherokee who had been trading with the wild Comanches. The Comanches had told Chisholm that they wished to be friends and trade with the whites. At the same time, the Comanches had warned the emigrants to be on the lookout for the Wichitas who were notorious thieves. Despite these assurances, Chisholm sensed the Comanches were becoming alarmed in anticipation of the great number of people who would soon be migrating across their hunting grounds.

A Delaware, who had just returned from California, had told Steinthal that he would like to "engage as a guide for the emigrants going the Fort Smith route." If any companies were interested, the Delaware would await their coming at the crossing of Little River. <sup>26</sup>

Lieutenant Dent remained at Fort Smith only four days. On March 27, Updegraff's company (3 non-commissioned officers and 22 enlisted men) crossed the Poteau. The soldiers were charged with opening a road along the route Dent had reconnoitered. Dent went along to show them the way.

The edition of the Herald which came off the press during the afternoon told of this movement. Emigrant companies which were ready to start might now do so. According to Editor Wheeler, it might be better to be on the road, even if the going were slow, rather than remain longer in camp.

Along with a number of his fellow townsmen, the newspaperman had begun to fret about the possible outbreak of an epidemic in the crowded camps. Too much care, Wheeler warned, could not be taken

to guard the health of the emigrants. They were urged to "run into no excess, and pay particular attention to the state of... [their] stomach and bowels." The officers at the Garrison had warned that it was "very unhealthy to remain at one camp more than a week." If feasible, the officers recommended, the camps be moved every three or four days. <sup>27</sup>

Several trains had decided not to wait for the army to open a road. "The Knickerbocker Exploring Company," 65 strong, led by Captain John A. N. Ebbetts had headed for California on the 25th. On the following morning, the Helena people had started. Despite the departure of these companies, the town remained jammed with forty-niners.

Two companies, one from Cincinnati and the other from Tennessee, had disembarked from the Pontiac on the same day as the New Yorkers crossed the Poteau. The Tennesseans, who hailed from Lincoln County, had brought all their gear with them. Their "fine mules" caused many comments. A company of Mississippians from De Soto showed up. <sup>28</sup>

Captain Marcy reached Fort Smith from Fort Towson at the end of March to take command of the escort. Although he had signed the petition asking that Bonneville be put in charge of the expedition, Editor Wheeler was favorably impressed with the captain. "Capt. M.," he informed his readers, "is a gentleman of talents, possessing a high mind, agreeable manners, and has scientific attainments which qualify him for the position which has been assigned him. -- We feel gratified that the charge of this expedition is in the hands of such a gentleman; and we have no doubt as to the success of the expedition." <sup>29</sup>

A detachment of 30 U. S. Dragoons commanded by Lieutenant John Buford reached Fort Smith from Fort Scott on the evening of April 3. The dragoons were slated to escort the emigrants as far as Santa Fe. Captain Marcy informed the editor of the Herald that if no hitches developed, his command would march on the morning of April 5. <sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile, a large company of emigrants had been organized at Sulphur Springs on the last day of March. The group, which elected John L. Bass captain, took the name "Western Rovers." Ninety-six men signed up with the company. Early on April 3, the "Western Rovers" started for California.

The steamers Orella No. 2 and P. H. White docked at Fort Smith on April 1. As soon as the vessels had tied up, a large number of forty-niners disembarked, along with a few Choctaws. <sup>30</sup>

Bad news reached Fort Smith during the first week of April from Little Rock. The cholera epidemic which had been ravaging the Gulf Coast was spreading. Several cases had been reported on boats below Little Rock bound for Fort Smith. From all reports, the plague seemed to be on the increase throughout the lower Mississippi Valley. Smallpox had been reported at St. Louis, Vicksburg, and Plaquemine. <sup>31</sup>

Captain Marcy's command left the Garrison on the evening of April 4 and crossed the Poteau. A number of the emigrant companies broke camp at the same time. Captain Lansing was worried by what he saw. Writing to General Jesup on the 6th, the captain reported:

The Emigrants are moving off in detached bodies -- very slowly, and without good organization. There seems to be a want of harmony among them, and I apprehend the Expedition will not be without disaster -- They have more to fear from themselves; their want of concert; than from bands of hostile Indians. Undeem, they need not apprehend much difficulty with the Indian tribes -- for, moving in large (though unwieldy) bodies, well armed and well escorted, and assured (as I have heard) but lately, by a deputation of Southern Comanches, that they should pass unmolested, they will, doubtless traverse the prairies in safety.

The departure of the expedition had left the Garrison "in a state of comparative quiet." At the same time, the town was bustling. Every day additional emigrants, anxious to overtake the escort, arrived and departed. These people seemed to believe that at last they were on the road to "fortune."

If the route along the south side of the Canadian should prove "practicable," Lansing notified Jesup, Fort Smith "must increase in importance both in a military and commercial point of view." <sup>32</sup>

About 90 emigrants reached Fort Smith on April 7 aboard the Sallie Anderson. Among the people who got off the steamer was Lieutenant Simpson of the Topographical Engineers. Editor Wheeler and the others who spoke with Simpson were keenly impressed with the number of scientific instruments he had brought with him. The lieutenant showed them his "viameter," which he explained, was attached to the wheels of a wagon to keep track of the mileage. Simpson remained at Fort Smith for four days before pushing on to report to Captain Marcy.

The Fort Smithites would await the results of Simpson's survey with baited breath. According to Wheeler, it would determine whether the "great National Railroad is to run through this State or not." For his part, the editor wrote, he had no fear of the result, because from the interest in the project manifested by Simpson, it is apparent the lieutenant would "perform his duty with a view to benefitting the country." <sup>33</sup>

Two other boats docked at Fort Smith with large numbers of emigrants during the week, April 7-14. About 80 arrived on the Alert No. 2. A large number of these belonged to the Havillah Company, which had left New York 21 days before. Part of the New York company had gone around Cape Horn, with a steamboat "freighted with everything necessary for Gold digging, on an extensive scale." The J. F. Webb brought the Memphis Company. Most of the Tennesseans had walked the last five miles to Fort Smith since the Webb had grounded off Lees Creek Bluff. <sup>34</sup>

Although most thoughts were on the "Golden West," the Fort Smithites received grim reports on the spread of cholera from the passengers of several boats which reached the town in the third week of April. The Robert Morris arrived on the evening of the 15th. On her run up the Arkansas, several of the crew, including Pilots



Cockran and Poplin had died of cholera. A number of the passengers who had come up on the Orella No. 2 had been stricken. Several had died. According to the newcomers, a terrible cholera epidemic was sweeping through the lower Mississippi River communities. Consequently, most of the boats arriving at Fort Smith had been exposed to the dread disease.

Several cases of cholera were reported in an emigrant camp, within four miles of Fort Smith. Since the plague didn't spread, the local doctors believed it was caused by "exposure" to the elements. They based this diagnosis on the fact that the season had been very damp. Up to this time, not a case of cholera had been reported in the town or among the troops at the Garrison.

It was surprising to Editor Wheeler and others that the cholera didn't spread to the town. Wheeler reported, "if there ever was a time when cleansing was necessary," this was the time. If the Board of Health would bother to make an inspection, it would "find dead carcasses and filth, of various kinds, enough to produce pestilence."

The town leaders were pleased to see that the reports of cholera had failed to panic the people. In their eagerness to attend to the business of fitting out the forth-niners, all seemed oblivious to the threat.

Several inches of snow blanketed the area west of Fort Smith on the nights of April 14 and 15. There was a hard freeze in the town on Sunday night, the 15th. Though the people didn't realize it, the cold snap helped curb the spread of cholera.<sup>35</sup>

Information reaching Fort Smith from the Choctaw Agency during the fourth week of April told that "upwards of 400 wagons" had passed on their way to California since the first of the month. When he published his paper on April 25, Wheeler informed his readers that there were still a number of emigrants in and around Fort Smith who planned to start for the west.

At least one of the forty-niners had become disenchanted with the Fort Smith route to Santa Fe. Returning to his home in the east, the man told the Fort Smithites that the trains were about 60 miles west of the Poteau. Although progress had been slowed by heavy rains, morale was said to be high. Most of the emigrants were said to believe that the worst was behind. <sup>36</sup>

Colonel James Duncan of the Inspector-General's Office reached Fort Smith on the steamer Alert No. 2. On April 20, Duncan inspected the Garrison. Two days after the inspection, Colonel Arbuckle and Paymaster Maclin left the fort. The two officers planned to examine the road which Captain Marcy was opening. If nothing happened to compel his return to Fort Smith, Arbuckle planned to go as far as Chouteau's Trading-House. <sup>37</sup>

Shortly after the Herald went to press on April 25, the steamer Cashier reached Fort Smith from Little Rock. Among the passengers who disembarked was Major Miles of the 5th Infantry. Miles was en route to take command at Fort Washita. Before starting for the advance post, the major stopped at Editor Wheeler's office and dropped off copies of the latest Louisville and Pittsburgh papers. <sup>38</sup>

The Fort Smith Herald for May 2 carried an advertisement signed by Lieutenant Burns. According to Burns, eight horses, eight mules, and "a lot of Harness &c." belonging to the government would be auctioned to the highest bidder on May 9. The sale would be held at the Quartermaster's Stables in rear of the Garrison. <sup>39</sup> Inclement weather on the 9th compelled Burns to postpone the auction one day. With the large number of emigrants clamoring for transportation, the bidding was lively. <sup>40</sup>

Heavy rains beat down on the Fort Smith area during the first week of May. As the Arkansas was already on a rise, the Fort Smithites looked for very high water as soon as the runoff from the recent down-pours was felt. On Sunday night, the 6th, strong winds had accompanied the rain. A number of garden fences in the town were blown down.

Traffic continued heavy on the river. Three New Yorkers bound for California reached Fort Smith on the Crella No. 2 on May 5. Before pushing on, they told Editor Wheeler that the rest of their company should arrive within a few days. Word was received at this time that several companies were being organized in Mississippi, Louisiana, and other states of the "Old Southwest." These groups planned to reach Fort Smith in June on the first stage of their march to "Eldorado." <sup>41</sup>

Paymaster Maclin was relieved during the first week of May by Major Augustus W. Gaines. Both the soldiers of the Seventh Military Department and the Fort Smithites were sorry to see Maclin go. Editor Wheeler reported, he had heard just "one expression" since news of the order of transfer had been released, and that was "regret." "As a gentleman he [Maclin] has no superior in the world. -- His lady is one of the excellent of the earth," the editor wrote in the May 9 edition of the Herald. <sup>42</sup>

The Arkansas crested during the second week of May and started to drop slowly. With seven feet of water in the channel, traffic continued heavy on the river. In the seven days ending May 16, five steamers (the Cotton Plant, the Amazon, the Robert Morris, the P. H. White, and the Duroc) reached Fort Smith from downstream. Besides a large number of passengers, the vessels unloaded hundreds of packages of "Dry Goods, Groceries, &c." Always one to champion the advantages of Fort Smith, Editor Wheeler trumpeted, "Our merchants have as choice a selection of goods as can be found in the Western Market." He predicted, more merchandise would be shipped to Fort Smith in 1849 than any other town in the state. <sup>43</sup>

Getting off the Cotton Plant were three companies of emigrants from New York, about 30 in all. While purchasing their mules and making preparations for the long journey to California, the New Yorkers

camped at Sulphur Springs. As soon as they were ready, the emigrants would cross the Poteau and follow the route marked out by Captain Marcy. According to the reports reaching Fort Smith, the road was now "fairly opened, and can be traveled by anyone." Editor Wheeler estimated that not less than 500 wagons had rolled westward since the beginning of the season. <sup>44</sup>

Another company of New Yorkers had come up the Arkansas on the Duroc. These men, having shipped their gear to the west coast by boat, expected to go to California with pack mules. <sup>45</sup>

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Lieutenant Dent returned to Fort Smith from the Indian Territory on May 15. Dent's report of the "Santa Fe Expedition" was received with tremendous interest by both the military and the Fort Smithites. Dent and Lieutenant Updegraff's command had left Fort Smith on March 27. No difficulty had been experienced in reaching the Choctaw Agency, 14 miles west of the Poteau. Upon leaving the agency, the advance party had encountered considerable trouble. Heavy rains made the prairie all but impassable for the detachment's wagons. After a difficult struggle with the mud, the soldiers finally reached Cache Creek.

When Captain Marcy learned that the trace across the prairie was all but impossible in wet weather, he determined to mark out a new road. Instead of turning away from the Arkansas at Strickland's, Marcy's detachment pushed up the "old south-fork road" another six miles to the first ridge. Ascending the ridge, Marcy's people followed its crest to Cache Creek. This route proved more satisfactory than the one reconnoitered by Dent, and was the one taken by most of the forty-niners.

From Cache Creek, the advance party pushed on westward. The trace pioneered by Dent the previous month was followed across Gaines Creek. Coal Creek, Dent reported, was muddy, swift, and deep. Since

it headed nearby, Coal Creek would rise rapidly following a hard rain and fall just as quickly. Unless it was bridged, Dent foresaw that when running bank full, Coal Creek could delay the emigrants for a day or two. Coal Creek was relatively narrow, so the captain recommended such a step.

A deep slough which discharged into Coal Creek several hundred yards above the ford caused the advance party to make a short detour to the north. This new route ran through a prairie and intersected the Shawnee Trace. Following the trace, the detachment passed through the Shawnee Hills and came out on a large prairie. On the far side of the prairie rose "a small mountain, of conical shape." Outcroppings of coal were found when the mountain was examined. Dent accordingly designated the elevation as "Little Coal Mountain" on the sketch which accompanied his report. Indeed, the entire area seemed to "abound with coal. Traces of coal were observed in the steep banks which bounded the streams.

After leaving "Little Coal Mountain," which was 100 miles from Fort Smith, Dent's group crossed a number of small prairies and passed along the foot of the Shawnee Hills. Finally, the soldiers' entered a large prairie. A trail led across this grassland. When Updegraff sought to take his wagons out onto the prairie, he found to his consternation that the entire region was "completely saturated with water." It was soon apparent to Dent and Updegraff that the sod wouldn't support the heavy wheeled vehicles. To avoid the morass, the party bore away from the prairie and into the Shawnee Hills to the north. One particularly rocky hill had to be ascended. When this obstacle was surmounted, the soldiers gained a firm, though "moderately" rough road which led to a small Shawnee village.

Dent discovered that he was within one and one-half miles of the Canadian. Up to this moment, he had had no inkling that he was this close to the river. The inhabitants of the village, Lieutenant Dent found to be "intelligent and industrious, and far advanced in civilization."

Their houses and farms looked comfortable and prosperous. From the Shawnees, Dent was able to replenish his supply of commissary stores, "In the production of butter of a delicate flavor and rich golden color, the captain reported, "the Shawnees are not far behind the inhabitants of far famed Goshen."

Departing from the village, the detachment advanced along a dry, forested ridge for several miles. After crossing a small stream, the soldiers drove their wagons up a steep hill. Upon reaching the top, they came out on a prairie "of some extent affording many varieties of rare and beautiful flowers." Beyond the prairie, the party ascended another grade and found itself on a dividing ridge. Four miles of easy travel brought the explorers to a steep descent. Three or four bad ravines were encountered. Updegraff turned his men to. Several hours hard work with pick and shovel made the gulleys passable for the wagons. Rolling on, Dent's command entered an extensive prairie. Here, the road forked, the one veering to the right led to Edwards Trading House on the north side of the Canadian. Dent and his people took the road branching to the left. <sup>46</sup>

Opposite the point where the soldiers entered the prairie was Shawnee Town. The village nestled at the foot of a "pretty little verdure clad mountain." Like the people of the first village, the residents of Shawnee Town showed "strong proofs of rapid advancement in civilization." Once again, the soldiers found an abundance of "provisions, corn, &c."

Most of the emigrants, who came after Dent's patrol, took the road to Edwards Trading-House. A step which they soon had cause to regret. For on doing so, they left a good road for a "boggy, broken, and much longer one."

Dent's party swung to the south to pass around the great bend of the Canadian. After fording a branch of the Middle Boggy, the soldiers crossed several fine prairies, and reached Delaware Ridge. Spurs from the ridge extend toward the Canadian. Passing along the

southern face of the ridge, the soldiers forded several additional tributaries of the Boggy. Shortly thereafter, the party commenced the ascent of Delaware Mountain, 148 miles from Fort Smith.

Delaware Mountain abutted on the Canadian. Its southern slope, however, was gentle and grass covered. The road opened by Dent's people lay along that slope. Lieutenant Dent recalled, "it is a source of regret to me that we were so soon over the mountain, as I did not remain long enough on it to sufficiently admire the gorgeous scenery which in every direction is here unfolded to view."

Descending from Delaware Mountain, the scouts crossed a well watered valley. They left the valley by a grassy ridge. At the summit was one of two nearby mounds, upon which the Indians had piled stones. People familiar with the region told Dent that these cairns were landmarks for travelers and were visible from the plains west of the Washita. Here, Lieutenant Updegraff camped his men.

Accompanied by an Indian guide, an interpreter, and one soldier, Dent continued. Striking toward the northwest, the captain and his companions made for the ridge which divided the watershed of the Washita and the Canadian. After passing through a belt of timber and fording a small tributary of the Canadian, the explorers came out onto "The Plains."

As they rode along, Dent kept the heads of the branches flowing to the Canadian to his right and those to the Washita on his left. A 30-mile march along a "firm road" brought Dent to a point opposite Chouteau's Trading-House, 185 miles from Fort Smith. Dent, before retracing his steps, visited the sites where "Chouteau's and Edwards Trading Forts" had stood. Scarcely a trace of these posts could be seen. A short side trip to the Washita was made by the lieutenant.

Dent's patrol returned on May 3 to the base camp near Delaware Mountain. The next day, the 4th, Captain Marcy and Lieutenant Simpson overtook the advance party. Marcy's command had left a point on the Canadian opposite Edwards Trading-House four days before. Before leaving

Shawnee Town, Marcy had bought a large supply of beef and corn from the Indians. The people living at the mouth of Little River had done their best to talk Marcy into crossing to the north side of the Canadian. Suspecting ulterior motives, Marcy had refused to listen to their "sales talk." Upon being relieved by Marcy, Dent started for Fort Smith. 47

On doing so, Dent saw that the emigrants who had stayed to the south of the Canadian were well ahead of those who had crossed near Edwards. Dent was sorry to learn that among those that had forded the river were the Fort Smith and Clarksville companies. Traders on the north bank of the Canadian who hoped to reap a nice profit from trading with the forty-niners had induced them to make this ill-advised move. Companies which had been 40 miles behind those which had crossed the Canadian had forged ahead in the race to California. 48

When told of this situation by Lieutenant Dent, Editor Wheeler notified his readers on May 16 of the existence of "a most excellent road" from Fort Smith on the "SOUTH SIDE of the Canadian, to the Grand Prairie." According to Dent, the paper reported, "the only obstacle that was feared by the friends of the route, the Delaware Mountain was crossed by an ascent and descent, so easily as to be scarcely perceptible to the traveler." 49

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The Fort Smithites read with interest Dent's report. In recent weeks all the news from the emigrants had been discouraging. Letters had been received from several persons, telling of the "severe time" they were having on the road. Rains had been unseasonably heavy. The road had been turned into a ribbon of mud.

Captain Robinson of Washington City returned to Fort Smith on May 20. He had lost his oxen and all his provisions at Sleepy Creek, about 20 miles east of Little River. When Robinson and his party had crossed the stream late one night, it had contained scarcely enough water to wet the soles of their boots. The emigrants camped for the



night a short distance west of the creek.

During the night, there was a terrific cloudburst. Suddenly, the sleepers were awakened by a torrent pouring through their camp. The night was black as pitch; the only light came from flashes of lightning. To escape the surging waters, the men climbed the nearest trees. At daybreak, the forty-niners saw a horrible sight. They were surrounded by a sea of muddy, churning water. Their oxen in attempting to escape had become entangled in driftwood and drowned. After the flood subsided, the emigrants searched their wagons to find that most of their gear had washed away. Having lost their outfits, they were compelled to return to Fort Smith. <sup>50</sup>

Commenting on these stories, Editor Wheeler observed, "It is folly to murmur at the dispensations of Providence, and we feel confident that in ordinary seasons, the road could have been passed over without any difficulty whatever." Wheeler and his fellow Fort Smith boosters were convinced that in the end, the road along the south side of the Canadian would bring great prosperity to their town.

After studying Dent's report, Wheeler informed his readers, this route has more advantages than its "most sanguine friends" anticipated. In a period of average rainfall, the emigrants would have encountered no difficulty in traveling over Marcy's road. But, Wheeler added, the "floods of rain" which had fallen in recent weeks had made every road, new or old, in the region almost impassable. Nevertheless, the location of the road was good. Wheeler felt certain it would be "the principal road traveled from this country to Santa Fe, and to the Pacific." <sup>51</sup>

During the third week of May, five deserters from Fort Gibson passed Fort Smith on a small flatboat. As soon as he was notified, Captain Sibley detailed Corporal Laughlin to track them down. Over-

taking the flatboat at Ozark, Laughlin arrested the men. He returned them to Fort Smith on May 19, where they were lodged in the guardhouse. The next day, the corporal started for Fort Gibson with his prisoners. 52

Rains fell on western Arkansas and the Indian Territory during much of the final week of May. The river which was already unseasonably high rose slowly. On Sunday, the 27th, the weather turned very cool.

Though the travel season was advanced, emigrants continued to pass through Fort Smith. Several Georgians and North Carolinians reached the town on the Alert No. 2. These men announced that the rest of their company should arrive in a few days. On speaking with the group, the editor of the Herald learned that they were experts at washing gold, and planned "to search for the precious metal on the Gila and other streams of New Mexico and California." 53

The Sallie Robinson came up the Arkansas on May 28. Aboard were a number of Choctaws en route from Mississippi to join their Nation in the Indian Territory. Before the vessel continued on to Fort Coffee, the master warned the Fort Smithites that since leaving Little Rock several of the Indians had been felled by cholera. Four more of the Choctaws were stricken with cholera within several days after going ashore at Fort Coffee. 54

Wheeler and the Fort Smith promoters were glad to learn from the newspapers that "large numbers of California emigrants are returning to their homes from the Missouri route, in consequence of the scarcity of grass on the plains." The editor wasted no time in broadcasting this news. At the same time, he pointed out, there was no shortage of grass on the Fort Smith route. There was sufficient grass on the plains along the road being opened by Marcy's detail to feed 50,000 head of horses, mules, and oxen, and still have an abundance left, Wheeler gleefully informed his subscribers. 55

Seizing on this news, the Fort Smithites launched a vigorous campaign to get the War Department to order at least two intermediate

posts established on the Fort Smith-Santa Fe road. With emigrants getting off almost every boat which reached Fort Smith, Editor Wheeler argued, it was the government's duty to afford them protection on the trip westward. In view of the failure of the grass on the Santa Fe Trail, this problem had become critical, the editor wrote. As he told his readers, the drought would cause a great increase in traffic on the Fort Smith route. <sup>56</sup>

The rains had stopped, so the river at Fort Smith began to drop slowly. On June 3, the Robert Morris stopped briefly at Fort Smith. She had on board about 100 Choctaws. Since leaving Vicksburg, a number of the unfortunate Indians had been stricken with cholera. Five of them had died. From Fort Smith, the steamer proceeded to Fort Coffee, where the Choctaws landed. As soon as all the passengers and their gear were ashore, the Robert Morris headed back down the Arkansas. <sup>57</sup> In the days following the departure of the Robert Morris, four additional Choctaws who had ridden the plague steamer died. To make matters worse, most of the newcomers had left Fort Coffee and "were fast dispersing through the nation." <sup>58</sup>

Thomas Aird of Little Rock, who had gone west with the Fort Smith Company, returned from the Indian Territory on May 31. He brought a number of letters. From Aird and this correspondence, the Fort Smithites were able to glean considerable information regarding the expedition.

When Aird had left the emigrants on May 14, the Fort Smith Company was several miles beyond Chouteau's Trading-Housing. Having gained the plains, the forty-niners believed the worst of the trip was over. Since leaving Fort Smith, Aird reported, the emigrants had "had a very hard time, traveling thro' mud and water all the while, being themselves constantly wet; yet notwithstanding all this, they enjoy good health." <sup>59</sup>

Of special interest to the Fort Smithites was a communication from Captain Marcy. The captain had drafted the dispatch on May 14.

At that time the escort was camped 211½ miles from Fort Smith.

Marcy reported that his command had reached its present position, which was west of Chouteau's, in safety. So far, the escort had marched south of the Canadian. A road, which was considerably better than the one paralleling the north bank of the Canadian, had been opened. A number of the emigrants, including the Fort Smith Company, had been induced by the people at Edwards Trading-House to ford the Canadian. These people, who had a vested interest, had argued that the military would be unable to open a road over Delaware Mountain. The forty-niners who had listened to this propoganda soon found they had been "woefully deceived." While the people who followed Marcy advanced along "a most excellent road," those who crossed the Canadian had been wallowing in mud. Much of the road between Edwards and Chouteau's had to be corduroyed.

At the moment, Marcy continued, he was camped opposite "Cross-timbers." While waiting for the emigrants, Marcy had sent out patrols. A good route by "Cross-timbers" had been located. Since he was almost on the "Grand Prairie," Marcy was satisfied that the "practicability of making a road from Fort Smith to Santa Fe, on the South side of the Canadian is settled."

If the Fort Smith Company, as anticipated joined him on May 15, Marcy would resume the march. Since it looked as if the worst was over, the captain believed he would report more rapid progress in the future than heretofore. An inspection of the public animals showed that they were in better condition than when the escort had left Fort Smith. At the same time, the wagons were in good repair. <sup>60</sup>

Captain Dillard of the Fort Smith Company had written his mother on May 15 from Chouteau's. During the day, the company had crossed to the south side of the Canadian. Dillard and his companions were glad to be back on the route opened by Captain Marcy. The men who had argued in favor of crossing the Canadian at Edwards Trading-House regretted having done so. Before reaching the Canadian, Dillard

explained, there had been "much complaint" about the road pioneered by Dent's detachment. Consequently, no voices had been raised when the people at Edwards urged them to cross the Canadian. They had soon discovered their error. The going became worse. According to Captain Dillard, we were:

compelled to take ropes and pull our wagons out of the mud every day, not making more than from four or five miles per day. You have no idea of the miserable roads we have had to contend with since we left home. It has rained on us every other day for the last week, and we have been compelled to sleep on wet bedding all the time. I have been awakened from my sleep, frequently, by the water coming, sometimes two or three inches, over my bedding. Notwithstanding all of our troubles and difficulties, there is no company gets along with more harmony than this does. I find them all willing to obey any orders given them, and to see them enforced. I have tried them in every way, having had as many as one hundred men at work at a time in mud and water all the while; sometimes the mud would be over their knees, and I can say that I have not heard one complain. <sup>61</sup>

Lieutenant Lorenzo Sitgreaves of the Topographical Engineers and a company of men debarked at Fort Smith from the Alert No. 2 in the first week of June. Sitgreaves' detachment had been given the task of running and marking the boundary between the Cherokee and Creek Nations.

A second army officer reached Fort Smith at this time. Captain Spenser Norvell of the 5th Infantry, who had been stationed at Fort Towson, reported to Captain Sibley at the Garrison on June 6. Norvell was to replace Captain Daniel H. McPhail as commander of Company B. <sup>62</sup>

Though the Arkansas was falling slowly on June 20, it was still very high. Men familiar with the river felt certain that at the moment boats of 700 to 800 tons could have been employed on the run to and from New Orleans. When the Orella No. 2 tied up on the 18th, several emigrants got off. <sup>63</sup>

Captain John Gildersleeve with the New York Mutual Protection California Company, 46 strong, entered Fort Smith on the 14th.

Gildersleeve and his party had been talked into marching overland from Wittsburg on the St. Frances River by the master of the steamer Lucy Wing. This journey, the emigrants found, was through a rough swampy country -- "a real wild goose chase." The editor of the Herald, in reporting this incident, warned people interested in going to California by way of Fort Smith and Santa Fe that "they should come immediately up the Arkansas river to this place. They are then on the right track." <sup>64</sup>

During the week, the Georgians and the North Carolinians, who had arrived on the Alert No. 2, called a meeting and organized a company for their protection "while on the march for California." A number of men from Arkansas and one Alabaman joined the party. Since they had little in common, the men on their arrival in the "land of Gold" would each go their separate way. Since the Georgians and North Carolinians were experienced prospectors, the Fort Smithites believed that if there were any of the "precious stuff" on the way to Santa Fe, they would find it. Captain S. R. Bonner of Columbus, Georgia, was elected captain of the company. <sup>65</sup>

When the editor of the Herald made his weekly round of the hotels and camps, he found that upwards of 80 emigrants were getting ready to start for California.

Cholera continued to take a heavy toll among the Choctaw emigrants near the agency. So far, very few long time residents of the new Nation had been affected. On the 14th, a Negro who had been hired out to the master of the Morredo died of cholera. The Morredo which had broken a crank had passed Fort Smith, 48 hours before. <sup>66</sup>

The issue of the Herald which came off the press on June 27, contained good news for the Fort Smithites regarding the cholera epidemic. According to the latest stories from downstream, cholera was reported to be "fast disappearing on the plantations below Little Bluff neighborhood." At the same time, the disease seemed to be on the upsurge at St. Louis, Cincinnati, and

Memphis. A check with the doctors indicated there was much less sickness in Fort Smith and Crawford County than was usual at "this season of the year." <sup>67</sup>

All the Choctaw emigrants who had been cut down by cholera had either expired or recovered by July 4. Altogether there had been about 35 deaths. Over a week had passed since any new case had been reported. <sup>68</sup>

Three companies of emigrants, Captains Bonner's and Gildersleeve's, and the small party which had come up the Arkansas on the Orella No. 2 crossed the Poteau and started for Santa Fe during the fourth week of June. All told, these groups mustered almost 100 men. <sup>69</sup>

News trickled back from the Indian Territory concerning the trials of the emigrants. A letter from a trader living among the Chickasaws, dated June 6, reached Editor Wheeler in time to be published in the June 27 edition of the Herald. The correspondent reported, several Shawnees had recently visited his post at Perryville. Having just returned from the prairies, the Shawnees announced that the emigrants were "proceeding in good order." They were far out in the country of the wild Comanches. The Indians seemed friendly, and the forty-niners were in high spirits.

A nasty rumor was afloat, however. A story was making the rounds that the wild Indians had sent the Chickasaws a piece of "Red Tobacco!" As the editor no doubt knew, the trader observed, this meant war. <sup>70</sup>

Lieutenant Dent arrived at Fort Smith from Fort Gibson on the evening of July 1. Dent had good news for the Fort Smithites. Lieutenant Abraham Buford, who had led the company of dragons to Santa Fe the previous autumn, had returned to Fort Gibson on June 29. On June 4, Buford and eight men had left Santa Fe. Much of the trip east had been made via the Santa Fe Trail. Instead of following the Trail all the way to Independence, Buford's patrol had turned aside on the trace cut by Captain L. Evans' Washington County Company. Evans and his people had put up a stone at the junction on which they had

inscribed, 300 miles from Fayetteville. According to Buford, several of the companies which had passed through Fort Smith had already reached Santa Fe. <sup>71</sup>

One of the men, Joseph Merrill, who had accompanied Lieutenant Buford from New Mexico visited Fort Smith. The Fort Smithites questioned Merrill closely. He told them that he had talked with members of the Knickerbocker and Helena Companies before leaving Santa Fe. Several men, who had followed the route up the south side the Canadian, had told Merrill, it was "the best natural road they had ever seen in any part of the world." The companies had enjoyed good health and their animals were in good condition. A member of the Knickerbocker Company informed Merrill that "their mules had fattened on the road." At the time of the patrol's departure from Santa Fe, Captain Marcy's escort and the Fort Smith Company hadn't arrived. <sup>72</sup>

Another letter from Editor Wheeler's friend at Perryville, dated June 23, reached Fort Smith in time to be printed in the Herald on July 11. The trader supplied additional information concerning trouble the emigrants had had with the plains Indians.

A member of one of the companies had sighted a Wichita brave crawling through the grass toward the camp. Thinking that the Indian planned to run off some of the cattle or horses, the sentry shot him. The leaders of the Wichitas, however, claimed their man merely wanted to see the "Pale-faces," but was afraid to come up "boldly." Wheeler's correspondent was inclined to credit the Indians' version of the shooting.

It was interesting, the trader noted, to watch the actions of some of the Indians, who had trailed the emigrants. Whenever the forty-niners broke camp, the redmen would rumage over the site. Many little things belonging to the "Naholas" (whites) were picked up:

Indian-rubber Canteens and water casks of the same, which they are at a loss to know the use of. Many have knives, hats, bells, pistols, and other things which the green ones



have left in camp and forgotten. Many have made money by hunting horses, mules, oxen, &c., that strayed from camps, which was fun for the Indians, and which the Naholas could not find when they would frequently be within a half mile of camp. <sup>73</sup>

The unseasonably wet weather continued into the summer. During the first two weeks of July, rain fell almost incessantly. The farmers had a difficult time curing their hay and harvesting their wheat. Oldtimers said, "nothing like the present year, for rain and wet," had heretofore been known in the region. Editor Wheeler fretted, "the crops of cotton, corn, wheat, oats, &c. will be very short in consequence of the continued wet weather." <sup>74</sup>

Former Paymaster Maclin returned to Fort Smith from the east on July 14 on the Alert No. 2. From him the Fort Smithites learned that St. Louis was gripped by a frightful cholera epidemic, about 1,000 persons had died in a week. Of more immediate concern was news of an outbreak of the dread plague at Fort Gibson. The master of the Morrédo which reached Fort Smith from up river on the 16th, informed Editor Wheeler that cholera had broken out at Fort Gibson on the morning before he left. Already, one was dead, and two or three others sick. A soldier, who had taken passage on the Morredo, had sickened and died before she tied up at Fort Smith. According to the captain, cholera was sweeping through the Creek Nation, where large numbers had succumbed. <sup>75</sup>

A week later the steamer Duroc arrived from Fort Gibson. In response to the anxious questions directed at them by the Fort Smithites, the boat's officers reported that when they had left the upper fort on July 20, there had been 40 cases of cholera and six deaths.

Doctor W. H. Mayers of No. 1, Commercial Row decided to capitalize on the cholera scare. He put up a "cholera preparation" from a highly recommended "recipe." Mayers gave a demonstration of his formula by giving a dose to a "gentlemen who was suffering with the diarrhea.

According to Editor Wheeler, the "Cholera preparation" produced immediate relief. He advised every householder to procure "this or some other preparation, so that in case of common diarrhea or Cholera, they would have a remedy."

High water on the Arkansas enabled steamboats to make the run from Little Rock to Fort Smith in record times. The Alert No. 2 needed only 35 hours including stoppages to go from Little Rock to Van Buren. Counting the hour's delay at Van Buren she reached Fort Smith in 37 hours. This was the fastest time ever posted by a vessel of her class. The passengers boasted "no boat of her size on the river surpasses her in comfort, able accommodations and speed."

Quartermaster Sergeant Laughlin had a busy time during the second half of July. One day while he was at the landing, a boat from Fort Gibson tied up. Spotting a soldier whom he recognized, the sergeant asked to see his furlough papers. The man was unable to produce them, so the sergeant arrested him. From the soldier, Laughlin learned that he had a companion at Van Buren. Laughlin, securing a horse, proceeded to Van Buren where he apprehended the second man. The deserters were confined in the Fort Smith guardhouse. Editor Wheeler cited Laughlin as "a very active and efficient soldier."

Lieutenant Abraham Buford visited Fort Smith at this time. The lieutenant had good news. He told the townspeople that "the direct and best route to California, is from Fort Smith, up the south side of the Canadian to Socorro on the Rio Grande, thence by pack mules down the Gila, or by Cooke's road through Socorro, to the Pima village on the Gila." Wagons could travel Cooke's road with ease, Buford reported. Better yet, grass was plentiful and supplies could always be purchased at reasonable prices along the road from Fort Smith to the Rio Grande.

Buford didn't think the emigrants should go to Santa Fe as it was out of the way and grass was short in that region. Moreover, the Santa Fe merchants asked and received high prices for forage and

provisions. Socorro, the lieutenant said, could be reached from Fort Smith just as easily as Santa Fe. Buford had spent the winter of 1848 at Socorro, which he located as about 200 miles south of Santa Fe. 76

The steamer Swallow bound down from Fort Gibson landed at Fort Smith on July 27. Captain Buster had good news. The cholera outbreak at that post was on the wain. Since the first case had been reported, 100 had been stricken. Of these, 12 had died. Since the ratio of mortalities was so low, the Fort Smithites were keenly interested in the treatment administered to the victims by the Fort Gibson surgeons. 77

The Arkansas began to fall in August. On the 8th, the Fort Smith Herald informed its readers that the river was lower than it had been in several months and was falling. Nevertheless, there was plenty of water for boating.

Editor Wheeler's campaign to get the streets and alleys cleaned finally paid dividends. A meeting was held in "the church" on the night of the 6th. Wheeler was elected to the chair. After he had explained the purpose of the assembly, a resolution was passed to appoint a 3-man team to co-operate with the health committee. Houses were to be inspected. If dirty, the owners were to be ordered to cleanse them. Any individual who refused was to be reported to the Town Council. At the same time, the Town Council agreed to make arrangements for cleaning the streets and alleys and seeing that they were sprinkled with lime. 78

A number of men eager to get started for California met a mile southeast of Fort Smith on August 10. A company to be known as the Marion Rangers was organized and Major Lane elected captain. Lane and his people crossed the Poteau nine days later. Taking Buford's advice, the Marion Rangers planned to take the road along the south side of the Canadian to Socorro.

The river continued to fall slowly, but on August 22 it was still navigable. Taking advantage of this situation, Paymaster Gaines

booked passage on the Alert No. 2 for New Orleans. 79

Gaines made a quick trip. He returned to Fort Smith aboard the J. B. Gordon on the last day of the month. 80

Several interesting letters from the west reached Fort Smith during the first week of September. An official dispatch from Captain Marcy was delivered to Colonel Arbuckle's headquarters. The captain had reported from Santa Fe on July 3 that he and his escort had entered the town four days before. His command was in good health, and would be ready to return as soon as the teams had "recruited."

All emigrants who had left Fort Smith on or before May 18 had reached Santa Fe in safety. As yet, the people from Independence had not shown up. According to the best available information, it would be two weeks before the first companies arrived.

Information obtained from people familiar with the area had induced Marcy to believe that a good route could be found from Valverde, near Socorro, to Fort Smith. If true, it would shorten "the distance to California some three hundred miles." If he could secure "positive" data that this route was practicable for wagons, Marcy proposed to return that way, otherwise he would retrace his steps down the Canadian. Unless something unforeseen developed, Marcy planned to start for Fort Smith within two weeks, and should he take the "outward route" reach the Garrison in 40 days.

Since the captain's arrival at Santa Fe, a party of Comanches had killed two emigrants 25 miles west of the Rio Grande. A detachment had been sent in pursuit of the Indians. The murders came as a surprise to Marcy, because during a "talk" he had had with a large band on the Canadian, the Comanches had "evinced the most friendly feelings toward the Americans." Indeed, they had even returned a horse which had strayed.

Especially interesting to the Fort Smith boosters were two letters received by residents of Scott County. One of these was from a forty-niner, who had left Fort Smith for California in the spring. Writing from Santa Fe in June, the emigrant reported, his company all well and in fine spirits. "They had not lost, but two oxen out of 500."

A second letter came from an emigrant, who had gone west by way of Independence. Never had he seen such suffering, he wrote. Hundreds of oxen had died, and large numbers of wagons had been abandoned. <sup>81</sup>

At the beginning of the second week of September, the Arkansas rose four feet, but fell almost as rapidly. On the 12th, the river was two feet above low water mark. The months of abnormally high water had altered the channel. Bars had shifted; the river could only be navigated with difficulty. <sup>82</sup>

Paymaster Gaines returned to Fort Smith on September 23. The major had spent the past several weeks on the road, during which time he had paid the troops stationed at Forts Towson and Washita.

Lieutenant Flint received a letter from Captain Marcy posted at Santa Fe on August 8. Marcy notified headquarters that he planned to start for Fort Smith on the 11th. Since he would return via Dona Ana, Marcy thought the people at Fort Smith should start looking for him about October 1. <sup>83</sup>

Captain Marcy reached Fort Smith on the evening of November 16 from Fort Towson and secured a room at Rogers' hotel. He was accompanied by Mr. Stephens, sutler to the escort. Although he hadn't finished his "Official Report," the captain agreed to talk with Editor Wheeler.

Marcy announced that on leaving Fort Smith, the escort had kept south of the Arkansas and Canadian rivers. The watershed separating the Washita and Canadian had been followed until the captain's detachment struck the Llano Estacado. Skirting the northern edge of the staked plains, Marcy had pushed westward until he reached Gallinas Creek, a tributary of the Pecos. A few miles beyond Gallinas Creek, the escort forded the Pecos and entered the village of Anton Chico. From the village, a good road led to Santa Fe.

The measured distance from Fort Smith to Santa Fe was 819½ miles. Of this, the first 120 miles had been very difficult, because of the mud. West of Delaware Mountain, the route was described as "very good." Water, food, and grass were sufficiently abundant. There were relatively few hills to cross, and those that were had "uniform and easy ascents and descents."

Marcy's command had remained at Santa Fe from June 29 to August 14. Leaving Santa Fe, the column had marched down the Rio Grande valley to Dona Ana. (Dona Ana was on the east bank of the Rio Grande, 12 miles below San Diego, where Cooke's trail to California commenced.)

The captain had left Dona Ana on September 1, and struck directly for Fort Washita.

One hundred and fifty miles east of Dona Ana and 12 miles south of the route followed, Marcy examined a large "Salt Lake." For years, the lake had served as a source of salt for the Mexicans of the neighboring provinces. At certain seasons of the year when the water was very low, immense quantities of salt could be taken up. Captain Marcy pronounced the salt equal in quality to that obtained from Turk's Island. In recent years, the Mexicans had not been taking much salt from the lake, because of their dread of the Apaches.

The Pecos was forded at a point nearly due east of San Diego. Crossing the headwaters of the Concho, the detachment camped on the night of October 6 on Red Fork of the Colorado. The next afternoon, Lieutenant Montgomery P. Harrison rode out alone to reconnoiter a ravine which the train would have to cross. <sup>84</sup> As darkness approached and there was no sign of the lieutenant, Captain Marcy, suspecting that he was lost, ordered the cannon shotted and fired. It brought no response. At daybreak, the cannon was discharged again. Harrison failed to put in an appearance, so Captain Marcy sent out searching parties to comb the area.

One of the patrols soon picked up the lieutenant's trail. From the tracks it looked as if Harrison had fallen in with three or four Indians. Turning his horse, he had gone with them. About seven miles from camp, the searchers found the lieutenant, dead. His body had been stripped of clothing and scalped. Upon examining the corpse, Marcy found that Harrison had been shot in the head with a missile from his own gun. This led Marcy to believe that

the Indians had probably feigned friendship. The body was taken to camp and embalmed, preparatory to being returned to Fort Smith for burial.

Twenty-five dragoons were dispatched in pursuit of the murderers, whom Marcy believed to be Kiowas. Because of the jaded condition of their horses, the dragoons, after following the Indians' trail for two days, were compelled to give up the chase and rejoin the column.

From the Red Fork of the Colorado, the detachment pushed on in a northeasterly direction until it gained Clear Fork. Clear Fork was followed to its confluence with Double Mountain Fork. At this time, on October 13 and 14, the command encountered "one of the most terrific storms, a norther," that Captain Marcy ever hoped to experience. Rain poured down continuously for 24 hours, "until the whole country around was completely deluged."

Following the south bank of the Brazos, Marcy's column forded the river, 20 miles below its confluence with Clear Fork. Marcy's party left the Brazos and followed the watershed of the Trinity and the Little Washita to within a short distance of Preston. Forging the Red, the detachment marched to Fort Washita.

Marcy reported, the country from Dona Ana to Fort Washita "generally smooth and level -- the road good and firm." Between the head of the South Fork of the Colorado and the Little Washita the region was "well timbered, the soil of first quality, and well watered." Whenever a range of mountains had been encountered, the column had "always found a smooth pass, where the acclivity and declivity were very uniform and gentle, and offering no obstruction to the passage of wagons." The distance from Dona Ana to Fort Washita was 727 miles. <sup>85</sup>

The expedition reached Fort Smith on November 19, three days after Marcy. In one of the wagons were the remains of Lieutenant Harrison. The body was buried on the 20th, with Military honors and an escort from the Masonic Fraternity of Belle Point Lodge. <sup>86</sup>

The appearance of Marcy's officers and men was especially reassuring to the Fort Smithites. According to the officers, there had been scarcely any sickness on the march to and from New Mexico. Even more remarkable was the condition of Sutler Stephens' oxen. These animals, which the sutler had purchased before leaving Fort Smith in April, were in excellent condition. Indeed, they had stood the 2,000-mile trip better than the mules used to pull the army wagons. <sup>87</sup>

Captain Marcy, having finished his report, left Fort Smith on the 23d for his permanent station at Fort Towson. Lieutenant Delos B. Sacket and his 27 dragoon started for Fort Scott, the next morning. <sup>88</sup>



FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

Chapter IX

The Santa Fe Expedition Rolls West

Notes

- 1 Fort Smith Herald, August 23, 1848.
- 2 Ibid., Sept. 27, 1848.
- 3 Ibid., Oct. 25, 1848.
- 4 Ibid., Sept. 27, 1848.
- 5 Ibid., Sept. 20, 1848.
- 6 Borland to Marcy, Jan. 10, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, S. of W., Ltrs. Recd.).
- 7 Fort Smith Herald, Feb. 21, 1849.
- 8 Adjutant General to Arbuckle, Jan. 22, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Sent). A copy of Arbuckle's letter of instruction was forwarded to Senator Borland by Colonel Jones on January 23. Fort Smith Herald, Feb. 21, 1849.
- 9 Fort Smith Herald, April 25, 1849.
- 10 Ibid., Feb. 21, 1849.
- 11 Ibid., March 14, 1849.
- 12 Ibid., March 14, 1849.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid. Frederick Dent of Missouri had graduated from West Point in the Class of 1843. Commissioned a brevet 2d lieutenant, Dent had been assigned to the 6th Infantry. Dent had been transferred to the 5th Infantry on March 30, 1846. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 368.
- 16 Fort Smith Herald, March 14, 1849.
- 17 Ibid., March 21, 1849. Lieutenant Updegraff and 19 enlisted men of Company D had left Fort Towson on March 3. Parker to Bearss, April 3, 1849.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Ibid.

- 20 Ibid. Members appointed by Wheeler to the committee were: Captain J. J. Dillard, Dr. Betner, \_\_\_\_\_ Van Buren, T. M. S. Gookin, and J. W. Seaman.
- 21 Ibid., March 14, 1849.
- 22 Ibid., March 21, 1849. The men signing the letter to Colonel Arbuckle were: John Rogers, George S. Birnie, S. L. Griffith, W. Duval, J. F. Wheeler, and Joseph Bennett.
- 23 Ibid. A member of the West Point Class of 1832, Randolph Marcy of Massachusetts had been commissioned brevet 2d lieutenant in the 5th Infantry on graduation. Marcy had been made a captain on May 18, 1846. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 689.
- 24 Fort Smith Herald, March 28, 1849.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Ibid., April 4, 1849.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Lansing to Jesup, April 6, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 33 Fort Smith Herald, April 11, 1849.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Ibid., April 18, 1849.
- 36 Ibid., April 25, 1849.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Ibid., May 2, 1849.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid., May 9, 1849.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 Ibid. Augustus Gaines of Kentucky had been appointed additional paymaster of volunteers on July 20, 1846. He had received his commission as major and paymaster on March 29, 1849. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 442.

- 43 Fort Smith Herald, May 16, 1849.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Ibid., May 23, 1849. Edwards Trading-House was on the west side of Little River, about three miles from the Canadian.
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 Ibid., May 16, 1849.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 Ibid., May 23, 1849.
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Ibid., May 30, 1849.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Ibid., June 6, 1849.
- 55 Ibid., May 30, 1849.
- 56 Ibid., May 30 and June 6, 1849.
- 57 Ibid., June 6, 1849.
- 58 Ibid., June 13, 1849.
- 59 Ibid., June 6, 1849.
- 60 Ibid., June 13, 1849.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Ibid. Spencer Norvell of Michigan had been commissioned 2d lieutenant in the 5th Infantry on October 20, 1839. Advanced to 1st lieutenant on May 18, 1846, Norvell had been made promoted captain of Company B on April 30, 1849. Daniel McPhail of Maryland had joined the service as 2d lieutenant in the 5th Infantry on March 8, 1847. He had been captain of Company B since July 10, 1846. McPhail had resigned from the army, his resignation to take effect April 30, 1849. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 681, 753.
- 63 Fort Smith Herald, June 20, 1849.
- 64 Ibid.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Ibid.

- 67 Ibid., June 27, 1849.
- 68 Ibid., July 4, 1849.
- 69 Ibid., June 27, 1849.
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 Ibid., July 4, 1849.
- 72 Ibid., July 11, 1849.
- 73 Ibid.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 Ibid., July 18, 1849.
- 76 Ibid., July 25, 1849.
- 77 Ibid., Aug. 1, 1849.
- 78 Ibid., Aug. 8, 1849.
- 79 Ibid., Aug. 22, 1849.
- 80 Ibid., Sept. 5, 1849.
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 Ibid., Sept. 12, 1849.
- 83 Ibid., Sept. 26, 1849.
- 84 Ibid., Nov. 21, 1849. A resident of Indiana, Montgomery Harrison had graduated from West Point in the Class of 1847. Commissioned a brevet 2d lieutenant, Harrison had been assigned to the 7th Infantry. Harrison on September 11, 1847, was transferred to the 5th Infantry. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 505.
- 85 Fort Smith Herald, Nov. 21, 1849.
- 86 Ibid.
- 87 Ibid., Nov. 28, 1849.
- 88 Ibid., Dec. 5, 1849. Delos Sacket of New York had graduated from West Point in the Class of 1845. Assigned to the 2d Dragoons, Brevet 2d Lieutenant Sacket had served in the Mexican War. Sacket had transferred to the 1st Dragoons on June 30, 1846. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 856.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

## Chapter X

## Fort Smith is Abandoned

Following his arrival at Fort Smith from Fort Gibson in early April 1849, Captain Lansing inspected the property belonging to the Quartermaster's Department at the post. He was disturbed to find that the steam sawmill had deteriorated. If a fair price could be obtained, Lansing believed it would be wise to rent it on a short term basis. Through use, the machinery and appearance of the mill might be improved.

The troops were comfortably settled in their quarters and the Santa Fe Expedition under way, so Lansing was satisfied that the officers of the Quartermaster's Department wouldn't find much to keep themselves busy. They would be reduced to attending to routine duties — forwarding and issuing supplies and overseeing necessary repairs to the government buildings.

Lansing was wrong. Within 72 hours, the captain was to have action a plenty. About 1 p.m. on April 9, the cry "Fire!" was heard from the "Soldiers' Quarters." Lieutenant Burns and a number of officers raced for the large brick barracks. Smoke could be seen curling up from the roof. Burns led the way as the officers clambered up the southwest stairs. They found their way temporarily blocked by a locked door which led into the garret. Burns broke down the door. Climbing up the stairs, he entered the garret. Smoke and flames compelled Burns and his companions to beat a hurried retreat. Undaunted, Burns scrambled up the northeast stairs. By the time he reached the garret, he found that fire had spread into this section.

By this time, most of the garrison had assembled. No fire engine, ladders, fire hooks, or hoses were available. Bucket-brigades were organized. Even so, the firefighters were hampered by a shortage of water. The only source was the well. Despite the best efforts of the officers and men, it was soon apparent that they were fighting a losing battle. A number of townspeople and emigrants rushed to the soldiers' assistance. Pieces of flaming ceiling showered down on the firefighter<sup>5</sup>. The slate began to give way.

Satisfied that it would be impossible to save the building, efforts were turned to saving the soldiers' clothing and equipment. Furniture, arms and accoutrements were carried from the doomed structure. Many of the doors and windows were removed.

When the fire finally burned itself out, nothing but the walls were standing. The roof, upper gable ends with the chimneys, and ten of the pillars had fallen. Captain Lansing on inspecting the ruins found that even the walls where standing were cracked in numerous places. With the exception of the basement, the walls would be "worthless as a basis for reconstruction." Many of the bricks, he believed, could be salvaged.<sup>2</sup>

The editor of the Fort Smith Herald reported that the loss of the large, spacious, elegantly built barracks would be a severe blow to the troops. At the same time, the men had lost most of their clothing. Estimates of what it would cost to replace the barracks ranged from \$20,000 to \$30,000.<sup>3</sup>

An investigation was immediately launched by Captain Lansing and Lieutenant Burns to see if they could discover the origin of the fire. The officers were told by the soldiers occupying the barracks that there had been an accumulation of soot in the southwest chimney. Straw had been burned in the fireplace in an effort to cleanse it. It was believed that heat from the burning soot had ignited a wooden girder in the in the garret. This girder had penetrated the chimney to within one brick's thickness of the flue.<sup>4</sup>

Colonel Arbuckle, on studying the report submitted by Captain Lansing, expressed surprise that the "Soldiers' Quarters" hadn't been consumed before. He feared the Officers' Quarters might suffer the same fate. Inspecting the buildings, he found a large amount of woodwork closely connected with the flues. When he notified General Jesup of this, Arbuckle asked that the post be supplied with a fire engine. If one had been available on the afternoon of the 9th, the general felt certain that the barracks could have been saved. <sup>5</sup>

General Jesup on May 4 wrote Colonel Arbuckle asking him to convene a Board of Survey to inquire into the origin of the fire which had destroyed the "Soldiers' Quarters."<sup>6</sup> Arbuckle accordingly directed Captain Sibley to appoint a group to carry out the requested investigation. Sibley on the morning of May 29 organized a board consisting of Assistant Surgeon Joseph H. Bailey, and Lieutenants Samuel Archer and William W. Burns. The three officers would meet at 9 a.m. for the purpose of examining and ascertaining as far as practicable all the facts connected with the conflagration.

After questioning a number of officers and men and sifting the evidence, the board recorded its findings. (See Appendix K). The board was of the opinion that with one small fire engine, the blaze, when first discovered, might have been extinguished. They were in agreement that the fire had "originated from the chimney," and that the flues were defective. Similar defects had been found in the flues of the other public buildings at the post. The members of the board were satisfied that no blame for the conflagration could be ascribed to the commanding officer, or to any other officers or enlisted men assigned to the garrison.

Captain Sibley approved the proceeding of the board. He, however, saw fit to add a few comments. The captain expressed himself as not being fully satisfied that the fire had started because of a flaw in the chimney. He thought it probable that it was caused by cinders

falling down the flue leading from the chimney to the attic. Persons who had reached the attic first were certain the "fire was first communicated to the roof."

The proceeding of the Board of Survey were forwarded to Washington on June 2 by Colonel Arbuckle. <sup>7</sup>

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As a temporary expedient to shelter the soldiers, Lieutenant Burns had put a detail to work erecting a shed. The enlisted men were to be permitted to pitch their tents under this structure. <sup>8</sup>

Arbuckle had a different idea. He ordered Burns to stop work on the shed. The soldiers were ordered to move into the Quartermaster and Commissary storehouses. He told Lansing that he was thinking seriously of having the men build huts with brick chimneys near the wall. Lansing differed with the colonel. He countered with a proposal to build a "plain store house," which would enable the post commander to convert the two stone storehouses into "very good barracks for two companies." <sup>9</sup>

Apparently, Arbuckle didn't think highly of Lansing's suggestion. Writing to General Jesup on April 13, he inquired into the propriety of erecting "two one story buildings, of two rooms about 26 feet by 28 each, with a small room about twelve or fourteen feet for the orderly room." While not desiring to endorse any plan, the colonel deemed a one story building with piazzas in front and rear as best suited for Fort Smith. Arbuckle believed sufficient brick and stone could be salvaged from the gutted barracks to "nearly complete the new buildings."

If the Department determined to construct new barracks, the general hoped "some Q.M. of steady business habits and considerable experience in building &c. will be directed to relieve Capt. Lansing." The captain had told the colonel that he was expecting orders to repair to Washington. Arbuckle thought Jesup couldn't go wrong if Captain Alexander W. Reynolds were assigned to replace Lansing as department quartermaster. <sup>10</sup>



On reading Arbuckle's and Lansing's letters, Jesup recommended that such buildings as Colonel Arbuckle "may approve" be erected to replace the Soldiers' Quarters. The troops, except in instances where the services of skilled mechanics were required, were to do the work. 11

Adjutant General Jones notified Arbuckle on May 16 that Secretary of War Crawford had directed that temporary barracks be built. As far as possible, the work was to be done by the soldiers of the 5th Infantry posted at Fort Smith. 12

During the week before the fire, it had rained almost constantly. The Arkansas as well as its tributaries boomed. Lansing complained bitterly because the mails were delayed. He notified General Jesup that "great reforms are needed in the transportation of the mail throughout the state." 13

Captain Lansing received his orders during the fourth week of May. The captain caught the Cashier, which was bound downstream, on the 25th. No replacement for the captain had reached Fort Smith, consequently Lieutenant Burns devoted considerable thought about the construction of a new barracks. Long discussions with John Gardner, a local master builder, were held. Gardner had worked on several of the buildings at the Garrison.

Burns wanted to know if it were feasible to reconstruct the "Soldiers' Barracks on the foundations and walls remaining but partly injured from the effects of the late fire." The side walls and foundations were pronounced in good condition. 14

Gardner declined to give Burns a figure on the amount that could be saved if the new Soldiers' Quarters were erected on the foundations of the gutted structure. He explained that much would depend on the facilities for obtaining building materials and local wage scales. It was his opinion that it would be at least \$1,000. Moreover, Gardner continued, a better building would result than if new foundations and walls were raised.

When he forwarded this information to Captain Sibley on June 1, Burns pointed out that he would have liked to have consulted additional master builders, but Gardner was the only one currently at Fort Smith. 15

Upon the receipt of Adjutant General Jones' letter authorizing the construction of temporary barracks, Colonel Arbuckle called on Lieutenant Burns for estimates. Burns was to obtain figures for the cost of erecting two frame buildings, such as the colonel had suggested in his April 13 letter to Jesup, as opposed to rebuilding the gutted barracks to a height of one story.

This time Burns referred the question to Master Builder Joseph Neuber.

Neuber estimated it would cost \$10,000 to repair the building. A figure of \$9,000 was given for erecting two frame barracks. Neuber argued that the difference in value between the two types when finished would be in favor of the brick structure by about \$6,000. Besides being less liable to catch fire, a brick barracks would not be subject to rot. Local experience had demonstrated that timber when used in a frame building wouldn't last more than five or six years.

Summing up, Neuber observed, it was his "opinion that the Government would eventually sustain a loss by erecting the frame quarters, instead of rebuilding the Brick of near or quite \$5,000.00 and at the same time not have the convenience and use of a Basement nor attick [sic]," both of which would be needed at the post. 16

Arbuckle, on studying Neuber's figures, expressed the belief that by employing troops, \$3,000 to \$4,000 could be saved. He notified General Jesup on June 16 that he agreed with Neuber as to the wisdom of raising a one story brick barracks. In addition to being more economical in the long run, a brick building would be more "comfortable to the troops." If the post should be abandoned, a brick barracks could be disposed of for a fair price, whereas the frame structures if occupied for a number of years "would command but a mere trifle."

While awaiting the government's decision, Arbuckle promised to send details to cut and bring in the needed heavy timbers. Since there wasn't any satisfactory timber on the reservation, the loggers would have to visit the Choctaws' land. Undoubtedly, this would cause a protest by the Choctaws. Arbuckle thought it would be wise if arrangements were worked out in advance for compensating the Choctaws for the timber. 17

Arbuckle's letter and Neuber's estimates reached Jesup on July 7. Jesup was impressed by the arguments for repairing the gutted barracks. After recommending that this be done, he forwarded the documents to Secretary of War Crawford. The Secretary gave his approval. Turning to the problem raised by the timber, Crawford suggested it be purchased by contract. 18

Despite the rash of business occasioned by the meeting of the Board of Survey and the need to obtain estimates, Lieutenant Burns had to make arrangements for supplying the post with hay. Bids were advertised in the Herald for furnishing the Quartermaster's Department with 25 tons of timothy and 100 tons of prairie hay. Burns examined the proposals on June 1. C. E. Johnson was given a contract for the timothy and C. E. Gray for the prairie hay. 19

Lieutenant Burns placed two advertisements in the Herald for August 22. Burns used the first to inform the people of the area that sealed bids for 5,000 bushels of "good, merchantable corn in the ear" and 5,000 bushels of "clean merchantable oats" would be received at his office until 10 a.m. on September 15. The grain was to be delivered quarterly, beginning with the 4th Quarter of 1849. According to the second notice, the government would sell at public auction 2,305 pounds of rice and 200 pounds of pork. The sale was to take place at the commissary storehouse on August 23. 20

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Over three months passed before Captain Lansing's replacement reached Fort Smith. Captain Alexander Montgomery, the new department

quartermaster, and his family reached Fort Smith on the John H. Gordon on the evening of September 9. As soon as he had stepped ashore, Montgomery hastened to department headquarters and reported to Colonel Arbuckle. The colonel told the captain that he was very glad to see him.

Early the next morning, Montgomery dashed off a note to General Jesup. The captain, besides telling of his safe arrival, announced that as yet he hadn't relieved Lieutenant Burns. Moreover, he had not had sufficient time to gather "any information as to the affairs of the department" at the post. He had heard that some steps had been taken toward rebuilding the Soldiers' Quarters. <sup>21</sup>

After relieving Lieutenant Burns, Captain Montgomery prepared to devote most of his time to constructing the barracks. On making inquiries, he learned that no arrangements had been made for getting the necessary bricks and lumber. No time was wasted by the captain in negotiating a contract to get timber from Piney Creek, about 140 river miles below Fort Smith. A rapid fall in the stage of the Arkansas brought steamboating on the reaches between Fort Smith and Piney Creek to a standstill. Montgomery was not a man to wait on the elements. A keelboat, with a capacity of 18,000 feet, was secured to transport the needed lumber.

A contract was signed with a local man to make bricks. The brickmaker notified Montgomery on October 6 that all the brick would be moulded within the next ten days. He would then start burning.

Montgomery was aghast when he saw the plans which Lieutenant Burns had drawn, and Colonel Arbuckle had signed for a single story barracks. Comparing them with the plans of the original structure caused the captain to shake his head in disbelief. He had seen "Barns in Pennsylvania of much more tasteful and imposing appearance."

The captain determined to try to get General Jesup's approval to rebuild the Soldiers' Quarters as they had been. To show what he meant, Montgomery forwarded the original drawings, along with

those for the one-story structure, to Washington on October 6. (See Arbuckle's and Burn's Plans for rebuilding the Soldier's Quarters at Fort Smith.) Montgomery was certain it would take Jesup only a moment to observe what a "grotesque appearance" a single story building would present when confronted by the "lofty Quarters occupied by the officers." For an additional \$5,000, Montgomery claimed, he could "restore the building to its former handsome and commodious condition." He was opposed to expending public money and material on a barracks which when completed would present "no higher architectural pretension than a respectable cow-house."

All that he had heard since reaching the Garrison, four weeks before, convinced the captain that most of the troops would soon be pulled out of Fort Smith. A small detachment would be left to occupy the post. Since Fort Smith was the normal head of navigation on the Arkansas, it must become the depot from which the advance forts were supplied. Such a development would make necessary the construction of additional storehouses. If the barracks was rebuilt as before, it could be easily converted into a large two story warehouse.

Montgomery had closely examined the fire-blackened walls. He found them sufficiently firm for the purpose he championed. The captain was satisfied that he could build up the front and rear walls of the second story, almost as easily as he could tear down the end walls to the height of the first floor. Colonel Belknap, (Arbuckle had received three month's leave of absence. While Arbuckle was absent, Belknap would be in charge of the Seventh Military Department.), when told of Montgomery's desire to build a two story Soldiers' Quarters, had expressed approval.

In either case, Montgomery informed Jesup, he didn't think he could complete the barracks before spring. <sup>22</sup>

Since Secretary of War Crawford had approved the plan to erect a one story barracks, Jesup decided to withhold his comments. Montgomery

was notified that if Belknap wanted to rebuild the quarters as they had been, he would have to take the matter up with the Secretary. <sup>23</sup>

Montgomery followed up on a project Lansing had initiated. Lansing in April had inaugurated steps designed to concentrate all the surplus wagons and teams in the Seventh Department at Fort Smith. Lansing had been transferred before he could complete the undertaking. Montgomery determined to see it through. Learning that there were a number of surplus mules at Fort Gibson, Montgomery ordered them brought to Fort Smith. With the mules came a number of surplus wagons and extra sets of harness. When the stock reached Fort Smith, Montgomery had them pastured on the point between the Poteau and Arkansas rivers. Three "good men" were given the job of herding these 46 mules, along with the 49 turned over to Montgomery by Captain Marcy's quartermaster on his return from Dona Ana. <sup>21</sup>

Montgomery smiled when he opened a letter dated November 2 from General Jesup. He found that he had anticipated the Quartermaster General's wishes in regard to the mules, Jesup wanted the animals retained until it was ascertained if they would be required for future operations. <sup>25</sup>

Replying, Montgomery explained his actions. The captain was satisfied that the cost of keeping the mules would be trifling. Except for a little corn and salt nothing else would be required.

The captain was troubled by the knowledge that Belle Point belonged to the Choctaws. He inquired into the possibility of purchasing the point as grazing land for the public animals. If Jesup were in agreement, Montgomery recommended that the government buy enough additional land from the Indians to keep the Garrison supplied with wood. There was very little timber on the reservation, Montgomery warned. <sup>26</sup>

A letter posted on December 13 by Quartermaster General Jesup reached Captain Montgomery at the beginning of 1850. The general directed Montgomery to send "all the good serviceable mules and Horses at Forts Smith and Gibson which can be spared" to Fort Leavenworth. <sup>27</sup>

Captain Montgomery questioned the wisdom of this directive. At the time, he had 105 mules grazing on Belle Point. Of these, about one-half had been brought back by the Santa Fe Expedition. These animals were in very poor condition. When he examined them, Montgomery was satisfied that it would be at least six months before they were in condition to travel. Because of the terrible condition of the road and inclemency of the weather, the captain argued, to start the mules for Fort Leavenworth before spring was to sacrifice them.

Colonel Belknap and Lieutenant Robinson had stopped briefly at Fort Smith on January 2 on their way back to Fort Gibson from Little Rock. In reply to Montgomery's questions, they said that very few if any animals could be spared from Fort Gibson. What he was told by Belknap and Robinson satisfied Montgomery that most of the Fort Gibson mules would breakdown long before reaching Fort Leavenworth.

Before forwarding this news to General Jesup on January 3, Montgomery discussed the situation with Colonel Arbuckle, who had returned to duty. The department commander seconded his quartermaster that it would be extremely unwise to send the public animals to Fort Leavenworth before spring. Since Jesup had failed to indicate when the horses and mules should be sent, Montgomery determined to defer action, while awaiting the receipt of further instructions. 28

Jesup agreed to accept Montgomery's decision. On January 25, he wrote the captain that he could wait till spring before sending the animals to Fort Leavenworth. 29

Montgomery's decision to concentrate all the wagons belonging to the War Department in the Seventh Department at Fort Smith, except those deemed absolutely essential to the operation of the posts, had caused unexpected problems. The post commanders had sent in their older and less serviceable vehicles. Inspecting the wagons (about 20 in all), Montgomery found that most required extensive repairs. When he discussed the situation with Captain Sibley, Montgomery learned that none of the soldiers of the garrison had been wagon makers

before enlisting. There were several wagon makers in Fort Smith, but their charges were too high. Writing General Jesup on January 9, the captain inquired into the possibility of employing a wagon maker by the month, until such time as his services could be dispensed with.

Like his predecessors, Montgomery was plagued by the sawmill. He thought that it would be good policy to sell the engine. Although well protected, the mill was depreciating rapidly. Montgomery had been offered \$500 for the engine and the machinery. He, however, advised against the acceptance of this proposition, because he believed it too low. If General Jesup were agreeable, Montgomery would undertake to see if he could get a higher price.

Work was progressing favorably on the new barracks. Montgomery informed his superior that they would be finished by April if not before. 30

Jesup on February 8 authorized Montgomery to employ a man to repair the wagons. The general announced himself as agreeable to the sale of the sawmill's steam engine and machinery, provided the price was right. 31

During the fourth week of November, the Arkansas had risen 15 feet. When the Herald went to press on the 28th, the river was still rising. At its current stage, the Antocrat, the largest vessel on the Mississippi, could have ascended to Fort Smith without difficulty. Before the rise, the St. Francis had come down from Fort Gibson. Captain Montgomery had been disappointed to learn from her master that the river was too low to bring down the shipment of slate to be used in covering the new "Soldiers' Quarters." With the Arkansas booming, it was now possible to ship the slate. 32

Colonel William Belknap, Captain Sterne Fowler, and Lieutenants Frederick Dent and John C. Robinson of the 5th Infantry reached Fort Smith from Fort Gibson aboard the General Shields on the morning of December 20. These officers had been ordered to Little Rock to sit on the court martial of Military Storekeeper David Butler. Captain Sibley joined the party before the boat cast off in the evening.



Two days later, the Trustee tied up at Fort Smith. One hundred and seven recruits commanded by Lieutenant George H. Gordon of the Mounted Rifles disembarked. All the soldiers were in "good health," and as "fine looking set of men" as the people of Fort Smith had seen. The Trustee continued on to Fort Gibson with 55 of the recruits on December 23, while Lieutenant Duff C. Green of the 5th Infantry marched for Fort Towson with 34. 33

The Butler court martial having been postponed, the officers assigned to sit on it returned to Fort Smith on December 28 aboard the General Shields. Captain Sibley disembarked and the others continued on to Fort Gibson. Three days later, on Saturday night, eight to nine inches of snow blanketed the countryside. A warming trend followed, and by the time the Herald went to press on January 5, all the snow had melted. 34

Lieutenant Harrison's remains on January 21 were disinterred from the post cemetery and placed on the steamboat Pontiac to be sent to his friends in Cincinnati.

The river continued very high. When the Herald came off the press on January 26, it was 20 feet above low water mark and rising rapidly. It had started raining on the 23d, and continued for 24 hours. On Wednesday night there had been lots of thunder, and the rain beat down. By Saturday, all the streams were running bank full and the mails had stopped. No mail could be expected until the weather abated and the streams fell. 35

A large mail, eight to ten bushels, came into Fort Smith on the Little Rock stage on the last day of January. 36

Rain fell again at Fort Smith on Thursday, February 7. Consequently, the Fort Smithites looked for the Arkansas to get even higher. 37

There was a heavy snowfall at Fort Smith on February 16. According to the editor of the Herald, the day was as "dark, gloomy, and boisterous" as one would wish to see.

The steamers P. H. White, Phillip Pennywitt, and Dispatch reached Fort Smith from Vicksburg with a large number of Choctaw emigrants during the second week of February. Eighteen of the Choctaws who had been assigned space on the Dispatch had died on the run up the Arkansas from Little Rock. <sup>38</sup>

Following their arrival at Fort Coffee, another 25 Choctaws succumbed. Thus by February 23, 43 of the 160 Indians who had taken passage on the Dispatch were dead of "something resembling Cholera." "Exposure and bad diet" were thought to be the "principal cause of this mortality."

Since the Indians were generally sent west under contract, many contractors paid scant attention to their comforts. Editor Wheeler asked his readers, "Why do not the proper authorities provide for the comfort of the Indians, while they are being removed. The manner in which they are generally removed, crowded together on steamboats, badly provided with good wholesome provisions, exposed to the weather, and badly clothed, subjects them to disease and death." <sup>39</sup>

An order was received at department headquarters from the Adjutant General's Office for the officers who had been assigned to the Butler court martial to reconvene in Little Rock on February 25. <sup>40</sup>

The river was falling, but there was plenty of water in the channel. The officers accordingly would encounter no difficulty in traveling to Little Rock by steamboat.

Spring was in the air, and the weather had turned "mild and beautiful." The California emigrant, Editor Wheeler mused, could start making arrangements for an overland trip to the land of Gold, while the farmer turned his thoughts to preparing his ground.

Captain Montgomery inserted an advertisement in the Herald for March 2, announcing that at 12 noon, he would sell to the highest bidder "a lot of mules" and other surplus government property. <sup>41</sup>

As expected, the wet winter was hard on wagon traffic. The roads linking Fort Smith with the advance posts were cut to pieces.

Two of the wagons which had carried Green's detachment of recruits to Fort Towson returned to Fort Smith in the first week of January. The teamsters reported the road terrible and in need of extensive repairs. Moreover, the road from Fort Smith to Fort Gibson, especially the first ten miles, was in frightful condition. Montgomery informed Jesup, "The earliest practicable season should be seized upon to put these roads in proper condition."

Colonel Arbuckle had advised Montgomery that he had recommended that an exploring party leave Fort Smith early in the spring "to mark out a new route to the Colorado waters." This party would be small, so there would be plenty of troops left in the Seventh Department to work on military roads. <sup>42</sup>

When he answered Montgomery's communication, Jesup reminded the captain that roads weren't a responsibility of the Quartermaster's Department. <sup>43</sup>

Sixty days had worked wonders in the condition of the public animals. By the last week in February, the mules looked as if they could be sent to Fort Leavenworth without breaking down. Since there were no officers available to send with the mules, Captain Montgomery with Colonel Arbuckle's approval employed a kinsman and former officer in the Quartermaster's Department, Samuel H. Montgomery. Sam Montgomery and his drovers left Fort Smith with 94 mules and 6 horses on February 27. <sup>44</sup>

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For the second year in a row, it looked as if spring on the Arkansas frontier would be unseasonably wet. As March came in, the Arkansas was "very high" and rising. Editor Wheeler informed his subscribers on the 9th, "We have had real March weather, since this month set in. A change every few hours, with the howling wind so peculiar to the month."

A two-day rain which commenced on the 19th and was still falling on the 21st when the Herald went to press caused all the streams in

the area to flood. Because of high water, mail service was curtailed. On the first day of spring, the wind changed to the north. The old-timers said hopefully that this was a sure sign of "fair weather." <sup>45</sup>

Having found Butler guilty, the members of the court martial (Belknap, Sibley, Fowler, Dent, and Robinson) returned to Fort Smith from Little Rock aboard the Pontiac on the 16th. All the officers, except Sibley and Dent, continued on to Fort Gibson aboard the P. H. White four days later. <sup>46</sup>

April came in with strong northwesterly winds. The weather was cold and cloudy on the 5th and 6th; it looked as if it were going to snow. A number of people were heard to say, "April is borrowing weather from March." <sup>47</sup>

As the days passed, there was little improvement in the weather. On the 16th, there was a hail storm. Editor Wheeler reported on April 27, "The weather has been very unpleasant -- cold & wet. We certainly have had the most unpleasant and backward spring that we have ever experienced." <sup>48</sup> Three weeks later, the editor complained that the season has been "very unfavorable for our farmer." A great many hadn't been able to do any planting. Long time residents remarked unhesitatingly that they had "never seen in Arkansas, such a wet, cold, and unfavorable spring." <sup>49</sup>

Steamboats reaching Fort Smith at this time began to disembark a few emigrants. Editor Wheeler and his fellow boosters hoped this was the vanguard of a horde.

The Cotton Plant which reached Fort Smith on March 30 had aboard 100 Seminoles and the delegation which had accompanied Agent Marcellus Duval to the Florida Everglades five months before. High hopes were held by the agent that additional Seminoles could be induced to follow their fellow tribesmen to the Indian Territory.

Colonel W. B. Runnels of Mississippi and several other prospective emigrants had come up the Arkansas on the Cotton Plant. The Mississippians moved into Rogers' Hotel, while awaiting the arrival of additional men, who would join them in organizing a company for California. <sup>50</sup>

On April 12, the Pontiac reached Fort Smith from Cincinnati. Among the passengers who got off was Captain Montgomery's brother. Three days later, the first company of emigrants (100 strong) to leave Fort Smith for California in 1850, crossed the Poteau. This group would take the route to Dona Ana.

For the next several weeks, almost every boat which reached Fort Smith from down river landed emigrants. The business tempo in the town picked up. Mules and other items needed for the long trip to the Golden West were in great demand. Although it was some time before the Fort Smithites would admit it, the number of emigrants passing through their town wasn't near as great as in 1849. <sup>51</sup>

A rumor that the government planned to send an expedition in early June to survey the route from Fort Smith to San Diego and to select sites for military posts was received with enthusiasm on the Arkansas. While the Fort Smithites had backed Bonneville in 1849, they now had a new champion. "We hope the Department at Washington, will give the command of this expedition to Captain Marcy," Editor Wheeler informed his readers. <sup>52</sup>

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The General Shields reached Fort Smith on May 1. Three of the passengers had been stricken with cholera on the run up the river. By morning, two of the victims had passed away. Several days later, the Phillip Pennywit with several cases of cholera aboard tied up at Fort Smith. <sup>53</sup>

Meanwhile, cholera had broken out at the Choctaw Academy at Fort Coffee. Two deaths, one Superintendent McAllister's son and a Negro boy were reported. At first, Mrs. McAllister was not expected to live, but she rallied. Within a week, the cholera epidemic had run its course. <sup>54</sup>

On May 16, the steamer Swallow stopped briefly at Fort Smith. Aboard the vessel were between 50 and 100 Choctaw emigrants. Upon being assured that the cholera was on the wain at Fort Coffee, the boat continued on upstream. <sup>55</sup>

The Arkansas by the end of May was lower than it had been in months. There was scarcely enough water in the channel to float the smallest boats. The Phillip Pennywit and the Pontiac were aground below Little Rock, and the General Shields at Moore's Rock. Just as it looked as if the river might not be navigable for steamboats much longer, there was a marked rise. On June 15, there was 10 feet of water in the channel, and the Arkansas was in "good boating order." 56

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When Montgomery thought about the best way of getting rid of the sawmill, he decided it might be easier to dispose of, if the purchaser didn't have to remove it from the reservation. The new owner would be guaranteed the use of the land on which the mill was situated. At the same time, he would agree not to interfere with military operations or prejudice the public interest in any way. 57

Jesup vetoed Montgomery's suggestion. The general was strongly opposed to allowing a private individual to operate on the reservation. If the mill were sold, it would be the buyer's obligation to move it. 58

Beginning on March 20, Captain Montgomery ran a series of advertisements in the Little Rock Democrat, Fort Smith Herald and Van Buren Intelligencer announcing that the sawmill would be sold at public auction. The sale was held on May 30. The mill was disposed of in two lots. Joseph Neuber's bid of \$680 was high for Lot 1, which included the steam engine, saw, and girt machinery. Charles E. Johnson secured Lot 2, the mill house, for \$300.

Montgomery, on relaying this news to Washington, recommended that the proposals be accepted. Jesup promptly authorized Montgomery to consummate the bargain. 59

Lieutenant Burns on March 30 announced in the Fort Smith Herald that "Sealed Proposals" for furnishing the post with "Good Superfine Flour" for the calender year beginning May 1 would be received. The flour, in such quantity as was required by the post commissary, was to be delivered quarterly. 60

On April 1, Montgomery wrote Colonel Hunt, the officer in charge of the New Orleans Quartermaster Depot. Along with an estimate of the funds needed to run his office during the 2d Quarter, Montgomery included a request for a whip saw, lime and shrouds. The shrouds were to be used to brace a flag staff "measuring some seventy feet at the 'cross-trees'." 61

Montgomery had calculated that he would need \$6,000 to run his department during the quarter. Of this sum, \$1,600 would be allocated for the transportation of ordnance, provisions, and officers' baggage. The remainder would be used to purchase building materials for the Soldiers' Quarters and to hire mechanics and laborers. 62

As the years passed, Colonel Arbuckle fell victim to the infirmities of old age. At the end of April, he received a leave to go to Hot Springs for the benefit of his health. During Arbuckle's absence, command of the Seventh Military Department would devolve on Colonel Belknap.

Editor Wheeler on learning of the colonel's proposed visit to Hot Springs informed his readers, Colonel Arbuckle:

has been in service of the U. S. for upwards of 50 years, and more than 30 years of that on this frontier. He is honest in all his transactions with his fellow men, a perfect gentleman in his deportment -- using his military authority with great moderation, and in the management of Indian matters, has no superior. He is universally beloved by all the officers and soldiers under his command, and respected by all the citizens of this section of the state.

Arbuckle and his traveling companion left Fort Smith on May 7 on the steamer Trustee. 63

On May 9, the Fort Smith garrison was reduced by one-half. Company B, 5th Infantry marched out of the post, taking the Fort Towson road. The company was to report to Captain Marcy at Fort Towson. According to camp rumor, Captain Marcy was to use Company B and the company currently posted at Fort Towson to establish a new fort on the Dona Ana road. 64

Colonel Belknap visited Fort Smith on June 22 and inspected the new barracks. Although work had been suspended because of a shortage of funds, Belknap found the building in an advance "state of preparation." He was glad to see that the "greater part of the interior carpentry" had been finished. Belknap told Montgomery that he felt the barracks should be completed "so far as to erect and cover it."

Montgomery saw the wisdom in the colonel's comments. Notifying Washington, the captain placed himself on record as favoring the action recommended by the acting department commander. <sup>65</sup>

Not receiving a prompt answer to his communication, the captain wrote a second letter to General Jesup on August 1 regarding the Soldiers' Quarters. When he did, he apologized for not describing the condition of the structure.

At the time work had been stopped, the lower and upper floor joists had been laid. Another four feet of brick would have to be added to the front and rear walls. The side walls had already been raised to the desired height. Windows and doors had been salvaged from the burned barracks, while nearly all the necessary casing had been finished. The bricks needed for raising the walls, the lathing and plaster, and the slate for the roof had been purchased and were on hand.

Montgomery was satisfied that the cost of completing the barracks "would not justify the sacrifice which an abandonment of the work in its present condition" would occasion.

Colonel Artuckle, who had returned to duty, was in agreement with Montgomery's views. He told the captain to inform Jesup that if the post were abandoned, it would be necessary to take down the walls to salvage the "valuable timbers employed in laying the joists." <sup>66</sup>

On August 16, General Jesup acknowledged Montgomery's letter of June 22 "in relation to the re-building of the barracks at Fort Smith." Before giving an answer, the general reviewed all the correspondence bearing on the subject. He found that according to Montgomery's



accounts for the 3d and 4th Quarter of 1849, \$7,264.88, nearly three-fourths of the estimate submitted by Colonel Arbuckle, had been spent for rebuilding the Soldiers' Quarters.

In view of the large sum already disbursed, and to insure that this money "may not be entirely lost to the government," Montgomery was directed to "take measures to have the building" closed, so it would be protected from the weather. The captain was cautioned that this work must be done "with as little expense as possible, according to the original plan." 67

\* \* \*

An order from the War Department which reached Fort Smith during the fourth week of June cast a pall of gloom over the town. General Order 19, dated May 31, 1850, read:

Under direction of the commanding officer of the Seventh Department a new Post will be established on the Canadian River. The site will be selected as near the Western Boundary of the Reserve as may best insure protection against depredation of the Indians, having a due regard, also, to obtaining the necessary supplies. The Post will be garrisoned by a Company of the 5th Infantry, drawn from any station, except Fort Gibson in the Department. Fort Smith will be abandoned, and the garrison & public stores disposed of according to the direction of the Commanding Officer of the Department. 68

At the same time, a letter from Adjutant General Jones reached Colonel Belknap. Jones wanted Belknap to place Captain Marcy in charge of the force sent to establish the new post, because he would be familiar with the area in question. 69

A mass meeting was held at "the church" at 11 a.m. on June 24 to discuss "the late orders received at the military post ordering Capt. Marcy to establish a post on the Canadian & removing Capt. Sibley's Company to Fort Gibson." Mayor N. Spring was called to the chair, while B. T. Duval was chosen secretary. A five-man committee was appointed to frame a set of resolutions to be forwarded to the Arkansas congressional delegation.

Within a few minutes, the committee had finished its work.

The committee called on Congress:

to use proper means for the establishment of military posts on Marcy's route, and requested that Marcy be ordered on the road [to Dona Ana] for the building of the new post instead of the Canadian, where he is now ordered.

That a monthly mail be carried through from Fort Smith to San Diego.

That the post of Fort Smith be kept up, and that at least one Company of Dragoons or Infantry be stationed there for the purpose of acting as escorts, expresses, &c.

That this post ought not be abandoned, as it is the most central point for Headquarters Seventh Military Department, being the highest point of navigation on the Arkansas, where military stores, munitions of war can be stored for all the posts, west on Marcy's roads, the Santa Fe road, and the Rio Grande.

That the new post [which Marcy was to establish] be named Fort Arbuckle, in honor of... [Colonel] Arbuckle, who has rendered important service on this Frontier for upwards of 30 years. 70

The report of the committee was accepted by a unanimous vote. Before adjourning the meeting, Mayor Spring appointed Editor Wheeler, Solomon F. Clark, and B. T. Duval to see that the resolutions were forwarded to Washington. 71

From talking with the army officers at the post, Editor Wheeler gained the impression that they felt it would be unwise to abandon Fort Smith. They argued that Fort Smith "must be kept up as a Military Depot, for the storing of supplies and munitions of war, for the new posts, now being established on the route to California, and Santa Fe." 72

Several of the leading Fort Smithites tried to prevail on Colonel Belknap to leave some troops at the Garrison. They were unsuccessful. Editor Wheeler observed bitterly, it seems strange

if Colonel Belknap has "the public good" at heart that he should order Sibley's entire company to Fort Gibson. Not even a "corporal's guard" would remain behind to look after the large amount of public property. "Here," Wheeler informed his readers, "is another exhibition of government economy." <sup>73</sup>

Captain Sibley on July 2 formed his company, E, and marched it to the landing. The men and their gear took passage for Fort Gibson on the J. B. Gordon. <sup>74</sup>

The departure of the troops occasioned several interesting articles in the Herald. Captain Sibley, who had been post commander for nearly two years, was cited as "an excellent officer and gentleman." According to Editor Wheeler, the captain deserved credit for the "excellent discipline" he maintained. While mild "in his government," he was at the same time "firm and decisive." This had won for Sibley the admiration and respect of his subordinates. The Fort Smithites hoped that the captain would soon be back among them.

In fact, the editor continued, he had never met with "a more gentlemanly and clever set of fellows in any part of the world" than those formerly stationed at the fort. <sup>75</sup>

The editor estimated that the withdrawal of the troops had left "about half a million dollars worth of public property exposed." Unless something was done to protect the property, it would be destroyed. While Captain Montgomery had charge of the buildings and the stores, he had no men to assist him. If this were economy, Wheeler observed, it was "saving at the spile and losing at the bung-hole." <sup>76</sup>

Although the troops had left, the "Stars and Stripes" still floated at the top of the flagstaff. Each morning, Montgomery would hoist the colors, and in the evening lower them. The editor of the Herald gloried "in his spunk." <sup>77</sup>

Montgomery on July 4 girded on his sword. Assisted by several citizens, the captain fired a "National Salute." <sup>78</sup>

Hoping to rally support for bringing the troops back to the Garrison, the Herald published an interesting article describing the fort. Wheeler reported:

The public buildings, for Military Purposes, at this place, are the largest, and best buildings on the Western Frontier. -- There are two large, elegantly finished brick buildings, two stories high, 40 by 100 feet, covered with slate, a gallery on each side, two stories, supported with pillars of brick. A large building, which was burned down in 1849, now nearly rebuilt, for soldiers' quarters, 65 by 60 feet, for two companies of men. The carpenter's work is all ready to put together, and the brick made for the brickwork. Two large two story stone buildings for Commissary, & Quarter Master's Stores, a brick guard house, and a stone magazine, all surrounded with a stone wall three feet thick. There are also two large stables on the public grounds, capable of containing 200 horses, besides out houses &c.

These improvements have been left to go to waste and destruction by withdrawing the last company of infantry for Fort Gibson, where there were already three companies and where there are no more use for them, than there is here. The barracks at that place are built of wood, are old, and many of them rotting down.

A more healthy place for troops we venture to say, is not to be found in the United States than Fort Smith. During the time the 2 companies of the 5th Infantry were stationed here, which is nearly 2 years, there were not exceeding half a dozen deaths, including those brought here with disease, contracted while in Mexico. Not a case of Cholera was among them last season, though the soldiers were called upon to remove freight from boats that had that disease upon them.

The troops were doing well here, and were needed, if for noother reason, than to take care of the public property; but the desires and caprices of 2 or 3 men to be gratified; and Uncle Sam has to foot the bill to the tune of several hundred dollars. 79

Colonel Arbuckle returned to Fort Smith from Hot Springs on July 16 and resumed command of the department. 80

News that the War Department had abandoned Fort Smith came as a shock to Arbuckle. He was at a loss as to why such an order had been issued.

Addressing a letter to General Jesup on August 4, the colonel professed to see the machinations of Senator Borland. Word reaching Arbuckle from Washington had the senator using his influence to oppose the Dona Ana route to California. Borland was reportedly basing his arguments on the ground that the Dona Ana road would "tend to depopulate western Arkansas." A military post at Fort Smith could be expected to facilitate emigration over this route.

In opposition to the senator's reported arguments, Arbuckle argued, Fort Smith was the depot from which supplies were forwarded to the posts in the Seventh Military Department. Since navigation on the Red above the raft couldn't be relied on, the garrisons along the northern border of Texas also had to look to Fort Smith. Arbuckle, who probably knew more about the area than any other individual, regarded Fort Smith "as a post of the utmost importance as a military depot." As such it must be occupied by a small command "to preserve the buildings, keep up the fences, receive stores and supplies, and expedite transportation."

Arbuckle advised Jesup that he had written the Secretary of War and General Scott on this subject. Besides urging them to keep Fort Smith garrisoned, Arbuckle had pointed out that its abandonment will be highly detrimental to the economy and interest of the service."

If Jesup could enlighten him as to the reason behind the order to abandon Fort Smith, Arbuckle would be appreciative. 81

When he acknowledged Arbuckle's letter on August 23, Jesup observed that he was as much "in ignorance" as the department commander as to why Fort Smith had been abandoned. So far as the Quartermaster's Department was concerned, Fort Smith would continue to be the depot "for the supplies intended for the troops of the upper Red and Arkansas rivers." 82

Before Jesup had a chance to reply to Arbuckle's message, Editor Wheeler and the members of the committee appointed by Mayor Spring

received letters from the junior senator from Arkansas, W. K. Sebastian, and Representative R. W. Johnson. Prior to the receipt of the memorial from his constituents protesting the War Department's decision to pull the troops out of Fort Smith, Senator Sebastian had called on Secretary of War Crawford and protested. Mr. Crawford informed the senator that "it was not the War Department's policy to abolish the fort entirely, but that it would be retained as a depot of Military supplies, and as the Headquarters of the Military division embracing it."

The order withdrawing the troops from Fort Smith, Crawford observed, had originated with the late President. (President Taylor had died on July 9.) Taylor's "personal opinion of the propriety of this measure" had guided the War Department. <sup>83</sup>

Representative Johnson informed the Fort Smithites that he had been first to discover about "the ill-judged and destructive orders issued concerning the removal and abandonment of Fort Smith." He had tried to get the order suspended, but was informed that it was useless, because it had been done by the "special direction of General Taylor."

General Scott had intimated to Representative Johnson that with Taylor dead, the new Secretary of War Charles M. Conrad was disposed to order Fort Smith reoccupied. <sup>84</sup>

FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

Chapter X

Fort Smith is Abandoned

Notes

- 1 Lansing to Jesup, April 6, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 2 Burns to Jesup, April 8 (?), 1849; Lansing to Jesup, April 10, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 3 Fort Smith Herald, April 10, 1849.
- 4 Burns to Jesup, April 8 (?), 1849; Lansing to Jesup, April 10, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 5 Arbuckle to Jesup, April 13, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 6 Report of Board of Survey Convened to Investigate the Fire, May 29, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 7 Arbuckle to Jesup, June 2, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 8 Burns to Jesup, April 8, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 9 Lansing to Jesup, April 10, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 10 Arbuckle to Jesup, April 13, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 11 Lansing to Jesup, April 10, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 12 Adjutant General to Arbuckle, May 16, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 13 Lansing to Jesup, April 10, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 14 Gardner to Burns, May 30, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

15 Burns to Sibley, June 1, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

16 Arbuckle to Jesup, June 16, 1849; Neuber's Estimates, June 15, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Neuber's estimates were:

Estimate of Cost of Rebuilding or repairing the Brick Quarters (that was burnt) at Fort Smith. 59 feet long by 56 feet wide (in the clear) and 65 by 60 from outside to outside. One story of 13 feet in height, on a Basement of 8 feet in height (finished for Kitchens & mess rooms, with a 12 foot Gallery in each side. The attick [sic] to be finished for company Store rooms. All material and work for the same included.....10,000

Estimate of the Cost for Building 2 Frame Quarters for 2 Companies of Soldiers, including Mess and orderly rooms, each 86 feet by 28 feet wide (from outside to outside). No basement attick [sic] nor Gallery. On Stone foundations. All materials & work for the same included.....9,000

17 Arbuckle to Jesup, June 16, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

18 Ibid.

19 Burns to Jesup, June 1, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Gray had bid \$5.40 per ton, while Johnson was to receive \$15 a ton for his timothy.

20 Fort Smith Herald, Aug. 22, 1849.

21 Montgomery to Jesup, Sept. 10, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Alexander Montgomery a native of Pennsylvania had graduated from the U. S. Military Academy on July 1, 1834. The young brevet 2d lieutenant was assigned to the 7th Infantry. Alexander had been a captain in the Quartermaster's Department since May 11, 1846. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 719.

22 Montgomery to Jesup, Oct. 6, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).



- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Montgomery to Jesup, Nov. 24, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Montgomery proposed the government acquire all the land between the reservation and a road which struck the Poteau one and one-half miles above its mouth. A good fence could be built along the north side of this road which led from the Arkansas to the Poteau. Such a fence would leave the road open for travel, while confining the public animals between two rivers, neither of which were fordable.
- 25 Jesup to Montgomery, Nov. 2, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 26 Montgomery to Jesup, Nov. 24, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 27 Jesup to Montgomery, Dec. 13, 1849 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 28 Montgomery to Jesup, Jan. 3, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Montgomery to Jesup, Jan. 9, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Fort Smith Herald, Nov. 23, 1849.
- 33 Ibid., Dec. 26, 1849.
- 34 Ibid., Jan. 5, 1850.
- 35 Ibid., Jan. 26, 1850.
- 36 Ibid., Feb. 2, 1850.
- 37 Ibid., Feb. 9, 1850.
- 38 Ibid., Feb. 16, 1850.
- 39 Ibid., March 2, 1850.
- 40 Ibid., Feb. 23, 1850.
- 41 Ibid., March 2, 1850.
- 42 Montgomery to Jesup, Jan. 9, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Montgomery to Jesup, Feb. 27, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 45 Fort Smith Herald, March 9, 16, and 23, 1850.
- 46 Ibid., March 23, 1850. Butler was dismissed from the service on March 29, 1850.
- 47 Ibid., April 6, 1850.
- 48 Ibid., April 20 and 27, 1850.
- 49 Ibid., May 18, 1850.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Ibid., April 13 and 20, 1850.
- 52 Ibid., April 20, 1850.
- 53 Ibid., May 4 and 11, 1850.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Ibid., May 18, 1850.
- 56 Ibid., May 25, June 8 and 15, 1850.
- 57 Montgomery to Jesup, March 22, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Montgomery to Jesup, May 30, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 60 Fort Smith Herald, March 30, 1850.
- 61 Montgomery to Hunt, April 1, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 62 Ibid. Three thousand dollars were earmarked for paying mechanics and laborers, and \$2,000 for building materials.
- 63 Fort Smith Herald, May 4 and 11, 1850.
- 64 Ibid., May 11, 1850.
- 65 Montgomery to Jesup, June 22, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 66 Montgomery to Jesup, Aug. 1, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 67 Jesup to Montgomery, Aug. 16, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 68 GO 19, May 31, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Sent).
- 69 Fort Smith Herald, June 29, 1850.
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 Ibid., July 6, 1850.
- 73 Ibid.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 Ibid.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 Ibid.
- 78 Ibid.
- 79 Ibid.
- 80 Ibid., July 20, 1850.
- 81 Arbuckle to Jesup, Aug. 4, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 82 Jesup to Arbuckle, Aug. 23, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 83 Fort Smith Herald, Sept. 1850.
- 84 Ibid. Charles Conrad became Secretary of War on August 15, succeeding Mr. Crawford who had resigned on July 23.

1850

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter XI

#### Fort Smith Becomes a Depot for Advancing the Frontier

Gold seekers bound for the west traveled in large numbers during the spring of 1850 from Fort Smith through the Chickasaw country to the Red River. To give assurance of safety to the emigrants as well as the immigrant Indians from the wild plains Indians, Captain Marcy was directed to establish a military post on the California road far enough west to accomplish that purpose.

Captain Marcy left Fort Towson to establish the new post on the Canadian in the last week of June. Marcy was accompanied by his company of the 5th Infantry, D. At Gaines Creek, Marcy's column halted and camped. Leaving his second in command in charge, the captain proceeded to Fort Smith by way of Fort Gibson. Marcy wanted to make arrangements with Captain Montgomery for supplying his men.

The captain reached Fort Smith on July 8. He was disappointed to learn that there was only 18 inches of water in the channel and the river was still falling. If this trend continued, steamboat traffic on the Arkansas must come to a standstill. Such a development would hinder Montgomery's efforts to keep Marcy's company supplied.

Speaking with Editor Wheeler, Marcy explained that the fort which he planned to establish would be about 200 miles west of Fort Smith, and on the direct line to Dona Ana. Consequently, the new road to Dona Ana would pass to the north of Fort Washita and Preston, Texas. This would shorten the distance from Fort Smith to Dona Ana by 50 to 60 miles.

Marcy, having completed his business at Fort Smith, left for Gaines Creek on the morning of July 17.

Breaking camp on the morning of August 1, Marcy's column headed westward. Since the weather was extremely hot, the expedition traveled slowly and only at night. Marcy's company reached Mustang Creek at 1 a.m. on August 22. So many of Marcy's oxen had died of murrain on the march that he couldn't continue any farther. On the advice of his guide, Black Beaver, regarding the lack of water in the neighborhood of the proposed destination, on Wild Horse Creek, Marcy stopped short of that point. The site selected was a few miles west of Mustang Creek. <sup>2</sup>

The large train which Captain Montgomery had organized to support Marcy's command rolled out of Fort Smith on July 30. Loaded on 31 ox drawn wagons were quartermaster's, ordnance, and commissary stores. Two pieces of artillery, one caisson, and a traveling forge went with the train. Editor Wheeler reported that Captain Montgomery had given his all "to expedite the departure of the train."

Lieutenant Frederick Myers of the Quartermaster's Department, who was in charge of the train, expected to rendezvous with Marcy's company on Gaines Creek. <sup>3</sup>

The summer of 1850 was very hot and dry on the Arkansas frontier. Although the river continued to drop, the Trustee succeeded in reaching Fort Smith from Little Rock on August 4 with 60 tons of freight and several passengers. <sup>4</sup>

Editor Wheeler complained on August 10, "The weather is so hot, that we are unable to do much in the way of writing editorials -- no new ideas -- no old ones, money all gone, all credit becoming rather slim." <sup>5</sup> There was no relief during the following week. Day after day, the sun beat down and the thermometer registered from 100 to 105° in the shade. <sup>6</sup>

To make matters worse, smallpox had broken out in the town. By the middle of the fourth week of August the epidemic had run its course. <sup>7</sup>

On September 10, a train of 17 wagons returned to Fort Smith from Captain Marcy's camp near the Canadian. The man in charge told Colonel

Arbuckle and Captain Montgomery that Marcy had selected a site for the new post about 190 miles west of Fort Smith, near the junction of the Santa Fe and Dona Ana roads. Marcy's camp was described as beautifully situated, "well timbered with a fine spring of cold water." <sup>8</sup>

Colonel Arbuckle was disappointed to learn that the site selected by Marcy for the new fort was on Mustang Creek, a tributary of the Canadian. The colonel had wished the post (which was to bear his name) located on Wild Horse Creek, a stream 20 miles further west that emptied into the Washita. Orders were accordingly issued by Colonel Arbuckle for Marcy to suspend work on the new post. Pending a decision by the Washington authorities on where the garrison was to be erected, Marcy and his company would remain on Mustang Creek. <sup>9</sup>

\* \* \*

A large mail reached Fort Smith on September 11. Among the items delivered to Captain Montgomery were dispatches drafted by General Jesup on August 16 and 23. Acknowledging these messages on the 12th, Montgomery announced that nothing had been done on the barracks since work had been suspended.

Montgomery estimated it would take about two weeks to get the oxen, which had returned from Marcy's camp on the 10th, back in shape to travel. As soon as they were, Colonel Arbuckle planned to have the wagons loaded with supplies. The train would then rejoin Marcy. <sup>10</sup>

The train left Fort Smith for Marcy's camp on September 27. Within 48 hours of crossing the Poteau, so many of the oxen had died of murrain that the train was unable to proceed any farther. Notified of this situation, Captain Montgomery left Fort Smith on the 29th, to procure additional oxen and urge the train to continue. Though he encountered considerable difficulty, Montgomery discharged his mission and returned to Fort Smith on October 4.

As soon as he reached the post, the captain wrote General Jesup. Montgomery, after detailing his troubles with the train, broached the subjects of replacing the oxen with mules. Because of the prevalence of murrain in the region, the Department had lost so many oxen that Montgomery was convinced mules would be cheaper in the long run.

Although the initial expense of mules was greater, he believed that inside of two years' service, a train of oxen would cost more. Moreover, the roads leading southwestward from Fort Smith were so hard as to cripple oxen and render them unservicable for several weeks after each trip.

Another factor in favor of mules was their superior speed. It was with great difficulty that oxen could make 12 miles a day, while mules could travel twice that distance without being pushed.

Every spring, the captain reported, drovers passed through Fort Smith bound for Fort Leavenworth with "a good many Spanish mules." To avoid the long drive to Fort Leavenworth, the owners might be willing to part with their mules "on comparatively moderate terms."

Montgomery recommended that the public oxen in his charge be turned over to the post quartermaster and commissary officers. They could be used for short distance hauls and beef. To replace the oxen, mules would be purchased. At the moment, there were 160 sets of mules harness at Fort Smith, so there would be no additional expense on this point in converting from oxen to mules. <sup>11</sup>

General Jesup agreed to Montgomery's plan to switch from oxen to mules, provided Colonel Arbuckle gave his approval. If Arbuckle sanctioned the scheme, the oxen were to be transferred to such posts as he might designate. <sup>12</sup>

On October 7, Montgomery wrote the Quartermaster General concerning another problem. The post corn crib was about to collapse. In addition, it was badly located, because it was too far from the stables for "safety or convenience." The crib was about 150 yards west of the stables and 400 yards from the guardhouse. A soldier stationed at the guardhouse, the only point where sentinels were posted following the departure of Captain Sibley's company, couldn't see the crib. Under such circumstances, it was an open invitation to pilfering.

Montgomery accordingly wished permission to rebuild the crib. All the timber which could be salvaged from the old would be used in erecting

the new. He proposed to relocate the new crib near the stables, where it could be under the eye of the man in charge of them. 13

Jesup approved this project on November 4. 14

Having received permission to resume construction of the barracks, Montgomery spoke to Colonel Arbuckle on the advantages which would accrue to the service if soldiers were detailed to do the work. Arbuckle declined.

Montgomery on October 25 determined to make a formal request. 15 The application was addressed to Lieutenant Flint. To complete the project with as "little expense to the Government as possible,"

Montgomery wrote, the Quartermaster General expected the troops of the Seventh Military Department to give assistance. Montgomery asked that a sergeant, a corporal, and ten privates be detailed to him as extra duty men. At the same time, he wanted as many "good Carpenters, Bricklayers, and Stone Masons" as could be spared from the other posts in the department ordered to report to him for duty at Fort Smith. 16

Flint laid Montgomery's memorandum before Colonel Arbuckle on the following morning. The colonel refused to give the captain the requested manpower. To justify his position, Arbuckle pointed out that he had urged the War Department to retain a score of soldiers at Fort Smith for various public purposes. Adjutant General Jones had failed to act on this suggestion. He therefore would be unable to detail any men to assist Montgomery unless authorized to do so by Washington. 17

Montgomery forwarded copies of his correspondence, with Lieutenant Flint to General Jesup on October 28. He attached a covering letter, informing his superior, "the works are progressing, and the interests of the government suffering." 18

General Jesup was aghast when he read the correspondence. No time was lost in placing the documents in the hands of the Adjutant General. 19 Repercussions were almost immediate. Adjutant General



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Jones on February 12 issued an order authorizing Colonel Arbuckle to reoccupy Fort Smith by withdrawing a company of the 5th Infantry from Fort Gibson. <sup>20</sup>

Upon receipt of this directive, Arbuckle designated Company E as the unit to be transferred to Fort Smith. The General Shields reached Fort Smith from Fort Gibson on March 14. As soon as the vessel tied up at the landing, Company E marched off the boat. Captain Sibley quickly formed his soldiers and marched them to the post. After assigning the men to their quarters, Sibley organized a detail to unload the gear. For the first time in nine months, Fort Smith was garrisoned.

When he notified General Jesup of this measure, the Adjutant General assured him that Captain Montgomery shouldn't encounter any more difficulty in obtaining extra duty men. <sup>21</sup>

\* \* \*

Like August, September 1850 was hot and dry in the Fort Smith area. The Arkansas continued to fall. On September 28, the Herald reported "the river is lower than it has been in ten years." <sup>22</sup> No relief was in sight, however. On October 4, the Arkansas was "lower than it was ever known before." In fact, there was so little water that the ferries had ceased operating, and the Fort Smithites forded the river. <sup>23</sup>

The drought was finally broken in the third week of October. Considerable rain fell -- causing a three or four inch rise on the Arkansas. Because of the prolonged dry spell and the long interruption of steamboat traffic on the Arkansas, the Fort Smith merchants found their basic food stocks (butter, eggs, potatoes, sweet and Irish, turnips, onions, pork, and chickens) very scarce and in great demand. Corn meal was bringing 75¢ to 87½¢ per bushel, while flour commanded a price of \$3.50 per 100 pounds. <sup>24</sup>

Unfortunately for the people of the Arkansas frontier, the Arkansas after rising about a foot started to fall once again. On November 5, the river was lower "than it has been at any time this

season." Enough rain fell during the day to lay the dust, and the wind shifted to the north. Two mornings later, there was a hard frost. <sup>25</sup>

By the time the Herald went to press on November 15, the river had been rising slowly for a week. There was three feet of water in the channel. Editor Wheeler reported hopefully, "Indications appear very favorable for a considerable rise, and we hail with pleasure the prospect for the commencement of the boating season." <sup>26</sup>

Just as the Fort Smithites were starting to look for the first steamboat, the river suddenly dropped a foot. An all day rain which drenched the region on the 18th revived their hopes. <sup>27</sup>

Prices continued to soar for necessities at the Fort Smith stores. Corn meal now brought up to \$1.00 a bushel, while pork, when it could be obtained, sold for \$3.50 to \$4 per hundredweight. <sup>28</sup>

Heavy rains fell over the middle reaches of the Arkansas on November 26 and 27. When the Herald went to press on the 28th, there were four feet of water in the channel, and the river was rising rapidly. There was now no doubt about there being plenty of water for navigation. <sup>29</sup>

Shortly after the Herald appeared on the streets on November 29, the Empire No. 2 reached Fort Smith. Since this was the first steamboat to reach Fort Smith in four months, most of the townspeople dropped what they were doing and headed for the landing.

Disembarking from the boat were Lieutenant Edward Mck. Hudson and a few Seminole emigrants from Florida, Superintendent for Indian Affairs West John Drennen, Creek Agent Philip Raiford, and Cherokee Delegate John Drew. In addition to his family, Colonel Drennen had with him a large sum of money due as annuities to the Nations of the Indian Territory.

Colonel Raiford called on Arbuckle on December 1 to furnish him an escort to guard the \$125,000 he was transporting to the Creek Agency. Since there were no troops at Fort Smith, Arbuckle had to order the escort from Fort Gibson.

When this information reached Editor Wheeler, he dashed off an editorial criticising the War Department for pulling the troops out of Fort Smith. "Here is government economy," the editor wrote. Although the Fort Smithites had repeatedly urged the War Department to keep one or two companies at the Garrison to serve as "escorts, expresses &c.," their pleas had been ignored. Now, he continued, Superintendent Drennen had arrived with upwards of \$400,000 for the different agencies under his supervision, and there were no troops at Fort Smith to serve as escorts. Within the next several days, Drennen would be leaving for New Orleans to fetch the \$1,200,000 due the Cherokees. This large amount would have to be sent into the Indian country, but there were no soldiers at Fort Smith to act as a guard.

"Here are the facts," the Wheeler fumed, "Let the Secretary of War look at them. One Company of troops can be spared from Fort Gibson, as there are 4 companies there. Three companies will be able to perform all the duty required at that post." 30

The low water in the Arkansas proved a headache to the military. A train of eight wagons had left Fort Smith on November 9 for Captain Marcy's camp on Mustang Creek. With the addition of the stores carried in these heavily laden vehicles, Marcy should have enough supplies to last him until June. Except for several barrels of sugar and flour, Montgomery had forwarded everything that Marcy had requisitioned. On checking the commissary storehouse, Montgomery had discovered that these items were exhausted. Attempts to purchase sugar and coffee from the Fort Smith merchants, whose stocks were almost exhausted, had failed. As soon as the river started to rise and steamboats again tied up at Fort Smith, Montgomery promised to rush several wagons to Marcy's encampment with sugar and coffee.

The wagonmaster of Marcy's train, along with the man in charge of the wagons transporting supplies from Fort Washita to Captain Sibley's camp, were directed to return to Fort Smith after carrying out their assignments. The drivers would be paid off, and the oxen turned out to pasture until spring.

1850  
1851

A contract for the purchase of 3,000 bushels of corn was mailed to General Jesup by Montgomery on November 10. In accordance with instructions from Arbuckle, the captain had bought 2,000 less bushels than usual. After the papers had been signed, the colonel changed his mind. He told Montgomery to buy another 1,000 to 2,000 bushels, if he could do so at a fair price.

This the captain was unable to do. The corn crop in the Arkansas valley, because of the drought had been very short. Most of the farmers were convinced that a large number of emigrants would pass through the area en route to California come spring. They accordingly refused to sell. The only thing in Montgomery's opinion that would keep the price from skyrocketing was for the Arkansas to be navigable until the next corn crop was harvested. If the river were opened to steamboats, corn could be shipped in from the Mississippi Valley.

After warning Jesup of this development, Montgomery observed, if the War Department were planning extensive troops movements in the area, measures would have to be taken to ensure a sufficient quantity of corn was on hand. 31

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A six to seven inch snow blanketed Crawford County on the night of December 6. 32 The runoff as the snow melted kept the river navigable throughout the month. During the last week of the year, six boats (the Trustee, the Umpire No. 2, the Exchange, the P. H. White, the St. Francis, and the Dove) deposited and picked up cargo at Fort Smith. Superintendent Drennen took passage on one of these vessels for New Orleans to get the Cherokees' money. 33

The Umpire No. 2 and the St. Francis returned to Fort Smith on January 8. Assistant Surgeon Joseph H. Bailey and his family boarded the Umpire No. 2. After having served for many years at Forts Smith and Gibson, Bailey was being transferred to Sackett's Harbor, New York. 34

January was unseasonably mild on the Arkansas frontier. Since no snow or rain fell, the stage of the river dropped. On January 24, there was barely enough water in the channel to float the lightest draft

steamboats. Superintendent Drennen, having secured the Cherokees's money, returned to Fort Smith aboard the Umpire No. 2 on the 23d.

Four days before, Sutler Stephens reached the post from Marcy's camp on Mustang Creek. He reported, all the officers and men in good health. At the time of his departure, Stephens told Editor Wheeler, Captain Marcy had taken the field to reconnoiter the country through which a road linking the post which he was to establish on Wild Horse Creek with the Red River would pass. <sup>35</sup>

The Arkansas rose rapidly in February. Editor Wheeler reported on the 7th, "The river is again in fine boating order, and we rejoice that it is so; it is not only the 'right arm' of trade and business, but is little less than 'both arms' of conjugal felicity." <sup>36</sup> On February 18, the steamers Domain and Sante Fe passed Fort Smith en route to Fort Coffee with 120 Choctaw emigrants from Mississippi. <sup>37</sup>

With the return of Company E to Fort Smith, it was necessary for the post commissary to call for proposals to supply the troops with rations which were purchased locally. The Fort Smith Herald for March 21 carried the following notice, "Sealed Proposals will be received until 12 noon on March 31 for furnishing the troops at Fort Smith with 'Best Quality of Fresh Beef -- Stall-Fed' in such quantities" as the post commissary designated. The contract was to run for one year, beginning April. <sup>38</sup>

Although the river had been navigable for four months, prices asked and received for food remained high. Corn meal, bacon, lard, and all kinds of vegetables were scarce and commanded high prices. This made it difficult for the post commissary to keep within his budget. <sup>39</sup>

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Arbuckle called Captain Montgomery into his office on March 25. He told the captain to be prepared to send a train with rations and other supplies to the post Captain Marcy was to establish on Wild Horse Creek. The train was to be ready to leave Fort Smith at the end of the third week of April.

When he examined the long list of items requisitioned by Marcy, Montgomery estimated he would need 19 teams of oxen of at least four

yoke each. Eighteen teams would be needed to pull the wagons and one the forge. This meant he would have to have 152 oxen to outfit the train. After deducting the oxen needed at the post, the captain found that he would have less than 100 beasts fit for the road. Of these, he feared many would breakdown before they had traveled 50 miles.

In any case it would be mandatory to purchase half a hundred oxen. Before doing so, the captain determined to tell Arbuckle of the correspondence he had had with General Jesup on this subject. Arbuckle would be shown Jesup's letter authorizing the captain to substitute mules for oxen if it met with the colonel's approbation.

Montgomery promptly addressed a note to Lieutenant Francis N. Page, Arbuckle's adjutant. The arguments used to win over General Jesup were repeated. Realizing that Arbuckle was set in his ways, the captain added a few new ones. He had found that oxen didn't hold up well under the severe service required of them in military trains until they had passed their fourth year. By the time they were eight years old, they were on the downgrade. The captain knew of mules that had gone through the Seminole and Mexican Wars and were still being worked. There were cases where the army had used the same mule for 15 to 20 years.

Assistant Surgeon Bailey, prior to his departure for Sackett's Harbor, had told the captain that cattle on the Arkansas Frontier, when moved from their own range, were "almost invariably attacked with Murrain during the succeeding summer or fall." During the past year's hauling season, Montgomery knew that almost one-third of the oxen assigned to the trains going from Fort Smith to Marcy's camp had died.

On the average it took the ox trains one month to make the trip to and from Marcy's camp. Montgomery calculated that a mule train could have made it in about half that time. Thus, it was twice as expensive to ship supplies from Fort Smith to the outposts by oxen

as it would be by mule. Furthermore, if mules were used, a greater number of trips could be made during a corresponding period. This would reduce the wear and tear on the wagons to a marked degree.

Finally, oxen wouldn't eat corn unless it was on the cob. This had compelled Montgomery to employ one wagon to haul corn for each outbound train. If mules were used, corn could be carried in sacks on each wagon.

Having concluded his case, Montgomery pointed out, it would probably be impossible to secure enough mules to equip the train by April 20. He therefore wished authorization to purchase a sufficient number of mules to make good this deficiency. As additional oxen broke down, they would be replaced by mules. <sup>40</sup>

After discussing the situation with Colonel Arbuckle, Lieutenant Page answered Montgomery's inquiry on the 28th. The colonel wanted Montgomery to employ all the "good work oxen and mules" which had been purchased for use at Fort Smith. Henceforth, the hauling about the post would be done by the "most indifferent oxen," the ones least likely to hold up on the trip to Marcy's camp.

Arbuckle and Page estimated Montgomery would need about 20 yoke of oxen or 30 mules to fill out his train. If the captain could procure "young mules accustomed to work and of good size at a fair price" he was authorized to do so. If he couldn't find mules at a reasonable price, it would be necessary for the captain to procure oxen. In either case, Montgomery would have to move rapidly. Arbuckle expected the train to be ready to roll by April 25, and under no circumstances was it to be delayed beyond May 1. <sup>41</sup>

Montgomery, on receiving Arbuckle's authorization to purchase mules, dispatched an agent into Benton and Washington counties. The man traveled as far as Springfield, Missouri, in his search for "young mules accustomed to work." Because of the imminent date of departure of the train, the agent was unable to purchase the requisite

number of mules. He returned to Fort Smith with the few that he had bought in time to allow Montgomery to secure the necessary number of oxen. <sup>42</sup>

Although it was not unexpected, Captain Montgomery was deeply mortified when on April 16 he opened a letter posted by General Jesup on the last day of March. The general had complained of the captain's failure to send in a number of required reports -- the accounts for the 4th Quarter of 1850 and the monthly reports of "Persons and Articles Hired." Because of his dereliction it had been necessary for the general to report the captain to the Treasury Department. If the accounts were not on the Quartermaster General's desk by April 5, he would be compelled to notify the Secretary of War.

With the departure of the troops from Fort Smith in July, the general had presumed Montgomery's duties would be very light. The only reason that he had allowed the captain to retain his clerk was because a new post was being established in the Seventh Military Department. Since Montgomery didn't appear to be using the clerk, he was to be discharged by April 30.

After studying Montgomery's report of "Persons and Articles Hired" for October, Jesup decided that the number employed was larger than seemed necessary for the limited duties the captain was required to perform. All men whose services weren't absolutely required were to be laid off immediately. In the future, Montgomery would have Colonel Arbuckle sign his monthly reports of "Persons and Articles Hired." <sup>43</sup>

Montgomery promptly drafted a letter of explanation. His clerk, he pointed out, had been "culpably negligent in the performance of his duty, but not to so great a degree as would appear from the non transmission" of the accounts. Montgomery complained that he had been unable to compel his clerk to discharge his tasks with any



alacrity. At the same time, the captain was unable to make out his accounts without the assistance of the clerk. Since it would be almost impossible to secure a replacement, Montgomery had refrained from firing the man.

In the employment of persons at the post, Montgomery assured Jesup, he had been "governed by as strict an economy as the requirements of the Department would permit." A number of circumstances over which the captain had no control had forced him to increase the size of the payroll. Among these were: the transfer of Captain Sibley's company, which prevented him from calling on the post commander for extra duty men; the necessity of outfitting trains to haul supplies to Marcy's camp; the hiring of guards to watch the public property following the departure of Sibley's troops; work having been resumed on the barracks, mechanics and laborers had to be employed. If Jesup had been acquainted with these circumstances, Montgomery felt, he wouldn't have censured him on this subject.

Montgomery hadn't realized that it was necessary for Colonel Arbuckle to countersign the "Roll of Persons and Articles Hired." Arbuckle at the same time had made no request to do so. The captain assured Jesup that it had been his policy to discuss with Arbuckle the persons employed. <sup>44</sup>

Six days later (April 22) Montgomery forwarded a number of the requested reports. <sup>45</sup> The remainder, he promised to send by the following week.

Montgomery notified Jesup at this time that a train of 21 wagons would leave Fort Smith on April 29 for Camp Arbuckle, the new post which Marcy's command was establishing on Wild Horse Creek. The general was notified that it had been necessary to purchase 25 yoke of oxen to enable the train to roll as scheduled.

Montgomery reviewed his arguments for using mules instead of oxen to supply the posts west of Fort Smith. The expense of recruiting the train in the future, the captain wrote, would be proportional to

the number of troops "thrown forward and to the extension of the line towards the Rio Grande." A recent order from the Adjutant General directing the 5th Infantry to establish camps along that line had added to the urgency of the situation. The captain felt that the substitution of mules for oxen should be made as early as possible. If this were too expensive, Montgomery argued, teams purchased to meet this increased demand on the Department ought to be mule instead of ox.

Another problem confronting the captain at this time was the large number of worn out wagons at Fort Smith and the various other posts in the Seventh Department. Montgomery recommended measures be taken to replace them with wagons of an "improved pattern." <sup>46</sup>

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The War Department during the winter of 1850-51 had arrived at an important decision. A new line of posts would be established in Texas. These forts would be designed to push back the frontier several hundred miles, and to protect the emigrants passing along the Dona Ana Road from Fort Smith to New Mexico. General Order No. 19, which was issued by Adjutant General Jones on April 11, was designed to implement this program. Eight companies of the 7th Infantry were ordered into the Seventh Military Department. Regimental headquarters and three companies would proceed to Fort Gibson, two companies to Camp Arbuckle, and one company each to Forts Smith, Towson, and Washita.

As soon as relieved by the 7th Infantry, the 5th Infantry was to take the field. The regiment was to establish two or more new posts, on or near Captain Marcy's route from Dona Ana. Positions suggested as possibilities for these posts were: at a point near the crossing of the Brazos; on or near the crossing of the Pecos; at some point between the crossing of the Pecos and Dona Ana. <sup>47</sup>

Twelve days before the War Department had issued a General Order dismounting the four companies of 7th Infantry stationed at Fort

Leavenworth. After turning in their horses to the Quartermaster's Department, the battalion was to be prepared to march to Fort Gibson. <sup>48</sup>

Colonel Arbuckle, upon being notified of the projected troop movements, called for Captains Sibley and Montgomery. Sibley was directed to have his assistant commissary to turn over to Montgomery: 4,000 pounds of pork in strong barrels, 500 pounds of coffee, 700 pounds of sugar, 4 pounds of citrate of potash, 6 kegs of pickled onions, 1 barrel of molasses, 3 pounds of citric acid, 9 bushels of dried peaches, 8 bushels of irish potatoes, 2 boxes of candles, and 20 gallons of good whiskey. Montgomery was to see that these stores were forwarded to Fort Washita for the use of the 5th Infantry, on its march into Texas. The stores were to be packed and ready for shipment by May 8. <sup>49</sup>

After Sibley had left, Arbuckle told Montgomery to hold himself ready to provide transportation for the 5th Infantry. When pressed as to how this was to be done, the colonel refused to commit himself. As the first step in carrying out this formidable project, Montgomery began making arrangements to purchase large numbers of oxen, mules, &c.

The captain knew that with the 5th Infantry occupying a line of outposts reaching to the Rio Grande, it would tax his resources to the breaking point. Montgomery wasted no time in relaying this information to Colonel Hunt at New Orleans. <sup>50</sup>

During the next several days, the captain checked his inventories. Montgomery by May 4 prepared a list of the quartermaster's stores needed. This requisition was mailed to Colonel Hunt. (See Appendix L) At the same time, he advised the colonel that the wagons used to supply Camp Arbuckle were "very nearly worn out." If Fort Smith were to be used as a depot for the new posts which were to be established by the 5th Infantry in Texas, he would have to increase the 25 wagons assigned to the train to 125. Even then an intermediate depot would have to be located on the Red or

Brazos. Since the roads were hard and corn was the principal crop of the area across which the initial advance would be made, Montgomery recommended mules be used to draw the wagons from Fort Smith to the intermediate depot. Beyond the Brazos, oxen could be expected to give better service than mules.

If he were to secure the additional wagons, Montgomery wanted to know whether they could be obtained in New Orleans. <sup>51</sup>

Captain Montgomery's letter reached Colonel Hunt on May 14. The colonel was staggered by the immensity of the request. Before taking any action, he telegraphed General Jesup. To make matters more embarrassing, the New Orleans Quartermaster's Depot didn't stock a number of the requisitioned stores. While a number of these could be purchased in the "Crescent City," some couldn't. Wall tents, flies, and poles would have to be ordered from the Philadelphia depot, while wagons could only be secured from Northern manufacturers. <sup>52</sup>

General Jesup wired Colonel Hunt to rush the requested articles to Captain Montgomery. The wagons and wall tents would be forwarded from Philadelphia to Fort Smith. <sup>53</sup>

An express rider rode into Fort Smith on May 9. He informed Colonel Arbuckle that four companies of the 7th Infantry had reached Fort Gibson after an overland march from Fort Leavenworth. The remaining companies of the regiment scheduled to see service in the Seventh Military Department were said to be en route up the Arkansas by boat. All these companies but one were to disembark at Fort Smith. This company in accordance with Arbuckle's instructions would continue on to Fort Gibson. There, the troops were to take charge of a number of the wagons which had accompanied the battalion from Fort Leavenworth and proceed to Fort Towson. <sup>54</sup>

Colonel Stanton, who was now in charge of the St. Louis Quartermaster's Depot, was advised by General Jesup that Montgomery required 100 wagons for the transportation of the 5th Infantry. The general made no mention of the number of horses and mules, or sets of harness

required. Until he received this data, it would be impossible for Stanton to make the necessary arrangements. Stanton proceeded to write and ask Montgomery for this information.

At the same time, the colonel had a question he wished answered. Were these 100 wagons in addition to those already on hand? If so, he apprehended that Montgomery's requirements might "be somewhat more Extensive than the Regulations may warrant." Assuming that the aggregate strength of the regiment was 400, the number of wagons suggested would provide one for each four men. If drawn by six mules, there would be three animals for two soldiers. This was Montgomery should know, the colonel continued, would far exceed the amount authorized by Army Regulations, even under the supposition that the regiment carried with it tons of commissary supplies.

The captain was cautioned that private baggage and stores couldn't be transported at public expense. Montgomery and the members of his department were to exercise extreme vigilance in checking on the loading of the wagons. All private baggage beyond the quantity prescribed by regulation was to be excluded. Stanton warned Montgomery to be on guard against the practise which seemed all too common on the frontier of assigning wagons and teams to particular officers or companies.

Before moving out, the officers of the Quartermaster's Department were to weigh the wagons. In no case should the weight exceed 2,500 pounds for a six-animal team.

Stanton suggested that Montgomery, after consulting the regulations, restudy his needs. He was reminded that the 16 six-animal teams, the four-horse ambulance, and five saddle horses which had been assigned the battalion of the 7th Infantry prior to its departure from Fort Leavenworth were to be used to assist the advance of the 5th Infantry. After taking these and the wagons, public animals, and sets of harness on hand into consideration, Montgomery was to let Stanton know what additional items were needed. As soon as the required information was on his desk, Stanton, if it were possible, would speed them to Fort Smith. 55

On June 2, Stanton received a telegram from General Jesup. The general informed Stanton that Colonel Hunt had been unable to obtain any of the 100 wagons that Montgomery had called for in New Orleans. Consequently, Stanton was to rush all the wagons at the St. Louis depot to Fort Smith. If he didn't have the required number in stock, he was authorized to make purchases. Stanton would also make arrangements for securing teams.

Stanton was thunderstruck. Besides having no wagons in stock, he was unable to buy any from the St. Louis merchants. Any vehicle which the merchants received was eagerly swept up the California and Norman emigrants. The only place where the badgered colonel thought he might be able to secure wagons was at Fort Leavenworth.

Before doing anything, he decided to contact Captain Montgomery. For the second time in two days, the colonel wrote the Fort Smith quartermaster. He wanted a number of questions answered. How many wagons and animals did Montgomery "consider indispensibly necessary for the transportation of the authorized Baggage and supplies" for the 5th Regiment? How many wagons and teams did Montgomery currently have at his command? When would the 5th Infantry begin its movement? Where should such wagons and animals as could be supplied by the Fort Leavenworth depot be sent? Could the captain purchase horses and mules locally, cheaper than they could be secured at St. Louis?

In case Montgomery didn't have the necessary information, an average horse brought \$85 and a mule \$95 on the St. Louis market.

Since there had already been too much delay, Colonel Stanton decided to send this dispatch by a special messenger, M. Wheeling. 56

It took Wheeling 12 days to reach Fort Smith. Upon reading Stanton's letters, Montgomery found that his request on Colonel Hunt for 100 wagons had been misinterpreted. The wagons asked for in his May 4 letter weren't to be used in transporting the 5th Infantry, he wrote Colonel Stanton. If his requisition had been promptly acted upon, it was barely possible that some of the wagons would have arrived in time to have been of use in this service.

His call for the wagons had been prompted by the need to throw supplies before winter began into the posts to be occupied by the 5th Infantry. Because of the isolated condition of the posts to be occupied, and the absence of all supplies in their immediate neighborhood except wood, grass, and water, the troops would have to carry with them an exorbitant quantity of supplies. Strong escorts would be required by the wagons once they crossed the Red. It was Montgomery's considered opinion that it would be impracticable to send trains beyond the Red more than twice during a year. When he took these things into consideration, Montgomery hoped Stanton would not find his "requirements" too "extensive." 57

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Meanwhile, Company F, 7th Infantry, which was scheduled to relieve Captain Sibley's command, reached Fort Smith. Company F had traveled to Fort Smith by a roundabout route. Leaving Jefferson Barracks by boat on April 17, the company had proceeded down the Mississippi to New Orleans, where it arrived on the 22d. At the "Crescent City," the troops took passage on the steamer Cleona. The run up the Mississippi and Arkansas took three weeks. Captain Richard C. Gatlin led the men of Company F ashore at Fort Smith on May 14. 58

By June 7, Captain Sibley's company was ready to start for Fort Washita. (Colonel Belknap had designated Fort Washita at the rendezvous for the troops of the 5th Infantry.) As soon as he had formally turned over the command of the Garrison to Captain Gatlin, Sibley gave the word and Company E, 5th Infantry marched out of the post and crossed the Poteau.

Four days later, Colonel Arbuckle, who had spent the greater part of the last 29 years on the Arkansas frontier, passed away. As soon as the colonel had ceased breathing, Lieutenant Page drafted a letter notifying Colonel Belknap that Arbuckle had expired at 11:45 a.m. As senior officer in the department, Page would await Belknap's orders.

Page informed Belknap, who was at Fort Washita that before Arbuckle's death "all the necessary measures" had been taken and transportation provided to facilitate the advance of the 5th Infantry and "to throw forward the year's supply of subsistence to the Brazos." 59

The death of Colonel Arbuckle would enable Captain Montgomery to implement one of his pet projects. Writing to General Jesup on June 15, the captain observed that no call had been made for horses and mules because Colonel Arbuckle had deemed oxen more economical. Before his death, Arbuckle had designated the type of transportation to be furnished the 5th Infantry. This transportation had been provided and all the companies of the 5th Infantry, except three, were en route to Fort Washita.

Cholera had broken out in the three companies of the 5th Infantry which had recently reached Fort Smith from Corpus Christi. A number of the captain's best teamsters had refused to accompany these troops to Fort Washita until the epidemic had abated. These units had been segregated in a camp six miles from Fort Smith, and had remained behind when the rest of the regiment marched for Fort Washita on June 10. Four days later, Major Abercrombie, who had been left in charge of the troops suffering from the plague, notified Montgomery that the cholera was subsiding. Within the next four or five days, he hoped to push on and rejoin the regiment at Fort Washita. As soon as Abercrombie's battalion arrived, Belknap planned to march his regiment for the Brazos. The column would carry with it into Texas four months' provisions for 450 men.

In accordance with instructions from Arbuckle, Montgomery had signed a contract with two citizens (Black and Butt) of Preston, Texas. The contractors had agreed to transport the column's baggage and supplies from Preston to the Brazos for \$3 per hundredweight. If given the opportunity, the contractors said they would be willing to haul to the posts which were to be established by the 5th Infantry in west Texas. Consequently, Montgomery had had the post quartermaster at Fort Washita establish an advance depot at Preston.



These arrangements in Montgomery's opinion obviated the need of maintaining a large public train to supply the new posts. Even so, the captain informed Stanton, he would need a number of additional wagons to transport supplies from Fort Smith to Preston. The three companies of the 7th Infantry which had taken position at Camp Arbuckle and Fort Washita would have to be supplied. Moreover, the wagons which were assigned to his department were on the verge of wearing out. It was the captain's opinion that they wouldn't last beyond the close of the year.

Since the opportunity for obtaining wagons in St. Louis or from Fort Leavenworth was slight, and the need was no longer pressing, Montgomery informed Stanton on June 14 that he would write General Jesup. The Philadelphia wagons were, in the captain's opinion, superior to those manufactured in the St. Louis area. In addition, horses and mules could be bought at Fort Smith for considerably less than at St. Louis. Montgomery accordingly wouldn't have to look to Colonel Stanton for anything. <sup>60</sup>

The captain waited until the next morning, June 15, before writing General Jesup. Calling the general's attention to the attached copies of his correspondence with Colonel Stanton, Montgomery sarcastically observed, "had the movement of the 5th Regt [.] of Inft [.] pursuant to the late orders of the War Department, depended upon the measures to be taken by...[Colonel] Stanton, it could not well have been effected with the dispatch enjoined by said orders."

Montgomery pointed out that the late Colonel Arbuckle had directed him to rely on means within his control and local resources to provide the 5th Infantry with its transportation. This had been accomplished, the captain reported, "at much less cost than if the means had been drawn from distant points." This was besides the great saving in time. If the 5th Infantry was unable to reach the area where the posts were to be established as early as the Secretary of War desired, it would not be the fault of the Quartermaster's Department, Montgomery boasted.

If he were to supply the advance depot to be established at Preston, as well as Fort Washita and Camp Arbuckle, Montgomery estimated that he would need 75 to 80 wagons. At present, the captain had 43 wagons, 17 of which were pulled by mules and horses, the remainder by oxen. Many of these wagons were just about worn out. When he took into consideration the condition of most of the remaining vehicles in the Seventh Military Department, the captain was of the opinion that if the 5th Infantry were to be supplied through Fort Smith, he would need not less than 500 good wagons "as early as it may be practicable to have them manufactured and forwarded."

Once again, Montgomery urged that mules and horses be used instead of oxen. If the general approved, these animals could be obtained on good terms at Fort Smith. He would require, to make the change, 180 sets of mule harness, along with a due proportion of saddles and whips. <sup>61</sup>

Captain Montgomery had mailed his monthly accounts to Washington on June 7. On doing so, he had attached a covering letter. In addition to informing Jesup of the impending departure of the 5th Infantry for Fort Washita, the captain reported that the quartermaster's stores which he asked Colonel Hunt to forward had not arrived. He therefore had been compelled to purchase a limited number of the requisitioned articles from the Fort Smith and Van Buren merchants. Several wagon loads of provisions had been sent in advance of the 5th Infantry to Preston. The contractors had agreed to haul supplies from Fort Smith to Preston for \$2.50 per hundredweight. They had refused to go beyond Preston, because of the fear that their oxen would be cut down by murrain.

Arrangements had been made with Black and Butt to transport the supplies beyond Preston. Montgomery was satisfied that this agreement would relieve the Quartermaster's Department of a very arduous task. As he informed Jesup, Montgomery believed that with the assistance of a few private contractors, his train would encounter no difficulty in moving the supplies required by the 5th Infantry

from Fort Smith to Preston. A further saving in the cost of transportation might be made, the captain wrote, if steamboats could be sent up the Red as high as Preston. <sup>62</sup>

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Captain Gatlin was anything but pleased with the hospital facilities at the Garrison. At the time of his arrival, the small log building which had been occupied by Major Thomas and Captain Alexander for years was being used as the post hospital. Besides being very dilapidated, the building was badly located for the purpose it served. Because of the wall of the fort, the only winds which reached the building were from the north. While at the same time, the hospital was so near the Officers' Quarters that during epidemics, the health of the officers was endangered.

When his attention was called to the building, Montgomery agreed with Captain Gatlin. The quartermaster believed that if the structure were repaired, it would be throwing money away. Plans and estimates for a new hospital were prepared by Montgomery on June 20 and forwarded to General Jesup. (See Montgomery's Plans for Post Hospital and Appendix M.) <sup>63</sup>

The letter containing the request to be allowed to construct a new post hospital reached General Jesup's desk on July 12. Because of a lack of funds, the general was compelled to veto the proposal for the time being. <sup>64</sup>

Captain Montgomery received a letter from Colonel Hunt at this time inquiring into the possibility of sending supplies up Red River to Fort Towson. Hunt thought Mackinaw boats might be the answer. Arbuckle, before his death, had entertained a notion that it would be practicable to send keelboats up the Red as far as the mouth of the Washita. Consequently, the question raised by Hunt was not new.

The captain had discussed navigation on the Red at length with Mr. Warren, who had been trading on the Red for years. (Warren's Trading-House was about 100 river miles above Preston.) Warren voiced

the opinion that the only certain way to supply Camp Arbuckle and the posts to be established in Texas was by wagon train from Fort Smith. Above the mouth of the Boggy, the Red rose rapidly following a freshet. The fall, he added, came just as quick. He was satisfied that any attempt to navigate this section of the Red "with any description of Boats" would be fraught with danger. <sup>65</sup>

A Doaksville merchant, William L. Poalk, had also been consulted by Montgomery as to the feasibility of sending boats up the Red. Poalk, who had been in business at Doaksville for years, pronounced navigation on the Red as "very uncertain and exceedingly precarious." Some years, the river might be navigable as high as Fort Towson for five months. More often, however, this was not the case. Poalk could recall years in which 11 months had passed without a boat tying up at Fort Towson landing.

During part of each year, the merchants at Doaksville, Pine Bluff, Clarksville, and Preston were compelled to transport part of their goods by wagon from Shreveport. The Shreveport road, Poalk described, as "one of the worst roads in the whole country."

Poalk next discussed boating on the reaches of the Red above Fort Towson. If it had been practicable, he noted, steamboats would have already been operating on both the Red and Washita. He had known several merchants who had purchased boats for that purpose, but their dreams had ended in failure. <sup>66</sup>

Letters containing the data garnered by Captain Montgomery concerning the difficulties of supplying the posts in Texas and the Indian Territory via the Red were addressed to General Jesup and Colonel Hunt on June 27. At the same time, the captain informed the general of the purchase of 60 good sound serviceable Spanish mules. The price paid was \$55 per animal. Since a number of the mules were already broken to harness, Montgomery felt he had made a bargain. Since the owner had wanted to dispose of his animals quickly, the captain had not had time to secure the permission of his superiors before closing the transaction. He trusted the general wouldn't disapprove.

The outbreak of cholera at Fort Smith caused the people who lived in the country to avoid the fort and the town. Montgomery had planned to contract with some of these individuals to haul supplies to the Preston depot. Now, he would be compelled to rely on his own resources.

Captain Gatlin had complained to the Quartermaster that the Officers' Quarters hadn't been provided with window blinds. Because of this, the commandant continued, they were "very uncomfortable." In view of this development, Montgomery wished to know if General Jesup would have any objections if he had measurements taken. An order would then be forwarded for 64 pairs of blinds to Cincinnati. Quotations obtained locally by Montgomery had convinced him that the blinds, even after the transportation cost was included, could be secured on more satisfactory terms in the Ohio River city. 67

General Jesup on July 17 approved Montgomery's request. The measurements had been taken, and the blinds were ordered from Cincinnati. 68

The great increase in paper work caused by the expanding importance of Fort Smith as a supply depot forced Captain Montgomery to call for clerical assistance. At first, the ordnance sergeant was able to help on a part time basis. This arrangement didn't prove satisfactory. Work continued to pile up. Finally, the captain had to add another full time clerk to his staff. 69

On the final day of June, Montgomery mailed his estimate of funds required for "Improvements, Alterations, and Repairs for Fiscal Year 1852." (See Appendix N) Not counting the money required for the new post hospital, Montgomery figured he would need \$2,640 to take care of this account. 70

At the beginning of July, Captain Montgomery took sick. Reporting to the post surgeon, he was told to remain in his quarters for several days. The captain by July 11 had recovered to the point where he was able to send in his reports and accounts for the 2d Quarter of 1851. Several contracts and performance bonds were also enclosed. One of these contracts was with Black and Butt for transporting supplies from Preston to the Brazos, the other was with C. B. Johnson for supplying the post with hay.

Twenty-seven heavily loaded wagons had left Fort Smith on the July 10 for Preston. This train which was drawn by mules carried Quartermaster's stores.

Colonel Belknap, who had just returned from the Brazos, complimented Montgomery on his foresight. He told the captain to purchase no more oxen for the transportation of supplies. Belknap swore that oxen were unsuited for this service. The road from Fort Smith to the Brazos, he said, was strewn with their carcasses. Worse, a number of the men who had contracted to haul supplies from Fort Smith to Preston had lost nearly all their oxen. These men had been forced to store the freight along the way. <sup>71</sup>

Several days later, Belknap issued instructions for the Garrison commissary of subsistence to purchase enough flour to supply 160 men for three months. As soon as transportation was ready, Captain Montgomery was to forward the flour to Fort Arbuckle. <sup>72</sup>

An incident which could have had tragic repercussions occurred on September 9 on a Fort Smith street between Colonel Belknap and John M. Smith. The two men had been unfriendly for several years. Within the past week, an increased strain had been placed on relations between the two. Encountering the colonel while he was off the post, Smith seized a chair and struck the officer several blows on the shins. He also took several wild swings at the colonel with his fists. Belknap offered no resistance but called for several bystanders to restrain his assailant. After Smith had been taken aside, the colonel examined his legs. Belknap, except for bruises to his shins, had escaped without injury.

Rumors spread like wildfire through Fort Smith and Van Buren that the colonel would demand satisfaction. A duel would take place across the Choctaw line. Friends of the participants, however, succeeded in making them listen to reason and there was no meeting. <sup>73</sup>

\* \* \*

A large train carrying the last of the stores which had been stockpiled at Fort Smith to facilitate the advance of the 5th Infantry into

Texas forded the Poteau on September 6. Colonel Belknap planned to start for Fort Washita the following week. He would time his arrival at the advance base to coincide with that of the train. As soon as the colonel reached Fort Washita, the rear echelon of the 5th Infantry which had been posted there to expedite the flow of supplies to the advance contingents would start for the Brazos. <sup>74</sup>

Colonel Belknap, as scheduled, left Fort Smith for Texas on September 13. The colonel was accompanied by Paymaster Gaines and a small escort. <sup>75</sup>

\* \* \*

Two days before Belknap's departure, Captain Montgomery had opened the bids which had been received in response to an advertisement carried in the August 13 edition of the Fort Smith Herald. The necessity of feeding the great number of animals used to pull the supply trains caused the quartermaster to call for increased amounts of forage. He estimated that the Department would need 30,000 bushels of corn, 10,000 bushels of oats, and 25 tons of fodder to carry it through the winter. The firm of Barrington, Shelton & Company of Elm Springs, Arkansas was awarded the contract. The successful bidders had agreed to sell the government the corn for 64 $\frac{1}{4}$ ¢ per bushel, the oats for 39 $\frac{1}{4}$ ¢ per bushel, and the fodder at \$2.50 per hundredweight. <sup>76</sup>

When he relayed this information to Washington, the captain mailed his accounts for August. He had deferred doing so, pending Colonel Belknap's return from Fort Gibson. Captain Gatlin had refused to countersign the reports. To justify his position, Gatlin had pointed out that except as it related to the Garrison, he had no authority over Captain Montgomery. <sup>77</sup>

Certain officers in the Quartermaster's Department were not ready to abandon the idea of supplying the posts established by the 5th Infantry via Red River. A letter from the Quartermaster General's Office signed by his deputy, Colonel Thomas, reached Captain Montgomery in September.

Thomas wrote on August 7 that he was unable to understand why navigation on the Red was so difficult. He knew that it had been navigated by steamers for years as high up as Fort Towson. It was understood at Washington that one steamer had ascended the river to Preston.

In 1842 the Quartermaster's Department had sent a large keelboat from Fort Towson to Fort Washita. The master had reported that by "clearing out a small number of smags, all difficulty in the navigation would be overcome."

At the time, the War Department determined to send the 5th Infantry into Texas, Thomas explained that it was so late that it was decided not to use the Red as an avenue of supply. To have insured their arrival at Fort Towson in time to be forwarded to Preston, the supplies would have had to leave New Orleans in early February. Consequently, it had been decided to support the movement through Fort Smith.

Thomas felt that the "principal Depot" for supplying the new posts established by the 5th Infantry should be on the Red, at least as high up as the Little Washita.

According to the latest reports from Captain Marcy, "but little was known as to the best and shortest land route, from Fort Smith to the Washita."

Montgomery was to ascertain and forward to Washington as soon as possible the answers to six questions:

What is the proper time in the Year to ship stores at New Orleans, so as to insure their arrival as high up Red river as Fort Towson without delay?

How far above Towson, a steamer has ascended Red river -- what month and year, and what was her draft of water?

The distance above Towson the river can be navigated with keel boat, drawing from two and a half to three feet water, & to what point?

What is the distance, by the river, from Towson landing to Preston -- to the Little Washita and the Big Washita?



The distance, by land, from Shreveport to Preston -- to Little Washita and to Big Washita, and the cost of transportation?

What is the cost of transportation per 100 pounds from Fort Towson to Preston -- to Fort Washita, & to Fort Arbuckle? and what from Fort Smith to the same points? 78

Montgomery answered Thomas' letter on September 15.

First, Montgomery took up the question as to the best time to ship supplies from New Orleans to take advantage of the seasonal rise on the Red. Although Montgomery couldn't say so, he considered this ridiculous. The people at the New Orleans depot, he informed Thomas, had much greater facilities for obtaining this data. Most of the steamboats engaged in the Red River trade called at the "Crescent City." According to the best available sources, the rises on the Red varied from year to year. They usually occurred, however, between December and March.

Since it had been established in 1842 only two steamers had ascended the Red as high as Fort Washita. One of these had reached the fort in February 1844, the other in the same month two years later. Only one of these vessels had been able to descend the Red, the other after grounding had been abandoned. 79

Because of its strong current, keelboats were of little use on the Red. Indeed, the captain pointed out, recent improvements in the science of designing light-draft steamboats had made it possible for these vessels to go anywhere that keelboats could.

Examining his mileage charts, the captain found it was 260 miles by river from Fort Towson landing to Preston, by land it was 110 miles. The reaches of the Red between these two points were very crooked. During high water, the current was treacherous. Montgomery had been unable to ascertain the distance from Preston to the mouth of the Little Washita. He didn't believe this made any difference, because people familiar with the area reported that the only type of vessel which could navigate the Red above the mouth of the Washita was canoes.

Next, Montgomery analyzed the cost of transporting supplies by land from Shreveport to various points on the Red. While it cost \$3.50 per hundredweight to haul to Preston, the charge was \$1.50 per hundred pounds for articles freighted to Towson landing and Fort Washita.

If the Department determined to establish a depot at Towson landing for the supply of the posts on the Washita and Brazos rivers, Montgomery urged his superiors to take cognizance of a number of points: (A) The uncertainty of navigation on the Red up to that point caused by the "rafts." (B) The unlikelihood that any but very light-draft vessels would ever ply the Red above the mouth of the Kiamichi.

To illustrate the superiority enjoyed by Fort Smith, the captain pointed out that it cost from \$2.50 to \$3 a bale to ship cotton from Towson landing to New Orleans, while from Fort Smith to the same destination the charge was \$1 to \$1.50 per bale. Ten steamers reached Fort Smith for everyone that tied up at Towson landing. Steamers drawing from 8 to 9 feet had reached Fort Smith from New Orleans and Cincinnati. During the past year, the steamer Don, which drew 9 feet, had docked at Fort Smith on three occasions. At the same time, no vessel with a draft of more than 4½ feet had ever reached Towson landing.

80

Nor could the proponents for establishing a depot at Towson landing use the argument of supply and demand to explain why it cost less to ship to and from Fort Smith. A large quantity of cotton was grown on both banks of the Red above the "rafts" as far as Preston. For each bale of cotton shipped from Fort Smith, 100 were loaded at Towson and the landings above. In addition, Montgomery continued, there was "more wealth and a denser population along the Red" above the "rafts" than there was in and around Fort Smith. It was therefore fair to assume that at least as much merchandize was imported into that region annually as into western Arkansas. Most of the supplies brought into the Red River country above the "rafts" was transported in wagons from Shreveport.

While at the same time, not 1 ton in 5,000 was freighted into Fort Smith on wheeled vehicles.

The question of whether Towson landing or Fort Smith should serve as the depot for supplying the new posts, in Montgomery's opinion became, would "the difference in land transportation compensate for the difference in facilities of water transportation." Captain Montgomery didn't feel it would. It was 263 miles from Towson landing to the Brazos via Preston. From Fort Smith to the crossing of the Brazos by way of Fort Arbuckle was 302 miles. An advantage of 39 miles for Towson landing.

Thus, Montgomery pointed out, the distance wagons would have to haul supplies to the advance posts was slightly in favor of the projected depot on the Red. In his opinion, this wouldn't compensate for the higher cost of the river transportation needed to get the stores to Towson landing. Moreover, this was just the beginning. Consideration should be given to a number of other factors incidental to steamboating on the Red:

The greater risk of losses by accidents of navigation, the greater risk of delays in delivery and consequent embarrassment of the troops to be supplied, and the very probable contingency of having to transport by wagon from Shreveport 125 miles to Towson landing over one of the worst roads in all the South West.

Captain Montgomery was convinced that the establishment of a depot at Towson landing would be attended with no material benefits to the service. At the same time, it would be a needless and wasteful expenditure of public funds. Even worse, it could very possibly involve disastrous losses, and much suffering among the troops dependent on the new depot.

Montgomery reviewed for Thomas' benefit the arguments cited in his letter to General Jesup on June 27, as to why it was impracticable to establish a depot on the Red above Towson landing. Heretofore, he warned, all attempts by private enterprise to open these reaches of the Red to navigation had failed.

Fort Washita had been established and occupied for years. As the Washington people knew, Fort Washita had always been supplied by wagon, either from Fort Towson or Fort Smith. This proved to Montgomery that the Red couldn't be relied on to ship stores to Fort Washita.

As soon as the posts beyond the Brazos had been laid out and Fort Arbuckle completed, the captain felt that there wouldn't be any need to keep garrisons at Forts Washita and Towson. The troops occupying these forts could be thrown forward to reinforce the advance posts. There was at Fort Washita, Montgomery pointed out, a great deal of "material" which could be used in the construction of Fort Arbuckle and the post at the mouth of the Little Washita. Besides, he added, the government would be saved "the great expense of maintaining two Posts now perfectly useless."

Of additional importance to assist the Department in making its decision was the emergence of the northwestern counties of Arkansas and the adjacent ones of Missouri as wheat growing centers. The farmers of this area were sending many wagon loads of wheat and Flour to Fort Smith and Van Buren. Montgomery was satisfied that he could supply the flour required by the troops on the advance line, at much cheaper rates than when the flour had to be purchased at Cincinnati and New Orleans. With the source of supply close at hand, the risk of spoilage would be greatly reduced. Furthermore, the captain continued, the day was not distant when the Commissary Department would be able to secure the pork and bacon needed to feed the troops on the frontier in the Fort Smith and Van Buren markets.

Lieutenant Page, to whom Montgomery had shown Thomas' letter, recalled having discussed the situation at length with the late Colonel Arbuckle. The colonel had said that when the road was completed from Fort Smith to the Brazos, and "a Post established on Red River at the mouth of the Little Washita, it would be more convenient, far more certain, and equally as cheap to the Government to supply the Posts on the Brazos, using the navigation of the Arkansas River." 81

Although Captain Montgomery didn't learn about it for several months, the War Department on July 2 had made an administrative decision which tipped the scales in favor of Colonel Thomas. At that time the boundary between the Seventh and Eighth Military Departments was redefined. The forts being established by the 5th Infantry south of the Red were transferred from the Seventh to the Eighth Military Department, Colonel Persifor F. Smith commanding. In the future, Smith was to see that these posts were supplied.

Lieutenant Page notified Captain Montgomery of this change on November 20. In view of this decision, the captain was to consult the Quartermaster General as to the "disposition of such means of transportation under your control beyond what is actually required for use in this department." Montgomery was to cut to the bone the expenses of the Fort Smith depot and to incur "no expenses beyond what is necessary for the service of the Seventh Department." 82

Montgomery disagreed with the War Department's decision. Before giving up the fight and disposing of the transportation which would now be made surplus, the captain made a final appeal to General Jesup. He argued that the trains operating out of Fort Smith shouldn't be reduced until it was demonstrated that supplies for the 5th Infantry could be delivered by water at the mouth of the Washita.

According to the latest information from Texas, Colonel Smith had located two of the sites to be fortified by the 5th Infantry. The first of these was on the Brazos, near Marcy's crossing, the second was on Clear Fork, 70 miles in advance of the former. Both these posts would have to be supplied from Fort Smith, if it were found impracticable to run steamboats up the Red as high as Preston or the mouth of the Little Washita. Information reaching Montgomery from Preston indicated that forage cost considerable less at Fort Smith than it did on the Red.

Before his death, Colonel Arbuckle had ordered a depot established on the right bank of the Washita near its confluence with the Red. Montgomery believed the colonel had made an error. A train approaching the depot from Fort Smith would first have to ford the Washita. If it were found that the reaches of the Red above Towson landing were

unsatisfactory for steamboating, the money spent erecting this depot would be wasted. Should the experiment prove successful, Montgomery argued, the depot ought to be placed upon the south bank of the Red. 83

Not wishing to oppose a decision made by the Secretary of War and General Scott, Jesup filed Montgomery's letter without drafting a reply.

FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

Chapter XI

Fort Smith as a Depot for Advancing the Frontier

Notes

- 1 Fort Smith Herald, July 13, 1850.
- 2 Ibid., July 20, 1850; Marcy to Adjutant General, Aug. 23, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 3 Fort Smith Herald, Aug. 3, 1850.
- 4 Ibid., Aug. 10, 1850.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid., Aug. 17, 1850.
- 7 Ibid., Aug. 24, 1850.
- 8 Ibid., Sept. 14, 1850; Montgomery to Jesup, Sept. 12, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 9 Fort Smith Herald, Sept. 21, 1850.
- 10 Montgomery to Jesup, Sept. 12, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Oxen to replace the ones that had died were purchased either at Fort Smith or in Sugarloaf valley.
- 11 Montgomery to Jesup, Oct. 4, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). The train had halted at Cache Creek.
- 12 Jesup to Montgomery, Nov. 4, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 13 Montgomery to Jesup, Oct. 7, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 14 Jesup to Montgomery, Nov. 4, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 15 Montgomery to Jesup, Oct. 28, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 16 Montgomery to Flint, Oct. 25, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 17 Flint to Montgomery, Oct. 26, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 18 Montgomery to Jesup, Oct. 28, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Adjutant General To Arbuckle, Feb. 12, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 21 Fort Smith Herald, March 21, 1851; Montgomery to Jesup, Oct. 28, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 22 Fort Smith Herald, Sept. 28, 1850.
- 23 Ibid., Oct. 4, 1850.
- 24 Ibid., Oct. 18 and Nov. 8, 1850.
- 25 Ibid., Nov. 8, 1850.
- 26 Ibid., Nov. 15, 1850.
- 27 Ibid., Nov. 22, 1850.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Ibid., Nov. 29, 1850.
- 30 Ibid., Dec. 6, 1850.
- 31 Montgomery to Jesup, Nov. 10, 1850 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 32 Fort Smith Herald, Dec. 13, 1850.
- 33 Ibid., Jan. 3, 1851.
- 34 Ibid., Jan. 10, 1851.
- 35 Ibid., Jan. 24 and 31, 1851.
- 36 Ibid., Feb. 7, 1851.
- 37 Ibid., Feb. 21, 1851.
- 38 Ibid., March 21, 1851.
- 39 Ibid., April 4, 1852.
- 40 Montgomery to Page, March 25, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 41 Page to Montgomery, March 28, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 42 Montgomery to Jesup, April 22, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 43 Jesup to Montgomery, March 31, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).



- 44 Montgomery to Jesup, April 16, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 45 = Montgomery to Jesup, April 22, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). The reports sent to Washington on April 22 included: the monthly accounts through March 31; the accounts current for the 4th Quarter of 1850; the Return of Property for the 3d Quarter of 1850.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 GO 19, April 11, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Sent). The remaining two companies of the 7th Infantry were to be stationed at Corpus Christi, Texas.
- 48 GO 18, March 31, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Sent).
- 49 Arbuckle to Sibley, April 29, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, Order Book, 7th Military Dept.).
- 50 Hunt to Jesup, May 14, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 51 Montgomery to Hunt, May 4, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 52 Hunt to Jesup, May 14, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Montgomery to Jesup, May 9, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 55 Stanton to Montgomery, June 1, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 56 Stanton to Montgomery, June 2, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 57 Montgomery to Jesup, June 7, 1851; Montgomery to Stanton, June 14, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 58 Inspection Returns for Company F, 7th Infantry, April 30 and June 30, 1851.

- 59 Page to Belknap, June 11, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, Order BK., 7th Military Dept.).
- 60 Montgomery to Stanton, June 14, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 61 Montgomery to Jesup, June 15, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 62 Montgomery to Jesup, June 7, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 63 Montgomery to Jesup, June 20, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 64 Ibid.
- 65 Montgomery to Jesup, June 27, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 66 Poalk to Montgomery, June 28, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). To add emphasis to his remarks, Poalk told of stories carried by the newspapers of Paris, Clarksville, and Preston. According to these, determined efforts were being made by the people of northeast Texas to have a railroad constructed from a point on the Red near the mouth of the Kiamichi to Galveston. If any dependence were to be placed on the Red as a navigable stream, Poalk asked, would such a road be necessary?
- 67 Montgomery to Jesup, June 27, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 68 Ibid.
- 69 Montgomery to Jesup, June 29, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 70 Estimate of "Funds Required for Improvements, Alterations, and Repairs at Fort Smith, During Fiscal Year Ending, June 30, 1852" (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 71 Montgomery to Jesup, July 11, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 72 Page to Gatlin, July 15, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, Order BK., 7th Military Dept.).

- 73 Fort Smith Herald, Sept. 12, 1851.
- 74 Montgomery to Jesup, Sept. 5, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 75 Fort Smith Herald, Sept. 12, 1851.
- 76 Bids submitted to Montgomery, Sept. 1, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 77 Montgomery to Jesup, Sept. 5, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 78 Thomas to Montgomery, Aug. 7, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent). Thomas had been promoted to lieutenant colonel on May 23, 1850.
- 79 Montgomery to QMG, Sept. 15, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). The two steamboats which had reached Fort Washita drew only 3 feet of water when loaded.
- 80 Other large steamers which had reached Fort Smith in the spring of 1851 were: the Phillip Pennywit, the Pontiac, and the Newburgh. The first two of these drew 7 feet and the other 8 feet.
- 81 Montgomery to QMG, Sept. 15, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 82 Page to Montgomery, Nov. 20, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, Order BK., 7th Military Dept.).
- 83 Montgomery to Jesup, Nov. 24, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

Chapter XII

Fort Smith as Depot for the Seventh Department

The late summer of 1851 was hot and dry at Fort Smith. Steamboat traffic on the Arkansas came to a standstill because of low water. Crops failed and with the ensuing scarcity prices zoomed. Bacon sold for 15¢ per pound, while butter when obtainable cost 25¢ a pound. Lard had disappeared from the merchants' shelves. Potatoes (sweet and Irish) brought \$1 per bushel, and flour sold for \$3 per hundredweight. <sup>1</sup>

Captain Sibley and 2d Lieutenant Louis H. Marshall of the 5th Infantry reached the Garrison from Fort Washita on September 26. The captain had returned to get his wife and family, who had remained behind when the regiment had started for Texas. <sup>2</sup>

The day before the two officers' arrival, the weather turned cool. On the night of the 26th, there was a frost. For the next week the days were "pleasantly cool" and dry. The dust was almost intolerable. "Oh!" complained Editor Wheeler "that we could have a little rain." <sup>3</sup>

Toward the end of the second week in October there was a heavy rain. The Arkansas on the 12th rose four or five feet, but by the time the Herald went to press on the 16th, it was falling rapidly. Just a little more rain, the Fort Smithites observed, would have put the river in boating order. <sup>4</sup>

Colonel Henry Wilson of the 7th Infantry reached Fort Smith by stage from Little Rock on November 2. Wilson had been selected by the War Department to replace Colonel Belknap as commander of the Seventh Military Department. The townspeople were delighted to learn that Wilson planned to make his headquarters at the Garrison. <sup>5</sup>

It began raining at Fort Smith on November 7, and continued almost without interruption until the morning of the 12th. The river was rising rapidly when the Herald appeared on the streets two days later. Taking cognizance of the amount of precipitation which had fallen, the Fort Smithites expressed hope that the Arkansas would soon be navigable for steamboats. <sup>6</sup>

Once again, the people were disappointed, the river fell before any steamboats were able to take advantage of the rise. At the end of November, the weather turned dry and cold, while the Arkansas was "as low as it has been at any time during this season." <sup>7</sup>

Prices of meat, dairy products, and potatoes, continued very high. Pork sold for 5 and 6¢ a pound, butter from 25 to 37½¢ per pound, potatoes for \$1 a bushel, lard for 16 to 20¢ per pound, and chickens 16 to 20¢ a pound. To avoid what they considered exorbitant prices, many of the Fort Smithites were sending to Cincinnati for pork and bacon. <sup>8</sup>

Colonel Wilson received orders during the week from the War Department to transfer the headquarters of the 7th Regiment and the Seventh Military Department to Fort Gibson. This news came as a surprise to both the community and the army officers.

Editor Wheeler protested bitterly that Fort Smith had been department headquarters for years. It was connected with the other posts in the department by roads, planned to facilitate "easy & speedy communications." During the period when the Arkansas was navigable for steamboats, Fort Smith was "the highest point where boats regularly land."

Citing an argument he used at the time the troops were pulled out of Fort Smith in July of 1850, the editor wrote, "The quarters for accommodation of the Commanding Officer and all other officers connected with the department and for the accommodation of troops, the storing of supplies, both for the Quarter Master's & Commissary

departments, are unsurpassed in any part of the U. S." Furthermore, there was a tri-weekly mail service connecting Fort Smith with points to the south and east, while once a week mail went to Fort Towson. To Wheeler these were advantages of the utmost importance to a department commander. He believed that someone in the War Department must have lost sight of them.

Scarcely any of these advantages would be enjoyed at Fort Gibson, since that post was "out of the way, being 60 miles in the interior of the Indian country." The buildings at Fort Gibson were rundown, and almost all the mail destined for that post had to pass through Fort Smith.

Before having issued the order to transfer Seventh Department Headquarters, Wheeler felt the "Adjutant General should have looked at all these things, consulted the convenience, the economy, and the advantages of keeping headquarters, at this place, where it properly belongs."<sup>9</sup>

6 Having learned that the reason behind the scheduled move was to place the headquarters as near as possible to the land of the Comanches, Wheeler placed a satirical article in the Herald for December 26. According to the editor, his old Cherokee friend Head Thrower had remarked that in this case the headquarters ought to be removed to Fort Arbuckle. If so it would:

save the government a good deal because all the soldiers & horses would be brought into requisition to carry expresses, as it as he thinks the soldiers have not enough to do as they are only now and then are to be seen with a gun on his shoulder, marching backward & forward on a little path. He says Fort Gibson will not do, it is too near the state line, and too far from the Ingins [sic].<sup>10</sup>

Communications between Fort Smith and Washington were too slow to have any immediate effect. Colonel Wilson on December 27 left for Fort Gibson. In his brief stay at the Garrison, the colonel had made many friends. The Fort Smithites hoped that the order transferring

department headquarters would soon be rescinded, and they would "have the pleasure of seeing the Colonel at this post again." Lieutenant Page was ill and didn't accompany the colonel to Fort Gibson. As soon as he had recovered, the adjutant planned to rejoin Colonel Wilson. <sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, Captain William Chapman of the 5th Infantry had reached Fort Smith on December 5. The captain had with him three officers and 210 recruits destined to reinforce the 5th Infantry on the Brazos. After drawing supplies and resting for several days, Chapman's column on the 11th resumed the march. <sup>12</sup>

Lieutenant Burns, his family and Captain Sibley's wife and children, accompanied Chapman's command. Captain Sibley planned to follow in several days. <sup>13</sup>

Paymaster Gaines received orders at this time to report to Washington for a new assignment. His replacement, Major Robert B. Reynold reached Fort Smith before Gaines departed. <sup>14</sup>

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Captain Montgomery on October 4 had mailed to his Washington office, a report listing the amount of money disbursed for construction during the fiscal year which ended on June 30. Six thousand two hundred and sixteen dollars had been spent rebuilding the "Soldiers' Quarters." Except for three projects, the barracks had been completed. Scheduled to be completed during the year were: the painting and plastering, the laying of a portion of the attic floor, and a brick floor in one of the basements. When finished, the barracks would consist of two rooms 56 by 30 feet, with corresponding basements and attic rooms.

A new corn crib had been erected at a cost of \$300.

Three hundred and fifty-two dollars had been spent fixing up the Officers' Quarters. According to Captain Montgomery these had never been properly completed. The lower galleries were without ceilings, while the windows lacked shutters. The two buildings used as officers' quarters each contained four apartments of four rooms. Each block had two basement rooms (19 by 16 feet) which were used as kitchens.

Because of the greatly increased responsibilities which had resulted from supplying the new posts, the commissary people found themselves cramped. A temporary shed would be built against the southeast wall of the fort. Captain Montgomery believed the increased space would take considerable pressure off the Subsistence Department.

To keep in repair the large number of wagons operated by the Quartermaster's Department required the services of a wheelwright. A shop for the wheelwright would have to be erected. (See Plan & Elevation of Wheelwright Shop prepared by Captain Montgomery.)

Captain Montgomery calculated that he would need \$2,640 to undertake the projected projects. An estimate of the cost of materials and labor for "improvements, alterations, & repairs at Fort Smith" was attached to the captain's communication.

Before bringing his letter to a close, Montgomery gave a brief description of the condition and the use to which several of the public buildings at the fort were being put. The building occupied by the commissary department had a basement room 44 by 43 feet. This space was used for a storehouse. The first floor of the structure which had corresponding dimensions was used as offices by the commissary and paymaster people.

There were two stables on the post. Both buildings were 136 by 37½ feet. The blacksmith shop consisted of two "log pens" 18 by 18 feet, with a 12 foot passage between. 15

Montgomery was confronted by a number of minor problems when he prepared to forward his accounts and returns for the 4th Quarter of 1851 to General Jesup. Since department headquarters had been transferred to Fort Gibson, Colonel Wilson was not available to countersign the "Report of Persons and Articles Hired." If Jesup wished, the captain would forward a duplicate copy to Fort Gibson for the colonel's signature. Captain Gatlin had been so ill that it was January 9 before he was able to sit up long enough to examine the "Muster Roll of Extra Duty Men." To make matters worse, Montgomery's clerk had also been indisposed.



1851  
1852

The train which had been used to support the advance of the 5th Infantry had returned from Texas. After talking with the wagon master, Montgomery found that the two new posts in Texas were on a line with Forts Arbuckle and Smith. According to the latest information, the fort which Colonel Smith proposed to locate at the mouth of the Little Washita in the spring would be on the "same line."

Once again, Montgomery advised Jesup that the establishment of these posts made Fort Washita superfluous. Because of its location, it could not be used as a depot, while Fort Arbuckle had now become the key post in that section of the Indian Territory. Fort Towson, he continued, had "long since ceased to be of any military value." The troops which garrisoned Forts Towson and Washita could, in Montgomery's opinion, be more usefully employed in erecting and holding the projected fort on the Little Washita. 16

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January 1852 was unusually severe on the Arkansas frontier. The cold weather caused a rapid fall in the stage of the Arkansas. By the end of the second week of the new year, the river at Fort Smith didn't contain enough water for the "smallest boats."

On the 12th, there was a "miniature snow storm of a few minutes duration, covering the ground with snow." Within a short time the clouds had cleared, and the wind picked up. As the north wind increased in violence, it turned bitterly cold. The next day was freezing cold and windy. Chunks of ice began to drift by Belle Point. The weather moderated on the 16th and 17th. Most of the Fort Smithites and the soldiers believed the worst was over.

Along toward evening on January 17, a northeast wind sprang up. Three to four inches of snow fell. Sunday, the 18th, found the wind swinging around to the north and increasing in intensity. During the night, the mercury fell to zero. In the morning, the river was filled with floating ice. Below the town, the ice gorged, water was backed up to a depth of two or three feet. The mouth of the Poteau was frozen over on the morning of the 20th. A number of people went skating.

Opposite the town, the Arkansas "stood like an eddy -- below, a short distance the river was frozen across, and stopped up by a gorge." The cold spell loosened its grip on the area on Wednesday. Until the gorge broke on Friday, there was danger of a flood as the water backed up. As soon as the ice gave way, the water receded rapidly. 17

By the end of January, the river was "almost as low as it has been this season." Steamboats at its present stage were unable to reach Fort Smith.

Unlike January, February brought mild, spring like weather. In fact, Editor Wheeler complained on the 7th that for two or three days it had been "too warm for comfort." The river rose. Soon there was five feet of water in the channel. During the second week of the month, four steamboats (the J. H. Harris, the Umpire No. 2, the Trustee, and the Gen. Shields) tied up at Fort Smith. 18

It is not known precisely what effect the outcry of the Fort Smithites had on the Washington bureaucrats, but the War Department soon reversed itself. Orders were issued for Colonel Wilson to return the headquarters of the Seventh Military Department and the 7th Regiment to Fort Smith. Colonel Wilson and Lieutenant Page returned to the Garrison on February 5. Informing his readers of what had happened, Editor Wheeler crowed, "we know we are right, and that nature has given us advantages, we do not intend tamely, to submit to being robbed of those rights, and our priviledges, benefits &c., to be turned over to another." 19

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About the middle of January, Captain Montgomery complained of his sight being impared. He reported to Acting Assistant Surgeon N. Spring. The surgeon diagnosed his trouble as conjunctivitis. Montgomery was placed on sick report and confined to a darkroom until the inflammation cleared.

When February 1 arrived, the captain began to fret. He knew that reports and accounts were due. Montgomery recalled that a year before, Jesup had severely reprimanded him for not posting these documents on

time. Montgomery on the 6th had Spring notify the general of his illness and the reason that the January reports would be delayed. <sup>20</sup>

Although the Quartermaster General had authorized the purchase of 64 shutters, Captain Gatlin began to worry as the months passed and none were installed. He knew that if he didn't take action to jack up Captain Montgomery, hot weather would arrive and there wouldn't be any shutters. A letter calling this matter to General Jesup's attention was written by the commandant on February 13. To wait until Congress passed the Department's appropriation bill, would in all likelihood mean another summer without blinds. Gatlin wanted Montgomery given permission to send at once to Cincinnati for them.

As justification for his request, Gatlin pointed out that the windows in the Officers' Quarters were very large. Shutters were absolutely necessary to exclude the heat during the hot summer months. Gatlin knew of no other post in the United States where the temperature ranged any higher than at Fort Smith. <sup>21</sup>

Colonel Wilson affixed his comments to Gatlin's letter. The commander of the Seventh Department argued that the addition of "Venetian shutters" to the windows of the Officers' Quarters "would add greatly to the health and comfort of the occupants with very little expense to the Government." <sup>22</sup>

On March 3, Jesup approved Gatlin's request. <sup>23</sup>

Upon returning to duty in late February, Montgomery found that his work had piled up. The subsistence stores requisitioned to carry the Fort Arbuckle garrison through 1852 had reached Fort Smith by boat. As soon as they had been inventoried, Lieutenant Page called on Captain Montgomery to have the requisite transportation prepared to haul them to their destination.

Montgomery at the same time had received instructions from Deputy Quartermaster Hunt at New Orleans. All the transportation, except such as was necessary for supplying the posts in the Seventh Department, was to be turned over to the post quartermaster at Preston, Texas. The number of wagons and teams allotted to the department were:

Fort Towson, two wagons with mule teams; Fort Washita, two wagons with mule teams; Fort Arbuckle, four wagons with mule teams; the Fort Smith depot, five wagons with one ox and four teams of mules. <sup>24</sup>

The steamer Jefferson which was bound from New Orleans to Fort Smith had been wrecked near Dardanelle. Since the vessel was known to be carrying government property, Colonel Wilson ordered Montgomery to the scene. Montgomery was to take charge of salvage operations. Reaching Dardanelle, the captain found very little of the boat protruding above the muddy water of the Arkansas. Nevertheless, Montgomery was able to rescue the bills of lading and most of the public stores. Questioning the survivors, he learned that the bales of clothing, and the camp and garrison equipage which the Jefferson carried were stored in the hold. Montgomery believed that when the river fell, these items might be saved. When he left the scene of the wreck to return to Fort Smith, the cabin-deck was still submerged.

Notifying Colonel Wilson of these developments, Montgomery suggested a guard be dispatched from Fort Smith to keep the wreck from being plundered. The soldiers would also be able to recover the public property from the hold.

Montgomery, when he forwarded his reports and accounts for the first two months of the year on March 20, attributed the delay to his visit to the Jefferson. <sup>25</sup>

Colonel Wilson on May 24 assumed additional duties. Henceforth, besides being department and regimental commander, he would be commandant of the Fort Smith Garrison.

It was not long before Colonel Hunt's directive to transfer transportation surplus above the department's needs to the quartermaster at Preston began to cause problems. Just as Montgomery had forecast, the scheme to send supplies up the Red to the posts in the southern part of the Indian Territory and West Texas encountered difficulties. In desperation, the subsistence stores for Forts Towson and Arbuckle were rushed to Fort Smith for distribution. It was the

end of September before the vessels with these supplies tied up at Fort Smith. Since only enough wagons and teams had been retained to take care of the needs of the Fort Smith garrison, Montgomery was compelled to contract for the necessary transportation to haul the supplies to their destinations. 26

Firewood had become exceedingly scarce on the reservation, so Colonel Wilson decided that it would be more economical in the long run to contract for its delivery, rather than send out wood gathering parties. The colonel instructed Montgomery to contract for the delivery of 420 cords of fuel. In response to an advertisement in the Fort Smith Herald, three men submitted bids. Examining the proposals on October 4, Montgomery found that Charles E. Pleasants was willing to supply the Garrison with the stipulated amount of wood for \$1.14 3/4 per cord. He was accordingly awarded the contract. 27

Major George Andrews assumed command of the Seventh Military Department and the post at Fort Smith on October 14, Colonel Wilson having received a 6-months leave of absence. On doing so, the major discovered that Ordnance Sergeant William H. Niles was living in an "old Hovel," which had been built some 20 years before, and was reputed to be "a part of 'Old Fort Smith, on the Poteau River.'"

When he examined the cabin, Andrews reported that at any minute he expected to see it tumble down on the heads of the sergeant and his family. Andrews was of the opinion that the government should provide Sergeant Niles with suitable quarters. At the moment, the army didn't have quarters for the families of the enlisted men either on or off the post. He had plans and estimates prepared. (See Plan, Materials, and Cost of Building of House for Ordnance Sergeant at Fort Smith, Ark.) These, along with a covering letter, were forwarded to Chief of Ordnance Colonel H. K. Craig on November 11.

Andrews hoped Craig might be able to talk General Jesup into agreeing to use Quartermaster's Department funds for this purpose.

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If he had the money and the means, Andrews added, he would cheerfully see that quarters for the sergeant were erected. But, with one greatly understrength company this was impossible. Should the application be granted, the major promised to assign prisoners and off duty men to assist with the construction. 28

Craig was unsuccessful in his efforts to prevail on Jesup to divert any of his funds for the building of quarters for Sergeant Niles' family.

A detachment of recruits which had been assigned to the 7th Infantry reached Fort Smith at the beginning of the fourth week of November. The men who were allotted to the companies stationed at Fort Gibson would take up the march for the advance post on the 26th. Before doing so, the officer in charge, Lieutenant L. A. Williams was to see that the detachment was supplied with rations to last for six days. Captain Montgomery would provide the necessary transportation for the recruits, and see that the loaded wagons crossed the Arkansas in advance of the column's scheduled departure from the Garrison. 29

\* \* \*

Not all the staff officers assigned to the Seventh Military Department were as anxious to expand their scope of responsibility as Montgomery. Paymaster Reynolds was shocked by a letter which he opened on March 9, 1853, from Paymaster General Benjamin F. Larned. He found that Larned had attached the two posts (Camp Belknap and Phantom Hill) which the 5th Infantry had established in West Texas to his zone of responsibility.

Acknowledging his superior's letter, Reynolds announced he would "endeavor to fulfill the duties." At the same time, he pointed out that the posts on the Brazos and Clear Fork were much farther from Fort Washita than they were from Fort Graham, a post in the Eighth Department. Reynolds argued that it would be more convenient for the paymaster in that department to service these posts, than one stationed at Fort Smith. According to the mileage table, it was 440

miles from Fort Smith to Phantom Hill, whereas it was only 100 miles from Fort Graham to Camp Belknap and even less to Phantom Hill. Moreover, travel from Fort Smith to the Brazos would be very difficult, because of the many streams and rivers which had to be crossed. At this time of the year, many of these watercourses were running bank full. 30

Larned saw the logic behind Reynolds arguments and approved the transfer of the pay accounts for the troops at Camp Belknap and Phantom Hill from the Seventh to the Eighth Military Departments. Even so, Major Reynolds had to make a number of trips in the discharge of his duties. In a one five month period, February to June 1853, he drew \$282.20 from Captain Montgomery to cover the cost of two trips to Fort Gibson, one to Little Rock, and one to New Orleans. 31

\* \* \*

Colonel Wilson returned from his leave on May 13 and resumed command of the department, the 7th Infantry, and the Garrison from Major Andrews. 32

Six days after Wilson reached the Garrison, Captain Seneca G. Simmons of the 7th Infantry reached Fort Smith with a detachment of recruits slated to reinforce the 5th Infantry in Texas. At first, it had been intended for the replacements to camp on Massard Prairie, while awaiting further orders. Wilson changed his mind at the last moment, and Captain Simmons was directed to have his troops bivouac on Cedar Prairie. 33

As soon as Captain Montgomery had organized a train to accompany the recruits, they took up the march for Camp Belknap. At the forks of the Texas road and the road leading to the Preston Depot, Captain Simmons met Major Joseph H. La Motte of the 5th Infantry. After being relieved by Major La Motte of the responsibility for looking after the replacements, Captain Simmons proceeded to Fort Arbuckle. 34

Captain Henry J. Hunt, the commander of Battery M, 2d Light Artillery, received an important telegram on May 25 from the Adjutant General. At this time, the battery was stationed at Fort Moultrie, South Carolina, where the men manned big seacoast guns. Hunt was to see that his battery was held ready to proceed to Fort Washita.

By June 15 preparations had been completed; the artillerists embarked at Charleston on the steamer Isabel. Three days later, the Isabel docked at La Habana. Hunt and his men transferred to the Empire City. Leaving La Habana on June 20, the troop transport anchored off New Orleans on the 23d. After spending five days at the New Orleans Barracks, Battery M took passage on the Franklin Pierce. The cannoneers disembarked at Fort Smith on July 9.

Since the unit was to be converted to horse artillery, it would have to remain at the Garrison while horses and harness were being purchased. On July 31, the battery received its guns, cassions, limbers, and traveling forage. 35

Meanwhile, Colonel Wilson had been ordered to Tampa Bay, Florida, to sit on a court martial. Major Andrews was on furlough, so Wilson issued orders on July 18 that the next senior officer in the department, Captain Theophilus H. Holmes, would be in charge during his absence. Since Holmes was commandant at Fort Arbuckle, it would be several weeks before he could wrap up his affairs and come to Fort Smith. Until Holmes arrived, Hunt would be in charge at the Garrison. 36

Captain Holmes reached Fort Smith on August 7 and relieved Hunt. Nine days later, Captain Hunt's cannoneers hitched up their teams. At a command from the captain, Battery M moved out, taking the road across the Poteau which led to Fort Washita. Since most of the men were unfamiliar with their duties as horse artillerists and the teams were new, Captain Hunt had to hold down the pace of the march. Consequently, it was the end of the month before the battery reached its new station. 37

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Bids for supplying the Garrison with 75 tons of hay were advertised in the Herald in June. Captain Montgomery on the 27th opened and examined the six proposals which had been submitted. G. B. May's offer to furnish hay for \$5.64 a ton was accepted by the Quartermaster. 38

Captain Montgomery mailed his reports and accounts for the 2d Quarter of 1853 to the Quartermaster General on July 15. A "Report



of the Capacity and Condition of the Barracks and Quarters," and a statement of "Additional Alterations and Repairs Required," together with an estimate of their cost were attached. (See Appendix;P)

A covering letter, justifying the construction work projected in Fiscal Year 1854 accompanied the reports. Montgomery urged that he be allowed to employ a blacksmith and a wheelwright. If he were, the captain observed, funds spent for shoeing the public animals and repairing the wagons would be greatly reduced. Past experiences had satisfied Montgomery that there was more than enough public work at Fort Smith to keep a blacksmith and a wheelwright "busy throughout the year." Since on many occasions there weren't any men skilled at these trades assigned to the Garrison, it would be necessary to hire citizens. If a wheelwright were allowed, a shop would have to be built.

To keep the public animals from straying and to protect the stand of timber which was beginning to have some commercial value, Montgomery championed the construction of a post and rail fence along the eastern boundary of the reservation. This fence would front the town and the Fort Towson road.

The wooden steps in front of the Officers' Quarters had become so rotten, they were unsafe. Estimates of the cost to have them replaced with new wooden or stone steps had been made. Montgomery recommended that General Jesup allow him to do the work in stone, because in the long run it would be more economical. Furthermore, stone steps would blend with the style and character of the buildings.

Material (slate and nails) were on hand for roofing the magazine. The only expense for this work, would be the wages paid to the mechanics.

If the Quartermaster General decided to sanction the construction of a new hospital, Montgomery thought a very "commodious one" might be erected by using the walls of the southeast blockhouse as a base. The walls of this unfinished bastion rose about five and one-half feet above the ground. 39

In September, Montgomery, as was customary, advertised for and received bids for supplying the post with corn and oats for the following year. The captain on the 17th signed contracts with John Gardner and Dennis Trammell. Gardner, whose bid of 37¢ per bushel was low, agreed to furnish 4,000 bushels of corn, while Trammell's price of 40¢ a bushel won him the right to sell the government 1,500 bushels of oats. <sup>40</sup>

Montgomery forwarded on October 11 his accounts for the 3d Quarter to Washington. On doing so, he enclosed the contracts and copies of the bonds filed by Gardner and Trammell. <sup>41</sup>

During October proposals were received for supplying the Garrison with 400 cords of wood. Upon opening the bids on the 20th, Montgomery was perplexed by what he found. Since the government would have to haul the wood, the distances involved entered the picture. He decided to refer the matter to the post commander, Captain Holmes. In view of the great differences in the distance the wood would have to be transported, Holmes deemed a bid of \$1.50 per cord submitted by Edward Corcorane as the most advantageous. Three other individuals had filed lower bids, but their wood lots were three miles from the fort, while Corcorane's was only one mile. <sup>42</sup>

Montgomery posted copies of Corcorane's contract and bond, at the same time as he mailed his records for October to the Washington office. <sup>43</sup>

Captain Montgomery spent a good part of September and October reconnoitering the country between Fort Smith and Fort Arbuckle. His mission was to mark out a shorter and better road connecting the depot with the advance post. The captain was assisted in the work by troops from Fort Arbuckle. <sup>44</sup>

On October 14, Major Andrews returned from leave. Since Colonel Wilson was still absent, Andrews relieved Captain Holmes of his duties as commander of the Seventh Department and 7th Regiment. Holmes would continue as commandant of the Fort Smith garrison. <sup>45</sup>

Toward the end of the month, orders reached Major Andrews from Washington to send all of Company F, 7th Infantry, except the men detailed as teamsters, to Fort Washita. Andrews issued instructions designed to implement this directive on the 29th. Lieutenant Joseph H. Potter was to command Company F on the march. Since Fort Smith would no longer be a station for troops, the regimental band was to accompany Company F. Captain Montgomery was alerted to provide the necessary transportation to facilitate the movement.

Upon the departure of the soldiers, the commander at Fort Smith (Lieutenant Franklin Gardner) was to place at the disposal of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs "such of the public quarters" as the superintendent might "deem necessary for office purposes." 46

Before the change of station could be effected, fresh instructions reached Major Andrews from the Adjutant General. The order sending Company F to Fort Washita was suspended.

A detachment of recruits for the 7th Infantry reached Fort Smith on November 17. After the replacements for Company F had fallen out, the rest of the newcomers were marched to Massard Prairie and encamped. Captain Montgomery was given the task of seeing the recruits were supplied with "fuel &c.," prior to their departure for the advance posts. 47

Colonel Wilson returned to Fort Smith from Florida on November 26. (The colonel had taken sick at Pensacola and had never reached Tampa Bay.) No time was lost by Wilson in assuming the duties currently being discharged by Major Andrews and Lieutenant Gardner. No longer would Wilson be department commander, however. The Adjutant General on October 31 had issued a General Order merging the Seventh Department into the Department of the West.

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Since the acquisition of California, the Fort Smithites and millions of their fellow citizens had been calling for a transcontinental railroad. This clamor had been brought to a boiling point by the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill. More significant though, the Union of the 1850's seemed to be bursting at the seams; the veterans of the Mexican War were demanding land in the West; it was trumpeted in the press that it was the country's "manifest destiny" to carry the blessings

of "American civilization" to the unenlightened. Except for the Gadsden Purchase, the continental boundaries of the United States, as we had known them up to the admission of Alaska, had been rounded out. A "great national highway" across the continent as suggested by Senator Thomas Hart Benton was mandatory.

While the agitation took form in countless meetings and resolutions, it reached tangible proportions in the Congress by the Act of March 3, 1853.<sup>48</sup> This enactment granted \$150,000 to the Secretary of War for use by the Corps of Topographical Engineers in making surveys to ascertain the best railroad route from the Mississippi River to the Pacific.

Jefferson Davis, who became President Franklin Pierce's Secretary of War on March 7, 1853, implemented this act by ordering three surveys. The Northern route, along the valleys of the Missouri and Columbia rivers, was to be surveyed by Isaac I. Stevens. J. W. Gunnison would direct the reconnaissance of the central route along the 38th and 39th parallels, which would be designed as the shortest road to San Francisco. The southern route which would follow the 35th Parallel was assigned to the party commanded by Lieutenant Amiel W. Whipple. The Secretary allocated \$40,000 of the appropriation to cover the southern survey.<sup>49</sup>

Whipple, who had spent the last four years as assistant with the Mexican Boundary Survey, had just completed his report when he was given his new assignment in April 1853. The lieutenant wasted no time in organizing his party. In addition to Whipple, the group consisted of 12 scientists and engineers.<sup>50</sup>

The lieutenant, having organized his party, left Washington for Philadelphia on May 30. Several of the men (George G. Garner, N. H. Hutton, and Walter Jones) bid goodbye to Whipple at the relay house. They would rejoin the party at Napoleon, Arkansas.

At Philadelphia, Whipple picked up "the various instruments and articles for which he had made arrangements." On June 4 Whipple "took cars for Pittsburgh." The night of the 5th was spent in Pittsburgh at

the Monongahala Hotel. Monday, June 6, found Whipple and one of his men (Assistant Meteorologist and Surveyor John P. Sherburne) en route to Cincinnati by way of Columbus. As a result of missing their connections in Columbus, it was the evening of June 7 before the two men reached Cincinnati. <sup>51</sup>

Whipple found several members of his party awaiting him. One week was spent in Cincinnati, making purchases, attending to last minute details, and waiting for additional members of the expedition to assemble.

The lieutenant had booked passage for himself and ten members of his party aboard the steamer Midas, which was scheduled to sail on the 14th. An unlooked for delay occurred, and the Midas didn't cast off until the next day. The run down the Ohio and Mississippi to Napoleon, with stops at Louisville and Cairo, took eight days. Whipple and his companions disembarked at the little Arkansas river town on June 23.

It was two days before the first steamer, the Gov. Meigs, engaged in the Arkansas River trade tied up at Napoleon. Whipple and his men lost no time in going aboard the Gov. Meigs. The steamer cast off at 2:30 p.m. on the 25th. The Gov. Meigs reached Little Rock on June 26, a pleasant Sunday morning. Lieutenant Whipple observed that Little Rock was "a charming place situated on a Bluff 300 miles by river, 150 by land from Napoleon." <sup>52</sup>

The lieutenant and his party remained at Little Rock until the next to last day of the month. Before leaving the Arkansas capital, Whipple employed eight teamsters, four cooks, and four herders. These men would be paid \$25 per month. Passage for the explorers was secured on the Empire No. 3.

At 6 p.m. on the 29th, the Empire No. 3 sailed for Fort Smith. The vessel arrived at Van Buren about noon on July 2. Whipple took advantage of the opportunity to visit the town. It was nearly sunset when the master of the Empire No. 3 gave several blasts on the whistle, and the steamer pulled away from the landing. An hour's run up the Arkansas brought the Empire No. 3 to Fort Smith. Disembarking, Whipple went to the Rogers Hotel. <sup>53</sup>

The next day being Sunday, the lieutenant went to church, where he "heard a miserable sermon." During the afternoon, Whipple called on

Colonel Wilson at the Garrison.

Whipple's party remained at Fort Smith from July 2-15. The lieutenant used this time to complete preparations for the difficult work ahead. On Independence Day, he visited with Captain Montgomery and his wife. Two days later, the captain and his wife entertained Whipple and a dozen other at dinner. When not socializing, Whipple arranged his vouchers, paid off the master of the Umpire No. 3, employed another cook, and practiced with the Gambey Sextant. <sup>54</sup>

H. B. Mollhausen, the expedition's Topographer and Artist, took advantage of the stay at Fort Smith to prepare two interesting drawings of the Garrison. One of these was of the Garrison and the town from the north bank of the Arkansas River, the other was of the expedition's camp (which had been dubbed Camp Wilson) with the Garrison in the background. <sup>55</sup>

Whipple on July 15 settled his accounts with Captain Montgomery by "paying for mules &c. and receipting for other public property, tents wagons &c." Moving out, the party was ferried across the Poteau. Since the surveying was going very slow, Whipple sent word ahead for the wagon master to stop and set up camp at the first house, Ring's. Between 4 and 5 p.m., the party ceased surveying for the day and started for camp. In going up a hill, the "carretela" was run against a stump, and the cross piece of the tongue broken. Leaving two men with the "carretela," Whipple and the rest of his surveying team pushed on afoot. When they reached Ring's, they found no camp. It now commenced to rain very hard. A two and one-half mile walk through a terrible storm brought the surveyors to camp. The first thing that Whipple did was to discharge the wagon master for disobedience to orders. <sup>56</sup>

The party remained in camp on Saturday, the 16th. Several men were detailed to take the "carretela" to Fort Smith and have it repaired. At the same time, Whipple sent Montgomery a requisition for a "small field piece." It was Tuesday before the party was ready to push on. On the evening of the 19th, the surveyors camped at Scullyville. <sup>57</sup>

As Lieutenant Whipple and his people pushed on into the Indian Territory, they kept close to the route pioneered by Captain Marcy's 1849 Expedition. It took the surveyors, the better part of seven weeks to work their way across the Indian Territory. On September 6, they passed through the Antelope Hills, Nightfall found the party camped one-half mile south of the Canadian. The next day, Lieutenant Whipple and his men crossed into Texas. <sup>58</sup>

Whipple and his men continued working on the survey, which terminated at San Diego, until 1856. The formal report of the Whipple Expedition was published by the 33d Congress, and attracted great attention both in the United States and Europe.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter XIII

#### Fort Smith as Depot for the Seventh Department

##### Notes

- 1 Fort Smith Herald, Oct. 3, 1851.
- 2 Ibid., Sept. 26, 1851.
- 3 Ibid., Oct. 3, 1851.
- 4 Ibid., Oct. 17, 1851.
- 5 Ibid., Nov. 7, 1851. Colonel Belknap had died on November 10, 1851, at Preston, Texas. Wilson, a veteran of the War of 1812 and the Mexican War, had joined the army as ensign in the 32d Infantry on May 17, 1813. He had been promoted colonel and assigned to the command of the 7th Infantry on June 11, 1851. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 1046.
- 6 Fort Smith Herald, Nov. 14, 1851.
- 7 Ibid., Dec. 5, 1851.
- 8 Ibid., Dec. 12, 1851.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid., Dec. 26, 1851.
- 11 Ibid., Jan. 2, 1852.
- 12 Ibid., Dec. 12, 1851.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid. Robert Reynolds of Tennessee had joined the army as a captain in the Quartermaster's Department on June 26, 1846. On March 3, 1847, he was made additional paymaster. Reynolds had been major and paymaster since March 2, 1849. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 825.
- 15 Montgomery to Jesup, Oct. 4, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).



- 16 Montgomery to Jesup, Jan. 9, 1851 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 17 Fort Smith Herald, Jan. 17, 24, and 31, 1852.
- 18 Ibid., Jan. 31, Feb. 7 and 14, 1852.
- 19 Ibid., Feb. 7 and 14, 1852.
- 20 Spring to Jesup, Feb. 6, 1852 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 21 Gatlin to Jesup, Feb. 13, 1852 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Page to Montgomery, Feb. 23, 1852 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, Order Bk. 7th Military Dept.).
- 25 Montgomery to Jesup, March 20, 1852 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 26 Montgomery to Jesup, Oct. 2, 1852 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Among the commissary stores destined for Fort Towson were: 67 barrels of pork and 3 barrels of vinegar.
- 27 Ibid.; Montgomery to Jesup, Oct. 23, 1852 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 28 Andrews to Craig, Nov. 11, 1852 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Sergeant Niles was the only man permanently assigned to Fort Smith. In the absence of the troops, he would become responsible for all the public property which was left behind. At the time, there were only 8 or 10 men in Company F, Seventh Infantry on duty at the Fort. Major Andrews of the District of Columbia had graduated from West Point as a 2d lieutenant in the 6th Infantry on July 1, 1823. He had been made major of the 7th Infantry on August 14, 1848. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 166.

- 29 Andrews to Lynde, Nov. 24, 1852 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, Order Bk., 7th Military Dept.).
- 30 Reynolds to Larned, March 9, 1853 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 31 Reynolds to Larned, July 28, 1852 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 32 Page to Andrews, May 13, 1853 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, Order Bk., 7th Military Dept.).
- 33 Page to Simmons, May 7 and 20, 1853 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, Order Bk., 7th Military Dept.). Simmons had been advanced to the rank of captain on February 16, 1847. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 887.
- 34 Page to Simmons, May 20, 1853 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, Order Bk., 7th Military Dept.).
- 35 Inspection Returns, Battery M, 2d Artillery, June 30 and Aug. 31, 1853. Henry J. Hunt had graduated from West Point in the Class of 1839, as a 2d lieutenant in the 2d artillery. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 556.
- 36 Page to Holmes, July 18, 1853 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, Order Bk., 7th Military Dept.). Theophilus H. Holmes of North Carolina had graduated from the U. S. Military Academy on July 1, 1839, as brevet 2d lieutenant in the 7th Infantry. Holmes had been a captain since December 9, 1839. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 539.
- 37 Inspection Returns, Battery M, 2d Artillery, Aug. 31, 1853.
- 38 List of Bids Examined, June 27, 1853 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 39 Montgomery to Jesup, July 15, 1853 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 40 List of Bids Examined, Sept. 17, 1853 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 41 Montgomery to Jesup, Oct. 10, 1853 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 42 List of Bids Examined, Oct. 20, 1853; Gardner to Montgomery, Oct. 20, 1853 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 43 Montgomery to Jesup, Nov. 4, 1853 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 44 Page to Montgomery, Sept. 7, 1853 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, Order Bk., 7th Military Dept.).
- 45 Page to Holmes, Oct. 14, 1853 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, Order Bk., 7th Military Dept.).
- 46 Page to Gardner, Oct. 29, 1853 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, Order Bk., 7th Military Dept.). Joseph Potter of New Hampshire had graduated from West Point in the Class of 1843 as brevet 2d lieutenant in the 1st Infantry. Potter was promoted to 2d lieutenant and transferred to the 7th Infantry on October 21, 1845. Franklin Gardner of Iowa, a classmate of Potter's, had joined the 7th Infantry as brevet 2d lieutenant. Gardner had been 1st lieutenant and regimental adjutant since July 14, 1847. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 445, 801.
- 47 Page to Montgomery, Nov. 17, 1853 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, Order Bk., 7th Military Dept.).
- 48 10 U. S. Statutes, 219.
- 49 Amiel W. Whipple of Massachusetts had graduated from the U. S. Military Academy in the Class of 1841. Commissioned a 2d lieutenant, Whipple was assigned to the 1st Artillery; three months later, he transferred to the Topographical Engineers. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 1025.
- 50 Chronicles of Oklahoma, "The Journal of Lieutenant A. W. Whipple," edited by Muriel H. Wright and George H. Shirk, Vol. XXVII, No. 3, pp. 237-238.
- 51 Ibid., 239-240.
- 52 Ibid., 240-242.
- 53 Ibid., 242-245.
- 54 Ibid., 246-247.
- 55 Ibid., 233. The originals of the two Møllhausen drawing of Fort Smith are in the "Whipple Collection," at the Oklahoma Historical Society.

- 56 Ibid., 247. A "carretela" is a long, low cart, usually two-wheeled.
- 57 Ibid., 247-248.
- 58 Ibid., 282.

## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

## Chapter XIII

## Low Water on the Arkansas Plagues the Army

Captain Samuel G. French of the Quartermaster's Department had spent several years on duty at Washington. The captain, who had been married the previous year, grew tired of "hotel life." During the spring of 1854, he formally asked General Jesup to assign him to a Western post. Jesup was agreeable; French was ordered to proceed to Fort Smith. French was accompanied to his new station by his wife. <sup>1</sup>

Captain French relieved Captain Montgomery on May 1 as post and depot quartermaster. As soon as he had turned over his duties to French, Montgomery left for his new station at Tampa Bay, Florida.

Meanwhile, the War Department had issued a General Order directing Colonel Wilson to pull the troops out of Forts Smith and Towson. Company F, 7th Infantry on evacuating Fort Smith would take post at Fort Gibson, while the troops from Fort Towson were to join the garrison at Fort Arbuckle. Fort Towson was to be abandoned by the military and turned over to the Department of the Interior for Indian purposes. <sup>2</sup>

Except for a small detachment which would be left at Fort Smith, the troops of Company F marched for Fort Gibson on May 8. The new quartermaster had spent many hours seeing that the transfer was effected without any hitches.

With the departure of Company F, Colonel Wilson assigned Captain French additional duties. As if his quartermaster's duties weren't enough, French would be acting department commissary of subsistence.

A requisition for subsistence stores arrived from Fort Arbuckle. Upon making inquiries, French learned that for the past several years

it had been the practice to purchase foodstuffs in the Fort Smith and Van Buren markets rather than ship them in from New Orleans. Realizing that his was more economical, French resolved to continue the policy.

Upon taking inventory, French discovered that there were only six wagons and teams assigned to his department. A letter was written to General Jesup. French asked that "seven wagons with harness & appointments" be rushed to Fort Smith from the Philadelphia Depot.

As air of urgency was added to the situation when a letter sent by General Jesup on April 28 reached Captain French. Opening the dispatch on May 16, French learned that he was required to furnish the transportation required by Captain Marcy for an expedition into north Texas. French shook his head. At the moment, he didn't have any wagons — four of his had left for Fort Washita with supplies, while the other two were en route to Fort Gibson with Company F.

In 1853, the Texas legislature had passed an act authorizing the Federal government to have "selected and surveyed, from any vacant lands within the state, reservations amounting to twelve leagues, for the exclusive use of the Indians inhabiting that Territory."

The War Department had selected Captain Marcy to go out into the unsettled parts of Texas. In conjunction with Major Neighbors, special agent for the Texas Indians, the captain was to locate and survey the proposed reservations.

The steamer Mattie Wayne docked at Fort Smith on May 17. Captain Marcy was one of the passengers. Disembarking, Marcy headed for French's office. He told the quartermaster that he would need 9 wagons, 27 yoke of oxen, 11 horses, and 2 mules to carry out his mission.

French replied that he didn't have the desired transportation. To equip Marcy's expedition, French would need \$5,000.

A request was forwarded to General Jesup, asking that \$5,000 be deposited with the Treasurer of the United States subject to

French's draft. French proposed to use this money to outfit Marcy's command.

As soon as this money was made available, French procured the necessary transportation. Accompanied by a suitable escort, Captain Marcy proceeded to Fort Belknap, where he was joined by Major Neighbors. 3

News that the soldiers had been withdrawn from Fort Smith caused a demand by another government agency for the use of some of the vacant buildings at the Garrison. Representative A. B. Greenwood of Arkansas promptly addressed a letter to Secretary of War Davis on this subject. Writing from the House of Representatives on June 2, Greenwood informed Davis that he had received a letter from Superintendent of Indian Affairs at Fort Smith, Thomas J. Drew.

The agent had notified Greenwood that the troops were to be pulled out of Fort Smith, and in the future the post would be used as a depot. For some time, the Indian agent had been allowed office space at the fort by the Secretary of War. Now that most of the soldiers were gone, Drew wanted to know if his congressman could make arrangements for him to have quarters for his family on the reservation. 4

Davis referred the congressman's letter to General Jesup. After studying the matter, the Quartermaster General replied on June 4. The fort being unoccupied, Jesup could perceive of no objections to Drew occupying one of the quarters at Fort Smith. This was provided that the Indian agent kept the quarters in good condition. He would be required to remove from the reservation whenever the Secretary of War deemed the post was needed for military purposes. 5

When the correspondence was returned to his desk with Jesup's comments, Davis asked that French be notified to place one of the "buildings at Fort Smith" at Drew's disposal. 6

Evidently, the various Washington departments didn't keep each other informed. On June 20, Secretary of the Interior R. W. McClelland wrote Secretary Davis on the same subject. McClelland announced that

he had been asked by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to request Davis to assign Drew quarters for his family at Fort Smith. <sup>7</sup>

Davis answered McClelland on the 23d. He pointed out, Fort Smith hadn't been abandoned. The troops had been withdrawn, and in the future the post would be used as a depot. The Secretary of War advised McClelland that on June 9, in accordance with a request from Congressman Greenwood, he had issued instructions assigning Drew "one of the houses at Fort Smith." <sup>8</sup>

Captain French on June 22 signed a contract with Cantrell and Bolling to furnish his department with 60 tons of hay at \$6.24 per ton. Only three bids had been received in response to the advertisements which French had inserted in the Fort Smith Herald. When he forwarded the contract and bond to Washington the next day, French pointed out that the hay should be sufficient, although it was about one-half what the regulations called for. This was possible, he observed, because the public livestock was allowed to graze from early spring to late autumn. <sup>9</sup>

On July 7, French forwarded to the Quartermaster General the required annual survey of the public buildings at the Garrison. <sup>10</sup>  
(See Appendix Q)

Early in July, First Lieutenant John Pope of the Topographical Engineers reached Fort Smith. Pope's detachment had been reconnoitering the country between Dona Ana and Preston, Texas, since October 1853. The lieutenant had with his party 2 wagons and 18 mules belonging to his corps which he wished to dispose of. French, knowing that mules had become very scarce and commanded from \$90 to \$175 in the Fort Smith area, offered Pope \$1,000 for the wagons and mules. Pope was agreeable, and turned the vehicles and animals over to the Quartermaster's Department before starting for Washington.

This was a fortunate move on French's part. Within a few days, Lieutenant Louis H. Marshall called on French to provide transportation for a patrol which he planned to lead from Fort Washita to New Mexico. At the same time, the commandant at Fort Washita, Major Andrews, called for wagons and mules. In view of these developments, French considered



his course of action in making the purchases of Lieutenant Pope vindicated. He would have been hard pressed to have met these requisitions without the additional mules. 11

General Jesup, on learning what French had done, gave his approval.

Within less than two weeks, French received a note from Major Andrews. Attached was a request for four wagons, mules, and hargess to be used by Lieutenant Marshall. Andrews advised French that he had sought to obtain the "wagons &c." in the Fort Washita area. The major estimated that this transportation would cost the department at least \$4,420. Even so, only one wagon had been forthcoming.

French was not greatly concerned with the correspondence from Andrews. Because of French's foresight in purchasing the transportation from Pope, he had been able to take care of Marshall's needs. Having discussed the situation with Marshall, French satisfied him that two wagons would be sufficient for his party. These wagons, along with others, had been loaded with stores and dispatched to Fort Washita. Lieutenant Marshall and his people had left Fort Smith en route for the same destination several days later. Marshall, upon his arrival at Fort Washita, would find the wagons, two six-mule teams, and two extra saddle mules. After signing receipts, Marshall would be ready to start for New Mexico.

These arrangements made by the capable French enabled Andrew to cancel his call for four wagons, teams, and harness. 12

French on August 24 addressed a call for funds to General Jesup. Five thousand dollars were needed to take care of the Department's operating expenses, and another \$4,000 to purchase grain to carry the public livestock through the approaching winter. A directive issued by General Jesup on May 29 worried French. In accordance with a plan advocated by the Secretary of the Treasury, it had been determined to allow the Receiver of Public Money at Little Rock to "receive public moneys from Disbursing Officers on deposit to their credit and pay out the same on their checks." French hoped Jesup wouldn't do this.

It would be far more convenient, French wrote, for the Quartermaster General to deposit the \$9,000 requested at New Orleans. If the funds were sent to Little Rock, French would have to travel there in person to receive them from the Treasury agent. Such a trip was time consuming and expensive. Whereas, if the money were sent to New Orleans or an eastern bank, checks or drafts could be mailed to his office. <sup>13</sup>

The Quartermaster General agreed with French. Orders were issued for \$9,000 to be deposited at New Orleans. <sup>14</sup>

A heavy rain had drenched Crawford County on June 9. This was the last precipitation, the people of the region were to see for months. Day after day, the sun beat down unmercifully on the fields. The drought and heat seared the wheat and caused the corn stalks to wither. By the fourth week in August, it was apparent to Captain French that western Arkansas and southwestern Missouri would not produce enough corn and wheat for "home consumption." Already, corn was selling for \$1.25 per bushel and a 100 pound sack of flour for \$7.

French knew the drought would interfere with his plans to purchase corn to carry his Department through the winter. He didn't believe he could obtain more than 1,000 bushels in any single neighborhood. Consequently, when he advertised, he called for bids on 1,000 bushels lots. <sup>15</sup>

On October 9, French opened and studied the proposals submitted by eight people to deliver 1,000 bushels of corn "in the ear-slip shucked" to the Garrison. George Gross' bid of \$1.15 and Abel Warren's of \$1.33 per bushel were accepted. Seven days later, the captain gave the contract for furnishing the Department with 2,000 bushels of corn on the ear to John Gardner. Gardner's bid was \$1.09½ per bushel. The contracts and performance bonds were mailed to Washington on October 24. <sup>16</sup>

Captain French on November 17 sent to the Quartermaster General a long list of stores which he wished to stock. (See Appendix R)

The captain thought most of the items could be purchased in New Orleans during late autumn or early winter. They were to be held in readiness to be shipped to Fort Smith by steamer and stored. French planned to use these stores to meet the regular requisitions of the post quartermasters in the posts dependent on Fort Smith. While admitting that most of the supplies could be bought locally, French preferred for Jesup to make the arrangements.

French called the general's attention to several of the items. The number of horseshoes, 4,000, could be dispensed with, provided no light artillery was ordered to the Arkansas frontier. The iron safe was destined for Fort Washita.

The wagons should be shipped from Philadelphia without delay. As soon as they arrived, those for which there was no immediate call would be disassembled and stored. French wanted the "harness and appointments" sent with the vehicles.

If the New Orleans Quartermaster's Depot would embark the stores on an Arkansas River steamer, rather than transshipping by way of Napoleon, French believed, transportation costs could sharply be reduced. 17

A contract was signed with A. J. Blomberg on November 25 to furnish the post 150 cords of wood. The successful bidder was to receive \$2.50 a cord. French was elated at the favorable terms. When he mailed the agreement to Jesup, he announced his intention, if Blomberg were agreeable, to increase the amount of wood called for so as to run the Department through the winter of 1855-56. 18

Deputy Quartermaster General Thomas acknowledged the receipt of Blomberg's contract. Thomas cautioned French to wait until June to contract for his fuel for the next Fiscal Year. 19

The War Department had determined to dispose of Fort Towson, so Captain French was ordered to hasten there "to examine the public buildings and sell them." French, at the time these instructions were received, was at Fort Washita. Captain Braxton Bragg who commanded at Fort Washita saw that French was given a mule "with a hard saddle."

With no escort, French started for Fort Towson. Not a solitary person was seen on the 40-mile ride to the Boggy. After spending the night with an Indian family, the captain reached Fort Towson the next day. There he was met by a committee of wealthy and well-educated Choctaws and their agent, Colonel Douglas Cooper. Accompanied by the committee, French examined the public buildings. He concluded that it would be folly for the government to "sell or destroy such property, for it would bring nothing." French accordingly recommended that they be deeded to the Choctaws for an academy. <sup>20</sup>

Subsequently, Secretary of War Jefferson Davis approved French's suggestion.

French, following his return to Fort Smith, received a letter from General Jesup, drafted on the last day of November. Reading the message, he found that he was to turn over to Choctaw Agent Cooper the public buildings at Fort Towson for use by the Department of the Interior. The War Department would reserve the right to utilize such structures as might be wanted for storehouses "for Military supplies," should the exigencies of the service make it necessary. In addition, nothing should be done to depossess the people who had built homes on the reservation while it was occupied by the army. If necessary, French was authorized to go to Fort Towson to make the transfer in person. A copy of this dispatch was sent to Cooper. <sup>21</sup>

Since he had just returned from Fort Towson, French decided to forego another trip at this time. Cooper accordingly accepted for the use of the Department of the Interior the public buildings at Fort Towson. When he inspected them, the Choctaw Agent found many in a state of ruin. All, he wrote French on January 10, were in a state of "rapid decay." If the War Department ever contemplated using any of the structures as warehouses, Cooper suggested that steps ought to be initiated to secure their prompt repair. Buildings fixed up by the Department of the Interior would be retained for its use, Cooper added. <sup>22</sup>

1854  
1855

Copies of his correspondence with Agent Cooper were mailed by French to General Jesup on January 20, 1855. <sup>23</sup>

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The practice followed by the New Orleans Quartermaster's Depot since French's arrival at Fort Smith was to ship to T. A. Kendig & Co. of Napoleon. This firm owned a wharfboat and functioned as a receiving and forwarding agent.

At the beginning of the second week of October 1854, the steamer Gov. Meigs tied up to the wharfboat. Government supplies, along with those destined for a number of Fort Smith merchants, were loaded aboard the steamer. On October 9, the Gov. Meigs cast off. She encountered low water on the Arkansas. A snag was rammed; some of the stores were damaged before the leak could be sealed.

The first week of February 1855 found the steamer stranded 60 miles below Fort Smith. There, she lay to, awaiting a rise.

Meanwhile, Captain French had received a copy of the bill of lading for the stores forwarded by Kendig & Co. When he examined the document, French was shocked at the price charged by the firm. The government had been asked to pay \$1.62½ per hundredweight for the freight shipped on the Gov. Meigs. Discussing the situation with the Fort Smith and Van Buren merchants, the captain learned that they were expected to pay \$1 for each 100 pounds of merchandise. <sup>24</sup>

French's blood was boiling when he wrote a note to Kendig & Co. on the afternoon of February 7. He told the firm what he had learned of their system of charging two prices. Unless compelled to do so, French wouldn't pay more than the usual freight on stores forwarded to Fort Smith. Hereafter, Kendig & Co. would "ship no more public property" to him, unless instructed to do so. <sup>25</sup>

Letters were sent by French to General Jesup and Lieutenant Colonel Daniel D. Tompkins of the New Orleans depot. Tompkins was requested not to ship any more stores to Kendig & Co. According to French, this was not the first time they had "proved faithless

agents to the U. States." Besides telling Jesup what had occurred, French wanted the general to sanction his refusal to pay the receiving merchants more than the customary charge.

The quartermaster's stores which he had ordered for the posts dependent on Fort Smith had been shipped from New Orleans on an Arkansas packet. Consequently, there wouldn't be any worry about transshipping at Napoleon. If all went well, French informed Jesup, the vessel carrying this valuable cargo should reach Fort Smith about the same time as the Gov. Meigs.

As commissary officer, French had already forwarded the subsistence stores for the 2d Quarter of 1855 to Forts Gibson, Washita, and Arbuckle. 26

General Jesup agreed with French that "the rates of freight on government Stores should be the same as those upon similar stores for merchants and private individuals transported on the same trip, and no more." French was authorized to pay no more, or else refer the account to Colonel Tompkins for settlement. 27

At the same time, the general wrote Colonel Tompkins. If what French had reported were true, Tompkins was to "place no more public stores in hands of Kendig & Co." Moreover, Jesup wanted to know why stores had been transhipped at Napoleon in the first place. If the season were unfavorable for sending supplies through from New Orleans to Fort Smith, wasn't it better to retain them at the "Crescent City"? he inquired. In the future, Jesup wished Tompkins to be better informed as to the honesty of the forwarding agents employed. 28

\* \* \*

The Arkansas didn't rise as expected during the late fall and winter. March 1855 arrived and still no steamboats reached Fort Smith. Commissary stores (coffee, rice, beans, soap, candles, and vinegar) which had to be shipped in began to run short at the posts dependent on the Fort Smith depot. Captain French was rebuffed when he tried to purchase these items in Fort Smith, Van Buren, and Little Rock.

1855

He learned that the steamer New World, loaded with the badly needed foodstuffs, had reached Napoleon from New Orleans in January. Unable to enter the Arkansas, she had tied up. A letter was written by French to Captain McClelland of the vessel to send 12,000 pounds of coffee, rice, beans, soap, candles, and vinegar up the White River to Aberdeen. If the master would do this, French would consider it the same as delivering the stores to Fort Smith.

Accompanied by a train of five wagons, French started for Aberdeen. The soldiers, on their trip down the Arkansas valley, found the country "exhausted." During much of the trip, the detachment found it impossible to obtain grain or fodder for their animals. Many of the people had very little to eat. Even at Aberdeen, where boats arrived almost daily, there was no grain. At the livery stable, French obtained less than 100 pounds of hay for the teams.

The train had reached Aberdeen on the evening of March 16. French was delighted to discover that McClelland had carried out his instructions. As soon as the wagons were loaded with rations, they started back to Fort Smith.

Having received permission to take a 30-day furlough, French didn't return to his station at this time. Before catching a boat for Natchez, the captain addressed a note to General Jesup. He told of the emergency which had compelled him to take a train 220 miles to pick up supplies. The stores which he was sending back would tide the troops until the Arkansas rose and boats could ascend to Fort Smith.

While en route to Natchez, French stopped briefly at Napoleon. A detachment of recruits commanded by Captain Gatlin and slated to join the 7th Infantry were stranded at the mouth of the Arkansas. The master of the New World was instructed to see that the soldiers were given rations.

Unable to attend to all his private business in the time allotted, French asked for a 20-day extension of his leave. In granting the

request, Colonel Wilson observed that he hoped French's absence from Fort Smith wouldn't occasion any delay in the procurement of transportation to facilitate the advance of the companies of the 7th Infantry scheduled to move out onto the plains. 30

French disembarked at Napoleon from a Mississippi River steamer at the end of the first week of May. The captain expected to take passage on a vessel bound for Fort Smith, but he was disappointed to learn that the Arkansas had not risen as anticipated. If he were to return to his station, it would have to be by stage. Before leaving Napoleon, French engaged a keelboat to ascend the Arkansas to where the New World was aground. She would take aboard about 60 tons of commissary stores and endeavor to get up the river to Fort Smith.

Since he hadn't calculated on having to return overland, French didn't reach Fort Smith until May 22, seven days after his furlough had expired. 31

Regimental headquarters having been transferred to Fort Gibson on May 5, French found Lieutenant Potter in charge at the Garrison on his return. Potter informed French that in addition to his other duties, the captain would be post commander.

Questioning Potter, French learned that no steamer had tied up at Fort Smith during his absence. To supply the troops dependent on Fort Smith, two wagons had been sent down the Arkansas to the point near its mouth where the supply boats were aground. Besides being expensive, this was a time consuming operation. On several occasions, there had been calls for rations by the post commissaries which Potter had been unable to meet from the stock on hand in the Fort Smith commissary storehouse. When this happened, purchases had been made from the Fort Smith and Van Buran merchants. To meet these bills, as well as to enable him to make additional purchases, French, following his return, wrote Commissary-General Gibson. The captain asked Colonel Gibson to send him "two Treasury drafts of two thousand dollars each...." 32



French had been told by Lieutenant Potter that on May 15, 12 wagons had left Fort Smith. This train would rendezvous with the steamers New World and Zulu, and pick up Captain Gatlin and his recruits. Potter was told of the chartering of the keelboat. The keelboat, French said, should reach the fort by June 7. If this experiment were successful, French estimated that keelboats could be employed to bring up supplies from the grounded vessels for half of what it cost to haul by wagon.

On May 25, a train of five wagons were started for the Gov. Meigs. They were to pick up clothing and ordnance to be issued to the companies of the 7th Infantry at Fort Gibson. These units were scheduled to start for the plains as soon as the recruits arrived. 33

French discovered that the voluminous amount of book work required to carry out his duties as post commissary, in addition to those of depot quartermaster, was too much. He saw that he was having to devote more and more time to receiving and issuing rations. Low water on the Arkansas had added to his burden. It had been almost a year since a steamboat had reached Fort Smith. Because of these circumstances, French had to allot more and more of his time to procuring foodstuffs locally. Writing to Commissary-General Gibson on June 9, French asked that he be allowed to employ an assistant.

Besides serving as clerk, the man could be used to advantage in the warehouse. He would be required to refill the pork barrels with brine, repair the sugar and flour barrels, and tend to odd jobs. French announced that he would prefer "a trusty & competent non-com. officer" to a hired man. But, he added, if this were impossible, he wished authority to employ someone. 34

Gibson agreed that French was entitled to a clerk. A note to this effect was attached to French's letter, when it was referred to Secretary of War Davis on June 30. Two days later, Davis approved the request. 35

Along toward the middle of June, Captain Gatlin and his recruits reached Fort Smith. Several of the soldiers were sick so they were

left at Fort Smith, when the rest of the detachment marched for Fort Gibson. Private Arnold Stub, who was slated to join Company I, 7th Infantry at Fort Belknap, was left to help care for the hospitalized men. Examining Stub's service record, French was delighted to discover that he had been a clerk before enlisting. French wrote Colonel Gibson. He inquired into the possibility of getting the Adjutant General to transfer Stub to the Fort Smith commissary department, as soon as all the recruits currently on sick report had returned to duty. 36

M. W. Bunch on June 16 was awarded a contract for furnishing the post quartermaster 100 tons of hay. Of the eight proposals submitted in response to French's advertisement in the Herald, Bunch's bid of \$6.97 a ton was low. 37

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A slight rise on the Arkansas enabled Captain McClelland to refloat the New World. Although soundings indicated that unless the river rose another foot, there would be bars which the New World couldn't cross, McClelland determined to take a chance. Progress was agonizingly slow as the vessel worked her way up river. The captain and the crew were disappointed when the river crested and dropped. Unable to cross Jackos' Bar, the New World tied up at Richland, about ten miles below Pine Bluff.

From Richland on June 22, Captain McClelland wrote French of his predicament. He wished advice as to what he ought to do. Having collided with drifting debris, the New World had sprung several leaks. Experience had taught McClelland that when the river started to clear, seepage would increase. It would then be next to impossible to keep the vessel afloat.

In the event of continued low water, McClelland wished French's permission to store the cargo in a "good safe warehouse." He would return to Napoleon with his boat. After having her caulked, the captain would standby to take advantage of the next rise.

Some decision would have to be made promptly, the captain warned. Already most of the vinegar, despite his best efforts, had leaked. At the same time, the brine had continued to "run off the Pork." Within another month, the captain forecast, all the flour would turn sour. 38

French received McClelland's letter on June 29. He agreed with the master of the New World as to the wisdom of discharging the stores. Before taking any action, however, he would have to check with Washington. Writing Commissary-General Gibson, French informed him that the steamer had been on the river almost six months. Out of the 975 barrels of flour which had been shipped from New Orleans, 126 had been consumed by Captain Gatlin's recruits, while another 75 were on a keelboat en route to Fort Smith.

French was satisfied it would cost \$10 per barrel to haul the flour from Richland to the depot. At present, "good new flour" could be secured at Fort Smith for an identical price. With the new wheat crop being harvested, the price could be expected to drop to \$7 a barrel. Since it was unlikely that the New World or any other steamer would reach Fort Smith before winter, French suggested that Captain McClelland take the flour back to New Orleans or to some intermediate point to be disposed of. It might be possible, French added, for one of his agents to have the flour transported to Little Rock in wagons and sold. At this time, flour was bringing \$10 to \$11 a barrel in the capital.

Pending the receipt of instructions from Gibson on the disposition of the flour, French gave Captain McClelland permission to store the rest of the commissary supplies. A train was started for Richland to bring up the sugar, coffee, rice, soap, vinegar and candles. As soon as additional wagons became available, they were to be sent after the pork. 39

Captain McClelland reached Fort Smith by stage on July 10. He brought additional bad news. He informed French that the New World

was stranded. It would be impossible, McClelland remarked, to get his vessel out of the Arkansas "empty much less with the flour." French was shocked. Unless he took prompt action, the flour would probably spoil. Simultaneously, he didn't want to put himself in position to be censured. Since it seemed impossible to transport the flour to Fort Smith, French told McClelland to sell 300 barrels, provided he could get \$10 a barrel. <sup>40</sup>

French was satisfied that he would be able to transport in wagons "the sugar, coffee, Rice &c." The flour, since it could be bought locally, caused no problem, but the captain hadn't been able to secure any "salt provisions" for the troops dependent on the depot. Arrangements would just have to be made for getting the salt pork from the New World to Fort Smith. This would be a problem, because all the wagons in the area were engaged in bringing up goods for the merchants. Besides being scarce, land transportation was very dear. If he hauled the pork from Richland, it would cost \$5 per hundredweight. French was "naturally hesitant" about incurring an expense of \$30,000, to perform a service which should be done by the "steamer for nothing, could she get up" to Fort Smith.

To make matters more difficult, the post commissaries at Forts Arbuckle, Gibson, and Washita were crying for rations. French knew that while he could assign more wagons to bringing up the lighter stores, it would be impossible to haul the salt pork with his available resources. Consequently, he decided to send Captain McClelland up the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. If need be, the captain was authorized to go as far as Pittsburgh. McClelland was to purchase the first "good light Keel Boat." On doing so, he was to keep certain considerations in mind. Besides being able to navigate the Arkansas at low water, the vessel would have to be capable of carrying 30 to 40 tons of freight. Tow lines, anchors, and poles for the use of the crew would be secured. After obtaining the keelboat, McClelland was to bring her to Napoleon, where he would receive additional instructions. <sup>41</sup>

Information concerning the steps Captain French had taken to meet the crisis reached and were approved by General Jesup on July 31. As he wrote French, the general relied on him "to have the troops Supplied, notwithstanding the difficulties of the navigation of Red and Arkansas rivers, with everything depending upon us, whether the Articles be such as we Supply, or merely transport."

The general also asked French at this time for a detailed report concerning "the difficulties of the navigation on the Arkansas frontier for the past year." French was to provide a minute statement of the measures he had taken to cope with the situation. In addition, the captain was to give his thoughts on ways of improving navigation on the Arkansas and Red. Jesup wished to know if French were satisfied that a fleet of keelboats was the answer. These vessels could be kept on hand as a precautionary measure, and used when the stage of the rivers was too low for steamboats. At the same time, they could be employed to supply posts above those "usually attained by Steamers." <sup>42</sup>

Word reached Captain French on July 17, ten days after McClelland had started for the Ohio, that Colonel Tompkins was planning to send him another large shipment of flour from New Orleans. French lost no time in letting the commander of the big New Orleans depot know his thoughts. He repeated his argument: it would cost \$10 a barrel to get flour to Fort Smith from New Orleans, while it could be purchased locally for \$8 a barrel. In French's opinion, Tompkins might as well "ship coals to Newcastle" as forward flour to Fort Smith. Because of the low stage of the Arkansas, French recommended that rations, other than flour, be shipped up the Arkansas to the Fort Smith depot in keelboats of between "30 & 40 tons burden." <sup>43</sup>

French's letter was read by Colonel Tompkins on July 29. Since it referred to commissary matters, Tompkins handed it to Captain Charles L. Kilburn. The captain was in charge of purchasing rations for all the posts in the old Seventh Military Department. At this time,

Kilburn had on his desk requisitions from the post commissaries at Forts Arbuckle, Gibson, and Washita for more than 1,000 barrels of flour.

Taking cognizance of what French had to say, Kilburn thought that in the future it might be a good idea for the Commissary Department to follow the scheme worked out by the Quartermaster people. Fort Smith would be designated a commissary depot, and the post commanders would direct their requests to that point rather than New Orleans. In addition, he continued, if a commissary depot were established at Fort Smith, the officer in charge would have "the advantage of that market as well as New Orleans."

With the commissary depot for the Seventh Military Department at Fort Smith, Kilburn wrote Colonel Gibson, Captain French would be able to make a more efficient use of his trains. Accurate data from the department commissary officer as to the amount of space required would be at hand. Since it cost \$4 per hundredweight to ship freight from New Orleans to Fort Smith, there would be a considerable saving on any subsistence stores purchased locally. If his suggestion were adopted by the Department, Kilburn felt it would be wise to send the requisitions which he had on hand to Captain French. Knowing local conditions, French could consolidate and strike out the stores which could be furnished "to good advantage from Fort Smith." A call for the remainder would be made on the New Orleans depot. <sup>44</sup>

Colonel Gibson was impressed with Kilburn's thoughts on the subject. Writing to Captain French on August 7, the Commissary-General explained and announced that he was adopting Kilburn's plan. Letters were being addressed, ordering the post commissaries at Forts Gibson, Washita, and Arbuckle to send their "requisitions for provisions direct to the A. C. S. at Fort Smith, Arkansas." French on the receipt of these lists would adopt the procedures outlined by Kilburn for supplying the dependent posts in the department with subsistence stores. <sup>45</sup>

\* \* \*

Reaching Pittsburgh during the first week of August, Captain McClelland purchased two keelboats on the 7th. As soon as crews had been secured, McClelland started back down the Ohio and Mississippi. At Napoleon, McClelland found a note from French, directing him to enter the Arkansas. The keelboats tied up alongside the New World on August 23. Forty-two tons of commissary supplies, mostly salt pork, were loaded. Captain McClelland was delighted to discover that the two vessels when freighted drew only 10 inches.

It took the keelboat crews one day less than a calendar month to pole their vessels up the Arkansas to Fort Smith. After discharging their cargos, the two keelboats started down river. According to Captain McClelland, another trip would suffice to bring up all the freight, except the flour, from the New World.

Since the keelboats had left on their first trip to Fort Smith, the river had risen slightly. Taking advantage of this situation, the New World crossed Jackos' Bar and ascended the Arkansas to Little Rock. Unless there were some unlooked for difficulties, McClelland believed the keelboats could make the run to Little Rock, pick up the supplies, and be back at Fort Smith by the end of October.

Captain French was enthusiastic over his decision to employ keelboats to shift the stores from the New World to the depot. Except for a few bales of clothing, these were the first stores to reach Fort Smith by water in 16 months.

He informed General Jesup on September 28 that it would have cost more to haul the 42 tons of stores to the post in wagons, than had been paid for the "boats" and their operation. Thus, in one trip up the Arkansas, the keelboats had paid for themselves. As French explained, it had cost \$5 a hundredweight to transport supplies from the New World when she was stranded at Richland. Whether the rations were brought all the way in wagons, or taken

by keelboat to Little Rock and brought the rest of the way on flatboats, the price hadn't varied more than a few cents. <sup>46</sup>

Upon Captain McClelland's departure for Pittsburgh, French had sent his clerk, Mr. Willard, down to the New World to try and push the sale of the flour. French was not too confident of the results. In recent weeks with the new wheat crop moving to the mills, the price of flour on the Little Rock market had fallen rapidly. Prior to Willard's arrival at Richland, McClelland had sold 60 barrels to local planters for \$10 a barrel. Willard was unable to make any additional sales.

When the clerk returned and reported the failure of his efforts, French had advertisements placed in the Arkansas Gazette. At first, the captain asked \$8 per barrel.

On August 30, French received an inquiry from a Fayetteville merchant, who wanted to know if the army were interested in purchasing 1,000 barrels of flour at \$6 a unit delivered at Fort Smith. This caused French to write the editor of the Gazette, asking him to change the price asked for the government flour aboard the New World to \$6.50 per barrel.

Even so, French encountered sales resistance as the price of flour on the Little Rock market continued to tumble. He was unable to find many buyers. All the flour which couldn't be disposed of was shipped to New Orleans and sold to starch manufacturers. <sup>47</sup>

The masters of the supply boats, French notified Jesup, were in no way responsible for their failure to reach Fort Smith. At no time in the past 16 months had there been sufficient water. In places, the Arkansas wasn't 30 feet wide, while some of the bars were covered by only six inches of water. For seven years, 1847-1854, the Arkansas had been navigable for small Mississippi steamers as high as Fort Smith an average of six months out of every year. With the acquisition of the two keelboats, French didn't apprehend any future difficulty in supplying the posts dependent on Fort Smith. <sup>48</sup>



An important message drafted by General Jesup on June 29 reached Captain French on the evening of July 16. Six companies of the 2d Dragoons had been ordered to rendezvous at Fort Belknap. As soon as the units were ready they were to proceed to Fort Riley. The clashes between the pro- and anti-slavery factions in Kansas Territory had compelled the War Department to take this action. Major Enoch Steen would be in charge of the movement. French was to make arrangements to expedite the march of the Dragoons. If he believed the movement could be facilitated by his presence, French was authorized to accompany the column on its march into "Bleeding Kansas."<sup>49</sup>

The next morning, French sent an express rider thundering off for Fort Belknap to communicate with Major Steen. At the same time, an agent headed for southern Missouri, his task was to purchase mules, wagons, and harness. Before the courier had returned from Texas, 152 mules and 21 wagons had been bought by the Quartermaster's Department for Steen's command.

When the rider reached Fort Smith, he carried dispatches addressed to Captain French from Colonel P. F. Smith, Major Enoch Steen, and Captain Hamilton W. Merrill. French was distressed to learn on scanning the correspondence that Steen already had enough transportation to take care of his needs. Thinking that perhaps Major Steen might change his mind, French employed the wagons to haul supplies to the advance posts. In case of a sudden call for transportation, the train could be started for Fort Belknap on short notice.<sup>50</sup>

A large number of proposals had been received by Captain French in response to an advertisement placed in the Fort Smith Herald, announcing that bids to supply the Quartermaster's Department with 4,000 bushels of shelled corn and 9,000 bushels of corn on the ear would be received on September 26. Abel Warren, S. B. Bennett,

1855  
1856

G. C. Smith, and R. Stevenson each was given a contract for furnishing 1,000 bushels of shelled corn to be delivered in "good new sacks." The 9,000 bushels of corn on the ear would be purchased from five men (S. B. Bennett, John Gardner, R. Stevenson, S. M. Rutherford, and G. D. May). The price paid for the shelled corn ranged from 53½¢ to 58½¢ per bushel, while the corn on the ear brought from 39¢ to 43¢ a bushel. 51

Lieutenant Potter and Captain French had been classmates at West Point. The two officers spent many of their free hours together during the summer and autumn of 1855. Potter, French recalled, "was a jovial, good fellow, and a wound in his leg" received at the battle of Monterey "made it an excellent indicator of rain, and was used to guide us on hunting expeditions." Partridges were numerous in the area. During the hunting season, Captain French and his wife in their carriage, and Potter on his horse, would ride over the prairies and "have rare sport." The two officers had well-trained dogs and the days at Fort Smith passed pleasantly. 52

Pressure by the Arkansas congressional delagation finally compelled the War Department to yield and order Fort Smith reoccupied. Upon receipt of this information, Colonel Wilson issued instructions pulling Companies B and F, 7th Infantry out of Fort Gibson. The two companies marched from Fort Gibson on December 5 and reached Fort Smith on the 8th. Upon arriving at the Garrison, Captain Gatlin relieved French as post commandant. 53

Captain French, having received his second furlough within the year, left Fort Smith on New Year's Day. To conserve his leave time and reduce expenses, the captain remained on duty until he reached Napoleon. This action was justified by the need to make arrangements to get the remainder of the stranded supplies up to the depot. When his vessel had been unable to ascend the river the previous winter, the master of the Hoses Greenwood had stored his cargo, much of it public property, at Napoleon. 54

The river was frozen, so French, accompanied by a planter from Louisiana, left Fort Smith in an ambulance for Little Rock. It was bitter cold, the thermometer registered 10 degrees below zero. Before reaching the capital, French learned that no steamers could ascend to Little Rock. Turning aside, he proceeded to DeValls Bluff on the White. There, French took passage on the first boat, which the master announced was bound for the Mississippi. The captain promised to land French and his traveling companion at the mouth of the White, where they could catch a down boat.

Near the mouth of the White, the master told French that the wharfboat at Montgomery's Landing had been removed. Consequently, he would carry them up the Mississippi until he encountered a Natchez bound boat. French recalled the ensuing journey as far worse than anything he experienced during the Civil War. According to French:

The wind was blowing violently, and the river full of floating cakes of ice; and when we met a boat, so violent was the wind, it would not answer our hail to stop, and we went on up. In the midst of all this snow, ice, and gale the boat caught fire in the hold, and the flames burst up the hatchways very high. The hatches were soon covered with wet mattresses, steam-driven into the hold, cotton on deck thrown overboard, and the boat landed where the bank was high and the water deep. Baggage and furniture were put on shore, and fires built. Hobs were bored into the hull of the boat, but the cotton on fire could not be extinguished. About dusk the captain announced that he would put the baggage on the boat again and run up the river three miles to a place where he could scuttle her in shoal water and put out the fire. All the passengers walked through the deep snow to the landing above, except one man and his wife, ... [the planter], and myself. It was not pleasant to be on the river in such a gale, and with the boat deck hot from the fires beneath; and when we did land and made fast to a wood barge, the owner, seeing we were on fire, ran out and cut our line with his ax to send us adrift. What a punishment the crew of the steamer gave him for cutting the line!

After what seemed an eternity, an upstream bound steamer stopped and took the crew and passengers aboard and carried them to Helena. Finally, securing booking on a New Orleans packet, French resumed his journey. A brief stop was made at Napoleon, where French signed a contract

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to have the government supplies stored there shipped to Dardanelle by steamer as soon as the ice melted. At Dardanelle, the supplies would be transshipped to Fort Smith on keelboats. <sup>55</sup>

FORT SMITH 1818 - 1871

Chapter XIII

Low Water on the Arkansas Plagues the Army

Notes

- 1 Samuel G. French, Two Wars: An Autobiography of Gen. Samuel G. French (Nashville, 1901), 128. Samuel G. French had graduated from West Point in the Class of 1843, as brevet 2d lieutenant in the 3d Artillery. Promoted rather rapidly, French was commissioned captain in the Quartermaster's Department on January 12, 1848. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 437.
- 2 GO 3, April 7, 1854 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Sent).
- 3 French to Jesup, May 15, 1854 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.); Randolph B. Marcy, Thirty Years of Army Life on the Border (New York, 1866), 146-147.
- 4 Greenwood to Davis, June 2, 1854 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 McClelland to Davis, June 20, 1854 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 8 Davis to McClelland, June 23, 1854 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 9 French to Jesup, June 23, 1854 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 10 French to Jesup, July 7, 1854 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 11 French to Jesup, July 27, 1854 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.); Parker to Bearss, April 15, 1963.

- 12 French to Jesup, Aug. 7, 1854 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 13 French to Jesup, Aug. 24, 1854 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 French to Jesup, Oct. 24, 1854 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 17 French to Jesup, Nov. 17, 1854 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 18 French to Jesup, Dec. 1854 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 19 Thomas to French, Jan. 10, 1854 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 20 French, Two Wars, 129.
- 21 French to Cooper, Dec. 27, 1854 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.); Jesup to French, Nov. 30, 1854 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 22 Cooper to French, Jan. 10, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 23 French to Jesup, Jan. 20, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 24 French to Jesup, Feb. 7, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 25 French to Kendig & Co., Feb. 7, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 26 French to Jesup, Feb. 7, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 27 Jesup to French, March 5, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 28 Jesup to Tompkins, March 5, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).

- 29 French to Jesup, March 17, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). The New World had on board: 542 barrels of pork, 1,125 barrels of flour, about 600 barrels of small rations, and a large amount of quartermaster's property.
- 30 Page to French, Apr. 26, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 31 French to Jesup, May 28 and June 18, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 32 French to Gibson, May 24, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 33 French to Jesup, May 28, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 34 French to Gibson, July 9, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 French to Gibson, June 22, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 37 French to Jesup, June 16, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 38 McClelland to French, June 22, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 39 French to Gibson, June 29, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 40 French to Gibson, July 10, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 41 French to McClelland, July 10, 1855; French to Jesup, July 12, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 42 Jesup to French, July 31, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 43 French to Tompkins, July 17, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 44 Kilburn to Gibson, July 29 and 30, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 45 Gibson to French, Aug. 7, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files ACS, Ltrs. Sent).
- 46 French to Jesup, Sept. 28, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 47 French to Gibson, Aug. 28 and 30, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 48 French to Jesup, Sept. 28, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 49 Jesup to French, June 27, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 50 French to Jesup, Aug. 29, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 51 French to Jesup, Sept. 29, 1855 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Three thousand bushels of corn on the ear were purchased from G. D. May, 2,000 from S. M. Rutherford, and a 1,000 each from S. B. Bennett, John Gardner, and R. Stevenson.
- 52 French, Two Wars, 130.
- 53 Inspection Returns for Companies B and F, 7th Infantry for December 31, 1855.
- 54 French to Jesup, Jan. 18, 1856 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 55 Ibid.; French, Two Wars, 130-131.



## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

## Chapter XIV

## Troubles in Utah Force the Army to Redeploy

Upon Captain French's departure for Natchez, 1st Lieutenant N. Bartlett Pearce assumed the duties as department quartermaster. One of Pearce's first official acts was to sign a contract with Simon Stanton to supply the post with 200 cords of wood. Of the five men who had submitted proposals, Stanton's bid of \$2.40 a cord was low. Pearce forwarded the contract and the abstract of bids to General Jesup's office on January 17, 1856. <sup>1</sup>

The winter of 1855-56 was very severe on the Arkansas frontier. Much snow and rain fell; it looked as if the drought was finally over. As soon as the ice in the Arkansas broke up, the river started to rise rapidly. For the first time since June 1854, the river was navigable. In fact, the Arkansas at Fort Smith was as high as it had been in a number of years.

Cephas Wheeler, who had taken over as the editor of the Herald, reported on March 1 that the river had fallen four or five feet, "but the rains that had fallen within the last week will keep it up so the largest boats can come up at all times." Both the civilians and the army took advantage of the high water to send mountains of supplies up the Arkansas. Steamboats were constantly arriving and departing. <sup>2</sup>

On March 1, it turned cold and there was a late season snow. This cold snap which lasted for a week caused the river to continue falling. When the Herald went to press on the 7th, there was about six feet of water in the channel. Because of the "cold & unpleasant" weather, the farmers had been unable to start their spring plowing; the ground being too "cold & wet" to work, the gardens would be late. <sup>3</sup>

During the second week of March, the Fort Smith weather was very changeable. Snow fell on the 12th, and again on the night of the 14th. <sup>4</sup> The weather now abated. A week before spring officially opened, the days were warm and dry. For the next four weeks, this type of weather prevailed. At the same time, the Arkansas continued to fall. By the last week of March, there was only four feet of water in the channel. Four boats, the White Bluff, the Hickman, the Gipsey, and the Anawan, had tied up at the Fort Smith landing. Before another two weeks had passed, the Arkansas was too low for steamboating. In view of the hot, dry weather, Editor Wheeler concluded that there was "no prospect of a rise." <sup>5</sup>

\* \* \*

Major George C. Hutter, who had replaced Major Reynolds as department paymaster, found that duty on the Arkansas frontier in the winter had its drawbacks. Since the troops in the department were scheduled to be paid every two months, Hutter prepared to leave Fort Smith on February 18 for Forts Arbuckle and Washita. About the time that the major and his escort were getting ready to start, the rain began to pour. People familiar with the region told Hutter that he had better postpone his departure, because it would be impossible to cross the rivers and creeks which would be running bank full.

Hutter waited eight days before starting for the outlying posts. The road was a ribbon of mud; the team was hard put to pull the paymaster's wagon. After going 13 miles, Hutter determined to turn back. It was the evening of February 28, when the paymaster and his exhausted party returned to Fort Smith.

As soon as the roads dried, Hutter intended to make a third attempt to get through to Forts Arbuckle and Washita. <sup>6</sup>

Captain French returned to Fort Smith from Natchez on the steamboat Pelican on March 7. Since he had been named administrator of his mother-in-law's large estate, French had decided to resign from the army. French on March 29 tendered his resignation. French's resignation was accepted by President Pierce to take effect on May 31. While waiting for the War Department to act, French had left Fort Smith and taken up residence on his Deer Creek plantation, several miles east of Greenville, Mississippi. <sup>7</sup>

Heavy rains drenched the middle reaches of the Arkansas during the fourth week of April. The river began rising at Fort Smith on the 27th. From the amount of debris swept down by the current, it was apparent to the Fort Smithites that they were in for "plenty of water." The steamer Anawan, the first vessel to reach Fort Smith in several weeks, tied up at the wharf on the 29th. After discharging her cargo, she cast off for Little Rock on the last day of April. <sup>8</sup>

The Arkansas continued to rise until there was 20 feet of water in the channel. In the week ending on May 10, seven steamers (the Moses Greenwood, Young America, Exchange, White Bluff, Gipsey, Hickman, and Lucy Robinson) arrived at the city. <sup>9</sup> The river crested on the 15th. <sup>10</sup> From mid-May through June 7, it was hot and dry along the western border of Arkansas. On May 31 there was only 3 feet of water in the channel.

Crops in the region were beginning to suffer for want of rain, Editor Wheeler warned on June 7. Almost as bad, the river had settled "down to its usual low stage -- too low for navigation." The Fort Smithites prayed that there would be another rise. Most of the merchants had ordered their fall stock of goods, and they would be seriously embarrassed if compelled to haul their goods up for the third year in a row. <sup>11</sup>

The people's prayers were answered on the 13th, when the river started rising rapidly. Within 36 hours there was enough water in the channel to float all but the largest Mississippi River steamboats. <sup>12</sup>

Captain Gatlin in May called on Lieutenant Pearce to supply his men with iron bunks.

Pearce informed Gatlin that he didn't have any in stock.

Gatlin told him to requisition 42 "double width" two story iron bunks. If "single story" bunks were sent, he would require 84. This request was forwarded to General Jesup on May 28 through headquarters, Department of the West. <sup>13</sup>

Jesup rejected the call for iron bunks. Since timber was available at Fort Smith, the soldiers would be required to fashion their own bunks, the crusty old general scribbled on the requisition slip. <sup>14</sup>

Pearce was relieved as department and post quartermaster by Lieutenant Edmund C. Jones on June 1. Before relinquishing his office, Pearce wrote General Jesup, requesting that the funds called for to run the quartermaster's office at Fort Smith be forwarded to Jones. If Jesup would examine his report for April and May, he would see that the money was badly needed. After going over his books with Jones, Pearce packed his gear and, accompanied by his wife, boarded a steamboat. Pearce was to proceed to New York for recruiting duty.

The Fort Smith Herald for June 5 carried an advertisement, which might prove of interest to a number of local farmers. It was announced that on June 18 at 2 p.m., the post quartermaster would examine proposals "for cutting, delivering, and stacking at the public yards in Fort Smith, two hundred and fifty Tons (of 2,240 lbs. each) of good well cured merchantable hay." Delivery was to commence by July 5 and be completed by August 15.

Since it looked as if the region was in the throes of another drought, Jones added a provision that bids for 50 tons of hay would be considered. Only three people expressed any interest in selling hay to the government. Two of these bids were rejected as too high. G. C. Smith was given a contract to furnish 50 tons at \$11.95 per ton and a similar amount for \$13.80 a ton.

When he forwarded the agreement and Smith's performance bond to Washington, Jones advised General Jesup that because the grass was burning up, he believed it would be impossible to obtain the amount of hay for which he had advertised. <sup>16</sup>

Realizing that 100 tons of hay was insufficient, Jones ran a second notice in the June 21 edition of the Herald. This time, Jones received a better response. Jones examined the bids on July 7 and found two acceptable. M. Pelley and Martin W. Bunch were given contracts for 50 tons of hay. Pelley would be paid \$11.45 per ton and Bunch \$11/50. <sup>17</sup>

Now that troops were again stationed at the Garrison, there would be an increased demand for wood. The wood purchased by Captain French to carry the post through 1856 would soon be exhausted. Lieutenant Jones called for proposals to supply the Garrison with 250 cords "of good sound merchantable hickory and oak wood." Twenty cords were to be delivered by June 24, 20 between July 1 and 20, and the remainder by October 15. John Gardner was low bidder. He promised to supply the fort with 100 cords of "good merchantable Hackberry wood" at \$2.40 per cord, and 75 cords of Pecan and 25 of Ash at \$2.50 a cord. <sup>18</sup>

Jones was disappointed to discover that when the Treasury draft for \$7,045 to run the Quartermaster's Department arrived, it was made out to Lieutenant Pearce. He returned the draft to General Jesup on June 27, with a request that it be redrawn. <sup>19</sup>

It was July 17 before the draft reached General Jesup's desk. The general had the Treasury Department make out a new warrant payable to Lieutenant E. C. Jones. <sup>20</sup>

The Arkansas, for a two month period beginning on the first day of summer, was too low at Fort Smith for steamboats. The days were hot and dry, while it cooled off in the evenings. A soldier from the Garrison, who was swimming off Belle Point, drowned on July 27. <sup>21</sup>

A heavy rain which fell on August 18 triggered a marked rise on the Arkansas. Taking advantage of this situation, the master of the Young America succeeded in making two runs up the river to Fort Smith from Little Rock in one ten day period. The Yorktown and the Umpire No. 3 tied up at the wharf on September 13 and "discharged heavy loads of freight." <sup>22</sup>

According to Editor Wheeler, "The Arkansas has been guilty of many unruly things in the past few years, but its late proclivity to let steamboats up its channel to this point in September is the strangest and most unaccountable of any." <sup>23</sup>

On September 12, Lieutenant Jones called for "sealed proposals" for furnishing and delivering 8,000 bushels of "good dry merchantable corn in the ear, slip shucked," and 4,000 bushels of "shelled corn, in good substantial sacks." These bids would be opened at 6 p.m. on October 2. <sup>24</sup>

Thirty-four proposals were on the lieutenant's desk by the deadline. After studying them, Jones gave D. B. Rives, Abel Warren, G. D. May, and J. S. Bostick contracts for supplying 8,000 bushels of corn on the ear. The prices paid ranged from 53¢ to 57 9/10¢ per bushel. Three thousand bushels of shelled corn were bought from Bostick for 68 3/4¢ per bushel, while Warren received 68¢ a bushel for the 1,000 which he sold the government. As soon as the sellers had posted their bonds, Jones forwarded the contracts to General Jesup. <sup>25</sup>

Although Lieutenant Jones had received the draft for \$7,045, correctly made out this time, it only covered the expenses of his Department through June 30. As stipulated in regulations, Jones forwarded at the beginning of July and again on September 1, estimates of the funds needed to operate his office. No money was forthcoming; bills accumulated. When he examined his books on November 10, Jones was shocked to find that on October 31, the Department was in debt \$15,015.59. (See Appendix S). A number of men to whom the Department owed money were becoming alarmed. If he were to carry out his duties, Jones wrote Jesup on November 10, he would have to pay off these claims. <sup>26</sup>

It took 18 days for Jones' letter to reach the desk of the Quartermaster General. The next day, November 29, Jesup directed one of his clerk to draw up, and mail a draft for \$15,000 to the harassed Fort Smith quartermaster. <sup>27</sup>

Long before he received these funds, Jones was compelled to make arrangements to obtain wood to carry the soldiers through the approaching winter. People who had wood to sell were asked to submit quotations for furnishing the Quartermaster's Department with 200 cords of "good merchantable oak and hickory wood." Apparently, the failure of the Department to settle its obligations promptly didn't have an adverse effect. Six men

1856  
1857

filed proposals with the lieutenant. Low man was M. Pennington, whose bid of \$2.35 a cord was accepted. 28

Major Isaac Lynde and his family reached Fort Smith by boat on October 25. The major was no newcomer to the area, for he had commanded the Garrison briefly during the previous winter. On December 17, Lynde formally replaced Captain Gatlin as the officer in charge of the post. 29

A large number of public animals wintered on the reservation. Lieutenant Jones and his people had to take care of 86 horses, 225 mules, and 27 oxen. By the middle of January, it began to look as if there might not be enough forage on hand to last till spring, when the animals could be turned out to graze. An inventory disclosed that there were 6,703 bushels of corn in the granary and ten tons of hay stacked near the stables. Since they were feeding the livestock 72 bushels of corn a day, Jones estimated he had enough to last until mid-April.

Notifying General Jesup of this situation, Jones asked for authority to contract for additional forage. At the same time, he informed the general that most of the horses belonging to Battery M, 2d Light Artillery which had been sent to Fort Smith from Fort Washita were "old." Many, Jones reported, were over "12 years of age," while some were unfit for further service. 30

General Jesup answered Jones' January 16 letter on March 28. He directed the young lieutenant to have the animals examined. All that were pronounced unfit for service would be sold at public auction without delay; those which were in good condition were to be distributed "between the posts of Washita, Arbuckle, and Gibson." If they were not needed at those forts, Jones was to retain them at the depot, and notify Washington the number of good animals which he had in excess of his needs. Upon receipt of this information, Jesup would forward instructions regarding their disposition.

According to regulations, officers were permitted to secure forage without special authority from the Quartermaster General. In addition, Jesup informed Jones, there was supposed to be a "large quantity" of

hay and grain at Fort Washita. If this forage could be transferred to Fort Smith by the public trains which hauled out the supplies, it would be wise to do so, the general wrote. 31

Jones found that he had miscalculated as to the amount of wood the Garrison required. By the end of the first week in February, the stock of fuel on hand had dwindled rapidly. An advertisement was inserted in the Fort Smith Herald announcing that the Quartermaster's Department wanted to purchase another 200 cords of wood. Bids would be submitted no later than February 10. When Lieutenant Jones opened the proposals, he found that James D. Boyd had bid \$2.45 per cord. Boyd, however, was unable to put up the necessary bond. Whereupon, Jones awarded the contract to Frances Park, who said he would supply 200 cords of "good sound oak & Hickory wood" for \$2.61 per cord. 32

A letter which General Jesup had signed on January 31 caused Lieutenant Jones several moments of anguish. It contained extracts from a letter to one of the Arkansas senators from a constituent. The voter charged that Mr. Willard, who had been a trusted employee in the Fort Smith Quartermaster's Office for a number of years, had been "issuing Qr. Master's certificates of indebtedness and signing his own name to them & taking the Teamsters' receipts upon the pay rolls &c." 33

Calling Willard into his office, Jones asked him to explain the charges.

Branding them falsehoods, Willard remarked that if anyone saw such a certificate "it was a forgery."

After excusing the clerk, Jones wrote General Jesup. He observed that until he had read the general's letter, he had never seen or heard of any certificates being signed by Willard. If the teamsters' pay had been withheld by Willard as charged, the lieutenant explained, they would have applied to him for redress. Moreover, from June 1 till Christmas, when he received the draft for \$15,000 mailed on November 29, Jones hadn't had enough money to pay any of his or other debts. Since the Department's employees were due several months' wages and were



having a difficult time getting credit from the Fort Smith merchants, Jones had given them certificates signed by himself. These certificates had been redeemed as soon as the men had been paid.

Jones explained to Jesup that for a number of months he had been aware that Willard had enemies. In August, he had been told that his clerk was a "rascal." The lieutenant, however, preferred to place his confidence in the opinion of his predecessor, other officers and civilians, and his own experience rather than in the "general and unsupported charges" of Willard's traducers. <sup>34</sup>

General Jesup's directive to have the horses examined and to auction off the unserviceable ones arrived too late. During the first week of April, a virulent disease, which the veterinary described as "the staggers," broke out among the horses. Seventy-three of the animals died before the veterinary succeeded in checking its ravages. No horses had expired since April 14, Jones wrote Jesup on the 21st. But since "their health and appearance" was not good, he had decided to postpone the sale until the survivors had improved in looks. <sup>35</sup>

Jones had anticipated the general on one point. News that the corn bins were almost empty caused the lieutenant to insert an advertisement in the Fort Smith Herald for April 7. Proposals for delivering 4,000 bushels of "good, sound merchantable corn, of the growth of 1856, in the ear, slip shucked" would be considered by the depot quartermaster at 12 noon on April 22. All told, 21 sealed bids were received. The proposals advanced by James M. Brown, J. J. Dillard, and Thomas Walden were accepted. Brown and Dillard each sold the government 1,000 bushels; Walden was given a contract for 2,000. <sup>36</sup>

As yet, Jones hadn't heard anything from the Assistant United States Treasurer at New Orleans regarding \$15,000 Jesup had reportedly sent there to help him settle his accounts before being relieved. Information had recently reached Jones that he was to be replaced by Captain Montgomery. Jones didn't feel he would need too much money to pay off his obligations. Except for the "ordinary debts" incurred in taking care of his duties at

Fort Smith, the lieutenant knew of only one outstanding debt contracted by him for which the Department was liable. This was for ferrying the 2d Artillery across the Poteau, which would be paid as soon as it was correctly certified. Not having any use for the funds reportedly deposited at New Orleans, Jones planned to turn them over to the post quartermaster at Fort Washita, since he assumed the money was intended for that post. 37

With the army making increased use of Fort Smith, Major Lynde decided he could make good use of the quarters currently occupied by Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Southern Superintendency Elias Rector. In accordance with the understanding reached with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs several years before, Major Lynde asked Rector to vacate. Rector agreed. On May 25, Rector and his family moved off the reservation. 38

Captain Montgomery returned to Fort Smith in May. After going over the books and records with Lieutenant Jones, Montgomery assumed the duties as department and post quartermaster. With the beginning of the new fiscal year almost at hand, Montgomery began working on his estimates.

The "Report on the Capacity and Condition of the Barrack and Quarters" was prepared at this time. When he inspected the buildings, the captain was surprised to see how rundown they had become in the three years he had been away. Lieutenant Jones, when asked to explain why this had happened, replied that no money had been available for repair work in the year that he had been in charge of the Department. Examining the records, Montgomery satisfied himself that it had been three years since any funds had been allotted for the upkeep of the buildings. Consequently, a large sum of money would be needed to carry out this work. All told, Montgomery figured it would require \$112,197.74 to run his Department during Fiscal Year 1858. The estimates, along with the "Report on the Capacity and Condition of the Barrack and Quarters," were mailed to the Quartermaster General. (See Appendix T) 39

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As the years passed, Fort Gibson became of diminishing importance, and the Cherokees made determined efforts to have the garrison removed.

A memorial signed by a large number of the principal men of the tribe in December 1854, charged that the fort had become a curse to their Nation. Instead of preventing the introduction of whiskey which the garrison was intended to accomplish, its influence made that contraband more plentiful. The only public grog shops and brothels in the Cherokee Nation, they said, were in the vicinity of Fort Gibson. Military establishments on the frontier were planned to lie between civilized communities on the one side, and the savage Indians on the other. Therefore, they reasoned, since the Cherokees were a civilized community, the garrison should be west of their country. 40

The War Department finally agreed to pull its troops out of Fort Gibson. On May 7, 1857, General Order 6 was issued providing that Fort Gibson "be abandoned without unnecessary delay." The Quartermaster's Department was to take charge of the public property. Of the four companies of the 7th Infantry currently stationed on the Arkansas, two would constitute the garrison of Fort Smith, while one was to take post at Fort Washita and the other at Fort Arbuckle. Regimental headquarters were to be transferred back to Fort Smith. 41

A copy of General Order 6 reached Colonel Wilson on June 7. Within a month, the fort had all but been abandoned. The regimental band with the adjutant and 14 enlisted men left on the 15th for Fort Smith; a week later, Company D started for Fort Washita; the next day, Company E marched for Fort Arbuckle. There remained at the fort only Lieutenant William L. Cabell with 20 men to guard the ordnance, medical, quartermaster's, and commissary stores until they could be removed to Fort Smith. 42

Because they were perishable, Lieutenant Cabell first turned his attention to the subsistence stores which had been stockpiled at Fort Gibson. Cabell planned to send the commissary supplies to Forts Washita and Arbuckle. Colonel Gibson vetoed this scheme, stating that they were not needed at the two advance posts. Instead, Cabell would ship the rations to Fort Smith. Keelboats were used to make the transfer.

Captain Montgomery wasn't glad to see the stores, since he had no need for them. Because it cost 75¢ per hundredweight to transport the rations down the Arkansas from Fort Gibson, the captain felt it would

had

have been more economical to store them. Or better yet, he continued, to have disposed of them at public auction. He was afraid these subsistence supplies would spoil long before they were required.

Cabell ignored Montgomery's protests. Montgomery, after warning Cabell that he considered it poor management to shuttle commissary stores from Fort Gibson to Fort Smith only to have them transshipped to the forward posts, told him to go ahead. He hoped orders would arrive from Washington and put a stop to this action. If something like this happened again, Montgomery inquired of Jesup on July 15, he would like to know if he had authority to intervene "for the interest of the service, in the duties of the officers of the Department at Posts dependent upon this Depot." 43

When a belated message arrived from Jesup, the Quartermaster General reported he had discussed the situation with Colonel Gibson. The Commissary General had announced that the subsistence stores weren't needed at Forts Arbuckle and Washita. If the commissary stores could be moved by water it was to be done immediately, but if they couldn't, they were to be left at Fort Gibson for the time being. 44

Another hitch had developed to harass Lieutenant Cabell. The property belonging to the Ordnance and Medical Departments had been loaded on keelboats on June 20. Cabell waited until July 3 for instructions as to what should be done with these stores. With the Arkansas dropping rapidly, Cabell fretted at the delay. Finally, the water fell to a point where the lieutenant realized, if the supplies were to be moved by boat, he couldn't risk delaying any longer. He ordered the boats to cast off. The river was so shallow that it took the keelboats 13 days to reach Fort Smith. 45

The abandonment of Fort Gibson was completed on September 1 by the removal therefrom of the last of the ammunition and supplies. It was then turned over to Daniel W. Coodey for the Cherokee Nation. 46

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Because of the heavy rains during the winter and spring of 1857, the road leading from Fort Smith to Fort Arbuckle had washed badly. Indeed, one section of the Fort Arbuckle road was so bad, that supply trains from the Fort Smith Depot were compelled to detour. To get to Fort Arbuckle, they had to go by way of Fort Washita. This added two extra days on the road for a train making a round trip.

Montgomery planned to call on Lieutenant Colonel Pitcairn Morrison, who commanded at Fort Arbuckle, to detail soldiers to repair the roads. Not knowing what the colonel's response might be, the captain asked General Jesup to use his influence with Adjutant General Samuel Cooper to get this work done.

The bad roads had caused the costs of keeping the wagons repaired and the mules and horses shod to skyrocket. Since June 1, exclusive of the work done at the post smithy, Captain Montgomery had had to disburse \$414.67 for this type of work.<sup>47</sup>

1857 was a good year for grass. There had been plenty of moisture in the spring; the grass grew lush on the prairies south of the Arkansas. Captain Montgomery was able to purchase hay needed to feed the public animals during the forthcoming winter on much better terms than Lieutenant Jones had been able in 1856. Where Jones had paid from \$11.45 to \$11.95 a ton, Montgomery contracted with Martin Bunch for 500 tons of "good merchantable Hay, Stacked, and Settled" for \$7.89 per ton.<sup>48</sup>

There was a flurry of excitement at Fort Smith at the end of July. At that time a copy of General Order 11, dated June 29, 1857, reached the fort. (Colonel Wilson was on leave at this time. During the colonel's absence from the frontier, Lieutenant Colonel Morrison commanded the department from Fort Arbuckle. Major Lynde on Wilson's departure had become the ranking officer at Fort Smith.) When Major Lynde read the dispatch, he learned:

1 The two Companies of the 7th Infantry now at Fort Smith, Arkansas, will move without delay under the command of the junior major by land via Fort Leavenworth and take post at Fort Laramie, Nebraska Territory.

2 Two Companies of the 7th Infantry -- one from Fort Washita, the other from Fort Arbuckle to be selected by the regimental commander will replace the two Companies from Fort Smith. 49

Since he was the junior major, Lynde called on Captain Montgomery for assistance. To make the movement from Fort Smith to Fort Leavenworth, Lynde calculated he would need 11 wagons with mule teams. 50 Besides carrying the soldiers' gear, the wagons would be loaded with rations to last 120 men for 20 days. 51

When Companies B and F, 7th Infantry left Fort Smith on August 1, another wagon had been added to the train. This wagon would accompany the column only as far as Evansville. The battalion was considerably understrength, but Major Lynde hoped to pick up recruits at Fort Leavenworth. He therefore drew extra arms and accouterments which were placed in the wagons and would be issued to the expected replacements. 52

Lynde's column reached Fort Leavenworth in 18 days. The battalion remained at Fort Leavenworth until August 21. Fifteen miles out on the road to Fort Laramie, Lynde, having been notified that the expected recruits were at hand, halted his men. The replacements joined the battalion on the 24th. The next morning, the recruits were distributed, and on August 26 the march was resumed. Lynde's column entered Fort Laramie on September 26. 53

From August 1 when Lynde's battalion left Fort Smith until the 7th there were no troops at the Garrison. Company D, 7th Infantry had left Fort Washita on July 27. It took the soldiers of Company D, 12 days to march to Fort Smith. Company H, 7th Infantry which had left Fort Arbuckle at the same time entered Fort Smith on August 11. As ranking officer, Captain Lafayette McLaws assumed charge of the post. 54

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On June 28 Montgomery, at the request of Captain Gatlin, had forwarded to Washington estimates of the cost of building at the post ten cabins for "the N. C. staff and Laundresses."

General Jesup replied on July 18. He informed Montgomery that "there is no grant of authority anywhere for building quarters for laundresses." Moreover, the use of public property for such a purpose would constitute a "misapplication of it under the 36th article of war." Officers of the Quartermaster's Department, Jesup warned, must be careful not to make estimates for anything not warranted by laws. 55

Restudying the "Regulations," Montgomery discovered under Paragraph 963 that it was provided, "to every six non-commissioned officers, musicians, privates, servants and washerwomen there shall be allowed in this latitude 256 square feet of Quarters."

"Common decency," the captain informed Jesup, "forbids the construction that the women are to occupy the same apartments with the men." Accordingly, it was reasonable to assume that the laundresses should have separate quarters. Captain Gatlin had proposed that the troops be used to erect cabins for the laundresses, and he was agreeable to compensating the Department for any material used beyond that afforded by regulations.

During the final week of June, when the estimates had been submitted, Fort Smith was occupied by the regimental staff, the band, and Companies B and F, 7th Infantry. If these units were at full strength, they would muster:

Two companies	186 enlisted men	8 women
Band	16 enlisted men	1 woman
Three staff non-commissioned officers		

Upon consulting the regulations a second time, Montgomery figured the enlisted men and laundresses were entitled to 8,960 square feet of Quarters. To meet this demand there were only two rooms (15 x 30 feet), or 3,360 square feet of Quarters at Fort Smith. This was a deficiency of 5,600 square feet, he reminded the general, while the ten cabins called for contained only 2,560 square feet. Montgomery was satisfied that it would be impossible to provide additional accommodations any cheaper than in the manner proposed by Captain Gatlin. 56

Grain crops had thrived in the middle Arkansas valley. The farmers and merchants looked forward to a bumper harvest. As the time for calling for bids to supply the Department with forage approached, Montgomery decided to alter the policy which the depot quartermaster had heretofore followed. Deliveries in the future would be made at designated internals. In August, the captain had the Fort Smith Herald run an advertisement:

SEALED PROPOSALS

Will be received at this office until ten o'clock, A.M., on Monday the 31st inst., for the delivery of good merchantable Corn and Oats as follows, viz:

2,000 bushels of Oats on or before the 30th of September, 1857.

3,000 bushels of Oats on or before the 31st of October, 1857.

2,000 bushels of Corn in the ear on or before the 30th of November, 1857.

3,000 bushels of Corn in the ear on or before the 31st of December, 1857.

4,000 bushels of Corn in the ear on or before the 31st of January, 1858.

1,000 bushels of shelled Corn on or before the 28th of February, 1858.

1,000 bushels of shelled Corn on or before the 31st of March, 1858.

1,000 bushels of shelled Corn on or before the 30th of April, 1858.

1,000 bushels of shelled Corn on or before the 31st of May, 1858.

1,000 bushels of shelled Corn on or before the 30th of June, 1858.

The Oats and shelled Corn to be delivered in sacks made of good strong material -- two bushels in each sack.

The Oats to weigh 32 lbs. per bushel, and the corn in sacks 56 lbs, per bushel.

The corn in the ear to be slip shucked.

Separate bids will be received for the Oats, for each delivery of the Corn in ear, and for the shelled corn. 57

As was to be expected under these circumstances, the captain had to examine a large number of bids. Charles C. Herd and James M. Brown were awarded contracts for the oats. Herd would deliver 2,000 bushels



by the last day of September and Brown 3,000 by October 31. Herd was to be paid 64¢ a bushel, Brown 66¢. S. B. Bennett, W. L. England, J. S. Bostic, and Abel Warren had filed the low bids for the corn. Bennett agreed to make the November 30 delivery, England the December 31, Bostic the January 31, and Warren the February, March, April, May, and June deliveries. The price paid by the government for the corn on the ear ranged from 49 1/2¢ per bushel to 57 1/2¢, while the shelled corn varied from 57 3/4¢ to 66 3/4¢.

The contracts and performance bonds posted by the successful bidders were mailed to General Jesup on September 18. <sup>58</sup>

In August, Montgomery had prepared an estimate of the quartermaster's stores which would be needed by the posts serviced by the Fort Smith depot. Montgomery drafted the list with a view to meeting "all probable ordinary demands" to be made upon the depot during the next six to eight months. Admittedly, if there were any drastic change in the number of troops assigned to the Arkansas frontier, it would effect the the captain's want list. Then, there was the annual problem caused by the rise and fall of the Arkansas River. If a prolonged drought occurred such as in 1854-55, many months would pass without any steamboats tying up at Fort Smith. Montgomery forwarded his want list to Lieutenant Colonel George H. Crosman, the officer in charge of the St. Louis Quartermaster's Depot on August 25. (See Appendix U) <sup>59</sup>

Colonel Crosman was surprised to receive Montgomery's dispatch, because the posts on the Arkansas frontier were supposed to be supplied out of the New Orleans depot. Examining the list of articles which Montgomery had called for, Crosman found according to regulations items 13 and 14 (6 yards of tracing linen and one ream of blotting paper) were not allowed as regular issues. After adding his comments on these points, Crosman on September 9 referred the correspondence to the commander of the Department of the West, with the recommendation that it be submitted to General Jesup. First, Brigadier General P. F. Smith and then General Jesup sanctioned the requisition as submitted by

Captain Montgomery. Orders were soon forthcoming for Colonel Crosman to see that it was filled. 60

A duplicate list of the stores needed at the depot had been mailed to General Jesup by Captain Montgomery. At the same time, the captain reported that steamboating prospects on the Arkansas were favorable. The river was rising, and there was eight feet of water in the channel at Fort Smith. According to reports reaching the post from upstream, it appeared that the river would be open for steamboats through September and possibly October. 61

Along toward the middle of September, a traveler reached Fort Smith from Fort Leavenworth. From him, Montgomery learned that 72 mules, 3 horses, and 12 of the wagons assigned to Major Lynde's battalion had gone on to Fort Laramie. This was contrary to instructions. Lynde was supposed to have returned the transportation drawn from the Fort Smith Depot on his arrival at Fort Leavenworth. The permanent transfer of the livestock would materially reduce the amount of forage needed to see the Fort Smith Quartermaster's Department through the approaching winter.

The loss of the wagons, which had corrugated-iron-beds, worried the captain. He wrote General Jesup on September 18, that in all probability it would be necessary to replace them in the immediate future. All the remaining wagons at the depot, the captain complained, were "old and much worn."

If the general would examine his want list of August 25, he would find that there was a requisition for five wagons. But at that time, Montgomery hadn't known that Major Lynde would take his 12 best wagons to Fort Laramie. Consequently, if Montgomery were to keep the troops at Forts Washita and Arbuckle supplied, he would need at least seven more wagons. A minimum of 36 mules would be required to replace the ones which had gone with Lynde's column. To help pay for the mules, Montgomery recommended the sale of the oxen and surplus horses at the depot. The oxen, the captain observed, had been turned over to Captain French in 1854. Since that time, they had done little to earn their keep, because the hard roads between the depot and the advance forts were too much for their hooves. 62

Captain Montgomery on September 22 forwarded to General Jesup and Colonel Crosman copies of his estimate of funds required to run his department through September and October. (See Appendix V) The captain calculated that \$11,109 would see him through this period. Of this sum, \$3,115 was needed for construction. Two buildings, a hayshed and a wheelwright and carpenter's shop, were scheduled to be erected. (See "Plan and Elevation of Hay Shed and Wheelwright's Shop") Montgomery argued that this money would be well spent. The stables, he pointed out, had deteriorated so far that it was impossible to store any hay in the lofts. Since there were no haysheds at the post, this year's hay crop had to be stacked in the open. Because of the want of a wheelwright or carpenter's shop, the captain had been forced to get his wagons repaired in town. Montgomery believed that a considerable saving of public funds would result if this work were done on the reservation.

For an explanation of the need for repairs (new steps for the Officers' Quarters and the barracks, and roofing the privies and galleries), Montgomery referred his superiors to the "Report on the Capacity and Condition of the Barracks...." Besides being unsafe, the wooden steps leading into these buildings were so "decayed" that they weren't worth repairing. <sup>63</sup>

When the estimates reached his desk, Colonel Crosman studied them carefully. The colonel, being very familiar with regulations, was surprised to discover that Montgomery had asked for construction funds, because Secretary of War John B. Floyd was the only person who could sanction such a request. Satisfied that the rest of the items were in order, Crosman forwarded the estimates to General Smith's headquarters. <sup>64</sup>

On September 12 Captain Montgomery had used the Fort Smith Herald to announce that proposals for supplying the Garrison with "Four Hundred Cords of good merchantable white oak, black jack, or Hickory wood" would be received at his office until 10 a.m. on the 26th. Fifty cords

were to be delivered on or before October 31, and the remainder by January 31, 1858. <sup>65</sup>

Only one bid was filed by the designated hour. Deeming the price quoted exorbitant, Montgomery rejected it. A second call was made. This time, the proposals to be considered were to be in the captain's hands by October 3. When he examined the three bids which were turned in, Montgomery awarded the contract to Salomon Clark and John D. Nicks. The fuel to carry the Garrison through the winter would cost \$3.48 per cord. <sup>66</sup>

General Jesup had been unimpressed with the arguments Montgomery had advanced to support his and Captain Gatlin's plan to build cabins for the laundresses. Once again, the general chided Montgomery for including log cabins for laundresses in his estimates. Since the Department wasn't authorized to underwrite this project, Montgomery might loan the commandant "tools & means of transportation" for the work when they weren't required for public service. The general had also cut the figure, \$1,000 per month, which the captain had asked for mileage to be paid officers traveling on official business. The sum requested by the Depot Quartermaster had been one-tenth of the amount appropriated for this type of activity for the entire army. <sup>67</sup>

Montgomery on reading the general's letter didn't feel that this second rebuke which the general had seen fit to administer on the subject was warranted. He was aware, he wrote Jesup on October 7, of "the high and extended responsibilities to the War Department and to the Government" under which the Quartermaster General rested. Jesup could rest assured that he would be the last officer in the Department to try to embarrass him in the discharge of his trust. Montgomery had been unaware that Jesup considered the building of the laundresses' cabins as unauthorized by "Law and Regulations." Although he had read and reread the regulations, Montgomery was "unable to see why allowance of Quarters for Laundresses being prescribed by Regulations, it should be a misappropriation of the public money to build such Quarters for the other persons named in the same table of allowances."

1857  
1858

Montgomery in closing announced that the general's decision would govern his action in preparing future estimates. <sup>68</sup>

During October and the first week of November, Montgomery drew up estimates of the money required by his department in Fiscal Year 1859. The captain included figures for adding a second story to the "Barracks." He believed this would be "the cheapest mode of providing the additional Quarters required." At the same time, the captain (recalling the arguments he had used at the time the Quarters were erected) observed, the second story "will improve the appearance of the building." Standing as it did opposite the Officers' Quarters, both two stories, Montgomery noted, "it presents a singularly squat and Barn-like appearance; in strong contrast with its neighbors over the way; by no means complimentary to the taste of its projection, and reflecting but little credit upon the Quarter Master's Department, which is supposed to be responsible for its design."

Montgomery forwarded copies of his estimates and his plans for enlarging the barracks to General Jesup and Colonel Crosman on November 9. (See Appendix W and Plans titled "Front and Side Elevations of Barracks at Fort Smith with Proposed Addition of Second Story") He pointed out that no estimate for the slate to cover the roof had been made. He was convinced that with what was already on hand at the depot and by salvaging the slate which would have to be removed in remodeling the building, he would have enough. <sup>69</sup>

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The first General Order issued by the War Department in 1858 was to have important repercussions on Fort Smith and the Arkansas Frontier. Troubles with the Mormons in Utah caused the War Department to act. Adjutant General Cooper on January 8 signed an order announcing that the "Army of Utah will be reinforced as soon as practicable by the 1st Regiment of Cavalry, the 6th and 7th Regiments of Infantry, and Batteries A and M, 2d Artillery." For the time being, Forts Smith,

Washita, Arbuckle, and Belknap would be abandoned. The garrisons, except the ordnance sergeants, were to proceed "at the earliest date" to Jefferson Barracks. Companies D and H, 7th Infantry which were stationed at Fort Smith were to travel via the Arkansas and Mississippi Rivers; the units from the other forts to be abandoned were to go by way of the Red and Mississippi, provided transportation on the Red could be secured "without too great a delay, otherwise by Fort Smith." 70

News of this movement reached the Fort Smith commandant on February 5. Captain Simmons, who had replaced McLaws as commander of the post on September 11, called on Quartermaster Montgomery to hold himself ready to furnish transportation for 96 officers and men, and 9 laundresses. The troops would carry with them their camp and garrison equipage. 71

Montgomery lost no time in contacting Captain J. Brown of the steamboat Little Rock which was tied up at Fort Smith. The master agreed to charter his vessel to the army. Working parties were organized by Captain Simmons and turned to loading the boat. By nightfall on the 7th, the camp and garrison equipage had been stowed aboard the Little Rock. The following day, the troops and the laundresses went aboard. 72

Meanwhile, Montgomery had received an urgent request from Assistant Surgeon Charles Page. It had been decided by the Surgeon General to send the doctor and all the "Hospital Property" at Fort Smith with Simmons' battalion. Page advised the captain that he needed transportation for "thirty two boxes of Medicines, Hospital Stores &c., and thirty seven iron Bedsteads." 73

As soon as the medical stores had been carried on to the Little Rock, Captain Simmons told Master Brown to cast off. The landing stages were lifted, and the vessel pulled away from the wharf and started down the Arkansas.

Except for a small detachment commanded by 2d Lieutenant Edward J. Brooks, and Captain Montgomery and the ordnance sergeant, all the troops were gone from the Garrison. It took the Little Rock 11 days to make the run down the Arkansas and up the Mississippi to St. Louis. Disembarking from the transport on February 19, Simmons' battalion marched to Jefferson Barracks. 74

In view of the War Department's decision to pull the troops out of the posts in the old Seventh Department, Montgomery determined that he wouldn't need as much forage as he had contracted to buy. Taking advantage of a clause which allowed the government to cancel, if notice were given 60 days before the date of delivery, Montgomery told Abel Warren to forget the delivery of the 1,000 bushels of corn scheduled for April 30.

Montgomery wrote General Jesup of this action on February 23. Moreover, the captain continued, he would like to know if the Department planned to withdraw from the depot a "considerable number" of draft animals, because of the abandonment of the posts dependent upon it. If so, he would be able to cancel additional corn deliveries. <sup>75</sup>

Colonel Morrison reached Fort Smith on February 27 with the troops of the 7th Infantry which had been garrisoning Forts Washita and Arbuckle. (Inquiries made by Morrison had indicated it wouldn't be feasible to move his command via the Red River.) A messenger had reached the Garrison several days before with a communication for Montgomery from Colonel Morrison. The colonel wanted the captain to charter transportation for his command. Contacting the master of the steamer Arkansas, Montgomery made the necessary arrangements.

Colonel Morrison, on looking at the Arkansas, thought she mightn't be large enough to transport his battalion and its gear. A Board of Survey was appointed to inspect the Arkansas and "report as to her capacity for carrying four companies of troops." After examining the vessel, the board reported, she was not large enough. <sup>76</sup>

When notified of this, Montgomery chartered a second vessel, the Lady Walton. Colonel Morrison now forwarded an official request to the quartermaster for transportation for 12 officers, 211 enlisted men, 17 laundresses, 13 servants and 6 horses. <sup>77</sup> Montgomery told the colonel that the two steamboats would be ready for boarding on March 1.

An order was drafted by the colonel's adjutant for the troops to be ready to embark. Companies C and E, the band and regimental headquarters were assigned the Lady Walton, while Companies G and K were to take passage on the Arkansas. <sup>78</sup>

At 8 o'clock the troops, including Brooks and his detachment, were mustered and marched to the landing. The gear and the horses belonging

to the officers had been loaded the previous afternoon, so there was little delay in embarking. As soon as the officers had mustered their units and reported all present, Colonel Morrison told the masters to get under way. Amid a blasting of whistles, the Lady Walton and the Arkansas pulled out into the channel. Morrison's battalion was off on the second stage of its journey from the Indian Territory to Utah. 79



## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

## Chapter XIV

## Troubles in Utah Force the Army to Redeploy

## Notes

- 1 Pearce to Jesup, Jan. 17, 1856 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). N. Bartlett Pearce of Kentucky had graduated from West Point in the Class of 1850 as a brevet 2d lieutenant in the 7th Infantry. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 778.
- 2 Fort Smith Herald, March 1, 1856.
- 3 Ibid., March 8, 1856.
- 4 Ibid., March 15, 1856.
- 5 Ibid., March 22 and 23, and April 5 and 12, 1856.
- 6 Hutter to Larned, March 3, 1856 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 7 French, Two Wars, 132; Fort Smith Herald, March 8, 1856.
- 8 Fort Smith Herald, May 3, 1856.
- 9 Ibid., May 10, 1856.
- 10 Ibid., May 17, 1856.
- 11 Ibid., May 31 and June 7, 1856.
- 12 Ibid., June 14 and 21, 1856.
- 13 Requisition for Iron Bunks, May 28, 1856 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Pearce to Jesup, June 10 and 11, 1856 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.); Fort Smith Herald, June 21, 1856.
- 16 Jones to Jesup, June 24, 1856; Fort Smith Herald, June 7, 1856 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Edmund C. Jones of Indiana had graduated from West Point in the Class of 1853, as brevet 2d lieutenant in the 2d Infantry. Promoted to 2d lieutenant, Jones had transferred to the 7th Infantry on March 3, 1855. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 580.

- 17 Jones to Jesup, July 10, 1856 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.); Fort Smith Herald, June 21, 1856.
- 18 Jones to Jesup, June 25, 1856 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.); Fort Smith Herald, June 7, 1856.
- 19 Jones to Jesup, June 27, 1856 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Fort Smith Herald, June 28, July 26, and Aug. 2, 1856.
- 22 Ibid., Aug. 30, Sept. 6 and 20, 1856.
- 23 Ibid., Sept. 20, 1856.
- 24 Ibid., Sept. 13, 1856.
- 25 Jones to Jesup, Oct. 21, 1856 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Rives sold the government 3,000 bushels of corn for 53¢ a bushel, Warren 1,000 bushels for 55¢ a bushel, Bostick 2,000 bushels for 57 9/10¢ per bushel, and May 2,000 bushels for 55¢ a bushel.
- 26 Jones to Jesup, Nov. 10, 1856 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Jones to Jesup, Nov. 11, 1856 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 29 Fort Smith Herald, Oct. 25, 1856. Isaac Lynde of Vermont had graduated from West Point in the Class of 1827, as brevet 2d lieutenant in the 2d Infantry. Lynde had been major of the 7th Infantry since October 18, 1855. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 649. Lynde had commanded at Fort Smith from January 27 to March 3, 1856.
- 30 Jones to Jesup, Jan. 16, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 31 Jesup to Jones, March 31, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).

- 32 Jones to Jesup, March 4, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 33 Jesup to Jones, Jan. 31, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 34 Jones to Jesup, March 2, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 35 Jones to Jesup, April 21, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 36 Jones to Jesup, April 25, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Brown had sold two 500 bushel lots to the government, one for 82½¢ and the other for 86½¢ per bushel. Dillard had received 89 3/4¢ for his 1,000 bushels. Like Brown, Walden had disposed of two 1,000 bushel lots. He was to be paid 85¢ a bushel for one, 87½¢ for the other.
- 37 Jones to Jesup, April 21, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 38 Denver to Thompson, June 22, and Thompson to Floyd, June 23, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 39 "Estimate of Expenditures in the Quarter Master's Department for the Fiscal Year" beginning July 1, 1857; "Report of the Capacity and Condition of the Barrack & Quarters," June 30, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 40 Drew to Davis, Jan. 24, 1854 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, S of W, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 41 GO 6, May 7, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept, Files, AGO, Ltrs. Sent).
- 42 Foreman, Advancing the Frontier, 74. William Cabell of Virginia had graduated from West Point in the Class of 1850. Commissioned a brevet 2d lieutenant, Cabell was assigned to the 7th Infantry. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 272.
- 43 Montgomery to Jesup, July 15, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 44 Jesup to Montgomery, June 29, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 45 Montgomery to Jesup, July 15, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 46 Foreman, Advancing the Frontier, 74.
- 47 Montgomery to Jesup, July 15, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Colonel Samuel Cooper had replaced Roger Jones as Adjutant General on July 15, 1852.
- 48 Fort Smith Herald, June 11, 1857; Montgomery to Jesup, July 29, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 49 General Order, No. 11, June 29, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.); Fort Smith Herald, July 27, 1857.
- 50 Lynde to Montgomery, July 31, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Montgomery to Jesup, Aug. 6, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 53 Inspection Returns for Companies B and F, 7th Infantry for Aug. 31 and Oct. 31, 1857.
- 54 Inspection Returns for Companies D and H, 7th Infantry, Aug. 31, 1857. Lafayette McLaws of Georgia had graduated from West Point in the Class of 1842. Commissioned a brevet 2d lieutenant, McLaws had been assigned to the 6th Infantry. McLaws had been a captain in the 7th Infantry since August 24, 1851. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 675.
- 55 Jesup to Montgomery, July 18, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 56 Montgomery to Jesup, Aug. 8, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 57 Fort Smith Herald, Aug. 15, 1857.
- 58 Montgomery to Jesup, Sept. 18, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 59 Montgomery to Crosman, Aug. 25, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Montgomery to Jesup, Aug. 25, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). P. F. Smith had been promoted brigadier general on December 30, 1856.
- 62 Montgomery to Jesup, Sept. 18, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 63 Montgomery to Jesup and Montgomery to Crosman, Sept. 22, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 64 Ibid. John Floyd had become President Buchanan's Secretary of War on March 6, 1857.
- 65 Fort Smith Herald, Sept. 12, 1857.
- 66 Montgomery to Jesup, Oct. 3, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 67 Jesup to Montgomery, Sept. 19, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 68 Montgomery to Jesup, Oct. 9, 1857 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 69 Montgomery to Jesup and Montgomery to Crosman (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 70 GO, No. 1, Jan. 8, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Sent).
- 71 Simmons to Montgomery, Feb. 5, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 72 Bill of Lading, Feb. 8, 1858; Montgomery to Jesup, March 5, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 73 Page to Montgomery, Feb. 8, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 74 Inspection Returns for Companies D and H, 7th Infantry for Feb. 28, 1858. Edward Brooks of Michigan had been commissioned 2d lieutenant in the 7th Infantry on June 30, 1855. Brooks had become regimental adjutant on July 1, 1856. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 249.

75 Montgomery to Jesup, Feb. 23, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

76 Montgomery to Jesup, March 5, 1858; Proceedings of Board of Survey, Feb. 27, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

77 Morrison to Montgomery, Feb. 28, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

78 Order No. 1, 7th Regt., Feb. 28, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

79 Montgomery to Jesup, March 5, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). The two transports had been chartered to take the battalion to Napoleon. At Napoleon, Colonel Morrison hoped to secure a large Mississippi steamer to transport his command to St. Louis.

1858

FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

Chapter XV

The 1st Cavalry Comes to Fort Smith

Captain Montgomery received an interesting dispatch signed by Adjutant General Cooper on March 27, 1858. He was to "repair without delay" to New Orleans. Upon arriving in the "Crescent City," the captain was to "assume temporarily the duties" of quartermaster at that station.

Although he welcomed the change, Montgomery was worried. At the moment, there was a large amount of public property at Fort Smith for which he was responsible. In absence of any instructions regarding its disposition, the captain deemed it necessary to hire a reputable citizen to act as military storekeeper. When he notified General Jesup of the situation, Montgomery promised not to leave for New Orleans without imparting "full instructions regarding the administration of the Department" to the new employee.

Within the next several days, Montgomery secured the services of M. G. Eastin as military storekeeper. Before catching a boat for New Orleans, the captain briefed Eastin as to his duties. An inventory of the stores for which the Quartermaster's Department was responsible was prepared and signed.

The task of securing the Quartermaster's property at Forts Arbuckle and Washita had been assigned to Captain Cabell by General Jesup. Cabell reached Fort Smith from Fort Leavenworth (where he had taken all the serviceable horses, mules, wagons, and harness belonging to the Department which had been made surplus by the transfer of the 7th Infantry) on April 7 and learned that a train of wagons en route from Fort Arbuckle with public property had been delayed by high water. In fact, the Arkansas and all its tributaries were booming. People who were familiar with the region told the captain that steamboats of the deepest draft

could reach Fort Smith without difficulty. Notifying the Department of this situation, Cabell promised to start immediately for the two abandoned posts. <sup>2</sup>

Hardly had Captain Montgomery reached New Orleans before he received an important telegram from General Jesup. All the property belonging to the Quartermaster's Department at Forts Arbuckle, Washita, and Smith was to be sold, except the horseshoes. The horseshoes, which were stored at Fort Smith, were to be sent to the Philadelphia Quartermaster's Depot.

Montgomery relayed this information, along with instructions as to what he should do, to Eastin on April 16. The horseshoes would be shipped via New Orleans. Eastin was to insert advertisements of the impending auctions in the Tishomingo, Fort Smith, Van Buren and Little Rock newspapers, about one month before the first sale, which would take place at Fort Arbuckle. Prospective purchasers were to be advised that terms were cash. The auction at Fort Washita would be scheduled a week later, while the one at Fort Smith was to follow in two to three weeks. Eastin would arrange his itinerary so he would be present at each sale. He was to conduct them "as may be most advantageous to the interest of the Government."

If Eastin discovered that the officers last on duty in the Quartermaster's Department at Forts Arbuckle and Washita had omitted to receipt their property on abandoning the posts, he was to receive the stores as invoiced by the ordnance sergeants. Instructions were being sent to the ordnance sergeants by Captain Montgomery to turn over to Eastin the Quartermaster's property which had been left in their charge. <sup>3</sup>

The next day, the 17th, Montgomery wired this information to General Jesup. He trusted the instructions he had given Eastin for disposing of the public property would meet the general's approbation. <sup>4</sup>

A copy of War Department Special Order 73, dated May 14, came into Montgomery's hands seven days later. Glancing at the message,



Montgomery found that Captain Abraham C. Myers had been assigned to command the New Orleans Quartermaster's Depot. As soon as Myers reached his new station, Montgomery would return to Fort Smith. 5

Montgomery at the same time had learned that Colonel Thomas T. Fauntleroy's regiment, the 1st Dragoons, had been alerted to move from Memphis to California. This news, in conjunction with the redeployment of the troops on the frontier to cope with the Mormon troubles, caused Montgomery to reflect about the wisdom of disposing of the Quartermaster's stores at Fort Smith.

Montgomery determined to telegraph General Jesup and see if the Department had changed its mind. When he did, the captain notified the general that Eastin had scheduled the Fort Smith sale for June 28. 6

Jesup read Montgomery's wire on May 28. He agreed with his subordinate that with troops moving to the West, the supplies at Fort Smith might be needed. The general dictated a telegraph directing Montgomery to have Eastin cancel the sale of the Quartermaster's property at Fort Smith. 7

Unknown to Montgomery, the Quartermaster General's Office had written Eastin on May 14, instructing him to make "no disposition" of the property at Fort Smith until further notice. This letter reached Eastin on the 30th. 8

Forty-eight hours before, Montgomery had sent a second message to Washington. Since it appeared that Fort Smith might be reoccupied at an early date, the captain wished to get clearance for several projects. As he informed Jesup, repairs were needed to stop the roof of the barracks from leaking. The hospital was so rotten it was about to collapse. Satisfied that it was not worth repairing, Montgomery requested authority to sell the structure and have it removed from the reservation. 9

Captain Montgomery was back on the job at Fort Smith in July. The captain on his return learned from Mr. Eastin that all the serviceable wagons and teams from Forts Arbuckle, Washita, and Smith

had been taken to Fort Leavenworth by Captain Cabell. There, they were assigned to the force which was being sent to Utah for operations against the Mormons.

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The departure of the 7th Infantry left only five men at Fort Arbuckle. Several thousand Comanches, incensed by a recent attack on them by Captain John S. Ford and his Texas Rangers, camped on the Canadian River. To secure arms, ammunition, and provisions, the Comanches planned to raid Fort Arbuckle. A demonstration was undertaken, and the undefended post was believed to be in great danger. <sup>10</sup> Depredations were committed by the raiders on the Chickasaws and white settlers in the vicinity of the post. A number of horses belonging to Smith Paul, who lived two miles west of Fort Arbuckle were driven off, and Mr. Gardner and other settlers were robbed. Horses galloped up to the homes of their owners with arrows sticking in them, thus identifying the tribe guilty of the outrages.

There were no troops at Fort Arbuckle to protect them, so the Chickasaws appealed to their agent, Colonel Cooper. Agent Cooper took the responsibility of calling out a force of Choctaw and Chickasaw settlers to defend their country and homes. A messenger was dispatched on June 22 to Fort Belknap with a request for help from the troops stationed there. Word was sent to Boggy Depot and Tishomingo asking that from 50 to 100 armed volunteers be rushed to Fort Arbuckle.

At Tishomingo, James Gamble called the people together and read them Cooper's message "and gave them a talk and called for volunteers, when it was found that every body wanted to go." <sup>11</sup> Soon an adequate number of Indians had responded to their agent's call. On June 29 Company E, 1st Infantry under Lieutenant James E. Powell, badly jaded from the forced march from Texas in the heat of the summer, reached Fort Arbuckle and relieved Colonel Cooper. <sup>12</sup>

The wagons and teams which accompanied Company E from Fort Belknap returned to Texas. Captain William E. Prince who reached Fort Arbuckle shortly afterwards notified Montgomery that except for one "old wagon"

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and a "team of oxen," he had no transportation. Consequently, Montgomery needed transportation badly, if he were to supply the troops at Fort Arbuckle. When the captain mailed in his reports for July on August 6, he called for:

- Ten Six mule Wagons, with bows, covers, chains, &c., complete.
- Twelve sets of Six-mule-team harness, with saddles, lines whips &c., &c., complete.
- Ten wagon covers (extra)
- Ten sets of wagon Bows (extra)
- Ten Tar buckets (extra)
- Thirty mule collars (extra)
- One hundred pounds Black Lead.

Good serviceable American mules for the teams, Montgomery informed Jesup, could be purchased locally for \$125 to \$150. <sup>13</sup>

Major William H. Emory of the 1st Cavalry had assumed command at Fort Arbuckle in September. The major planned to organize a pack train to support operations against the Comanches. On October 14 he had the post quartermaster forward a requisition to the Fort Smith depot for 50 mules. A similar number of packsaddles, lariats, and saddle blankets, along with two coils of pack rope, were likewise called for. Reaching Montgomery's desk on November 1, Emory's request caused the captain to shake his head. He knew that there weren't any surplus "serviceable mules." A quick check by the clerk indicated that the same situation existed as to packsaddles. While the articles in stock were being packed for shipment to Fort Arbuckle, Montgomery addressed a note to General Jesup, informing him of the depot's inability to provide the mules and saddles. <sup>14</sup>

Jesup, learning that a detachment of troops was about to start from Fort Leavenworth to Texas, issued orders for them to bring the mules and saddles needed by Major Emory. <sup>15</sup>

The Fort Smith Herald for October 4 carried two advertisements of interest to a number of local people. On October 20 at noon,

Captain Montgomery would open bids for supplying the post with 200 cords of "good sound merchantable hickory or black jack wood." The fuel was to be cut from the trunk of the tree or from large limbs. Fifty cords were to be delivered before November 30, the remainder by January 31, 1859.

The second notice announced the captain would examine proposals for the purchase of "Ten Thousand Bushels of good sound merchantable corn" on Saturday, October 23. Deliveries would be scheduled: 2,000 bushels in the ear, slip shucked, on or before November 30; another 2,000 bushels, slip shucked, on or before January 31, 1859; 1,000 bushels on or before February 28; 2,000 bushels in "good new gunny bags, containing two bushels, or 112 pounds, in each sack," on or before December 31; 3,000 bushels of shelled corn in gunny sacks on or before April 30, 1859. <sup>16</sup>

Montgomery, when he opened the proposals for the fuel on the 20th, found that M. Pelley and two associates had filed the low bid, \$3.83 per cord. As soon as they posted their fulfillment bond, the captain awarded them the contract.

Nine individuals and firms filed 18 proposals for furnishing the Department with corn. After working out a table on which he listed his requirements, Montgomery accepted the low bids. P. Perkins came out of the captain's office with the lion's share of the business. His figures had been low in three categories. For the 2,000 bushels of corn on the ear to be turned over to the army on November 30, he would receive 75¢ per bushel. The 2,000 bushels of shelled corn to be delivered on December 31 would net Perkins 80¢ a bushel, while the 3,000 bushels of shelled corn to be turned over on April 30 brought \$1 a bushel. J. M. Brown was to be paid 86½¢ a bushel for 2,000 bushels of corn on the ear which he agreed to make available to Captain Montgomery by January 31. G. D. May was to deliver 1,000 bushels to the post on February 28, for which he would receive 71½¢ per bushel. <sup>17</sup>

A letter which reached Fort Smith on October 11 from General Jesup troubled Captain Montgomery. The general was of the opinion that during

August the number of men hired by the captain was "needlessly large, & altogether out of proportion to the duties" he was required to perform. Montgomery was asked to explain why it was necessary to retain such a large force. Furthermore, the captain was directed "to reduce it to the lowest practicable limit consistent with the wants of the post." 18

Montgomery drafted a long dispatch in which he defended himself. He assured his superior that in the employment of men he "had ever been as economical as was consistent with the best interests of the Post."

Montgomery had felt that certain projects mentioned in his "Report of Barracks and Quarters" were indispensable to the protection of the public property and the health" of the garrison. A number of mechanics had been hired and put to work repairing the public buildings. Upon the receipt of Jesup's letter, these artisans had been discharged. No further attempt would be made to fix up the buildings, although a visit from Lieutenant Page, General Smith's Assistant Adjutant General was momentarily expected. The Quartermaster was reasonably certain that Jesup would hear from Page after the inspection.

The captain felt Page wouldn't be impressed with what he saw. At the moment, Montgomery reported:

a hay shed and another forage house are much wanted—then the steps in front of the Barracks and Quarters are so rotten that they are no longer safe—then the Kitchen floors in some of the Officers' Quarters are rotted and broken through in many places, and being basement rooms must affect the health of all occupying the Quarters, and that the cornice galleries leading to the privies in rear of the Officers' Quarters, except some that have been repaired, are in a falling down condition.

While these additions and repairs might be deferred, they would have to be eventually attended to. When they were, Montgomery warned, the cost would be greater. Finally, much valuable public property would be lost through exposure.

Unskilled labor had been hired by the captain to police the reservation. These men had assisted the Quartermaster in handling the forage and subsistence stores. If Jesup would check, he would find that a similar practice was followed at the forts guarding

the approaches to New Orleans — Pike, Macomb, Jackson, St. Philip, and Livingston.

Montgomery's tasks had been complicated when Captain Nathan "Shanks" Evans of the 2d Cavalry had passed through Fort Smith and left a number of hostlers to look after and provide for the horses. The captain was satisfied that this duty could not have been performed without adding to his labor force. Montgomery was convinced these men's services could soon be dispensed with. A letter had been received from Major George H. Thomas of the 2d Cavalry at Fort Belknap. Thomas announced that he had been instructed to call for the animals as soon as they were able to travel. Montgomery notified Major Thomas to send at once.

Moreover, a large number of claims from the past fiscal year had to be settled. The pressure of this work caused Montgomery to add an assistant clerk to his staff in August. It was fortunate that he had, because his first clerk was indisposed. Montgomery couldn't see any cause for complaint by the general on this point. When he had been on temporary duty at the New Orleans Depot, where the volume of business was about the same, there had been three clerks.

Calls had been made on Montgomery during the second week in October by Majors William H. Emory and Earl Van Dorn for the transportation of supplies to Fort Arbuckle. Not having any animals available, Montgomery was compelled to contract with local teamsters. The people to whom the wagons belonged asked \$3.50 per hundredweight. Three wagons were loaded with flour and started for the outpost. A fourth wagon on the 12th engaged for the same trip at a savings to the Department of 50¢ a hundred pounds.

Learning that Major Emory had passed through North Fork Town on the 6th en route from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Arbuckle, the harassed captain wrote the major, asking him to send to Fort Smith all the wagons he could spare from his supply train. Montgomery planned to employ these vehicles to forward stores to Fort Arbuckle.

When not employed, the teams could be foraged at Fort Smith for about half what it cost at the advance base. 19

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Following the arrival of Company E, 1st Infantry at Fort Arbuckle, Colonel Cooper and his Indians had made a reconnaissance as far west as the Wichita Mountains. After an absence of about 20 days, Cooper returned and predicted that unless an adequate force was stationed in the Territory a bloody war would ensue.

Shortly after Cooper had returned from his reconnaissance, a war party of Comanches ran off about 75 head of horses belonging to the Choctaws and Chickasaws. The raid took place near Fort Arbuckle. A detachment of the 1st Infantry from the fort was ordered out in pursuit. Except for satisfying themselves that the culprits were Comanches, the soldiers returned to the fort without accomplishing their mission.

Major Emory in an attempt to recover the stolen horses asked the Wichitas to carry a message to the Comanches. The raiders were to be apprised that the horses had been "taken from friendly Indians," when and if they returned the horses, the Comanche chiefs were to be invited to visit Fort Arbuckle. If they would do this, Major Emory would be agreeable to holding peace talks.

A reply was soon received. According to the Comanche leaders, the horses had been taken without their consent. The warriors who had brought in the animals claimed they were stolen from Texas.

Five of the Comanche chiefs with a number of their followers and five of the horses started for Fort Arbuckle. They stopped for a few days on Rush Creek, near the principal village of the Wichitas.

Meanwhile, Captain Lawrence S. Ross with a number of Texas and Indians had intercepted a second band of Comanches. This party had the remainder of the stolen horses. A running engagement ensued. Ross and his men stampeded and recovered nearly all of the animals.

Shortly thereafter, Ross' column fell in with Major Van Dorn's battalion of the 2d U. S. Cavalry. Ross pointed out to Van Dorn the hostiles' trail. The Texan and his men fell in with the cavalry as it moved out in pursuit. On the night of September 30, Van Dorn's column halted on Otter Creek, near the Wichita village. From his scouts, Van Dorn learned that a large number of Comanches were camped in the vicinity. Unfortunately, the major hadn't been alerted that this was the party which was proceeding to Fort Arbuckle to talk with Major Emory.

Before sunrise, Van Dorn roused, fed, and formed his command. The cavalrymen and Texans were organized into two columns. Day was breaking when Van Dorn launched a surprise attack. The issue was never in doubt. Very few of the redmen had time to snatch up their weapons. Resistance was hopeless. The ones who were not shot down in their tracks scattered into the underbrush. Fifty-two Indians, including two Wichitas were slain. All the Comanches' camp equipage, provisions, and most of their horses fell into the soldiers' hands.

People familiar with the ways of the Comanches claimed they had taken the horses from the Choctaws and Chickasaw "without any hostile intent unless resisted." The horses would be used to mount braves who didn't have any, preparatory to following the migrating herds of buffalo into Texas in November. Van Dorn's slashing attack had changed all this. The Comanches were enraged at the whites and the Wichitas for the unprovoked massacre. Buffalo Humps, their war chief, warned that he would "continue the war until the last Comanche is destroyed."

The Wichitas were upset by Van Dorn faux pas. They were afraid the Comanches would take revenge on them for their part in arranging the abortive Fort Arbuckle peace conference. To make matters worse, Van Dorn's troops had foraged for several days on the fields of the Wichitas to their utter ruin. As soon as Van Dorn's column moved on, the Wichitas



fled to Fort Arbuckle. They begged Major Emory for food and protection. 20

Lieutenant Alexander E. Steen reached Fort Smith in early October with a detachment of the 3d Infantry. Steen had been detailed to escort an expedition commanded by Edward F. Beale which was en route from Fort Leavenworth.

The rapid growth of California and the increasing tide of emigration to that region called for better and more rapid facilities for transportation. A mail contract had been let to the Overland Mail Company of which John Butterfield was president. In September 1858 the first of the Butterfield mail stages departed through Missouri, Arkansas and the Indian Territory for California.

Beale had been directed to survey a route from Fort Smith westward along the Canadian River for a wagon road which should continue on to the Colorado River. It was October 18 before Beale and his train reached Fort Smith. Beale felt certain that Van Dorn's attack on the camp presaged bitter war with the Comanches. Since the route to be taken by the train crossed Comanche land, Beale was worried. He decided to take the matter up with Lieutenant Steen. When he did, the superintendent suggested Steen secure "at least two pieces of Artillery." The lieutenant agreed with Beale on the importance of strengthening the escort. 21

Steen lost no time in bringing the subject to Montgomery's attention. On October 26 Steen asked the captain for two guns, ammunition, and teams. 22

After studying the regulations, Montgomery agreed to turn over the requested field pieces to Steen. The horses needed to pull the guns caused a problem. At the moment, there were no artillery horses at Fort Smith. There were, Montgomery informed Steen, a number of animals in his charge belonging to the cavalry. Major Thomas of the 2d Cavalry had notified Montgomery that he planned to send an officer from Fort Belknap to pick up these horses. Because of the

urgency of the situation, Montgomery announced, he would turn over to Steen 12 of these animals. 23

Having secured the artillery, the train left Fort Smith on October 28. Even so, things didn't look good. Before they crossed the Poteau, guides Jesse Chisholm and Black Beaver told Beale and Steen that they couldn't go beyond old Fort Holmes or Antelope Hills before spring. According to the guides, the range along the route beyond Antelope Hills had been burned off by the Comanches. In view of this information, Beale hastened ahead to North Fork Town. There, he hoped to gather additional information regarding the possibility of foraging the train after it passed old Fort Holmes.

The day after Lieutenant Steen crossed the Poteau, Montgomery received a dispatch from General Jesup. He was to turn over to Major Emory all the horses at Forts Smith and Washita. This caused Montgomery to have second thoughts regarding his wisdom in supplying Lieutenant Steen with teams to pull the artillery. After sketching for the general what had transpired, the Quartermaster observed, "If there is any error in the transfer of the horses, I think there is very little doubt but that there will be an opportunity to remedy it before Lt. Steen crosses the plains." 24

\* \* \*

During the last week in October, the Arkansas started to rise rapidly. Writing to General Jesup on the 26th, Montgomery informed him that the river had risen ten feet in the last 36 hours. Unless he were seriously mistaken, the captain was sure that steamboats would have no difficulty reaching Fort Smith for the next four weeks or possibly longer. 25

Except for a boat laden with subsistence stores which was about to cast off from New Orleans for Fort Smith, the army had no plans to take advantage of this situation. 26

On October 25, the Treasury Department acted on a request which it had received from the Quartermaster General. A draft for \$10,000 was forwarded to Captain Montgomery. This was \$5,000 less than the

amount the captain had called for in his estimate of funds needed to run his office through November. (See Appendix X) Of the sum sent to Fort Smith, Montgomery was authorized to spend \$2,000 for repairs to the Barracks and Quarters. <sup>27</sup>

\* \* \*

In view of the difficulties with the Comanches, the War Department decided that Forts Smith and Washita should be garrisoned. General Order 21 was accordingly issued on November 6, 1858. Six companies of the 1st Cavalry currently at Fort Leavenworth were ordered transferred to Forts Smith, Washita and Riley, two companies to each post. The commander of the Department of the West was to "designate the particular companies and give the necessary orders for the march across country." <sup>28</sup>

General Jesup wrote Captain Montgomery two days later in regard to the decision to reoccupy Forts Smith and Washita with cavalry. It would be necessary for the captain to provide forage at the two posts for the animals and accommodations for the troops. Measures would be taken at Fort Smith to procure additional corn and hay, while such repairs to the Quarters and Barracks would be made as were deemed essential. A confidential agent would be sent to Fort Washita by Montgomery to make similar arrangements. Since the expenditures of the Department for the Fiscal Year 1859 were very high, Montgomery in making the repairs at Forts Smith and Washita was to limit himself "to such as are absolutely necessary to render the troops comfortable." <sup>29</sup>

Two companies of the 1st Cavalry, A and B, commanded by Captain Delos B. Sacket reached Fort Smith from Fort Leavenworth on December 18. Sacket, after assigning his officers and men to their quarters, formally assumed command of the post. <sup>30</sup>

A number of months passed before the Department was able to make arrangements for giving Montgomery the mules which he needed to supply Fort Arbuckle. Captain Cabell was assigned the task of

1858  
1859

driving 400 mules and 14 horses from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Smith. Cabell and his hostlers were given the animals on November 23. When he inspected the mules, Cabell found the majority "very poor and in very bad travelling condition." The Fort Leavenworth quartermaster explained that the beasts had seen hard service on the plains during the past summer.

It took Cabell's party 20 days to make the drive. Along the route severe weather was encountered. Rain and sleet fell constantly.

Seven of the mules broke down and had to be left. Reaching Fort Smith on December 13, Cabell turned over 393 mules, 14 horses, and two wagons to Captain Montgomery. 31

Captain Montgomery seconded Cabell's opinion of the mules. Extreme difficulty was encountered in selecting 50 mules to send to Major Emory at Fort Arbuckle. The remainder were placed in charge of a "responsible citizen," who agreed to pasture them in the Arkansas bottoms. In addition, he would see that each animal was fed six pounds of corn per day. For this, the man was to be paid \$1.35 a week for each mule.

Now that two companies of the 1st Cavalry were stationed at Fort Smith, the troopers had first call on the stables. The post not having been planned as both a cavalry establishment and a depot, there was a critical shortage of stalls. All told, there were only 93 stalls in the two stables. This was little more than was required for stabling one company's mounts. Consequently, about one-half the horses assigned to each company were without shelter. In a letter mailed on January 4, Montgomery called this situation to General Jesup's attention. The captain recommended additional stables be built.

Since the cavalry had pre-empted the stables, Montgomery was obliged to find other facilities to accommodate the horses for which he was accountable. He decided to make an arrangement similar

to the one undertaken in respect to the mules. An agreement was reached with a man to pasture and feed the horses their full ration of corn. For each animal, the contractor was to receive 35¢ per diem. <sup>32</sup>

General Jesup agreed with Montgomery on the need for additional stables. He authorized the Quartermaster to put up more "horse sheds." Montgomery at the same time was admonished to spend as little money as possible on this project. No mechanics were to be hired and the cavalrymen were to do the work. <sup>33</sup>

In December, Montgomery, in accordance with the instructions he had received from Jesup, advertised in the Fort Smith Herald for bids to supply the post with firewood and corn. With two companies of cavalry stationed at the post and a war with the Comanches threatening, the captain called for more wood and corn than ever before. Three hundred cords of wood and 20,000 bushels of corn would be required.

Only two proposals were received. The captain considered the quotations unreasonable and rejected them. A second advertisement was immediately inserted in the paper. <sup>34</sup>

This time, the captain got a better response. Contracts for furnishing the corn were awarded to James N. Brown and Richard Thurston. Brown would make delivery on 5,000 bushels of shelled corn in gunny sacks on or before January 31 and a like quantity by February 28. For the first shipment, he would receive \$1.27 a bushel and for the second \$1.23. Thurston was to be paid \$1.29 a bushel for the 10,000 bushels of shelled corn which he was to turn over to the Post Quartermaster on or before March 31. <sup>35</sup>

The Fort Smith weather was unusually mild during the first three weeks of January. Examining the Fort Leavenworth mules on the 20th, Montgomery was delighted to see that they had started to fill out. Barring a blizzard or prolonged cold spell, the captain believed they would be in good condition by April 15.

All information reaching Fort Smith indicated that the army planned to wage an aggressive campaign against the Comanches in the spring and summer. If so, Montgomery calculated he would require 50 new wagons with harness to keep the troops supplied. The addition of the Fort Leavenworth mules would alleviate the necessity of purchasing many draft animals.

Notifying General Jesup of his needs, the captain pointed out, the transportation problem hadn't been helped when the commanders at Forts Arbuckle and Washita had retained for their use the supply trains which had accompanied their columns on the march from Fort Leavenworth to their new stations. By accident, they had gained control of the means by which Montgomery had intended to forward supplies once they had taken the field. Although, he had called for the trains, the post commanders seemed unwilling to surrender them to be "employed again in the service of the Department."

Of equal importance was the problem of husbanding of the limited supply of corn which could be obtained at Forts Arbuckle and Washita. This corn, Montgomery argued, ought to be used to support the operations which were projected on the frontier. At the same time, the corn supply in the Fort Smith area was practically inexhaustible.

Checking on the progress made in stockpiling supplies at the advance posts, the captain reported, except for 179 barrels of flour, everything requisitioned by Major Emory for Fort Arbuckle from the depot had been forwarded. As soon as the flour had been sent, the Fort Arbuckle train would be idle. If he had control, the captain could then employ these wagons to throw supplies into Fort Washita. As yet, Fort Washita had not been victualed.

If the post commanders could be prevailed upon to dispense with the surplus transportation, Montgomery hoped Jesup would order it sent to Fort Smith. As soon as Fort Washita had been supplied,

the teams could be broken up and put out to graze, and the teamsters discharged until their services were needed. 36

Almost six weeks passed before General Jesup acted on the information supplied by Montgomery. On March 1 the general issued a directive for the post quartermasters at Forts Arbuckle and Washita to send to Fort Smith all animals and wagons "not absolutely required." 37

Orders were dispatched at the same time to Captain Stewart Van Vliet at Fort Leavenworth. The Fort Leavenworth quartermaster was directed by the general to rush "50 wagons with harness" to Captain Montgomery. Working parties were organized; the designated gear on March 14 was loaded aboard the transport Mink for shipment to Fort Smith. 38

Montgomery was miffed on February 27 to receive a dispatch from St. Louis signed by Major Dcn C. Buell. (At this time, Buell was serving on Colonel Edwin V. Sumner's staff. Sumner had succeeded to the command of the Department of the West on General P. F. Smith's death.) As soon as the work of repairing the kitchens, galleries, and basements of the Officer's Quarters and the roof of the Quartermaster's Storehouse had been completed, the captain was to discharge all the carpenters he had hired but one. This would preclude the construction of a hayshed.

The captain wrote Buell on the 28th, pointing out that all the necessary material for erecting the shed had been procured. More important, he continued, a shed was "indispensible for the proper protection of the hay at this Post." In the past, large amounts of hay had spoiled for "want of such protection." Montgomery hoped Buell would have a change of heart. 39

Captain David R. Jones replied in the name of the commander of the Department of the West. Colonel Sumner had told Jones that he didn't think a hayshed was needed at Fort Smith. If Montgomery would see that the hay was properly stacked, the wastage could be curtailed. For example, Jones pointed out, at Fort Leavenworth where immense quantities of hay was put up, there were no sheds. 40

Rebuffed by department headquarters, Montgomery carried his case to General Jesup. Attaching copies of his correspondence with

Buell and Jones, the captain observed, the materials for the shed had been procured at considerable cost. Since they were perishable, to arrest the project would be to sacrifice them. <sup>41</sup>

Jesup supported his subordinate. Instructions were issued by the Washington Office on April 19, giving Montgomery the go ahead. <sup>42</sup>

Montgomery on March 5 signed a contract with William Geiger of Fort Smith. Geiger would build steps in front of the Officers' Quarters and in front and rear of the barracks. The work was to be done in stone in accordance with the plans previously prepared by Captain Montgomery. Stone for the steps would be quarried within eight miles of Fort Smith by Geiger, with the government to assume the cost of hauling. When laying the stone, Geiger was to see that the exposed surface was "cut smooth without mouldings." Captain Montgomery or his successor was to be responsible for furnishing the contractor line and sand. Geiger promised to be finished with the project on or before August 31. For this work, Geiger was to be paid \$1 for "each and every superficial square foot" of stone laid. <sup>43</sup>

Montgomery was dumbfounded when a letter arrived from General Jesup at the end of the first week of May. The general had a number of questions he wished answered. Where did Montgomery get his authority for having the steps replaced? Why hadn't the work been put up for bids? Why hadn't he reported the contract? Wasn't Geiger being paid an exhorbitant price?

If a contract had been made, Montgomery was to comply with regulations and forward a copy to the general's office. <sup>44</sup>

Before replying, Montgomery determined to get affidavits to support his position. He suggested that Charles Munder and Casper Emper, who like Geiger were stonemasons, had brought the subject to the general's attention. R. W. Johnson for whom Munder and Emper had done some work was called in. Johnson examined the steps closely. He pronounced the stone work as good as that done by Munder and Emper.



Since they had charged him \$1.25 per superficial foot, he was satisfied that no one in the area would have undertaken the task for less than Geiger was being paid. <sup>45</sup>

A committee of leading citizens from Fort Smith visited the fort on May 7. When shown the steps erected by Geiger in front of the Officers' Quarters, they described the work and materials as first rate. Moreover, being well acquainted with Geiger, they placed themselves on record as to his ability and skill as an artisan. Indeed, the committee knew of no mechanic in whom they would "more implicitly confide for an honest and faithful compliance of his contract and undertakings." Upon studying the contract, the Fort Smithites assured the captain that the price scheduled to be paid was not exorbitant. They were unable to see how Montgomery could have prevailed on any competent mechanic to do the work for less. <sup>46</sup>

Post commander Sacket was asked for comments on the need for replacing the steps and his opinion of the value of the work. Sacket assured Montgomery that he considered the construction of the steps "both necessary and proper." At the time of his arrival at Fort Smith, the captain remarked, he had found the steps giving access to the Quarters and the barracks "in a most deplorable state of dilapidation." In front of the Quarters, the steps had been removed and "two pairs of narrow temporary steps had been put up." Sacket felt that the construction of new steps rated the highest priority. As to what the work should cost, Sacket refused to express an opinion, because it was something of which he was totally ignorant. <sup>47</sup>

After having secured these statements, Montgomery prepared to answer his general's complaints. He informed Jesup that since he had forwarded an estimate of the cost of the steps, and the Treasury Department had made the necessary remittance, he had assumed that the expenditure had been approved. A verbal agreement had then been made with Geiger to undertake the work. The captain had felt at that time, and still did, that it would be cheaper to do the project by contract

than to hire workmen by the day. Subsequently, the terms of the agreement had been reduced to writing. The captain confessed that here he had been in error. According to a strict interpretation of the "Regulations" this shouldn't have been done. But under the circumstances, Montgomery thought it would be sufficient to forward a copy of the contract with the voucher for the first payment.

No bids had been solicited, because there were few mechanics in the area qualified to do this type of stone work. Montgomery believed that if he had asked for proposals, it would have merely invited collusion among the mechanics. Furthermore, the money earmarked for the project was not large enough to arouse the interest of outside contractors.

Pending the receipt of further instructions from the Quartermaster General, Montgomery had ordered Geiger to suspend work. Copies of the correspondence filed by Johnson, the committee, and Captain Sacket in support of the project and Geiger's competence were attached to the captain's letter. 48

Jesup being absent from his office, it was July 23 before he returned and found Montgomery's correspondence. The general found the captain's answer unsatisfactory. It was our duty, he wrote, "to have the business of the Government done in the most economical manner," which as a general rule, could only be attained by competition. In this case, there seemed to be parties who were eager to do the work at a cost much below that proposed by Geiger. Whether or not they were "responsible men, able & intending to fulfill their obligations," was a matter for subsequent investigation should they be the lowest bidders. To decide this beforehand was to restrain competition.

Having received the copy of an offer to dress the stone steps which Munder and Hess had forwarded to Secretary of War Floyd, Jesup attached it to Montgomery's letter. The two men had announced their willingness to do this work for 90¢ per superficial foot. In addition,

they wouldn't put the United States to any expense "for quarrying, hauling the rock, for tools, or for dressing them." Montgomery was directed to discuss their proposition with Munder and Hess. Until he had done so, Jesup would withhold approval or disapproval of the Geiger contract. 49

It took the general's dispatch eight days to reach Fort Smith. Montgomery reluctantly promised to carry out the general's instructions. The captain at the same time expressed grave doubt whether or not a new contract could be made with "reliable men." Munder and Hess in his opinion, which was shared by many Fort Smithites, weren't trustworthy. Since filing his disposition of May 1, R. W. Johnson had given Montgomery additional information of his transactions with the two men. Johnson reported that when Munder and Hess were employed by him, they were "frequently too drunk to work."

Before receipt of the general's letter of April 27 when work had been stopped on the steps, Geiger had quarried and cut nearly all the stone needed to complete the project. Furthermore, the steps in front of one of the Officers' Quarters had been almost finished. As of the moment, Montgomery wrote, "there remains to be put up the steps in front of the other Block of Officers' Quarters and in front and rear of the Soldiers' Barracks." In justice to Geiger, and in consideration of the losses suffered by him on a previous contract at Fort Washita, Montgomery asked that he be allowed to lay the stone already cut. If not, Geiger would sustain additional losses, because at the moment there wasn't any other construction going on in the Fort Smith area requiring cut stone. Montgomery wouldn't have broached this matter, except that he was confident the work couldn't be done properly any cheaper.

The captain answered a charge made by Munder and Hess that tools for which he had been responsible had been furnished Geiger for "quarrying and cutting." Montgomery reported that he had let Geiger use a water bucket, a mallet, several hoes, a stone hammer, and a

few "old stone wedges of no value." All of these had been returned in good order.

If he accepted the offer made by Munder and Hess to complete the steps, Montgomery inquired, "might not some other party urge the same complaint" against him for not affording them an opportunity to bid on the work? Even if Munder and Hess were reliable contractors, there was no evidence that the work could have been done cheaper by soliciting bids.

Mr. Atkinson had told the captain that Munder and Hess had a grudge against Geiger. It seems that they had worked for Geiger at one time, but had quarreled with their employer about wages. Actuated by "private malice," they had written Secretary of War Floyd.

Montgomery observed that he had taken the responsibility of making a contract with Geiger for the construction of the steps. The price paid by the government for this project would be less than usually paid for this type of work. Geiger had partially executed the contract. Now in an effort to pay off a private grudge by wresting the contract from Geiger, Munder and Hess had brought charges of misconduct against the captain. Montgomery accordingly begged Jesup and the Secretary of War not to allow him to be "made the victim of such base motives." To annul the contract with Geiger, in the captain's opinion, would expose him "to unfair and unmerited criticism." 50

Captain Sackett had been disturbed to discover that no quarters were provided at Fort Smith for the ordnance sergeant, the non-commissioned officers, or the laundresses. When he questioned Montgomery, the captain told him of the efforts he and Captain Gatlin had made several years before to get quarters for these people erected. At that time, General Jesup had vetoed the request. He had announced on doing so that he considered it a misappropriation of public funds to construct quarters for laundresses. No reply had been made to the portion of the captain's estimate calling for quarters for the non-commissioned officers. Montgomery accordingly had assumed that the entire project had been turned down.

Sackett cited the "Regulations" which provided "Wagon & Forage Masters, Sergeant Major, Ordnance Sergt. or Qr. Mast's Sergeant" shall each be allowed one room, with a special allowance for fuel.

Montgomery agreed. But in view of General Jesup's known position,

he suggested Sacket apply to Chief of Ordnance Colonel Craig. Experience had demonstrated that the Ordnance Department was in the habit of furnishing quarters "of palatial proportion and appointment to its officers, and ample accommodation for enlisted men and others, at arsenals and armories." Montgomery thought Colonel Craig might regard the application for quarters for the ordnance sergeant in a more favorable light than General Jesup.

Captain Sacket lost no time in writing to Colonel Craig. The Ordnance Department rejected Sacket's request. In a letter to General Jesup, Craig pointed out that his Department lacked authority to erect quarters for the ordnance sergeant at Fort Smith.

Major Ebenezer S. Sibley, who was in charge of the Quartermaster General's Office during Jesup's absence, relayed this information to Captain Montgomery. The captain was asked to report on the "character of the house now occupied by the Sergeant of Ordnance" at Fort Smith.

Montgomery replied on July 2, informing Sibley that the "house" was "neither a fit or safe habitation for any person." An inspection divulged that it was "not worth repair." Montgomery thought a new building should be erected for the sergeant. <sup>51</sup>

General Jesup refused to go along with his captain. Since a new quarters couldn't be built, Montgomery was authorized to provide the ordnance sergeant with a room on the post. <sup>52</sup>

\* \* \*

June was a busy month for Captain Montgomery. On the 5th, he started a large train for Fort Washita. These wagons were to be used for transporting the baggage and supplies of the troops ordered to the Antelope Hills. Five days later, Captain Sacket and his battalion took the field. A small detachment remained behind when Sacket's column crossed the Poteau. A large number of wagons accompanied Sacket's column which was scheduled to rendezvous with the troopers from Fort Washita. The remainder of Sacket's train left Fort Smith on the 13th. Exclusive of the company vehicles, 90 wagons had rolled westward from Fort Smith during the past eight days. <sup>53</sup>

Captain Montgomery on May 13 had placed a notice in the Fort Smith Herald. Bids for supplying "sound, well cured, merchantable hay" would be received at the Quartermaster's Office until 12 noon on June 13. What astounded the readers of the Herald was the news that the government would purchase 700 tons of hay, more than double the amount bought in previous years. Proposals to furnish "timothy, clover, crab grass, red top, Hungarian, or other cultivated hay" would be given preference over prairie or wild hay. The prairie hay was to be cut by July 25, and if delivered to the post it was to be done on or before September 30. If the government had to haul the hay, it was to be stacked, salted, and fenced. Timothy and other cultivated hay was to be turned over to the post quartermaster by November 30. 54

Eight bids were on Captain Montgomery's desk at the designated hour. After studying them, the captain awarded contracts to M. Pelley, J. H. Rahn, and G. C. Smith. Two 50 ton lots of prairie hay were purchased from Pelley and one from Smith. Rahn would deliver 550 tons. The price the Department paid for the hay ranged from \$9.73 a ton to \$11.99. Montgomery's effort to get people to submit propositions for the sale of "cultivated hay" failed. 55

At the end of the third week of June, Montgomery received a Treasury draft for \$30,000 on the United States Depository at Little Rock. Try as he would, the captain was unable to get the draft cashed by the Fort Smith and Van Buren banks. Since he was getting short of funds, he decided to go to Little Rock. Montgomery left Fort Smith on the 24th, cashed the draft at Little Rock, and was back at the Garrison on July 2.

Upon his return to Fort Smith, the captain found an order dated June 22 from headquarters Department of the West. He was to cooperate with the commandant at Fort Arbuckle, Captain Prince, in opening a "good road" between the two forts. Before beginning work

on the project, Montgomery was to meet with Captain Prince so they could finalize plans for the joint undertaking. 56

The captain soon found himself in trouble with Department of the West headquarters. A note from Captain Cabell triggered the dispute. Cabell, who had assumed the position as post quartermaster at Fort Arbuckle, wrote Montgomery on June 29 that Wagonmaster Jossenburger's train had just arrived. Cabell saw that Jossenburger was issued one-half the amount of corn called for in the "Regulations" to forage his teams on the return trip to Fort Smith. To justify his action, Cabell reported, there was good grazing between Fort Arbuckle and the depot. Furthermore, he continued, he was issuing one-half the prescribed amount of forage to his teams. Any more than that, Cabell wrote, would be a waste of corn. 57

Montgomery "hit the ceiling" when he read Cabell's note. He didn't feel that "half forage of corn" was sufficient for animals at work during the summer. Long experience had convinced the captain of one thing, "Full work demands full forage, at whatever period of the year." During the summer, the work required of the teams was much more exhausting than in the winter. To keep the animals in good condition under steady work, a full ration of corn was required. It was poor economy, he reasoned, to starve the teams. From this practice came one of the Department's heaviest expenses. Hard work and starvation had caused the breakdown of hundreds of animals. Broken down horses and mules had to be condemned and sold, while new ones were purchased to replace them. If not sold, they had to be kept on hand at public expense without any return until they had recuperated. Montgomery knew that it cost twice as much to build up animals, as it would have cost to have maintained them in good working condition.

When trains were in the field where corn couldn't be secured, there was an excuse for breaking them down. But in supplying Forts Arbuckle and Washita from Fort Smith this was unnecessary. How

much wiser it would be to keep these teams in good shape, rather than see them breakdown every two or three trips. 58

Montgomery had repeatedly preached his philosophy on the care of animals to the post quartermasters. The letter from Cabell convinced the captain, he would have to take stronger action. He would ask Captain Robert M. Clary, who was assigned to headquarters Department of the West, to bring the subject to Colonel Sumner's attention. Montgomery wanted Clary to get Sumner to issue a set of instructions for the guidance of the post quartermaster's at the forts dependent on Fort Smith. They were to be notified that Montgomery was responsible for the trains. In addition, they would be directed to keep him apprised of the "state of the supplies at those Posts." 59

Captain Clary referred Montgomery's communication of July 13 to Sumner. The colonel rejected Montgomery's arguments. He held that the post commander and not the quartermaster should decide if it were expedient to comply with a requisition for forage or other supplies. He was of the opinion that "half forage of Corn is sufficient for animals at work during the Summer months." 60

Rebuffed by Colonel Sumner, Montgomery carried his case to Quartermaster General Jesup. He pointed out on doing so that department headquarters had failed to meet the chief object of his letter to Captain Clary, "to secure a compliance with my requisitions upon the officers serving in the Qr. Master's Department at the Posts dependent on this Depot." The captain had been in the army long enough to be aware that it was the responsibility of the commander and not the quartermaster to determine whether it was expedient to comply with requisitions made upon a post. He hadn't planned to bypass the post commanders. The captain had merely hoped Sumner would have issued the requested directive through them to the quartermasters. Since he had received no information on the subject, Montgomery informed Jesup, he presumed his application remained unanswered. After repeating his arguments as to why animals being worked should receive full forage, the captain posted his letter on August 9. 61



A letter signed by General Jesup on July 22 was read by Captain Montgomery on the last day of the month. It made the captain see red. Jesup had complained about the great number of men carried on Montgomery's rolls for May and June.

This was easily explained. In May, the trains which had wintered at Forts Arbuckle and Washita reached the depot. These trains had to be broken up and the teamsters discharged. Shortly thereafter, instructions had arrived from headquarters Department of the West for the captain to outfit the wagons which were to accompany the troops ordered to the Antelope Hills from Forts Washita and Smith. Thus the rolls for the period gave an erroneous impression: the wagon masters and teamsters who had been discharged and those being hired to go West with the new trains being shown. Moreover, many of the wagons which had been shipped to him from Fort Leavenworth aboard the steamer Mink required repairs. Although serviceable, the harness which had been received with the trains from Forts Washita and Arbuckle had to be overhauled. If the captain had not adopted this course of action, new harness would have had to be purchased.

Simultaneously, two trains were on the road, carrying supplies from the depot to the advance forts. Besides the public animals employed at the depot, a large number had been turned out to graze.

Montgomery assured the general that he had not been "forgetful" of the public interest. At all times, he sought to conduct his office in the most economical manner possible. <sup>62</sup>

Captain James Belger of the Quartermaster's Department reached Fort Smith on July 31. The captain had been sent to Southwestern Missouri and western Arkansas to purchase horses for the 2d Cavalry which was stationed in Texas. By the time he reached Fort Smith, Belger had acquired 261 horses. <sup>63</sup>

News that the two companies of the 1st Cavalry which had been ordered to the Antelope Hills were scheduled to return to Fort Smith caused Montgomery additional concern. With the arrival of the troopers, there would again be an acute shortage of stables at the post. In January, Montgomery had notified the Quartermaster General that he had only stabling facilities for 93 animals.

Acknowledging Montgomery's communication, Jesup had advised the

captain that because of a shortage of funds, stables couldn't be erected with money budgeted to the Quartermaster's Department. Sheds for the protection of the animals, however, would have to be put up. The general suggested that the cavalrymen be required to do the work.

Montgomery, on the receipt of this letter, had called on Captain Sacket to furnish a detail of mechanics. Sacket declined, pointing out that he had no artisans in his battalion. Shortly thereafter, Colonel Sumner had issued instruction for Montgomery to lay off all the carpenters at Fort Smith except one. This man would be discharged "as soon as the repairs immediately necessary" on the stables had been completed.

This order was followed by a War Department directive, dated April 11, announcing "no new buildings will be erected on any military station except such as can be built by the labour of the troops."

Consequently, Montgomery hadn't been able to erect the stables as authorized by Jesup. With the return of the two companies, stabling for 200 horses would be urgently needed. Montgomery wrote Jesup on August 13, inquiring whether he should prepare and forward plans and estimates for stables in anticipation of their arrival. <sup>64</sup>

Montgomery, with the approach of winter, began to worry about his hayshed. As the months passed, the timber, lumber, and shingles which had been purchased to be used in erecting the shed, through exposure to the elements, began to deteriorate. Since these materials had cost a tidy sum, the captain realized that unless they were put to the use for which they were cut, they would become worthless. Since Colonel Sumner had refused permission for soldiers to work on the sheds, Montgomery asked General Jesup to allow him to employ civilians. He calculated it would cost about \$500 to erect the shed, and within two years this amount would more than be recovered by the reduction in hay spoilage. <sup>65</sup>

On August 30 Montgomery hit General Jesup's office with another request. The beams supporting the galleries to the Officers' Quarters were decaying badly. To keep the galleries from tumbling down, the captain had to resort to propping. A number of other repairs were needed "to keep the buildings on the post in order." With Sacket's battalion due back at the Garrison by October 1, Montgomery recommended that he be allowed to employ a carpenter at from \$45 to \$50 per month to do such work. When not engaged in fixing up the buildings, the man could be used to procure timbers and prepare it for use by the wheelwrights. 66

G. A. Mayers, who had taken care of the Fort Leavenworth mules during the winter of 1858-59, approached Montgomery at the end of August. He announced that he would like to run the mules during the approaching winter for \$4 per head a month. For this figure, he would be responsible for their safe keeping, give them one-half ration of "good corn", keep them on good ranges, and provide the nedexsary fencing and herdsmen. Whenever the grazing became exhausted, Mayers would see that the mules were driven to a new range.

Montgomery was impressed with Mayers' proposition. He had no hesitation in forwarding it to General Jesup, along with a recommendation that it be accepted. As the general would recall, the captain wrote, the Fort Leavenworth mules had been in "very low condition" when turned over to Mayers. When returned to the army in the spring, the mules had recovered their strength and had rendered good service. 67

FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

Chapter XV

The 1st Cavalry Comes to Fort Smith

Notes

1 Montgomery to Jesup, March 27, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Colonel Tompkins had been transferred; Captain Montgomery would be in charge of the big depot pending the selection of a replacement.

2 Cabell to Jesup, April 7, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.); Jesup to Montgomery, April 9, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, War Dept. Files, Ltrs. Sent). Cabell had been promoted to Captain in the Quartermaster's Department on March 8, 1858. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 272.

3 Montgomery to Eastin, Apr. 16, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

4 Montgomery to Jesup, Apr. 17, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

5 Special Order, No. 73, May 14, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QGO Ltrs. Sent).

6 Montgomery to Jesup, May 21, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

7 Ibid.; Montgomery to Jesup, May 24, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

8 Eastin to Sibley, May 30, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

9 Montgomery to Jesup, May 26, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 10 Jones to Mix, Sept. 14, 1858 (National Archives, OIA, Southern Superintendency).
- 11 Arkansas Intelligencer, July 9, 1858.
- 12 Cooper to Rector, July 21, 1858 (National Archives, OIA, Southern Superintendency).
- 13 Montgomery to Jesup, Aug. 6, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 14 Montgomery to Jesup, Nov. 1, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Fort Smith Herald, Oct. 4, 1858..
- 17 Montgomery to Jesup, Nov. 4, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 18 Jesup to Montgomery, Sept. 30, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 19 Montgomery to Jesup, Oct. 11, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 20 Dobson to Montgomery, Nov. 9, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 21 Beale to Steen, Oct. 26, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.); Chronicles of Oklahoma, "Survey of a Wagon Road from Fort Smith to the Colorado River," Grant Foreman, editor, Vol. XII, No. 1, p. 74.
- 22 Steen to Montgomery, Oct. 26, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 23 Montgomery to Steen, Oct. 27, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.); Chronicles of Oklahoma, "Survey of a Wagon Road from Fort Smith to the Colorado River," Foreman, editor, Vol. XII, No. 1, p. 75.
- 24 Montgomery to Jesup, Nov. 1, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 25 Montgomery to Jesup, Oct. 28, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Atkinson to Montgomery, Oct. 25 and Jesup to Montgomery, Nov. 8, 1858. (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 28 GO 21, Nov. 6, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QGO, Ltrs. Sent).
- 29 Jesup to Montgomery, Nov. 8, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 30 Fort Smith Herald, Dec. 25, 1858. Delos Sacket had graduated from West Point in the Class of 1845 as brevet 2d lieutenant in the 1st Dragoons. Sacket had been a captain in the 1st Cavalry since March 3, 1855. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 856.
- 31 Cabell to Jesup, Dec. 13, 1858 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 32 Montgomery to Jesup, Jan. 4, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Montgomery to Jesup, Jan. 1, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 35 Montgomery to Jesup, Jan. 9, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 36 Montgomery to Jesup, Jan. 20, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Van Vliet to Jesup, March 17, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 39 Montgomery to Buell, Feb. 28, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 40 Jones to Montgomery, March 7, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 41 Montgomery to Jesup, April 6, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Contract, Montgomery with Geiger, March 5, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 44 Jesup to Montgomery, April 27, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 45 Johnson to Montgomery, May 1, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 46 Committee to Montgomery, May 7, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Members of the committee were: James Spring, A. G. Mayers, A. Hamilton Cdine, J. K. McKenzie, J. R. Kannady, R. W. Johnson, John Beckel, N. Spring, and John Rogers.
- 47 Sacket to Montgomery, May 7, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 48 Montgomery to Jesup, May 7, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 49 Jesup to Montgomery, July 23, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 50 Montgomery to Jesup, July 31, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 51 Montgomery to Sibley, July 2, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 52 Jesup to Montgomery, July 20, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 53 Montgomery to Jesup, July 2, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 54 Fort Smith Herald, May 13, 1858.
- 55 Montgomery to Jesup, July 2, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 56 Montgomery to Jesup, July 2, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 57 Cabell to Montgomery, June 29, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 58 Montgomery to Jesup, Aug. 9, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 Jones to Montgomery, July 20, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 61 Montgomery to Jesup, Aug. 9, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 62 Jesup to Montgomery, July 22, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 63 Belger to Jesup, Aug. 2, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 64 Montgomery to Jesup, Aug. 13, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 65 Montgomery to Jesup, Aug. 29, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 66 Montgomery to Jesup, Aug. 30, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 67 Montgomery to Jesup, Aug. 31, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Only three of the Fort Leavenworth mules had died after being turned over to Mayers.



FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

Chapter XVI

Fort Smith is Transferred to the Department of Texas

Secretary of War Floyd signed General Order No. 4 on July 27, 1859, which had far reaching effects on the Arkansas frontier and the Indian Territory beyond. Four companies of the 1st Infantry from Texas were to "occupy a site for a military post in the Wichita Country, near the reserve selected for the Texas Indians, to be called Fort Cobb." The two companies of the 1st Cavalry (D and E) currently stationed at Fort Arbuckle were to join the infantry not later than October 1.

Major Emory was to command the troops ordered to the Wichita Country. After selecting the site for the new garrison, he would hold his men ready to start work as soon as Congress made the necessary appropriation. The new post would be supplied from Fort Smith.

Captain Sacket's battalion wouldn't return to Fort Smith from the Antelope Hills. Instead, Sacket's troopers were to take post at Fort Arbuckle by the 1st of October.

The limits of the Department of Texas were extended "northward between New Mexico and the State of Arkansas, including Fort Smith, to the Arkansas River" and the southern boundary of Kansas without crossing either.

A courier reached Fort Arbuckle on September 6 with dispatches. Captain Prince opened a communication addressed to him as post commander and found a copy of General Order No. 4. Since Companies D and E, 1st Cavalry were to rendezvous with the 1st Infantry in the Wichita Country not later than October 1, Prince was thrown into a quandry. He knew only too well that headquarters for the Department of Texas were a long way off. To make matters more pressing, the time for

the scheduled troop movement was almost at hand. The captain determined to anticipate the instructions which he felt would be forthcoming from Brigadier General David E. Twiggs at San Antonio. Prince would call upon Captain Montgomery for the necessary transportation. Twenty-six wagons were to be loaded with supplies for Fort Arbuckle. If the train moved promptly, Prince felt certain it could reach his post by September 25. This would be in time to allow Companies D and E to start for and arrive at the projected site for Fort Cobb by October 1.

When he forwarded the requisition for the 25 wagons to Montgomery on September 10, Prince reported that Mr. Garland (who served as Major Emory's wagon master) had reached Fort Arbuckle on the 9th. Garland had told Prince that Emory had 24 wagons, the teams of which were in very poor condition. Consequently, it would be impossible to anticipate any assistance in effecting the transfer of the cavalrymen from Emory's train. At the same time, all the wagons assigned to Fort Arbuckle were either on detached service or needed for post duty. <sup>2</sup>

Major Emory received his copy of General Order No. 4 on the morning of September 10. (Emory at this time was en route back to Fort Arbuckle from the Antelope Hills.) Changing its line of march, Emory's column headed for the Texas Indian Agency. Nightfall on the 11th found Emory's troopers camped ten miles west of the agency. The major, before retiring, addressed a letter to Captain Prince. Upon reaching the agency, near where he had been directed to select a site for Fort Cobb, Emory proposed to deposit most of his supplies. Only such transportation and rations as were needed to subsist his command until the various units had returned to their stations would be retained. Lieutenant Philip Stockton with all the empty wagons would head for Fort Arbuckle. The wagons could either be used to haul the supplies and gear belonging to Companies D and E to the agency or be sent to Fort Smith.

As yet, Emory continued, nothing had been heard from San Antonio. Unless some extraordinary means were used to forward instructions,

he felt that it might be another four to six weeks before any were received. It would be necessary to anticipate orders. Emory thought Captain Cabell's presence at the agency would be indispensable. Cabell's assistance was required in preparing a list of supplies needed from the Fort Smith depot.

Prince was to notify the commander of the detachment ordered to the Wichita Country that the commissary stores Major Emory had stored at the Texas agency consisted of: 4,500 pounds of bacon, 17 barrels of flour, 500 pounds of rice, 400 pounds of desiccated vegetables, and a few unimportant small stores.<sup>3</sup>

Initially, Montgomery had supposed that the wagons which had accompanied Sacket's battalion to the Antelope Hills would be available to transport Companies D and E to the Wichita Country. He therefore hadn't anticipated Prince's call for 26 wagons. Moreover, he couldn't spare the train which was engaged in hauling supplies to Fort Arbuckle. Several days passed before Montgomery could organize another train. After equipping 25 wagons, the captain put his fatigue parties to work. The baggage and property belonging to Sacket's command was loaded.

The detachment from the battalion which had remained at the Garrison was alerted to accompany the train. Just as the wagons were getting ready to start, word reached Fort Smith that a large shipment of clothing, and camp and garrison equipage destined for the troops at Fort Arbuckle and the two companies of the 1st Cavalry slated to establish Fort Cobb was about to arrive. Montgomery detained the train several days. By the morning of September 24, the vessel with the supplies from the New Orleans depot had tied up at Fort Smith; the heavy boxes were placed on the wagons. Prior to his leaving the depot, Montgomery told the wagon master that on reaching Fort Arbuckle, he was to place his train at Captain Prince's disposal.

Montgomery didn't appear overly concerned about his failure to get the train rolling by the date indicated by Captain Prince. In

fact, the wagons were just one day's march from Fort Smith on the day Prince had hoped they would be at Fort Arbuckle. Montgomery didn't feel this was critical. If Companies D and E marched for the Wichita Country as scheduled, the stores Major Emory had stockpiled at the agency would last them until the train currently on the way from Fort Smith arrived. 4

In view of his difficulty in securing authority to build additional stables, Montgomery was undoubtedly relieved to discover that Companies A and B, 1st Cavalry wouldn't be spending a second winter at Fort Smith.

As a result of the administrative change which had placed Fort Smith in the Department of Texas, Captain Montgomery would now look to San Antonio rather than St. Louis for instructions. The captain promptly got in touch with the chief quartermaster for the Department of Texas. Major David H. Vinton.

In a letter posted on September 4, Montgomery warned Vinton that the Arkansas wasn't navigable at all seasons of the year. Worse, the periods during which steamboats could ascend to Fort Smith were irregular and of uncertain duration. He accordingly thought it would be "prudent to provide against the chances of low water by keeping on hand" at the Fort Smith depot "a reasonable supply of such articles as may be required from time to time at the posts dependent on it." It was especially important, Montgomery warned, that clothing for the troops be forwarded to the depot in the winter or early spring. If adequate supplies were stockpiled at the Garrison, he would be able to meet promptly all requisitions, and "to provide against the embarrassments and heavy expenses incident to low stages of water." 5

Vinton, in replying to Montgomery's dispatch, addressed his communication to General Jesup. On doing so, he pointed out that at the moment he was unable to judge the wants of the posts recently annexed to the Department of Texas as to Quartermaster's stores or clothes for Major Emory's troops. Vinton would like to know whether an estimate of clothing from his office was required for the current

year. Furthermore, he would like to be enlightened as to the correct procedures to be followed in requisitioning supplies for these posts. Should they be forwarded to Washington, the Assistant Quartermaster in New Orleans or Fort Smith? <sup>6</sup>

Toward the end of October, Montgomery achieved an end for which he had struggled for many years. The last of the public oxen were disposed of. They were sold to the Fort Smith butchers for \$20 a head. <sup>7</sup>

Montgomery knew that with the establishment of Fort Cobb, he would need more corn than ever before. On September 20 the captain placed an advertisement in the Fort Smith Herald. It was announced that at 2 p.m. on October 29, proposals would be opened at the office of the Fort Smith Quartermaster for the delivery of "Twenty thousand Bushels of Good Merchantable Corn."

Five thousand bushels slip shucked were to be delivered on or before December 31. The remainder, shelled and put up in "good new gunny bags, containing two bushels, or one hundred and twelve pounds" was to be turned over to the depot quartermaster on or before March 31, 1860. Bids for less than 5,000 bushels would be rejected. The names of people willing to put up security for the fulfillment of the contract would accompany the letters of proposal. Captain Montgomery reserved the right of canceling any portion of the delivery when deemed expedient on giving 30 days notice. <sup>8</sup>

Several days before the bids were slated to be opened, Captain Montgomery had a discussion with Thomas McCarron, who had expressed interest. The captain told McCarron that he wouldn't be able to accept his proposal even if it were low, because he had recently failed to execute a contract awarded him by Superintendent of Indian Affairs Elias Rector. <sup>9</sup>

At the designated hour, a number of interested persons assembled in Captain Montgomery's office. Besides the captain and a number of the bidders, Captain Burns and Mr. Burrows were present. (Burns had

been promoted to captain in the Commissary Department on November 3, 1858. Since Captain Sacket's departure from the Garrison in June, Burns had been commander of the post.) After opening and reading the proposals, Montgomery asked Burns and Burrows to abstract the bids. Upon finishing this task, Captain Burns found that McCarron had filed low bid for the shelled corn. Burns, handing the abstract to Montgomery, advised him not to accept McCarron's proposal, because "he was not able to fill the contract." Moreover, Burns warned, it was his belief that McCarron planned to sell out to the next lowest bidder.

Montgomery then announced the McCarron's proposal wouldn't be accepted, because on several previous occasions he had failed to keep faith with the government. <sup>10</sup> McCarron made no response, but left the office immediately. <sup>11</sup>

As soon as McCarron walked out, Burns and Burrows awarded the contracts to "the lowest responsible bidders." <sup>12</sup> G. D. May would supply the depot with 15,000 bushels of shelled corn at 87½¢ per bushel, while James C. Bourland was given a contract for 5,000 bushels of shucked corn at 62½¢ per bushel. The contracts which the captain signed with May and Bourland were mailed to General Jesup's office on October 31. Montgomery's clerk had a lapse of memory; he failed to forward the abstract of the bids and the performance bonds. <sup>13</sup>

Fifteen days passed before Montgomery caught this mistake. He thereupon posted the required documents. In a covering letter, the captain told of his reason for rejecting McCarron's proposal. <sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile, the contracts signed with May and Bourland had reached Washington, along with a letter from McCarron. The unsuccessful bidder wanted to know why his proposal had been rejected.

Major Sibley on November 11 dashed off a letter, directing Montgomery to suspend the agreements and to explain why McCarron's bid hadn't been accepted. <sup>15</sup>

When Sibley's message reached Fort Smith on November 19, Montgomery was absent from the post, supervising the repair of the Fort Arbuckle road. It was mid-December before the captain returned to the Garrison. Before replying to the letter from the Quartermaster General's Office, Montgomery secured several affidavits.

Captain Burns prepared a statement of what had transpired when the bids had been opened. W. B. Sutton, who had been listed by McCarron as his bondsman, swore that he wouldn't have gone his surety "unless he had other responsible & reliable securities...." A member of the Fort Smith bar, R. P. Pulliam, wrote that he didn't know of any property in the town or county owned by McCarron. "If he has any credit," the lawyer observed, "I do not know it, nor do I know that he has not, for it is hard to know how some men get credit in this town." From past experiences in trying to collect "honest debts" from McCarron, Pulliam was convinced by what he knew of his "visible means out of which a debt could be made by law" that he wasn't worth \$50. 16

Along with these affidavits, Montgomery sent a letter reviewing the transactions which had preceded the awarding of the contracts. To justify his action in throwing out McCarron's bid, the captain noted, it had been his understanding that there was a government ruling "when a bidder fails to come forward to execute a contract awarded to him as the lowest bidder, that he be held, ever afterwards unworthy of consideration in such matters." In addition, he didn't believe McCarron honestly intended to assume the contract on the terms proposed. Finally, Montgomery didn't think the disappointed contractor could obtain "good and reliable" sureties. 17

A second letter on the subject was forwarded to Washington by Montgomery on December 23. Montgomery questioned Major Sibley's logic in ordering the contracts suspended. The time when Bourland was to make delivery on the 5,000 bushels of shucked corn was almost

at hand. If General Jesup would examine the abstract, he would discover that McCarron's bid on this delivery was 6½¢ per bushel higher than Bourland's. Consequently, McCarron didn't have the slightest vestige of a claim to this award. Unless the general set aside Sibley's ruling, Bourland would be released from his obligation. If this happened, Montgomery was satisfied it would cost the government not less than 80 to 85¢ per bushel for shucked corn. This increase in cost being due to the expense of cribbing, and the seasonal rise in prices as corn became scarce.

If the Department compelled him to cancel the contract with May, the captain didn't believe any responsible man would undertake the delivery of 15,000 bushels of shelled corn for less than \$1 per bushel. This would be a difference of \$1,875 against the government.

Montgomery reiterated his argument that McCarron was not a responsible bidder. It had therefore been his duty to reject the bid. The captain had just one regret: Why had Secretary of War Floyd and Major Sibley shown so little confidence in his discretion? 18

General Jesup on January 6, 1860, forwarded the correspondence treating with the McCarron case to the Secretary of War.

At the same time, the general addressed a note to Captain Montgomery. Jesup notified the captain that his contract with Bourland had been approved. When Major Sibley had written Montgomery suspending both contracts, the abstract of the bids hadn't reached his desk. The general chided the Fort Smith Quartermaster that "negligence of a clerk can not be admitted as an apology for withholding papers necessary to the forming of correct opinions here on matters affecting the public interest, particularly" when he had signed the letter transmitting the contracts. If a loss occurred, Jesup warned, it will not result from "Major Sibley's actions but from your omission, not your clerk's."

Turning to McCarron's bid for the shelled corn, the general announced that his bid should have been accepted, or all the proposals set aside.



Montgomery had no right to refuse a bid \$1,200 lower than any other "without being certain at the time that the bidder could not give the required security." By his action, Montgomery had placed both himself and the Department in the wrong.

The general ruled that McCarron's reneging on his agreement with Superintendent Rector didn't constitute a valid reason for rejecting his proposal. This was especially true in view of McCarron having fulfilled his obligation to supply the post with fuel. According to Jesup, Montgomery's objection "if applicable to a contract for corn, would be equally applicable to a contract for wood." 19

Montgomery answered his superior's communication on January 18. He was unable to agree with Jesup's reasoning. Since Superintendent Rector was known to be in Washington, the captain suggested the general discuss with him whether McCarron could be considered responsible in a contract, especially one in which a large sum of money was involved.

If Jesup would examine his files, he would discover the fuel contract with McCarron had been let on January 17, 1859. The contract with Rector for which McCarron had refused to give bond had been signed in September, only a few weeks before the corn proposals were opened.

Quoting from the regulations, Montgomery wrote, "Contracts will be made with the lowest responsible bidder....But when such lowest bids are unreasonable they will be rejected and bids again invited by public notice." Since he didn't consider McCarron a responsible bidder, he had rejected his proposal. Simultaneously, he was satisfied that May was "the lowest responsible bidder." May's proposition not being unreasonable, it had been accepted. 20

Meanwhile, Montgomery had received a list of the Quartermaster's stores required by Major Emory's command and the posts dependent on the Fort Smith depot. The captain, after checking his inventory, forwarded on November 4 an estimate of his needs to headquarters of the Department of Texas. (See Appendix AA)

Major Vinton received the correspondence on the 18th. After examining Montgomery's wants, Vinton referred them to General Twiggs,

with a request that they be approved and mailed to General Jesup. Notification of this action was forwarded to Captain Montgomery.

As the weeks passed and no stores arrived, Montgomery began to grow uneasy. To make matters worse, requests from the post quartermasters began to arrive. When Montgomery was unable to fill their requisitions, the calls were repeated in more pressing terms. Captain Cabell from Fort Cobb wrote, "We are now absolutely in need of all the Quartermaster's property called for by the requisition."

Not having heard anything concerning his estimates since Major Vinton had announced they were being sent to Washington, Montgomery feared they might have been lost between San Antonio and the capital. On March 11 a letter and a duplicate set of requisitions were forwarded to General Jesup. Unless the stores were received within the near future, Montgomery warned, he would be compelled to purchase the items for which the post quartermasters were calling locally. <sup>21</sup>

Captain Thomas G. Pitcher of the 8th U. S. Infantry had reached Fort Smith in the first week of December. Pitcher was in charge of the escort for the commission charged with marking the Texas boundary. Calling upon Montgomery, Pitcher informed him that his detachment needed supplies to see it back to Santa Fe. Besides mules, the captain needed clothing for his command and \$500 to buy forage on the return march to New Mexico. (See Appendix BB) After having Captain Pitcher sign the necessary vouchers, Montgomery gave him the requested funds. <sup>22</sup>

\* \* \*

In the meantime, a letter from Major Sibley posted on November 16 had reached Fort Smith. When he read the communication, Montgomery found that the Department was concerned about the large number of mules assigned to the Fort Smith depot. The Washington people believed the number was "greater than is required by the necessities of the service." This opinion was strengthened by the receipt of the captain's estimates for December and January which "embraced" an item for foraging 300 "unemployed public animals."

Secretary of War Floyd and General Jesup, Sibley wrote, were desirous that "the number of animals of the Q. M. Dept. be reduced

to the lowest possible limit consistent with efficiency." Montgomery was to notify promptly the Department how many of the Fort Smith mules could be spared and "still leave a sufficient number to enable" him to conduct his duties in an efficient manner.

The number of people employed by the Fort Smith depot was likewise considered very large and would have to be reduced as soon as possible. Moreover, Sibley continued, "the cost of transporting supplies to the posts dependent on Fort Smith in the manner it is now done is so great that it has become a matter of interest to this Dept. to know whether the transportation cannot be effected at a less expense to the Government by Contract." Montgomery was to investigate and report on this subject, so it could be referred to Secretary of War Floyd. <sup>23</sup>

Montgomery estimated on December 3 he would need about 70 wagons and teams to keep the troops at Forts Arbuckle, Cobb, and Washita supplied in 1860. Allowing for a reserve of 40 mules, 460 animals would be required to keep this number of wagons in operation. The cost of maintaining this amount of transportation for one year, the captain placed at:

80 Teamsters (10 extra) @ \$25 per mo.	\$24,000.00
2 Wagon Masters @ \$60 per mo.	1,440.00
3 Asst. Wagon Masters @ \$45 per mo.	1,620.00
Forage for 460 mules	
35,770 Bushels @ \$1.25 per bushel	44,712.00
Hay and Fodder	2,500.00
Wear and tear of harness, wagons, and equipment	3,000.00
Cost of repairing the same	1,500.00
Shoeing mules, medicines, salt,&c.	<u>2,500.00</u>
	81,272.00
6 percent interest on this amount	<u>4,815.15</u>
	<u>\$86,147.15</u>

The captain calculated the amount of freight to be hauled during the year:

To Fort Washita	100 Tons
To Fort Arbuckle	150 Tons
To Fort Cobb	300 Tons

After discussing the situation with local contractors, Montgomery assumed they would charge the government \$3.50 per hundredweight to haul supplies to Fort Washita, \$4.50 to Fort Arbuckle, and \$6 to Fort Cobb. The cost of doing business through contractors would be:

6 per cent interest	\$56,500.00
	<u>3,390.00</u>
Cost with public means	59,890.00
	<u>86,147.65</u>
Difference in favor of contracting the hauling	\$26,257.65

Turning to the other question raised by Major Sibley, Montgomery reported that as of November 30, he had 874 mules. Of these, 84 were to be turned over to Captain Pitcher's party. This would leave 790 mules at the depot. If 80 instead of 40 were kept as a reserve, it left a surplus of 110. It so happened there were about that number which were overage, undersized, or incapable of rendering efficient service. Montgomery recommended these animals be sold. If they were, he believed, they would bring from \$45 to \$75 each. Should it be determined to dispose of the serviceable mules, prices of from \$100 to \$150 could be anticipated.

Montgomery took this opportunity to remind the Washington people that the Arkansas had crested. The master of a boat which was about to start for New Orleans told the captain he would bring stores up to Fort Smith for \$1 per hundredweight. Montgomery thought this a bargain, because in periods of low water, he had been in the habit of paying \$2.50 per 100 pounds to get goods brought up from the mouth of the Arkansas. Then, to make matters worse, these small steamboats were generally inferior and the trip was very slow. Consequently, the supplies in many cases were "more or less injured by the delay and exposure." In view of this situation, Montgomery wished to place himself on record as recommending that henceforth the bulk of the stores be forwarded to the depot between December 1 and April 30. <sup>24</sup>

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Major Sibley studied Montgomery's dispatch on January 2. The data submitted was carefully analyzed. When he relayed the letter to Secretary of War Floyd, Sibley recommended Captain Montgomery be given authority to advertise for proposals to haul "all Military supplies" to the posts dependent on the Fort Smith depot. Subject to the Secretary's and the Quartermaster General's approval, the captain would be empowered to make a contract with the lowest bidder. Sibley was in agreement that the 110 mules listed as disposable should be sold at public auction. As soon as a contract for the supply of the advance forts had been negotiated, and the post quartermasters were satisfied they had sufficient transportation, the rest of the mules were to be sent to Fort Leavenworth. 25

Seven days later, Secretary Floyd approved all of Sibley's recommendations except one. No mules were to be sent to Fort Leavenworth. 26

General Jesup's office lost no time forwarding this information to Captain Montgomery. The captain quickly drew up the necessary public notice which was carried by the Fort Smith Times on January 31. To make certain that the news obtained the widest possible circulation, Montgomery made arrangements for it to appear in the Little Rock True Democrat, the Fayetteville Arkansan, the Memphis Avalanche, the St. Louis Republican, and the Texas State Gazette.

According to the advertisement, sealed proposals would be received at the office of the Fort Smith Quartermaster until 12 noon on Saturday, February 25, 1860. These bids would be for the transportation of "Military Stores and supplies from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to Fort Washita, Fort Arbuckle, Camp Cobb and to such other Forts and Camps as may be established in that section of the country," during the period April 30, 1860 to May 1, 1861. The prospective contractors were to state the cost of transportation per hundredweight for each 100 miles. Each bid would have to be guaranteed by at least two co-sureties. 27

United States Representative Thomas C. Hindman was very interested in seeing that one of his constituents received the contract. To ascertain

the feeling of the Quartermaster's Department on the subject, the Arkansas congressman discussed the situation at length with General Jesup. The general assured Hindman that interested parties must be prepared to post "ample bond, both in amount and security." Hindman wrote his friend, G. A. Mayer, repeating what the general had said. No contract, he warned, would be confirmed unless Captain Montgomery was satisfied the bond would effectually prevent loss to the government. Mayer showed the congressman's letter to Montgomery.

The captain accordingly fixed the bond to be put up by the interested parties at \$150,000. <sup>28</sup>

When he examined and abstracted the proposals, Captain Montgomery found that R. C. Armistead had advanced the low bid for transporting the supplies. Armistead promised to undertake the task for \$1.47 per hundredweight for each 100 miles. Checking Armistead's sureties, Montgomery found their joint properties totalled \$142,000, and their ascertained liabilities on other bonds \$125,000. This left an unencumbered estate of \$17,000. Under these circumstances, Montgomery gave Armistead ten days in which to make good his bond. <sup>29</sup>

Armistead was unable to raise the necessary bond in the allotted time. Consequently, on March 8, the captain awarded the contract to G. A. Mayer, the next lowest bidder who was able to post bond in the amount required. Mayer's rate schedule was:

- From Fort Smith to Fort Arbuckle \$1.85 a hundredweight per 100 miles.
- From Fort Smith to Fort Washita \$1.95 a hundredweight per 100 miles.
- From Fort Smith to Fort Cobb \$1.80 a hundredweight per 100 miles.
- To any point beyond Fort Cobb \$1.75 a hundredweight per 100 miles.
- Or the whole at an average of \$1.83 a hundredweight per 100 miles.

Armistead protested that the bond was exorbitant. He pointed out that the acceptance of Mayer's bid would cost the government several thousand additional dollars.

Hindman, fearful lest Secretary of War Floyd veto Mayer's contract, brought political influence to bear. Writing Secretary Floyd on March 28, Hindman noted that Mayer's proposal was 20% less than the government had previously paid for identical transportation. Moreover, it was lower than that paid by the Fort Smith merchants. This, in Hindman's mind, justified a doubt of Armistead's ability to abide by his proposal. <sup>30</sup>

Resisting the pressure brought by Hindman, Secretary Floyd on April 2 disallowed the contract Montgomery had signed with Mayer. The Secretary was satisfied that a bond of from \$30,000 to \$40,000 would be sufficient.

Affixing his comments to Hindman's letter four days after Floyd had made his ruling, Jesup wrote, "By your decision in the case several thousand dollars will be saved to the Treasury, which would have been lost if Mr. Hindman's views had governed." <sup>31</sup>

Ordnance Sergeant C. P. Swift had written Chief of Ordnance Craig on February 1, complaining of lack of space in which to store ordnance supplies at Fort Smith. Swift's letter was referred by Colonel Craig to General Jesup. <sup>32</sup>

The Quartermaster General on the 23d addressed a sharp memorandum to Montgomery concerning this situation. A magazine, the general pointed out, shouldn't "be used for the promiscuous storage of powder, ammunition, boxes, &c., &c." As a solution to this problem, a storeroom ought to be provided for "Ordnance property, other than powder & ammunition; without regard to the Corps or rank of the Consignee." <sup>33</sup>

Before replying, Montgomery called on Sergeant Swift. The sergeant agreed to write Colonel Craig. He pointed out that he had no intention of lodging a complaint against Montgomery and was sorry his letter had been so construed. When the sergeant had complained to the captain of the danger of storing large boxes in the magazine, Montgomery had seen that they were transferred to the Quartermaster's Storehouse. <sup>34</sup>

Montgomery forwarded a copy of Swift's message to General Jesup on March 5. At the same time, the captain observed, the shed formerly used for storing ordnance property had long been unfit for that purpose. Information regarding this situation had been contained in the captain's annual "Report of Additions and Alterations" which had been filed on July 12, 1859. Plans and estimates for a gunshed and ordnance storeroom had been included in his annual report. Until this moment, Montgomery complained, no mention had been made of their receipt.

At present, supplies could be stored in the barracks, but if troops should be ordered to Fort Smith, a new ordnance storeroom would be required. 35

Armistead took over the task of supplying the advance posts at the beginning of May. Low water on the Arkansas threatened to hamstring his efforts within the first 60 days. Only a small portion of the stores had reached the depot from New Orleans by the end of the fourth week of June. Masters of several of the vessels finding that they were unable to reach Fort Smith had landed and stored their cargoes. Armistead's agent at the depot, R. S. Nash, estimated that within the next ten days all supplies which had reached the post would be loaded and ready for transportation. He accordingly asked Captain Montgomery to take measures to see that the supplies stored below were conveyed to the Garrison at the earliest opportunity,

Nash believed this request was justified, because no rise could be anticipated on the Arkansas before late fall or winter. If the contractor had to wait on water-borne transportation, it would be months before the supplies arrived. Such a delay, he reasoned, would cause suffering at the advance posts. Captain Burns had told Nash that there were only enough rations stockpiled at the forward forts to last until January 1.

All government contractors, Nash observed, understood they were to haul with the "benefit of grass." Armistead had been aware of this



when he had submitted his bid. Nash urged Montgomery to give the problem of forwarding the supplies to Fort Smith prompt attention, 36

Montgomery took up the subject immediately. Addressing a covering letter to Major Sibley, the captain pointed out that the supplies in question had been consigned to Fort Smith, "at certain specified rates." They wouldn't be surrendered at the points where they were now stored, "except on terms at variance with the terms of the original bills of lading." Unless he was authorized by Washington, Montgomery didn't feel he had authority to settle with the carriers now holding the stores on terms other than those expressed in the bills.

The Fort Smith merchants, to avoid unnecessary delay, when their goods were stored because of low water found it to their interest to accept and pay for the freight as if it had been delivered to Fort Smith. They would transship the merchandise from the entrepot at their own expense.

Few masters, Montgomery pointed out, respected their bills of lading. At the same time, "Arkansas law" was more uncertain than the "Arkansas river in its movements."

Eighty tons of quartermaster's and subsistence stores had been put ashore by the captain of the Isaac Shelby at Lewisburg. These, along with those warehoused at other points on the river, should be brought up to Fort Smith as early as possible, Montgomery wrote. Since the quartermaster's stores were needed for the construction of Fort Cobb, they ought to have been already on their way.

Like Nash, Montgomery was unable to predict when the Arkansas would again be navigable. Within the next ten days, he hoped to have at least 20 wagons available. These could be used to establish a shuttle service to bring up the supplies as rapidly as they were required. Consequently, Montgomery was not ready to advise that a contract be let for their hauling. The captain wasn't prepared to abandon hope that a slight rise might enable light-draft steamers to ascend to Fort Smith.

To expedite matters, Montgomery would let Forage Master J. L. Rider carry this correspondence to Washington. If Sibley deemed it proper, Rider

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could rush back to the Arkansas by way of Memphis and Napoleon. At either of these two shipping centers, the forage master might be able to make arrangements for the charter of several light-draft steamers, 37

Rider left Fort Smith on the Butterfield Stage on June 29.

General Jesup had died on June 10. Ten days later, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph E. Johnston was made Quartermaster General of the United States. When Rider reached Washington on July 7, he turned over to General Johnston the mail he carried. The general acted immediately. A message was forwarded by telegraph and mail for Captain Montgomery "to procure at once the public supplies now in store at Lewisburg on the best terms." Johnston would leave it to the captain's discretion as to the manner they should be transported to Fort Smith. 38

Turning to Rider, Johnston ordered him to return "to the Arkansas river & get possession on the most advantageous terms possible for the Government of all the military supplies on that river below Lewisburg, & ship them by light draught boats to Fort Smith, or to the highest point on the Arkansas that can be reached by them." In making these arrangements, Rider was to "procure the transportation at the lowest cost practicable." 39

Rider reached Napoleon on July 15. He found the steamer Pine Bluff, loaded with government supplies consigned from the New Orleans depot to Fort Smith, moored to the bank. Speaking with the master, Rider learned that the Pine Bluff had been tied up for about 70 days waiting for a rise to enable her to enter the Arkansas. After settling with the captain at a pro rata rate, Rider had the stores transferred to a light-draft steamer, the Alamo, which he had chartered. He believed the Alamo would be able to reach Lewisburg, 370 miles above Napoleon. People familiar with the river assured Rider that it would be impossible for any steamboat afloat to ascend beyond Lewisburg. Even so, a barge would have to be taken along to be used in getting the freight across bars. For this service, the government agreed to pay \$1.50 per hundred-weight.

Writing General Johnston on the night of the 15th of the day's happenings, Rider reported, there were a number of vessels with military stores grounded between Napoleon and Little Rock. Orders had been

obtained from two of the masters allowing Rider to pick up the supplies, provided the army paid pro rata fees. As soon as he reached Lewisburg with the Alamo and she had discharged her cargo, Rider would return down river. All remaining government property destined for Fort Smith, whether stored or afloat, would be brought upstream. <sup>40</sup>

In the mail which reached Fort Smith on July 17, Montgomery received an important letter from Major Vinton, posted 15 days before. Vinton wanted to know if the Fort Smith depot could furnish him 40 wagons with teams and harness.

Replying the next day, Montgomery announced that he would be able to supply the wagons and harness but not the mules. At the moment, there were only 32 surplus mules of inferior quality at the post. The rest of the depot mules were being employed to haul the army stores which were stranded along the river between Fort Smith and Little Rock. Montgomery calculated it would be the middle of October before this task was completed.

By that time, the transportation which Montgomery had assigned to the troops in the field under Captain Samuel D. Sturgis of the 1st Cavalry should be available. The only thing that might interfere with ordering these mules and wagons to Vinton would be the failure of Armistead to meet his schedule. If this happened, the captain would be compelled to use the animals with Sturgis. Should it become necessary to call on Armistead to haul a large amount of stores after it was no longer possible to graze the livestock, the service would be unable to pay him the agreed rates. Armistead accordingly would be unable to execute his contract.

If it were again necessary to send a column into the field in the spring of 1861, nearly all the Fort Smith mules would be required. Large numbers of mules were raised in Benton and Washington counties for the East Texas and Louisiana markets. Montgomery, if given authority, could purchase on short call the requisite number of mules to field 40 teams. These teams, with wagons and harness, could be en route to Texas on "a notice of 20 days." <sup>41</sup>

Over a year had passed since work on the steps leading to the Officers' Quarters and barracks had been suspended in response to Jesup's injunction. Before his death, Jesup had received a note from Secretary of War Floyd approving Montgomery's recommendation that Geiger be allowed "to finish the work at the Barracks at Fort Smith so far as material has been prepared," the cost all told not to exceed \$1,800.

Henceforth in negotiating contracts, Jesup warned, Montgomery "must be more careful to keep the Department in the right." This would be insured by inviting fair competition, "either in the open market, if there be not time to invite proposals, or by taking the lowest bid in all cases." The low bidder must be given an opportunity to prove his "Competency." 42

Since \$686 had already been paid Geiger for his work on the steps in 1859, Montgomery would have to hold the cost of completing the project to \$1,114, if he were to keep within the limitations established by the Secretary. The captain placed the cost of finishing the steps at \$1,114, which would allow for the cutting and laying of 1,114 superficial feet of stone at \$1 per foot. Montgomery on July 7 posted his estimate and covering letter. 43

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Johnston, like his predecessor, found himself hard-pressed by finances. On August 16 he cautioned Montgomery that the expenses of the depot at Fort Smith seemed "too great" for the object for which it was maintained. The number of mechanics, wagon masters, teamsters, herders, etc. on the Department payroll appeared to be way out of line for the "amount of work required of the depot." Unless a great reduction in expenses could be effected, Johnston warned, it would be "necessary to break up the depot & adopt at Fort Smith the plan pursued at St. Paul." At St. Paul, the Department had employed a "forwarding merchant," at a considerable saving to the public. 44

The captain acknowledged the general's message on the 23d. At this time, he noted, a train of six wagons was en route to Forts Arbuckle and

Cobb. These vehicles were loaded with articles badly needed at the advance posts. Armistead hadn't been prepared to haul these stores on their arrival from Lewisburg. The rest of the public wagons were engaged in bringing up supplies from Lewisburg and Norristown, and would be engaged in this task until all the public property stored at those points was at the depot.

Montgomery assured Johnston that he was making such reductions in expenditures as could be safely undertaken at Fort Smith. But as long as he had to keep and operate a train, it was impossible to dispense with all the mechanics. At the moment, a large number of wagons required repairs. As soon as this work had been completed, the captain promised to reduce his force of skilled craftsmen.

Recently, General Twiggs had authorized Montgomery to fence the stables and granaries. To carry out this project, several men had been added to the payroll. Moreover, the captain continued, the "public buildings" on the post were very valuable. In the absence of a garrison, it was "indispensably necessary to employ labour to keep them in condition." These men were also available to assist in the receiving and forwarding of stores.

A herder had been retained to look after broken down animals. Montgomery and Commissary of Subsistence Burns were in agreement that these animals ought to be sold. If Johnston agreed, it would enable Montgomery to lop one man off the payroll.

Under no circumstances would Montgomery place himself on record as urging the abandonment of Fort Smith. If the post were broken up, the captain argued, "The service, as regards this frontier, would be most seriously embarrassed." He felt Fort Smith bore the same relation to the Arkansas frontier as Fort Leavenworth did to the Kansas and Nebraska frontiers. A proper observance of the period when the Arkansas was navigable as high as Fort Smith, and a judicious conformity thereto in the purchase and forwarding of supplies would solve most of the problems. Montgomery believed recently established Fort Butler could

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be "better supplied" from Fort Smith than any other point. As a general rule, trains heading west in the spring could leave Fort Smith six weeks earlier than Fort Leavenworth. <sup>45</sup>

It would not be long before troops reached Fort Smith. A battalion of the 2d Light Artillery (Companies E and F) which were stationed at Fort Leavenworth received marching orders on September 7. The battalion commander, Captain James Totten, was to proceed to Fort Smith with his artillerists as soon as possible. A requisition was handed to Post Quartermaster Captain Van Vliet for transportation and funds. Six 6-mule teams and wagons were made available to Captain Totten for the transportation of the battalion's subsistence stores and the officers' baggage. One 4-mule spring wagon was provided as an ambulance. The battalion, 172 strong, marched for Fort Smith on September 9. <sup>46</sup>

The batteries rolled into Fort Smith on September 29, having marched 330 miles since leaving Fort Leavenworth. Company E remained at Fort Smith only three days. On October 2 the battery started for Augusta, Georgia, where it arrived on the 19th. <sup>47</sup>

Captain Totten notified Montgomery on October 13 that he had received orders to return with his battery to Fort Leavenworth. If all went according to schedule, he planned to put his artillerists in motion on the 15th, Monday. Totten told the Quartermaster that he needed from four to seven wagons to transport the subsistence, baggage, and clothing belonging to his unit. These, along with the teams, would be turned over to Captain Van Vliet upon the column's arrival at Fort Leavenworth.

An unlooked for hitch developed; it was the 16th before Company F took the field. Nightfall on October 24 found the battery camped on Cow Creek, 165 miles from Fort Smith. Here, orders were received for Totten to countermarch his cannoneers. The next morning, Company F started for Fort Smith via Fort Gibson. Totten's command returned to Fort Smith during the first week of November. On November 27,

in accordance to orders from headquarters Department of the West, the battery headed for Little Rock. Company F reached its new station on December 10, having marched 850 miles since leaving Fort Leavenworth in September. <sup>48</sup>

When he wrote Johnston on October 13, Montgomery, besides discussing the movements of the artillery, observed that all the loose mules were in hand and on the range. The grass for this season of the year was unusually good. As yet, it hadn't been necessary to give these animals any forage. If the weather continued mild, the captain felt, he could hold off on the forage until the middle of November. From then till spring, to insure that the mules would be ready for service, it would be necessary to give them at least half rations of corn.

Except when the ground was covered with snow (which was infrequent at Fort Smith) it was unnecessary to feed the mules hay. The grass found in the river bottoms sufficed. Although the corn crop had been well below average on the Arkansas in 1860, Montgomery believed the mules could be foraged, salted, and herded during the winter at a cost of 20¢ per diem. The captain, on checking his records, reported it had cost 16 2/3¢ a day to winter the mules the previous winter.

Montgomery was able to report at this time that most of the supplies stranded by lowwater in the Arkansas had been hauled to Fort Smith. The return of a train sent to Des Arc to bring in stores put ashore at Napoleon would complete the long drawn out and heartbreaking undertaking. As soon as these wagons reached Fort Smith, the captain planned "to break up the teams," except such as necessary to meet the current demands of the depot and contingencies. <sup>49</sup>

On October 16 Montgomery received an interesting note from Armistead. Armistead wished a list of all military supplies hauled to the advance posts in public trains since the inauguration of the contract. <sup>50</sup>

Montgomery suspected that Armistead planned to use this data to prepare a claim against the government. Upon being questioned, Armistead admitted as much, remarking he would be sustained by precedent. In

their discussion, the contractor argued that Montgomery in demanding the bond had estimated the amount of supplies to be transported at 600 tons. Consequently, Montgomery was bound to allow him to haul stores up to and including that figure. Although he hadn't transported much more than 300 tons of freight, Armistead expected the government to pay him as if he had hauled 600 tons.

Referring this matter to General Johnston on the 18th, the captain pointed out that Article 10 of the contract stipulated, "nothing herein shall be so construed as to forbid the United States from using its own means of transportation for such service, whenever it may be deemed advisable to do so."

The captain felt the real reason for Armistead's complaint was that the contract had not been as profitable as anticipated. Montgomery believed Armistead was looking for a pretext to withdraw. Commissary Burns had told the captain that in all probability he would have to throw a large quantity of rations into the advance posts during the winter. Should Armistead be required to transport these subsistence stores, it would involve him in great loss. Since the contractor employed oxen exclusively, Montgomery was satisfied that one team couldn't haul enough corn to Fort Cobb and back to maintain itself and a second drawing stores. Moreover, corn couldn't be secured along the way until the next crop had been made. Indeed, there wouldn't be enough corn for the inhabitants of the Indian Territory. Montgomery informed Johnston that unless he was badly mistaken, corn at Fort Smith would be selling for from \$1.50 to \$1.75 a bushel before spring.

In replying to Montgomery's inquiry about what he would do if Captain Burns called for transportation, Armistead replied, "it could not be expected of him that he would meet such [a] demand." If this happened, Montgomery informed Johnston, the emergency would have to be met by public teams.



During the past hauling season, the captain reported, he hadn't used government transportation to carry supplies to the advance posts except in emergencies when the teams and wagons which it was necessary to keep on hand were idle or when the vehicles from the forward forts were returning empty. For example, several wagons which were to be turned over to Captain Cabell were about to start for Forts Arbuckle and Cobb. These vehicles had been loaded with freight. Could Armistead, Montgomery inquired of Johnston, "under a proper construction of his Contract have required that I should forego this opportunity of using the public means?"

Before answering Armistead's letter of the 16th, Montgomery wished to learn Johnston's thoughts on the subject. 51

Two letters written by Major Vinton during the fourth week of September reached Captain Montgomery at this time. Vinton complained that a number of items (saddle blankets, wagon covers, harness thread, etc.) which had been requisitioned for the use of the troops at Fort Cobb on October 4, 1859, and could have been purchased from the Fort Smith merchants hadn't. Instead, Montgomery had ordered these supplies from the Quartermaster's Depots at St. Louis and New Orleans. Montgomery interpreted this to mean that he had been ordered to buy these stores. Checking his files, the captain found the document in question. It read, "The Asst. Qr. Mr. at Fort Smith, will issue the articles called for within as modified in red ink." He was unable to see how this endorsement could possibly authorize him to purchase supplies he didn't have on hand.

On November 4 of the previous year, Montgomery had transmitted his requisitions to Headquarters Department of Texas. In a covering letter, a copy of which had been sent to Major Vinton, Montgomery had explained that the items required by Captain Cabell at Fort Cobb had been included. Vinton had acknowledged the receipt of Montgomery's correspondence on November 18, and announced that the list had been referred to General Twiggs with a request that it be forwarded to the Quartermaster General.

The next Montgomery heard of the matter was on April 21. Major Vinton had written him four weeks before, inquiring why the supplies requested by Captain Cabell for Fort Cobb hadn't been forthcoming. Montgomery had notified Vinton that none of the articles called for in his estimates of November 4 had yet been received at the depot. Furthermore, he hadn't been authorized to purchase locally.

All that he currently knew about the situation was that the estimates had been approved by the Quartermaster General on February 18, and the invoices had cleared the St. Louis and New Orleans depots at the end of March. Since the invoices didn't coincide with the estimates on a number of items, Montgomery presumed the Quartermaster General's office had made changes.

Notwithstanding these embarrassments, the captain wrote Vinton on October 15 he was satisfied that the troops at Fort Cobb had been supplied from the depot with "all articles indispensably necessary, and that Captain Cabell has had no very great or just cause of complaint." Whenever it had been called to his attention that items were needed at the advance posts, Montgomery had assumed the responsibility of buying them locally. He didn't believe the troops at Fort Cobb had suffered "materially for want of Boring Machines, or morticing machines," because they had been abundantly supplied with augers and chisels. 52

A copy of the letter to Vinton was sent to General Johnston on October 19. On doing so, Montgomery pointed out, "how much the Service suffers from the 'Circumlocution' system now obtaining in regard to the Posts dependent upon this Depot." To cut down confusion and reduce red tape, Montgomery suggested that the estimates for the posts to be supplied from Fort Smith be sent by the depot quartermaster direct to Washington and not through department headquarters. 53

A letter written by General Johnston on October 25 reached Fort Smith on November 5. Opening the dispatch, Captain Montgomery found that it was in reply to his communication of the 18th. Johnston wished to have a number of questions answered. He wanted to know: How many teams would be needed at the depot during the winter? What would the captain use them for? Could Contractor Armistead be relied on to transport all the stores to the three posts dependent on Fort Smith? What would it cost to supply Forts Washita and Arbuckle with corn from Fort Smith? 54

If Armistead could be relied upon to haul all the stores from the depot to the forward posts, Montgomery believed 25 or 30 teams would suffice. This opinion was conditioned by several factors. It would be necessary to send several teams and wagons with the recruits and horses scheduled to pass through the depot en route to Forts Arbuckle, Cobb, and Washita. Should supplies be ordered to the depot within the next several months, it would probably be necessary because of low water to have them sent to Des Arc on White River. The public teams would

be used to transport them to Fort Smith. Unless seriously mistaken, the captain didn't believe the Arkansas would be navigable to Fort Smith before mid-February. In case the subsistence stores had to be transported from Des Arc, 50 or 60 teams would be required. If it were decided to supply Fort Arbuckle with corn and should the contractor refuse, Montgomery felt certain all the wagons and teams currently at the depot would be needed.

The conversation with Armistead described in his letter of October 18 had convinced the captain that the contractor couldn't be counted on to transport military supplies during the winter.

Turning to the question of supplying Forts Arbuckle and Washita with corn from the depot, the captain assured the general, that it would be very costly. At the moment, corn could be purchased at Fort Smith for \$1.98 3/4 per bushel. If Armistead hauled the corn to Fort Arbuckle, the price would be increased to \$2.73 3/4 a bushel; should public teams be used, the cost would be about \$2.58 3/4 per bushel. This figure included 10% for wear and tear; an additional half ration for the mules so employed; a wagon master at \$60 per month and an assistant wagon master at \$45 for every 25 teams.

If the river suddenly became navigable, Montgomery believed he could purchase corn on the Wabash for 87 1/2 to 90¢ a bushel. The only problem would be getting the corn down the Ohio before it froze over. Consequently, the captain recommended that he be allowed to send an agent to the Wabash. A large quantity of corn would be bought and shipped up the Arkansas to the highest "attainable" point to await the winter's rise. 55

Armistead was not present, so Montgomery referred Johnston's inquiry as to whether he could be counted on to haul supplies during the winter to his agent, Mr. Nash. Agent Nash informed the captain on November 13 that he couldn't answer. He suggested Montgomery wait and ask Armistead, who was scheduled to reach the fort in about five days. 56

A large number of recruits slated to join the 1st and 2d Cavalry Regiments had been sent to Fort Leavenworth in late October. On November 13, Captain Innis N. Palmer who was in charge of this detachment called upon Captain Van Vliet to furnish him transportation for 8 officers, 195 enlisted men, 12 laundresses, and 8 officers' servants to Fort Smith. Rations to last for 29 days would be carried. 57 The day before, the ordnance people had asked Van Vliet to provide them with space on the wagons for 27 boxes

of ordnance stores for the 1st and 2d Cavalry. Each box would weigh 258 pounds. 58

Van Vliet was in the habit of moving promptly. By the morning of the 14th, 25 wagons and one ambulance had been readied and loaded. As soon as the men were formed and inspected, Captain Palmer gave the word and the column moved out. Because of the lateness of the season, Van Vliet saw that four of the wagons were filled with corn for the mules. Palmer was to inform Montgomery on his arrival at Fort Smith that the train was to be returned to its base as early as practicable. 59

The arrival of the recruits at this time embarrassed Captain Montgomery. After having fitted out 40 teams and a number of spare mules which he had been directed by General Johnston to dispatch to Fort Leavenworth, Montgomery found that he didn't have sufficient "serviceable animals" to send the recruits to their permanent stations. He was compelled to employ some of the mules and wagons which Captain Palmer had bought to transfer the Forts Arbuckle and Washita detachments and their baggage to their destinations. The remainder of Palmer's train had to be ordered to Des Arc to pick up subsistence stores for Captain Burns' department. Unless something unforeseen developed, Montgomery believed these wagons and teams would be back at Fort Smith by Christmas. They would then be released and allowed to return to Fort Leavenworth.

= When he notified Johnston of his actions on December 8, Montgomery pointed out that should the need for the services of these teams at Fort Leavenworth have passed, he hoped they could be assigned to the Fort Smith depot. He felt certain they would be needed to haul additional supplies from Des Arc, and possibly to transport military stores to the posts dependent on Fort Smith. 60

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In June, Montgomery had received important instructions from department headquarters at San Antonio. If a detail (two officers and

40 men) could be provided by the commandant at Fort Cobb, Montgomery was to reconnoiter and open a road connecting Fort Smith with Fort Cobb. This task was to be undertaken as soon as possible. On July 15, a letter reached the depot from Captain Daniel Huston, who was in charge at Fort Cobb. Huston informed Montgomery that he was prepared to give him 40 men, but he could spare no officers. Two weeks later, Montgomery received a second dispatch from Huston. Because of some "excitement among the Reserve Indians arising from the presence, in this vicinity, of some Texas Rangers," Captain Huston wrote, he couldn't let Montgomery have the promised enlisted men either.

Montgomery, in view of this news, concluded that his only hope for getting a detail to open the road would be following the return of the cavalry from the plains. He accordingly started for Fort Cobb to intercept the cavalry on its arrival. Near Fort Arbuckle, Montgomery was overtaken by an express rider from the depot. The courier informed the captain that Captain Samuel D. Sturgis' battalion was en route to Fort Smith instead of Fort Cobb. Consequently, his presence would be required at the depot. <sup>61</sup>

Upon retracing his steps, Montgomery got in touch with Wagon master Garland. The wagon master had taken a train over the projected route and was familiar with its general features. Montgomery told Garland to load several wagons with tools and go to Fort Cobb. Before leaving, Garland was given a letter signed by Montgomery addressed to Captain Charles C. Gilbert, the new commander at Fort Cobb. Gilbert was asked to furnish Garland a detail. If he were unable to provide the number directed by department headquarters, Gilbert was requested to assign Garland a party sufficient to make a reconnaissance and mark the route. Should this be accomplished, Montgomery was convinced that work might be commenced immediately when sufficient manpower became available. <sup>62</sup>

On December 28, Montgomery reported the new road to Fort Cobb open. Lieutenant Andrew Jackson left Fort Smith with a detachment during the morning to examine and report on the route in accordance with General Johnston's orders. <sup>63</sup>

Captain Sturgis reached Fort Smith during the third week of September. The editor of the Thirty-fifth Parallel lost no time in interviewing the captain. He informed his readers that Sturgis' command had fought several engagements with the Indians during the summer campaign on the plains. Sturgis told the editor that he had ridden ahead and his troopers would arrive within the next several days. The editor was impressed with the captain, whom he described as "a gallant officer."

Sturgis' column reached Fort Smith on September 19. It consisted of Companies A, B, C, D, E, and I, 1st Cavalry. According to the editor of the Thirty-fifth Parallel, the troopers looked "as well as could be expected from the service they had to perform and the hardship they endured."

Two of the companies, D and E, were assigned to the "Garrison;" the four others, after resting for a few days, proceeded to Forts Arbuckle and Washita. Captain Sturgis, on September 19, formally assumed command at Fort Smith.

Meanwhile, information had reached the Fort Smithites that the government was having to pay \$4.67 per bushel for corn at Fort Cobb, while at Fort Arbuckle the post quartermaster was having to give \$3 a bushel. At the same time, corn was selling for \$1.18 3/4 a bushel in Fort Smith.

The editor of the Thirty-fifth Parallel accordingly informed his readers, "Now, does this show plainly that it would be far more economical for the government to keep their cavalry and other stock at this place during the winter. The price of forage is a little over 1/4 as much as at Fort Cobb, while it is less than half the cost at Arbuckle." 64

Soon after reaching Fort Smith, Captain Sturgis was alarmed to discover that according to regulations his command's horses were only allowed half rations of forage. To make matters more difficult, the available pasture in the neighborhood had been overgrazed and the mounts had already been reduced to a weakened condition from the summer's hard campaign. The shortage of stables of which Montgomery had repeatedly complained were also a problem. Most of the horses were compelled to "stand out exposed to the cold." Rebuffed in his efforts to talk

Montgomery into increasing the forage ration, Sturgis determined to bring the subject to the attention of higher authorities.

On December 5, he addressed a message to General Twiggs's headquarters. Unless his mounts were allowed a full ration of forage, Sturgis warned, they would be unfit for service in the spring. <sup>65</sup> Time was all important, so Sturgis forwarded a copy of his dispatch to Twiggs to Adjutant General Cooper's Washington Office. <sup>66</sup>

FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

Chapter XVI

Fort Smith is Transferred to the Department of Texas

Notes

- 1 GO 4, Aug. 19, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Sent).
- 2 Prince to Montgomery, Sept. 10, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). The 26 wagons would be used for the "transportation of Companies 'D & E' 1st Cavalry with their Camp and Garrison Equipage, Clothing (Year's supply) Extra Saddles and Horse Equipage, Six Officers, 8 Laundresses, and fifteen days Subsistence." At this time, Twiggs commanded the Department of Texas.
- 3 Emory to Prince, Sept. 11, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 4 Montgomery to Jesup, Sept. 25, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 5 Montgomery to Vinton, Sept. 4, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 6 Vinton to Jesup, Oct. 4, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 7 Montgomery to Jesup, Oct. 24, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 8 Fort Smith Herald, Sept. 20, 1859. The Van Buren Press, the Little Rock True Democrat, and the Payetteville Arkansan also carried the advertisement regarding the receipt of sealed bids for 20,000 bushels of corn.
- 9 Montgomery to Jesup, Nov. 15 and Dec. 15, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).



- 10 Burns to Montgomery, Dec. 14, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). McCarron had bid 62½ cents a bushel for 5,000 bushels of slip shucked corn.
- 11 Montgomery to Jesup, Dec. 15, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 12 Burns to Montgomery, Dec. 14, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 13 Montgomery to Jesup, Dec. 23, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 14 Montgomery to Jesup, Nov. 15, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 15 Sibley to Montgomery, Nov. 11, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 16 Pulliam to Montgomery, Dec. 15, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 17 Montgomery to Jesup, Dec. 15, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 18 Montgomery to Jesup, Dec. 23, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 19 Jesup to Montgomery, Jan. 6, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 20 Montgomery to Jesup, Jan. 18, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 21 Montgomery to Jesup, March 10, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 22 Montgomery to Jesup, Dec. 3, and Dec. 19, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 23 Sibley to Montgomery, Nov. 16, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 24 Montgomery to Sibley, Dec. 3, 1859 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 25 Ibid.

- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Fort Smith Times, Jan. 31, 1860.
- 28 Hindman to Floyd, March 28, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 29 Ibid.; Vinton to Jesup, May 1, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 30 Hindman to Floyd, March 28, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Vinton to Jesup, May 1, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 33 Jesup to Montgomery, Feb. 23, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 34 Montgomery to Jesup, March 5 and Swift to Craig March 3, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 35 Montgomery to Jesup, March 5, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 36 Nash to Montgomery, June 28, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 37 Montgomery to Sibley, June 29, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 38 Johnston to Montgomery, July 7, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 39 Johnston to Rider, July 7, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 40 Rider to Johnston, July 15, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 41 Montgomery to Vinton, July 18, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 42 Jesup to Montgomery, April 17, 1860, (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).

- 43 Montgomery to Sibley, July 7, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 44 Johnston to Montgomery, Aug. 16, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 45 Montgomery to Johnston, Aug. 23, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 46 Van Vliet to Johnston, Sept. 10, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 47 Inspection Returns, Companies E and F, 2d Artillery, Oct. 31, 1860.
- 48 Montgomery to Johnston, Oct. 13, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.); Inspection Returns, Company F, 2d Artillery, Oct. 31 and Dec. 31, 1860; Thirty-fifth Parallel, Oct. 19, 1860.
- 49 Montgomery to Johnston, Oct. 13, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 50 Armistead to Montgomery, Oct. 16, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 51 Montgomery to Johnston, Oct. 18, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 52 Montgomery to Vinton, Oct. 15, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 53 Montgomery to Johnston, Oct. 19, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 54 Johnston to Montgomery, Oct. 25, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Sent).
- 55 Montgomery to Johnston, Nov. 5, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 56 Montgomery to Johnston, Nov. 13, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 57 Palmer to Van Vliet, Nov. 13, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 58 Hagner to Van Vliet, Nov. 12, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

59 Van Vliet to Johnston, Nov. 15, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). The wagons were loaded as follows: 3 with officers' baggage, two to each company (three companies), 6 with subsistence stores, one with medical stores, 3 with ordnance stores, and 4 with forage.

60 Montgomery to Johnston, Dec. 8, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

61 Montgomery to Johnston, Nov. 8, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). Samuel Sturgis of Pennsylvania had graduated from West Point in the class of 1846, as a brevet 2d lieutenant in the 2d Dragoons. Sturgis had been a captain in the 1st Cavalry since March 3, 1855. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 934.

62 Montgomery to Johnston (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

63 Montgomery to Johnston, Dec. 28, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

64 Thirty-fifth Parallel, Sept. 28, 1860.

65 Sturgis to Twiggs, Dec. 5, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

66 Sturgis to Cooper, Dec. 5, 1860 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

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FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

Chapter XVII

The Arkansas State Troop Seize Fort Smith

Abraham Lincoln was elected to the presidency in November 1860. The grave sectional problems which had plagued the country for years now came to a climax. South Carolina withdrew from the Union on December 20. By the beginning of February 1861, the other six states of the Lower South had followed South Carolina out of the Union. Delegates from these states convened at Montgomery, Alabama, on February 4. A new constitution was adopted on the 7th, and 11 days later Jefferson Davis was inaugurated as Provisional President of the Confederate States of America.

Although the states of the Upper South were not yet ready to secede, there was considerable sentiment for such action. On the same day that the delegates at Montgomery voted a new constitution, the Grand Council of the Choctaw Nation declared the tribe's adherence to the Southern States. The next day, February 8, Captain Totten surrendered the United States Arsenal at Little Rock to the Arkansas authorities.

Major Justus McKinstry, the officer in charge of St. Louis Quartermaster's Office, received an urgent telegram from Captain Montgomery at Fort Smith on February 12. This dispatch concerned a shipment of quartermaster's stores made aboard the Sunshine and of ordnance supplies on the Southwester.<sup>1</sup>

The Sunshine had left the St. Louis depot on January 15, while the Southwester had pulled away from St. Louis six days later. After the supplies had been landed at Napoleon, they were to be transferred to smaller vessels and taken up the Arkansas to Fort Smith. Before they could be transshipped, the supplies were "seized by certain individuals pretending to act for the State of Arkansas."<sup>2</sup>

McKinstry promptly relayed this information to the commander of the Department of the West, Brigadier General William S. Harney. When he did, McKinstry pointed out that Arkansas had passed no ordinance of secession. The major hoped Harney would issue orders for the forwarding agent at Napoleon "to take legal steps to recover" the public stores. <sup>3</sup>

On the following day (the 13th), General Scott, in view of these developments, drafted a dispatch addressed to General Harney. Scott wanted Harney to issue orders for the evacuation of Fort Smith. The troops posted there were to be sent to Fort Leavenworth. Before abandoning the post, the garrison was to remove all the public property, except subsistence stores, for which there was transportation. The subsistence stores were to be sent to Fort Washita. In view of the seizure by the Arkansas authorities of the Little Rock Arsenal and the stores at Napoleon, Scott was satisfied that it was unsafe to forward any supplies up the Arkansas destined for Forts Arbuckle, Cobb, and Washita. Henceforth, these posts would be supplied via Fort Scott from St. Louis or Fort Leavenworth. <sup>4</sup>

News that the army was planning to pull its soldiers out of the Garrison caused considerable excitement in Fort Smith. A mass meeting was held at 7 p.m. on Washington's birthday. When the men assembled, Francis H. Wolfe was called to the chair, and James M. Ward was elected secretary. As the group's first order of business, a motion was entertained to protest the decision to abandon Fort Smith by the military. The proposal was seconded and adopted. George Ruddy was given the task of drawing up the remonstrance which was addressed to the Secretary of War. The document which was wired to Washington read;

We, the undersigned, citizens of Arkansas, learn with deep regret that the post of Fort Smith is to be abandoned by the General Government. It is fair to suppose that this order has been determined upon in consequence of the actions of a mob in Little Rock and the unfortunate course of the governor in demanding from the United States officer the arsenal.

The late decision of the people at the ballot-box has proved beyond question the almost unanimous voice in the counties adjoining Fort Smith for Union as against violence, mob law, and secession. We, therefore, in the name of the people, the whole people, ask a suspension of this movement until the decision of the State by its convention is known. <sup>5</sup>

The memorial which the Fort Smithites had adopted had immediate repercussions. Sometime before midnight, General Scott telegraphed General Harney, "Stop the march of the troops from Fort Smith." <sup>6</sup>

Colonel Emory, who had spent the winter in the East, was ordered by General Scott on March 13 to proceed to Fort Cobb. Before departing for the Indian Territory, Emory stopped off in Washington. After he had reported to the Adjutant General, Scott changed the colonel's orders on the 18th. Instead of going to Fort Cobb, Emory was to "repair without delay to Fort Washita." Upon arriving there, Colonel Emory was to direct Lieutenant Albert V. Colburn to join him with the regimental staff, band, and records.

Emory was to concentrate the companies of the 1st Cavalry currently stationed at Forts Arbuckle and Cobb at or near Fort Washita. This order was not to be considered binding, if in Emory's judgement, the safety of the troops and the interests of the United States demanded a different disposition. Scott reminded the colonel that in making his dispositions the interests of the United States were to be considered paramount to those of the friendly Indians on the reservation at Fort Cobb. Good faith, however, required that the Indians be given advance notice of the withdrawal of the troops. For protection against wanton attack by the wild plains Indians, the reservation redmen must be given a chance to move to the vicinity of the posts to be occupied. <sup>7</sup>

At the same time, the Adjutant General's Office telegraphed General Harney. The commander of the Department of the West was to shift the company (E) of the 1st Infantry currently stationed at Fort Arbuckle to Fort Washita. The troops at Fort Cobb were to be alerted to be ready to abandon their post. <sup>8</sup>

The next day, March 19, General Harney relayed this message to Captain Montgomery. The Fort Smith Quartermaster was to see that express riders carried copies of this dispatch to the commandants at Forts Arbuckle, Cobb, and Washita. <sup>9</sup>

Senator Charles B. Mitchell of Arkansas called on General Scott on the 19th. The senator proposed that the troops be pulled out of Fort Smith. He suggested they be sent to "Frozen Rock," about 15 miles southeast of Fort Gibson on the Arkansas River. According to Senator Mitchell, this position would make a suitable site for a post. Strong opposition was voiced by Mitchell to the plan to evacuate Fort Cobb. In deference to the senator, Scott promised to keep one company there for the protection of the reservation Indians. <sup>10</sup>

Learning that Colonel Emory was still in the city, Scott saw that he was informed of this new decision regarding Fort Cobb. Furthermore, if Captain Sturgis at Fort Smith asked for assistance in guarding the Garrison and depot, Emory was to give it. The colonel, in case Arkansas seceded, was to withdraw his troops from its territory. <sup>11</sup>

From Washington, Colonel Emory proceeded to Memphis by rail. Arriving at Memphis, the colonel was assured by the steamboat people that the Arkansas was navigable to Fort Smith. He left Memphis by boat on March 24. A sudden drop in the stage of the Arkansas stranded Emory 60 miles below Dardanelle. To add to the colonel's troubles, an inquiry indicated that other forms of transportation from where the vessel was grounded to Fort Smith were limited.

Fortunately for himself, Emory had anticipated the possibility of being detained. Before leaving Little Rock, the colonel had sent a copy of his instructions from General Scott to the commandant at Fort Arbuckle. The post commander had been instructed to commence transferring his troops to Fort Washita. In case the Texans threaten Fort Washita, the Fort Arbuckle commander was "to march to its support with his whole force." <sup>12</sup>



A slight rise in the Arkansas on April 2 enabled the vessel to resume her run up the river. Colonel Emory disembarked at Fort Smith four days later. His first order of business on reaching the Garrison was to draft a set of instructions for the commanding officer at Fort Cobb. Utilizing the discretion granted him by General Scott, Emory directed the commandant to rush two of his four companies to Fort Washita, the remaining units were to remain at Fort Cobb until further orders. To assist with this movement, Emory told Captain Montgomery to send additional transportation to the advance post.

Notice was to be given the Reservation Indians that Fort Cobb was to be evacuated. Such Indians as wished to retire within the protection of the camp at Fort Washita were to be allowed to move with the troops. All ordnance stores at Fort Cobb, except those needed by the two companies slated to be left, were to be taken to Fort Washita. Any surplus wagons and teams were to be employed in transferring to Fort Washita the other public property not required at Fort Cobb.

An express rider was entrusted with the delivery of this dispatch. <sup>13</sup>

A copy of his instructions to the commandant at Fort Cobb was telegraphed to department headquarters. In a covering note, Emory advised General Harney of his reason for departing from the letter of Scott's orders. Emory felt one company would be insufficient "to occupy so isolated a post" as Fort Cobb. <sup>14</sup>

Within the next few days, Emory met with several of the Indian agents. They told him it would "give great dissatisfaction" to the Choctaws to bring the reservation Indians to Fort Washita, which was within their Nation. Writing to the commandant at Fort Cobb on April 10, Emory announced that he was holding in abeyance the portion of his orders of four days before authorizing him "to offer to such Indians as may choose to retire within the camp at Washita the protection of the troops destined for that place."

Emory would have liked to discuss the situation with the Reservation Indians' Agent, Colonel Matthew Leeper. The agent was known to be on

his way to Fort Smith, but he had been detained by high water. In his absence, Emory had consulted Superintendent of Indian Affairs Rector and the contractors, Johnson and Grimes. These three men agreed that the Fort Cobb Indians were "huddled and planting," and couldn't move to Fort Washita even if the Choctaws were willing.

When he discussed the subsistence situation at Fort Cobb with Commissary Captain Burns, that officer showed Emory a requisition indicating the post in question was supplied up to May 31. The withdrawal of the two companies would extend this period two months. Since the post might have to be evacuated at any moment, Emory notified the commander not to keep more than two or three months' supply of commissary stores on hand at any time. 15

On April 12 a momentous event took place in Charleston Harbor, as the Confederates opened fire on Fort Sumter. The next day, the fort surrendered. Several hours before Major Robert Anderson surrendered, Colonel Emory left Fort Smith for Fort Washita. Before doing so, he had sent a long telegram to Washington. The colonel informed the War Department of the measures he had taken to carry out General Scott's directives. In addition, there were a number of other matters Emory wished to bring to his superior's attention.

To help protect the Reservation Indians in view of the extreme position taken by the Choctaws, Emory had written General Harney. A suggestion that two companies of the 1st Cavalry from Fort Wise "might be usefully employed by passing the summer near Fort Cobb" had been advanced. In addition to affording a measure of security to the redmen, the troopers could forage their horses on the large amount of corn which had been stockpiled at the outpost.

The Arkansas authorities had seized the supply of ammunition destined for his command at Napoleon in February, so Emory suggested Harney be directed to send another shipment overland from Fort Leavenworth. Because of the resignation of a number of officers tendering their services to the Confederacy, the four companies (A, B, C, and I) of the 1st Cavalry

operating out of Fort Washita were left with only two company officers. Emory asked that the vacant billets be filled immediately.

Since it was expected Arkansas would soon leave the Union, Emory told Captain Sturgis that the moment this news was received, he was to pull his troops out of Fort Smith. Retiring into the Indian Territory, Sturgis was to post his command on the Arkansas River at the crossing of the Texas road linking Forts Scott and Washita.

Major Sacket and Captain Prince had opposed the decision to abandon Fort Arbuckle. Emory had rejected their appeals. He pointed out to the two officers that if Arkansas left the Union, it would be almost impossible to supply the troops in the Indian Territory. While they had sent their requisition through Department of Texas headquarters, all their supplies had passed through the Fort Smith depot. Once this line had been closed, the only one left open would be the Texas road from Kansas City via Forts Scott and Gibson. Since this road lay close to and paralleled the Arkansas boundary for hundreds of miles, trains moving along it would be "constantly exposed to seizure." 16

Near Fort Washita, Colonel Emory was met by one of the staff officers stationed there. Emory learned from this man that "a year's supply" of subsistence stores for the troops in the "district" were expected to arrive at Fort Smith by boat in the near future. Emory stopped long enough on the 18th to send a message to General Harney's headquarters. He wished to point out that if the stores were being shipped up the Arkansas, there was a very real danger that they would be stopped. If this happened, the posts would either have to be supplied overland from Fort Leavenworth or abandoned. 17

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During the days following the firing on Fort Sumter, events in rapid-fire order swept Arkansas along the road to secession. President Lincoln on April 15 issued his call for 75,000 volunteers

to be provided by the states on a quota basis to put down combinations "too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings," and "to cause the laws to be duly executed."

Next, a shipment of arms ordered by the Arkansas authorities was seized at Cincinnati. This action caused Captain Burns considerable remorse. He had just received from Major George G. Waggaman at St. Louis an invoice for a year's supply of subsistence stores for the posts serviced by the Fort Smith depot. His Arkansas friends assured the captain that the subsistence stores which were being transhipped to Fort Smith would be seized in reprisal. Writing to Major Waggaman on April 19, Burns announced, he was leaving Fort Smith immediately. He hoped to intercept the supply boat. "By advising with the captain," Burns would seek to avoid stopping at towns where feeling against the Union was running a fever pitch. 18

When he reached Little Rock on the 20th, Burns found that "military preparations" had been made to intercept all vessels loaded with United States stores. The Sky Lark had just passed. The people at the wharf told Burns she had been boarded at Pine Bluff on the 18th and the public stores removed. Burns, on glancing at a local paper, learned that the Silver Lake No. 2 would be stopped at Little Rock, if she hadn't already been at Pine Bluff.

The captain called on several of the leading citizens, who had heretofore been known as "Union men." They told Burns to see Governor Henry M. Rector. When he reached the governor's mansion, Burns was advised that he was not at home. As he rode through the streets of Little Rock, the captain saw that the spirit of revolution was aboard. Troops were being enrolled to march against Fort Smith. The steamboat on which he had come down river was chartered.

Pushing on to Pine Bluff, Burns found the Silver Lake No. 2 tied up to the bank, guarded by a detachment of militia. The crew had left, the subsistence stores had been seized and stored ashore, and the boat was slated to transport troops to Fort Smith.

Mr. Bell, one of Governor Rector's agents, told Burns that the stores were to be sent to Little Rock. There, part of them would be issued to the "5,000 troops" called out to serve on the Fort Smith expedition.

Burns, from Napoleon at a late hour on the 21st, telegraphed Washington that in the future supplies for the posts in the Indian Territory would have to be forwarded from Fort Leavenworth by way of Forts Scott and Gibson. 19

Governor Rector on April 22 rejected Lincoln's "requisition for troops from Arkansas to subjugate the Southern States...." The governor described the demand as "only adding insult to injury."

"The people of this commonwealth," he added, "are freemen, not slaves, and will defend to the last extremity their honor, lives, and property against Northern mendacity and usurpation." 20

Meanwhile, the expedition which Governor Rector had ordered to take possession of the public property at Fort Smith had been organized. Former United States Senator Solon Borland was placed in command. War fever swept through Little Rock. Colonel Borland was swamped with volunteers. The colonel's biggest difficulty was finding enough boats to transport the volunteers up the Arkansas. 21

News that the expedition had left Little Rock and was en route up river preceded it. Captain Sturgis had been expecting such a move on the Arkansans' part. Even if the secessionists hadn't moved against the Garrison, the seizure of the supplies had made it untenable. To have resisted Borland's command with his two companies (D and E), "while the entire population of the surrounding country were ready at a moment's warning to take up arms against us," the captain considered foolhardy. It could only result in the cavalrymen being taken prisoner and the loss to the government "of all the arms, horses, means of transportation, &c., at the post."

Sturgis issued orders for the men to start packing their gear on April 22. Captain Montgomery, the ordnance sergeant, the hospital

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steward, the sick, and the laundresses were to remain behind. With these people, Montgomery was to proceed to St. Louis and report to department headquarters.

About dark on the 23d, it was reported to Sturgis that the vessels with the Arkansas volunteers aboard were approaching. The battalion was turned out on the double. When Sturgis gave the word, the troopers of Companies D and E, 1st Cavalry swung into their saddles. Followed by all the available transportation, "some twenty wagons and teams," the column moved out at 9 p.m., taking the road to Fort Washita. Sturgis' battalion reached Fort Washita on the last day of the month, where the captain reported to Colonel Emory. <sup>22</sup>

The steamers Frederick Notrebe and Tahlequah reached Van Buren from Little Rock shortly after dark on the 23d. Aboard were about 300 State Troops and eight guns. Colonel Borland bragged to the editor of the Press that his command was "fully provided with all the munitions of war necessary for taking possession of Fort Smith." As expected, the arrival of the expedition caused tremendous excitement in Van Buren. The local militia company, the Frontier Guards, was ordered to turn out. <sup>23</sup>

After several hours, the two transports cast off for Fort Smith. Captain Sturgis' column had been gone several hours, when the Frederick Notrebe and the Tahlequah tied up to the Fort Smith wharf. As soon as the eager volunteers had disembarked, they formed, and marched to the fort. Colonel Borland and Edmund Burgevin Adjutant General of Arkansas rode at the head of the motley column. Taking possession of the fort and all the public property in the name of the state of Arkansas, Borland declared Major Gatlin and Captain Montgomery prisoners of war. (Major Gatlin, who had commanded the Garrison on several occasions, was visiting at the fort at the time of Borland's arrival.) Upon giving

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their paroles not to fight against the state of Arkansas or the Confederacy during the present difficulties, Gatlin and Montgomery were released. <sup>24</sup>

Paymaster Nathan W. Brown was on his way back to Fort Smith from Fort Arbuckle at the time the fort was turned over to the Arkansas troops. At Scullyville, he learned the Garrison had been occupied and that Captain Montgomery was a prisoner. He immediately turned around and joined Sturgis' column on its march to Fort Washita. <sup>25</sup>

Reinforcements poured into Fort Smith on the 24th. First to arrive were the Frontier Guards from Van Buren, closely followed by Captain Perkins' Crawford County Cavalry Company. The steamer Leon, crowded with troops, arrived from Little Rock. By nightfall, Borland's command had increased four-fold. Fort Smith's streets were jammed with armed men. <sup>26</sup>

The Arkansas Convention, which had been elected to consider secession had adjourned in March without taking action, reconvened on May 6. This time, there was no doubt what the assembly would do. On the first day of the meeting, Proter Grace of Jefferson County introduced an ordinance of secession. It was adopted by a vote of 65 to 5, of these, four subsequently switched to the affirmative. <sup>27</sup>

Meanwhile, Colonel Borland and his Little Rock troops had returned to their homes. The Lady Walton with Borland's men aboard had passed Van Buren on Sunday, April 28. As she chugged by Van Buren, a salute in honor of the Little Rock soldiers was fired by the Crawford County militia.

Upon Borland's departure, Brigadier General B. Burrows of the 8th Brigade Arkansas Militia took command at Fort Smith. The fort was garrisoned by two Sebastian County companies and Perkins' and Foster's companies from Crawford County. <sup>28</sup>

News that the convention had voted to secede reached Fort Smith on May 8.<sup>29</sup>

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General Scott had determined on April 17 to pull all the United States troops out of the posts in the Indian Territory. Colonel Emory, taking such useful public property as he had transportation for, was to march his command to Fort Leavenworth. Captain Montgomery was to be left at Fort Smith in charge of the public property. In addition, Montgomery was to muster into United States service volunteers who might be tendered by Governor Rector in response to the President's call of two days before.<sup>30</sup>

Since secrecy would be essential to the successful accomplishment of the scheduled troop movement, Scott determined to send the dispatch to Colonel Emory by special courier. Lieutenant William W. Averell was entrusted with this task.<sup>31</sup>

Dressing in "a rough traveling suit of citizen's clothing," Averell left Washington at 2:45 p.m. on the 17th via the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. At Harpers Ferry, where the train stopped briefly, the lieutenant spoke with Captain Roger Jones, the officer in charge of the arsenal guard. Jones told Averell he was afraid the Virginians were about to attack. Realizing that he didn't have enough men to hold his position, Jones had made arrangements to destroy the arsenal and withdraw into Maryland.

All the cities, towns, and villages, through which the train passed on its way to St. Louis, the lieutenant found were "alive with agitated people turning out volunteers in response to the call of the President." Averell reached St. Louis on the evening of April 19.

The next morning found the lieutenant on the train for Rolla, where he arrived at 5 p.m. He left Rolla by the next southwest bound stagecoach at 5 a.m. on the 22d. "Several prominent Southern



gentlemen" were fellow passengers. Averell "proceeded, with changing horses, mails, and passengers, toward Fort Smith." The stage thundered through towns wild with secession excitement and rumors of war. The unruly temper of the people and their manifest readiness to embrace any pretext for violence made it necessary for the safety of the dispatches and their successful delivery for Averell to conceal his identity. Having assumed an alias and a business suitable to the emergency, the lieutenant, although questioned closely on several occasions, was able to continue.

On the run from Cassville, Missouri, to Bentonville, Arkansas, Averell was obliged to drive the stage much of the way. The driver had become too drunk to handle the team, and there were no other male passengers. At Evansville, Averell was astounded to hear that Fort Smith had been captured by Colonel Borland. Soon after passing through the Boston Mountains, the coach encountered one from Fort Smith. Fortunately for the lieutenant, it was a very dark night. On the other stage were wives of several army officers who might have recognized him.

After crossing the Arkansas on a ferry, Averell reached Fort Smith at 9 a.m. on April 27. The town was in "a political frenzy." Captain Montgomery on whom he had an order for transportation was reportedly in the guardhouse. "Secession troops were having a 'general training' and target practice." It would be perilous to make any inquiries concerning the whereabouts of Captain Sturgis' battalion. The only information which Averell could obtain was that the blueclad column had gone westward.

At the moment, pursuing forces were being organized in both Arkansas and Texas. To make matters more difficult, a number of bridges had been burned, and the rivers and streams were booming from recent rains. Exchanging his gold watch and a little money for a horse, saddle, and bridle, Averell prepared to push on. It

had been two years since he had been in the saddle, consequently the lieutenant, after five jolting days in a stagecoach, was not in the best condition. Moreover, his mount was "unbroken to the saddle." After a fierce but unsuccessful effort to throw Averell, the horse bolted.

The lieutenant, by the time he reached the Poteau, had mastered the horse. Averell found the stream 100 yards wide and bank full. The bridge had been destroyed. Removing his heavy black overcoat, Averell forced his mount into the swirling water. After a "fearful struggle" in which he lost his overcoat and received "some injury" when kicked by the thrashing beast, the lieutenant gained the left bank.

Twenty miles west of Fort Smith, Averell came to a fork in the road, the one veering to the right led to Fort Arbuckle and the one to the left to Fort Washita. Averell examined the tracks and correctly concluded Sturgis' column had taken the left hand road. He rode forward a short distance on the Fort Arbuckle road to establish a trail in case he was pursued and then crossed over to the other road.

On the morning of the 29th, Averell was overtaken at Holloway's Overland Station by four "mounted desperadoes." In the meantime, the lieutenant had secured a light blue overcoat such as worn by an army private to replace the black one lost in the Poteau. They were easily persuaded that they had missed their man, and Averell was but a "rancorous secessionist like themselves" who was en route to Fort Washita to fetch his sister. Averell was allowed to continue. After riding for several hours, the lieutenant turned off the road to graze his horses. While doing so, the four men thundered passed. Shortly thereafter, he encountered a "friendly wayfarer," who had talked with the "desperadoes." They had told the traveler that they would shoot the lieutenant on sight.

Averell decided he had best avoid the Fort Washita road. He would endeavor to reach the Fort Arbuckle road west of the Sans Bois Mountains. Before he had gone very far, Averell encountered the men returning, whereupon he took to the woods. The secessionists called on him to halt and opened fire. Feeling that he could make a trail faster than they could find it, the lieutenant struck out across the Sans Bois Mountains and made his escape. He came upon the Fort Arbuckle road about 2 a.m. To rest his horse, the lieutenant dismounted and led the animal through howling packs of wolves. Once again on the 29th, Averell sighted but was able to avoid his pursurers. After another frightful night in the woods among the wolves and impassible ravines, the lieutenant found a Choctaw cabin, some food for himself and horse, and a guide who was willing to take him to the Fort Arbuckle road, ten miles west of Perryville.

Another weary day and night on the road brought Averell to Cockrane's ranch, 40 miles east of Fort Arbuckle. Here, he learned that the garrison had evacuated Fort Arbuckle and was en route to Fort Washita. Obtaining a guide and a fresh horse, Averell started for Fort Washita. Toward evening, a driving rain began. In the storm, the Indian lost his way and the lieutenant soon lost his guide. After swimming Blue River, Averell unsaddled his horse. Tying his mount to one stirrup, and running his arm through the other, he lay down and slept till morning. The lieutenant was awakened on May 1 by the Indian, who told him they were about ten miles west of Fort Washita. Gaining the road linking Forts Arbuckle and Washita, Averell could see by the ruts in the mud that a large body of troops had recently marched westward. Following the road about six miles, Averell and his guide came on a large force of cavalry and infantry just as the men were breaking camp. In response to Averell's inquiry, the soldiers identified themselves and said that Colonel Emory was with the advance. Galloping ahead, the

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exhausted lieutenant, saluted, and delivered the orders given him in Washington, 15 days before. <sup>32</sup>

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Colonel Emory was chagrined on reaching Fort Washita on April 17 from Fort Smith to discover that the troops from Fort Arbuckle and the two companies from Fort Cobb had failed to concentrate as directed. News of the Arkansans' seizure of the commissary stores had cast a pall of gloom over the garrison. To make matters more difficult, it was known that a strong force of Texans was being organized south of the Red for the purpose of taking over the forts.

Although he didn't know that Lieutenant Averell was hurrying west with orders to abandon the posts in the Indian Territory, Emory anticipated the instructions which he carried. Orders were issued for the troops to get ready to evacuate Fort Washita. Following the arrival of Sturgis' battalion from Fort Smith, the soldiers on April 30 marched out of Fort Washita, taking the road to Fort Arbuckle. The Texans occupied the post the next day. <sup>33</sup>

When Lieutenant Averell joined him on May 1, Emory found that he had anticipated Scott's orders in regard to abandoning the posts. The colonel, taking cognizance of Averell's exhausted condition, told him to get off his horse and ride in an ambulance.

Emory's column on the 3d encountered Major Sacket with the troops from Fort Arbuckle and two companies from Fort Cobb on the east bank of the Washita River, five miles from Fort Arbuckle. Not knowing that Emory had abandoned Fort Washita three days before, Sacket's column was en route to that point. Emory ordered Sacket to return to Fort Arbuckle. The soldiers spent the remainder of the day loading the wagons to capacity. On May 4 the troops were formed and the flag was lowered with "military honors" and Fort Arbuckle was abandoned. With the Indian guides, Possum and Black Beaver, leading the way, the column started for Fort Cobb. The route taken led across the prairie north of the Washita River. In case

his command was pursued, Emory wanted to be certain he could employ his cavalry to advantage. <sup>34</sup>

Upon the departure of the troops, 1st Sergeant Charles A. Campbell of the 1st Infantry with a small detachment of casuals was left at Fort Arbuckle to look after the buildings and the public property which it had been impossible to remove. Campbell and his men didn't have long to wait. A strong force of Texans led by Colonel William C. Young reached the fort the morning after Emory's departure. Captain S. T. Benning of the Fannin County Company commanded the Confederate vanguard. Campbell was called on "to give up...in the name of the Southern Confederacy, the whole of the United States property" in his charge. Since his men had no arms, Campbell had no alternative but to comply with Benning's demand. The Texans planned to make the casuals prisoners of war. Government contractor Mayers intervened. He prevailed on Colonel Young to release the soldiers and guarantee them safe passage with their families and private property to Fort Leavenworth. <sup>35</sup>

Emory's scouts informed him on May 5 that his column was being followed. The colonel called a halt and sent for Captain Sturgis. Sturgis was told to take a company of cavalry and delay the pursurers. Lieutenant Averell, having recovered from his ordeal, solicited and received permission to accompany Sturgis. By employing stratagem, Sturgis was able to decoy the Texans into a trap. Finding themselves surrounded by a force of unknown strength, the Texans grounded their arms. Sturgis and his troopers had captured the Rebel vanguard, about 30 men, without bloodshed. This served to discourage further pursuit. After questioning the prisoners, Emory released them on the morning of the 6th. <sup>36</sup>

The march for Fort Cobb was resumed. Emory, fearing for the safety of the two companies at the post, sent a courier racing ahead with orders for the commandant to abandon Fort Cobb and join his column.

Emory on May 9 rendezvoused with the Fort Cobb garrison, 35 miles northeast of that post. The colonel now altered his line of march. Possum and Black Beaver were told to scout the most direct route to Fort Leavenworth that the lay of the ground would permit.

During the next ten days rapid progress was made. Nightfall on the 19th found the column -- eleven companies, 750 fighting men, 150 women, children, teamsters, and other non-combatants -- camped north of the Arkansas River in Kansas. Emory was proud of his accomplishment. He reported, "Nothing has been left behind but what would have been left in time of peace. Contracts were made to bring such stores as were left and were worth transporting (chiefly clothing of soldiers and officers' baggage)...." Information had reached the colonel that these stores had been seized by the Texans and Indians. If so, he thought the men should be reimbursed. 37

Emory's command pushed on across Kansas, reaching Fort Leavenworth on the morning of May 31. On the long march, not an animal, an arm, or wagon had been lost. Two of the soldiers had deserted, however. After turning over his command to Major Sacket, Emory started for Washington. 38

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Before adjourning, the Little Rock convention elected one major general, James Yell, and two brigadier general, N. Bart Pearce and N. B. Burrows, to command the State Troops. Pearce was to be in charge of the Western Division and Burrows the Eastern Division. Burrows on the receipt of this news on May 13 turned over the command of the troops at Fort Smith to Lieutenant Colonel John R. Kannady and left for his new post. 39

General Pearce reached Fort Smith from Little Rock on the evening of the 20th. The next day, Pearce organized and sent a column to try to intercept a government train of 30 wagons reported to be en route from Fort Cobb to Fort Leavenworth. This Confederate force consisted of one company of infantry and two of cavalry. The infantry left Fort Smith on the steamer Leon. It was fortunate for the Rebels that Emory's column had passed into Kansas, because there is little doubt but that the regulars would have cut the pursuing force to pieces in an engagement. 40

FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

Chapter XVII

The Arkansas State Troop Seize Fort Smith

Notes

1 The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Vol. I, 646-647. (Cited hereafter as O. R.) The Sunshine carried 14 boxes containing: 83 saddles, 166 stirrups, 83 saddlebags, 83 girths, 83 surcingles, and 83 bridles. The 19 boxes stored aboard the Southwester held: 40,000 caliber .58 elongated-ball cartridges, 10,000 caliber 58 rifle-musket blank cartridges, 20,000 Sharp's carbine-ball cartridges, 50,000 Colt's pistol-ball cartridges, and 10,000 Colt's pistol blank cartridges.

2 Ibid., 646.

3 Ibid. General Harney had replaced Colonel Sumner as commander of the Department of the West on November 10, 1860. Parker to Bearss, April 17, 1963.

4 O. R., Series I, Vol. I, 654.

5 Ibid., 655.

6 Ibid., 656.

7 Ibid.

8 O. R., Series I, Vol. LIII, 487.

9 O. R., Series I, Vol. I, 656-657.

10 Ibid., 659.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid., 659-660.

13 Ibid., 662.

14 Ibid., 661-662.

15 Ibid., 663-664; Smith to Bearss, April 26, 1963. Jane F. Smith is Chief, Social and Economic Branch, National Archives and Records Service.

16 O. R., Series I, Vol. I, 665-666.

- 17 Ibid., 668.
- 18 Ibid., 647. The subsistence stores had been shipped by boat from St. Louis on April 12 and 13.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid., 687.
- 21 John M. Harrell, Confederate Military History of Arkansas (Atlanta, 1899), 12.
- 22 O. R., Series I, Vol. I, 650, 651, 652.
- 23 Van Buren Press, April 24, 1861.
- 24 O. R., Series I, Vol. I, 650, 651.
- 25 Ibid., 651.
- 26 Van Buren Press, April 24, 1861.
- 27 Harrell, Confederate Military History of Arkansas, 13-15.
- 28 Van Buren Press, May 1, 1861.
- 29 O. R., Series I, Vol. I, 691.
- 30 Ibid., 667.
- 31 O. R., Series I, Vol. LIII, 493. Lieutenant Averell of the Mounted Rifles had just returned to duty, having recovered from wounds received in a clash with the Indians two years before.
- 32 Ibid., 494-496.
- 33 Ibid., 496; O. R., Series I, Vol. I, 648.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 O. R., Series I, Vol. I, 652, 653.
- 36 Ibid., 648; O. R., Series I, Vol. LIII, 496.
- 37 O. R., Series I, Vol. I, 648.
- 38 Ibid., 649.
- 39 Harrell, Confederate Military History of Arkansas, 17; Van Buren Press, May 13, 1861.
- 40 Van Buren Press, May 22, 1861.



FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

Chapter XVIII

The Federals Occupy Fort Smith

During the summer of 1863, the Arkansas Confederates were dealt a series of fearful blows. Union offensives were mounted from two directions. On August 10 a strong force led by Major General Frederick Steele broke out of the Helena perimeter and drove westward toward Little Rock. Twelve days later, Major General James Blunt's Army of the Frontier forded the Arkansas River near Fort Blunt (The Federals had recently renamed Fort Gibson as a compliment to General Blunt.) to inaugurate a campaign which was to lead to the capture of Fort Smith. With the loss of Fort Smith and Little Rock, the Union gained control of the Arkansas River, while at the same time the Confederates for practical purposes, lost that portion of Arkansas north of the river.

General Blunt, the Kansas doctor turned soldier, had been at Fort Blunt since early June. As the third week of August drew to a close, it looked as if nothing much could be expected of Blunt's army in the immediate future. Writing on August 19 to Major General John M. Schofield, his immediate superior, Blunt observed, "To-day I have a burning fever again, and the prospect looks as though I might be quite sick." <sup>1</sup> Except for a few days when first stricken, Blunt had been able to attend to his duties. Blunt was afraid, however, his surgeon might put him back to bed. This would be very discouraging, he informed Schofield, because he had been waiting for his health "to sufficiently recover to cross into Dixie." <sup>2</sup>

Prior to his relapse and just as he was ready to issue marching orders, Blunt had received word through unofficial channels that Colonel William F. Cloud was advancing down through Fayetteville with 1,500 troopers and four guns of the 2d Battery, Indiana Light Artillery. Blunt on the 14th had addressed a note to Colonel Cloud. <sup>3</sup>

He wanted Cloud to send him the 2d Kansas Cavalry and the 2d Indiana Battery. This force was to travel light and fast, the transportation to follow under light escort. Cloud was to have the remainder of his command take post near Cincinnati or Evansville. To drive home the urgency of the occasion, Blunt wrote, "The necessity for the forces I request is pressing. A battle is pending, and will be fought within a few days, with heavy odds against me." <sup>4</sup>

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Colonel Cloud's command was assigned to the District of Southwestern Missouri, Brigadier General John McNeil commanding. Information had reached General McNeil's Springfield headquarters on August 9 that Colonel John T. Coffee with 500 Confederate partisans was camped near Rutledge, Missouri. McNeil promptly initiated steps which he hoped would lead to the early destruction of Coffee's raiders.

Colonel Edwin C. Catherwood with a battalion of the 6th Missouri State Militia Cavalry, a squadron of the 1st Arkansas Cavalry (Union), and two mountain howitzers was alerted to leave Springfield at 2 p.m. Catherwood's column was to march for Pineville by way of Newtonia. At the same time, McNeil sent a telegram to his commander at Cassville, Colonel Cloud. If Cloud deemed it advisable, he would lead a task force down the Telegraph road to Bentonville, Arkansas. This would place him astride Coffee's line of retreat. Between them, Catherwood and Cloud should be able to bag Coffee. Cloud was not to consider this a positive order. Should he decide to co-operate, he was to notify Catherwood. <sup>5</sup>

The next day (August 10), General McNeil received an important telegram from General Schofield's St. Louis headquarters. According to Schofield, the reports reaching him indicated that the Confederates were concentrating at Fort Smith, preparatory to attacking General Blunt at Fort Blunt. To hold his position, Blunt might require reinforcements in a hurry. Schofield accordingly wanted McNeil to send all his surplus artillery, cavalry, and infantry into northwestern

Arkansas as far as Bentonville or Maysville. Communications would be opened with Blunt, and this force held ready to march to the support of the Army of the Frontier in case the Rebels attacked. <sup>6</sup>

McNeil promptly acknowledged Schofield's message. The Springfield commander told of the march of Catherwood's column. In view of Schofield's orders, McNeil changed the instructions which he had given Cloud. No longer were they discretionary. Cloud would march via Bentonville and Fayetteville to cut off Coffee's retreat. If Catherwood and Cloud moved with alacrity, McNeil noted, they could "scarcely avoid coming in contact" with Coffee.

Major Frank Eno with a battalion of the 8th Missouri State Militia Cavalry was to leave Greenfield, Missouri, on August 12 to reinforce Catherwood. Upon joining Catherwood, Eno was to direct him to report to Cloud. The dispatch of a strong column into northwestern Arkansas, McNeil warned, would leave his district exposed to a Confederate advance through the valley of White River. <sup>7</sup>

Catherwood's combat team had started from Springfield as scheduled on August 9. Three days and nights on the road brought the hard-riding Federals into McDonald County. On the 13th Catherwood's troopers attacked Coffee's partisans at Pineville. The Rebels were routed, with the loss of between 60 and 70 casualties, mostly dead. Abandoning their wagons, the survivors scattered.

At White Rock Prairie, Catherwood was reinforced by Major Eno's battalion. Eno handed Catherwood the orders McNeil had drafted for his combat team to report to Colonel Cloud at Bentonville. When his command reached Bentonville, Catherwood discovered that Cloud had pushed on to Fayetteville. Cloud had left instructions for Catherwood to move in a southwesterly direction toward Fort Blunt. <sup>8</sup>

Upon breaking camp at Cassville, Cloud's brigade had marched down the Telegraph road. South of Pea Ridge, the column turned into the road paralleling Little Sugar Creek and on to Bentonville. There, Cloud learned of Catherwood's successful attack on Coffee's camp. Cloud, after leaving a message for Catherwood, pushed on to Fayetteville. <sup>9</sup>

From Fayetteville, Cloud sent a patrol to establish contact with General Blunt. This detachment reached Fort Blunt on August 17. From what these men told him, Blunt decided his letter of the 14th addressed to Colonel Cloud must have gone astray. He waited two days; not hearing anything he drafted a second message. Blunt reiterated his orders for Cloud to send him the 2d Kansas Cavalry and four guns of the 2d Indiana Battery. Cloud's infantry, with a few mounted men for picket duty, would be left on Lindsay's Prairie or on the State Line road. This force was to hold itself ready to march for Fort Smith when ordered. <sup>10</sup>

Notifying General Schofield of his actions, Blunt announced that as soon as the requested reinforcements showed up, he would move against the Confederates even if he had to be "hailed" in a carriage. When the "tug of war comes," he would run the risk of having to sit a mule.

According to the latest information brought in by Blunt's scouts, Brigadier General William Steele's Confederates had pulled back to Briartown on the Canadian. Other reports indicated that Steele had withdrawn his troops from Fort Smith. In recent weeks it had been said that the Confederates were sending their families south to Red River. Steele's family had reportedly left Fort Smith several days before for Texas. In view of this intelligence, Blunt concluded, the Rebels must be planning to evacuate the territory between the Canadian and Red rivers.

Should he succeed in driving the Confederates beyond the Canadian, Blunt intended to occupy Fort Smith. He would make Fort Smith his chief supply depot.

The hot weather proved a problem. On the 19th the temperature at Fort Blunt was 98 degrees in the shade. A number of horses, especially the ones ridden by the scouts, had broken down. Blunt's quartermaster had been buying all the replacements he could find, but the horses gave out faster than new ones could be purchased. Perhaps, the general thought, he might be able to capture some from the Confederates in the projected operations. Moreover, the army's mules weren't in good condition.

Because of the hot weather, the flies, and the tough grass, the mules just about held their own when not worked. <sup>11</sup>

While waiting to hear from Blunt, Colonel Cloud kept his patrols busy. The 2d Kansas visited Prairie Grove. A squadron of Missourians led by Colonel John Scott was encountered. Shots were exchanged. Scott's outnumbered command evacuated the village and fled into the fastnesses of the Boston Mountains. Since they were familiar with the area, the greyclads eluded their pursuers. Cloud's troopers returned to Fayetteville with an ordnance wagon loaded with 5,000 rounds of ammunition abandoned by Scott's horsemen. <sup>12</sup>

The messenger with Blunt's dispatch of August 19 reached Cloud's command post about the same time as the one that had left Fort Blunt five days before. Not having received any word from Catherwood, Cloud was "loth" to leave his train in the woods on the State Line road. He accordingly determined to push on to Fort Blunt with the 2d Kansas and the Indianians' four guns, the infantry and the trains were to follow. <sup>13</sup>

Colonel Cloud entered Fort Blunt with his "flying column" on the evening of August 21. As soon as Cloud had reported to his headquarters, Blunt issued marching orders to the Army of the Frontier. The officers were alerted to have their units supplied and ready to march within 24 hours.

Writing to General Schofield on the 22d, General Blunt announced, "all my available force, about 4,000, are now crossing the Arkansas." Within the next ten days, should he enjoy the successes he anticipated, the Indian Territory south of the Arkansas River would again be in Union hands. Blunt planned to be on the road himself in a few hours, and if the Confederates held their ground, the next 48 hours would settle the "contest in the Indian country." Although his scouts had placed the Rebels' strength at 8,000, he had no fears of the result. Should they be defeated on the Canadian, Blunt predicted, the Southerners wouldn't make another stand north of the Red. <sup>14</sup>

Nightfall on August 22 found Blunt's entire command, 4,500 strong, south of the Arkansas. Shortly before he forded the river, Colonel Cloud saw a party of horsemen thundering down the road from Park Hill. It was Colonel Catherwood and his escort. Catherwood had overtaken Cloud's train during the day. Learning that action was impending, Catherwood had left his second in command to bring on his combat team while he hastened ahead. Blunt, on being notified of Catherwood's arrival, sent orders for him to await the arrival of his troopers. As soon as they reached Fort Blunt, Catherwood was to ford the Arkansas and join the Army of the Frontier.

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In the days following the engagement at Honey Springs fought on July 17, Confederate General Steele concentrated Brigadier General Douglas H. Cooper's and William L. Cabell's brigades on Imochia Creek, about 25 miles south of the battlefield. Steele on July 22 notified district headquarters at Little Rock that he had concentrated all the troops at his disposal, except the detachments guarding the magazines and Colonel A. S. Morgan's 26th Arkansas Infantry. Morgan's regiment garrisoned Fort Smith. The army mustered about 1,200 more effectives than had fought under Cooper at Honey Springs.

Steele planned to advance and reoccupy the ground from which Cooper had been driven by General Blunt, provided he could ford the Canadian. Scouts had reported the Canadian rising, so Steele didn't believe it would be wise to leave an unfordable river to his rear. Another problem bothered Steele as he thought of ways to wrestle the initiative from the Federals. The powder which had been recently shipped to his command from San Antonio was defective. It was so easily effected by even the slightest dampness as to be worthless. Needless to say this had a serious effect on the men's morale. Rumor had the powder sent to Mexico by the Yankees with the express purpose of its falling into Confederate hands.

Unless he recieved several artillery batteries, Steele forecast, he would be compelled to wage a defensive campaign. At the moment, Cooper's and Cabell's brigades between them had just seven guns.

16

A second letter was addressed to Brigadier General Smith P. Bankhead. Steele told Bankhead, who commanded troops in northern Texas, of his plan to cross the Canadian. If possible, Steele planned to intercept a large supply train which his scouts had told him was due to reach Fort Blunt from Fort Scott between August 1 and 10. To accomplish this, Steele needed Bankhead's help. Since he lacked artillery with which to attack Fort Blunt, he would attempt to take the Federals' train. Such a move, Steele believed would compel Blunt to come out from behind his fortifications. When he did, Steele wanted to have enough troops "to put the matter beyond the possibility of a failure." Consequently, he would like to know if Bankhead could rush reinforcements. 17

Steele, examining the Canadian, decided it was no obstacle. Forging the river on the 23d, Steele's troops occupied Prairie Springs, 15 miles from Fort Blunt, on the following day. The Federals withdrew to the north bank of the Arkansas in the face of the Confederates' advance. Rumors that Bankhead had crossed the Red caused spirits to zoom in the camps of the Rebels. 18

On July 27 Steele again wrote General Bankhead. He informed Bankhead that in the morning he would move his command to Honey Springs, and there await the Texans' arrival. Steele was still of the opinion that it would be a mistake to attack Fort Blunt unless his artillery corps was bolstered. Bankhead was authorized to make use of the commissary stores stockpiled in the magazines along the Texas road between the Red and the Canadian. 19

Steele's army took position at Honey Springs on the 28th. The range was good; orders were given for the troops to graze their mounts. Steele on the 29th advised district headquarters of his plans. Should General Blunt recross the Arkansas in force, Steele would pull back to meet General Bankhead's column, which was presumably en route from Texas. According to his spies, General Blunt had 16 pieces of artillery, some as large as 12-pounders. Blunt reportedly had at least 5,000 men, of whom 2,000 were whites. To oppose the Army of the Frontier, Steele had

2,500 whites and about 4,000 Indians, supported by seven guns. <sup>20</sup> Steele rated Blunt's Indian troops, since they were officered by whites, as better disciplined and armed than his.

From their stronghold at Fort Blunt, the Federals, it was feared, could send a column against Fort Smith. Having a shorter distance to march, the Yankees could reach Fort Smith ahead of Steele. If Steele drew back to cover Fort Smith, it would leave his depots along the Texas road exposed. In addition, the Creek Nation, which Steele looked upon as not being much "interested in our cause," would probably go over to the Union on the approach of Blunt's column. Unless reinforcements were rushed from Little Rock, Steele felt there was little likelihood the situation in the Indian Territory would improve. If a strong force could be sent to his assistance, Steele predicted, the Army of the Frontier could be overwhelmed. With the destruction of Blunt's command, the danger to western Arkansas and north Texas would be effectively removed. This movement, to be successful, must be prompt, Steele added. <sup>21</sup>

Several days later, Steele saw fit to warn Colonel Morgan that "our hold of Fort Smith is a frail one." Steele wanted his Fort Smith commander to see that most of the supplies on hand at the big depot were removed. Subsistence stores were to be stockpiled at Riddle's, so Morgan in case he had to give up Fort Smith on short notice would "have something to fall back upon." People familiar with the area had told Steele that near Riddle's there was a good defensive position known as the "Narrows." Should the Yankees cross the Arkansas above Fort Smith, Morgan was to retreat to the "Narrows," by "going south to the road running from Waldron to Riddle's." <sup>22</sup>

Steele's scouts on August 3 returned with some interesting information. They told the general that people in whom they had utmost confidence had reported "a force is being collected at Fort Scott, Kans., for the purpose of aggressive movements" into the Indian Territory. This information disconcerted Steele. He would like to beat the Federals to the punch, but he didn't feel his army was in condition to attack Fort Blunt. As yet, he hadn't heard from General Bankhead, so he didn't know when or if he would be reinforced.



The patrols sent out by Steele reported they were encountering increasing difficulty in slipping across the Arkansas River. In recent days, the Federals had increased their vigilance. For 15 miles above and a like distance below the mouth of the Grand, every crossing of the Arkansas was closely watched by Yankee pickets. <sup>23</sup>

By August 5 the area around Honey Spring had been pastured off by the thousands of animals belonging to Steele's little army. The camp was moved to Soda Springs where there was plenty of grass and water. An order was sent by General Steele to Colonel Scott on August 6. Scott, who was stationed at Fayetteville, was directed to keep Colonel Morgan at Fort Smith advised of any Union advance from Missouri into northwestern Arkansas. <sup>24</sup>

The situation took an unpleasant turn for the Confederates at the end of the first week of August. Desertions in Cabell's brigade had climbed. What was at first a trickle quickly became a flood. Men left by squads, platoons, and even companies. As many as 200 left in one night with several officers going with them. When Steele and Cabell investigated the situation, they were unable to find a logical explanation. The weather was good, and provisions (flour and beef) abundant. Several of the deserters had been captured. Steele planned to bring these men before a court martial, and if they were convicted, to have them shot.

Reporting to district headquarters on the 7th, Steele announced that the situation in the Indian Territory was rapidly deteriorating. Desertions in Cabell's brigade were getting out of hand. The previous evening a company sent in pursuit of a group had overtaken a party of over 200 commanded by an officer. While the majority of the deserters were en route for Arkansas, many had gone over to the foe. Most of the desertions had taken place in companies raised north of the Arkansas River.

Because of this situation, Steele determined to order Cabell's brigade to recross the Canadian. His principal reason for taking this action was to keep the Texans and Indians from emulating the Arkansans. Steele feared the bad effect the desertions would have on the troopers

of Cooper's brigade. To conceal his real motive, Steele let it be known that Cabell's brigade, after crossing the Canadian, would be in a better position to reinforce Fort Smith.

Two Choctaws, who had been captured by the Federals several weeks before, escaped and reached Steele's camp at this time. They brought more bad news. According to the Choctaws, Blunt had been reinforced by two regiments and a section of artillery. To meet this increase of strength on the Federals' part, Steele now had an army which was "scarcely more effective than was General Cooper's in the late engagement at Honey Springs."

Several additional heavy blows were dealt to Steele's spirits on August 7. Word reached the general that Bankhead's orders had been changed. Bankhead wouldn't be coming to his assistance. A message arrived from district headquarters that Major General Sterling Price would be unable to send any reinforcements from Arkansas. Steele was left with but one option -- he could maintain a defensive attitude as long as possible and fall back when the Federals advanced. Unless fortifications were thrown up quickly at the junction of the Texas with the Forts Smith and Blunt roads, Steele forecast, he would be hurled back behind the Red. Not having an engineer to entrust with the project or many intrenching tools, the construction of the proposed fortifications looked like a forlorn hope. Furthermore, the troops under his command didn't look with relish on pick and shovel work. Indeed, as Steele wrote Commissioner of Indian Affairs S. S. Scott, "prospects are very gloomy." <sup>25</sup>

Steele dispatched an important letter to Colonel Morgan at Fort Smith on August 8. Morgan was warned to be on the lookout for an advance by Colonel Cloud's brigade down the Telegraph road. A thrust toward Fort Smith by Cloud's bluecoats would in all probability be supported by the two Yankee cavalry regiments which had reportedly occupied Tahlequah. Steele feared the Tahlequah Federals might be able to slip across the Arkansas at Fort Coffee. Consequently, Steele wanted

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Morgan to make preparations to evacuate Fort Smith. Everything of value, not immediately needed, was to be forwarded to Boggy Depot. 26

Cabell early on the 8th had his men in the saddle. Amid the cheers and jeers of their comrades, the Arkansans rode out of the Soda Springs camp and headed eastward toward the Canadian. The next day, a report reached General Steele that the Federals were fording the Arkansas in strength. This was bad news. Steele reasoned that the deserters must have carried news of his difficulties to General Blunt. Once on the south side of the Arkansas, the Federals could by executing a night march surprise Steele's outnumbered and isolated command. Steele wasted no time in ordering Cooper to break camp. As soon as Cooper's Texans and Indians had packed their gear, the units were formed and mustered. At an order from Steele, the column moved out, taking the road for the Canadian. Steele pressed ahead rapidly and overtook Cabell's brigade before it had forded the river. Crossing the Canadian, the reunited Confederate army halted on the Imochia. 27

Steele was getting more discouraged with each day. As if the general didn't have enough trouble with Cabell's Arkansans, the two Creek regiments announced they were unwilling to leave their Nation. Writing to district headquarters on the night of August 9, the harassed general observed, "Thus, between the Creeks on one side and the Arkansas cavalry on the other, I can make no move without losing part of my force." An investigation by Steele had disclosed that the men of Cabell's brigade, with the exception of Colonel Morgan's 26th Arkansas and Colonel James C. Monroe's Cavalry Regiment, belonged "to a class who have very little at stake, and take but little interest in our cause." The officers were little better. Several excused the deserters when they were apprehended. With this material, Steele thought he would be doing well if he avoided disaster. 28

It was the second week in August before General Bankhead received permission to march to Steele's support. Up till this time, Major General

John B. Magruder, the ranking Confederate officer in Texas, hadn't seen fit to order Bankhead to cross Red River. Magruder had considered the threat to the Texas coast much more critical. After consulting with a number of his officers, Magruder finally decided to order Bankhead to proceed to Fort Smith with two regiments of cavalry (the 1st and 30th Texas) and a battery of light artillery. 29

Bankhead was "greived" to learn of the desperate straits in which General Steele found himself. Writing to Lieutenant General Edmund Kirby Smith's headquarters on August 10, Bankhead announced that he wished he could relieve Steele promptly, but Magruder had ordered him not to move until his command reached 2,000, with a second battery. As soon as Colonel Alexander W. Terrell's Cavalry Regiment and Abat's Texas Battery reached Bonham, Bankhead would be in condition, so far as numbers were concerned, to ford the Red. 30

When his brigade crossed into the Indian Territory, Bankhead requested that it be allowed to act independently. He questioned the value of amalgamating his command with Steele's. To place his brigade permanently under Steele, Bankhead argued, would leave Kirby Smith without a strategic reserve, "which could be moved in any emergency either into the Indian Department, Louisiana, or Eastern Texas." 31

Information reached General Bankhead's command post on the 13th that Steele had withdrawn Cabell's brigade behind the Canadian. Steele had written that he would be compelled to retire whenever the Federals advanced. Bankhead was deeply disturbed by this news. Moreover, Steele had neglected to say whether he would retire upon Fort Smith or toward Texas. If Steele withdrew into Fort Smith, it would leave the road to Texas open, but should he retreat down the Texas road and make his stand at Boggy Depot, Bankhead would join him there. 32

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Within three days, the grass on the Imochia began to show signs of overgrazing. Steele on the evening of the 11th ordered Cabell to march his brigade to the Sans Bois. The next day, the brigade marched

as directed, camping where an iron bridge carried the Beale road across the stream. About 15 miles now separated the two wings of Steele's rapidly shrinking army. By this date nearly all of Colonel J. P. Hill's Regiment, a large number of Carroll's Regiment, and nearly all of Crawford's Battalion had left the colors. <sup>33</sup>

Steele fretted about the necessity of having to divide his small army. He warned Cabell on August 15 to "exercise great vigilance." Should he learn of an advance by the Federals, Cabell was to move back toward the Imochia, if he had time. Otherwise, he was to march up the Sans Bois via the Perryville-Fort Smith road until he encountered Cooper's brigade. <sup>34</sup>

Cabell misinterpreted Steele's message. He came to the conclusion that Steele planned to fall back to Perryville with Cooper's brigade. A staff officer raced off to check to see if this were true. At the time, Cabell's courier galloped up to his headquarters on the 17th, Steele had moved his camp to Brookin's Creek. Steele categorically denied that he had any intention of "falling back in any direction at present." The reference to the Perryville road was only as a route by which the two brigadiers could unite.

The aide brought up several other subjects which had been troubling his general lately. Cabell's mules were breaking down in large numbers. Steele was unable to understand why, if the mules were being herded at night as directed. Because of the swarms of black flies which were abroad in this area in the late summer, the animals simply couldn't eat in the daylight hours. In reply to the staff officer's questions regarding the whereabouts of Cooper's patrols, Steele remarked, it was impossible to keep tab of each group. Cabell could rest assured that at all times there were "small parties of observation" roaming the area between Webbers Falls and the Creek Agency.

Steele turned to the plague of desertions which had gripped Cabell's brigade. He had no doubt, the general wrote, but many of the Arkansans, "will find pretexts for desertion in any move that does not take them in the direction they wish to go, and this feeling is encouraged by the

tone of the officers." Steps should be taken by Cabell and his officers to curb all talk which tended to make the troopers dissatisfied, or which made them think they should be elsewhere. Rumors from Fort Smith had reached Steele recently that the word was passed on the streets that Cabell believed the men ought to desert unless the brigade was returned to Arkansas. If nothing were done to counteract these stories, though they were false, many of the men would leave believing they had the "good-will of their officers."

According to the latest reports reaching Steele from Missouri, Colonel Cloud was gathering a force at Cassville, with the intention of driving down the Telegraph road to the Arkansas River. If Cloud did, Steele feared he would unite with Blunt. Against such force, they could "make but a poor show," Steele warned Cabell.<sup>35</sup>

Nine critical days slipped by before General Steele got around to making arrangements for the construction of defensive works on the Texas road. Steele on August 16 issued orders for Captain Sylvanus Howell to take part of his company and start throwing up earthworks from 10 to 20 miles north of Boggy Depot. Before breaking any ground, Howell was to make a careful examination of the terrain. Next, he would try to talk the Red River planters into letting him use their slaves and tools. A line of rifle pits and artillery emplacements to shelter 2,500 men were to be erected. Log houses were to be constructed for storage, wells sunk, and bridges placed over the streams in rear of the field fortifications.<sup>36</sup>

Colonel Scott before abandoning Fayetteville notified General Steele that Cloud's column was driving southward into Arkansas. This information reached General Steele on the 19th. To counter this threat, Steele determined to shift Cabell's brigade to within supporting distance of Fort Smith. Orders were forwarded for Cabell to march to the neighborhood of Scullyville. There he would be near enough to reinforce Colonel Morgan at Fort Smith should the Yankees advance on the town in such

numbers as he "could oppose with a reasonable prospect of success." If the bluecoats came against him in overwhelming strength, Cabell was to withdraw toward Riddle's, where a commissary depot had been established. At the same time, Cabell was cautioned to alert his patrols to watch for an advance by General Blunt's army out of Fort Blunt. 37

No time was lost in carrying out these instructions. Abandoning their position on the Sans Bois, Cabell's troopers struck eastward. Spirits soared as the men realized that they were heading toward home. Reaching Scullyville, Cabell sent scouts to locate grass and water. An area possessing both these essentials was found within three miles of Scullyville. Here, the brigade camped. 38

Cabell on August 21 received a dispatch from General Steele directing him to take charge of all operations in the Fort Smith area. Patrols were to be dispatched to see if they could ascertain the strength of Cloud's column which at last report was operating in Benton and Washington counties. The water and the grass had been exhausted near Scullyville, so Cabell abandoned his encampment. He reconcentrated his brigade at McLean's crossing of the Poteau, nine miles southwest of Fort Smith and eight miles from Scullyville. Preparations were made to defend Fort Smith. After sending scouts across the Arkansas to check on the Federals' activities in northwest Arkansas, the general put a number of fatigue parties to work constructing the fords and roads above his position. The bottom road to Fort Smith was likewise blocked.

Leaving one regiment on picket in front of Scullyville with orders to guard the Fort Smith road, Cabell rode into Fort Smith. The general was surprised to find that Colonel Morgan had failed to send the stores to Boggy Depot as ordered. As if this weren't bad enough, Morgan reported there was a train of wagons loaded with ammunition consigned to General Steele's chief of ordnance parked at Dardanelle. Cabell sent an escort and orders for the train to proceed to Waldron. 39

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After fording the Arkansas at Fort Blunt on the evening of August 22, Blunt started the Army of the Frontier for the Canadian.

Unlike many of the professional soldiers, Blunt wasn't afraid to improvise. He employed the Civil War version of mechanized infantry. Blunt's footsoldiers were transported across the rolling hills of the eastern Indian Territory in wagons.

Evidently, Blunt's scouts had not been too active, because they had failed to learn that Steele had divided his command. Blunt, before leaving the Arkansas, had been told that Steele, Cabell, Cooper, and Watie were camped on the Imochia with not less than 9,000 men. The Federal officers pushed their men hard. Colonel Catherwood's task force forded the Arkansas during the night and overtook the army at Honey Springs. Within 48 hours, the fast-moving column had covered the 60 miles that separated the Arkansas and the Canadian at this point. <sup>40</sup>

Steele's scouts sighted Blunt's bluecoats early on the 23d. Riding like the wind, they carried the news that the Yankees were across the Arkansas to General Steele's camp on Brookin's Creek. Unlike many soldiers in a similar situation, they gave an accurate account of Blunt's strength. Blunt, according to the scouts, had 5,000 men, of whom three-fifths were infantry. Steele was flabbergasted when he learned of the mode of transportation devised by Blunt for his infantry. At the moment, Steele had about 1,500 greyclads with which to oppose the onrushing Army of the Frontier.

To enable Cooper's troopers to forage their mounts, Steele had dispersed the units. Most of the Cherokees and several companies of Choctaws were so far off that contact would be established with the Federals long before they could rejoin the brigade. Consequently, Steele determined against risking a general engagement. Orders were given to fall back to Perryville. Express riders were sent to recall Colonel Stand Watie and his Cherokees who were on a reconnaissance to Webbers Falls. A staff officer galloped off with instructions for Colonel David N. McIntosh and his Creeks,



who were camped at North Fork Town, to rejoin the brigade at Perryville. As they retired down the Texas road, the Confederate would seek to hold the Yankees in check until their supplies had been sent to the rear. 41

General Cabell was promptly notified by Steele that the Federals were advancing in force toward the Canadian. Upon receipt of this intelligence, Cabell began making preparations "to protect and send off the public property of every description at Fort Smith." Ordnance stores of every kind and description, all the quartermaster's and commissary supplies were loaded onto wagons and placed in a position of safety. All the men not assigned to working parties were employed to watch the approaches to Fort Smith from the north and the west. 42

Evacuating the line of the Canadian on the morning of August 23, Steele's column withdrew down the Texas road. Blunt's army crossed the Canadian 36 hours later and occupied Steele's abandoned encampment. Here, Blunt learned for the first time that the Confederate fordes were badly scattered. Cabell with 3,000 men was said to have gone to Fort Smith, McIntosh and his Creeks had reportedly retired up the Canadian, while Steele, Cooper, and Katie were said to be heading for the Red.

Before deciding his next move, Blunt ordered his men to camp. At the same time, scouts were dispatched to see if they could pinpoint any of the fragments into which the Confederate army had apparently broken. At 3 a.m. on August 25, a patrol which had ridden down the Texas road returned. The leader informed Blunt that he had overtaken Steele's command, which he erroneously estimated to number about 5,000, about 20 miles south of the Canadian.

Blunt ordered the "Long Roll" beaten. As soon as the men had wolfed down their breakfast, a pursuit was organized. The cavalry and mountain howitzers took the lead, as the column moved out. Although Blunt pushed his men relentlessly, they were unable to overtake any

Confederate during the day. Blunt turned his men out early on the 26th. About 10 a.m. the vanguard was fired on from ambush by a company of Choctaws. Being veterans, the bluecoats didn't panic. A sharp fire fight ensued in which four Choctaws were killed and their captain captured. When questioned by General Blunt, the captain announced that his unit belonged to the 2d Choctaw Regiment. He and his comrades had come up from the Red the previous day to reinforce General Steele.

During the afternoon, there were several clashes between the Union advance and Steele's rear guard. Blunt was elated, because this was a certain sign that he was gaining on the Rebels. <sup>43</sup>

General Steele had reached Perryville on the evening of the 25th with his main column. He was disappointed at not finding McIntosh and his Creeks. The next morning, Steele received some good news for a change. A courier reached Perryville with the news that General Bankhead's Texans were finally en route to his assistance. <sup>44</sup>

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Word that General Steele had withdrawn from the approaches to Fort Blunt was a number of days in reaching General Bankhead's Bonham, Texas, headquarters. When the information did arrive on August 20, it caused considerable head shaking. Cabell's brigade was reported to have gone to Fort Smith, while Cooper's was camped near Briartown. Bankhead apparently confused Briartown, which was on the Texas road with Scullyville. Writing General Magruder, Bankhead complained that Steele had left the road to Texas and the magazines at Boggy Depot uncovered. If Bankhead were to protect the northern frontier of Texas, it would be necessary for him to occupy Boggy Depot with his entire command. <sup>45</sup>

A severe drought had dried up almost all the waterholes and streams between Bonham and the Red. Bankhead accordingly determined to move his brigade forward by detachments. The 30th Texas Cavalry left camp and started up the road to the Indian Territory on August 23, Captain W. B. Krumbhaar's battery followed on the 24th, while the 1st Texas Cavalry

took the field on the 25th. Bankhead wouldn't advance beyond Boggy Depot till all his units were up, or he had heard from General Steele. He refused to leave the Texas road uncovered unless directed to do so. If a Union column slipped across the Texas frontier because the road was left unguarded, Bankhead warned General Magruder, "the whole country would rise in condemnation of the order which moved... [his] command from a salient position." 46

Terrell's regiment which had been slated to reinforce Bankhead's brigade had been recalled by General Magruder. It had been necessary to rush part of that regiment to Galveston to quell a mutiny. When he notified Bankhead of his action on the 22d, Magruder announced that he was sending Jones' Texas Battery to Bonham. 47

Upon receipt of the message telling of Bankhead's advance, Steele dashed off a dispatch. He informed the commander of the reinforcing column that he was "falling back before a much superior force of the enemy." If Bankhead's Texans were at Perryville, Steele wrote, "they could be gratified in their desire to be under fire, with but little delay." Steele believed Blunt planned to crush his force and then march against Fort Smith. 48

To add an air of urgency to the situation, Steele affixed a postscript to the message before handing it to a rider, "7 P.M. -- The Federal cavalry is still harassing us, and the artillery and infantry reported not far behind. Hurry up." 49

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Along toward dusk on August 26, the pressure on the Confederate rear guard became so severe that Steele had Cooper establish a man with his entire brigade a roadblock a short distance north of Perryville.

It was getting dark when General Blunt's vanguard approached Perryville. The village was surrounded by a heavy growth of timber. Suddenly, there were two flashes, followed by two sharp booms. A storm of canister scattered the bluecoats, wounding four of them. Captain

Roswell W. Lee had had his Texans mask their two mountain howitzers where they could register on the road. The gunners had doubled charged their pieces and waited anxiously for the Yankees to blunder into their trap.

General Blunt was near the head of the column. As soon as the advance recoiled, Blunt told the commander of his lead regiment, the 6th Kansas Cavalry, to dismount and deploy his troopers to the right and left of the road. While horse-holders were being detailed, the Kansans unlimbered two mountain howitzers. By the time the bluecoats had worked their way to within 300 yards of the breastworks behind which the Rebels crouched, the Yankee artillerists had their small but efficient popguns in action. A dozen rounds were sent crashing into the butternuts' position. Having accomplished their mission by delaying the Federals long enough to give their comrades a good start, the Confederates abandoned the roadblock, secured their mounts, and retreated down the Texas road.

Entering Perryville, Blunt learned from the few inhabitants who were cowering about that the main Rebel force was several miles in advance. Since they had spent the day at the village, while his troops had made a 40-mile march, Blunt decided to call a halt. He "considered farther pursuit through a rough and timbered country in the night" as being futile. The general inspected the village and found that nearly every building contained public stores. He felt certain since Perryville was the only populated place between Boggy Depot and North Fork Town that it must be an important depot. Orders were given and carried out to burn the village. 50

Steele kept his column on the road throughout the night. Toward daybreak, the Confederates became satisfied that the Federals hadn't followed them beyond Perryville. Steele accordingly called a halt as soon as the column reached the East Boggy. While the men were going into camp, Steele dictated several messages which were handed to couriers

to be carried to General Bankhead. Bankhead was to march his brigade "to the Middle Boggy, with all possible dispatch." Should the Yankees continue their drive down the Texas road, a battle would be inevitable. Unless the Federals slowed the pace of their advance, the next engagement could occur within 24 hours. Since it was rumored that McIntosh's Creeks were en route to Boggy Depot by another road, Steele wanted Bankhead to tell them that they were to report to General Cooper at once on the Texas road. 51

The letter written by Steele on the evening of the 26th, prior to the evacuation of Perryville, was 25 hours in reaching Bankhead's headquarters. At that time most of Bankhead's Texans were camped on the Blue. Bankhead called for a night march. 52

Generals Steele's and Bankhead's columns rendezvoused on the Middle Boggy on August 28. Steele was delighted by the sight of Bankhead's 1,000 well armed Texans. As soon as Bankhead's train arrived, Steele planned to move toward Fort Smith to help General Cabell who he feared would "be the next object of the enemy." The addition of Bankhead's Texans would make good the losses suffered from straggling during the retreat. The continued failure of the Creeks to rejoin Cooper's brigade troubled Steele. Although he had heard from Watie, the Cherokee leader had not returned from the scout which had taken his command to the Arkansas River. Consequently, when Steele started for Fort Smith his army would be more efficient but weaker numerically than when it left the Canadian.

If all went according to schedule, Steele hoped to leave the Middle Boggy on September 1. Steele, on notifying Cabell of his plans on August 30, pointed out that Cooper's brigade was "much broken down." 53

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Having seized the initiative, General Blunt didn't intend to relinquish it. Satisfied that nothing further could be gained by

pursuing Steele's command down the Texas road, Blunt determined to strike General Cabell. Like the good general he was, he would beat the Confederates in detail. The reports brought in by the general's scouts indicated that Cabell with from 3,000 to 4,000 troops was holding the crossings of the Poteau near Fort Smith.

Instructions were issued on the morning of August 27 for the Army of the Frontier to retrace its steps. Blunt on reaching the Canadian divided his command. The general, accompanied by his escort and Cloud's brigade, would march against Fort Smith, Colonel William R. Judson's brigade was to make a sweep up the Canadian, while the remainder of the army took position at Fort Blunt and Webber's Falls.

Contact between Blunt's vanguard and Cabell's scouts was established on the 30th. The greyclads spotted the Federals two miles west of the Sans Bois. Riders thundered eastward to alert Cabell to the approaching danger. <sup>54</sup>

General Cabell had been alerted 48 hours before to be on the lookout for Yankees. At that time he had received a letter from General Steele written on the 26th, reporting that the Yankees were following as he retreated down the Texas road. Steele warned Cabell that he was to keep scouts out on both sides of the Arkansas. In addition, Cabell saw that Lieutenant Colonel L. L. Thomson at Scullyville sent patrols beyond the Sans Bois. News that Blunt had pulled back from Perryville and had returned to Camp Pike reached Cabell promptly. <sup>55</sup>

Confederate scouts kept tab of Blunt's column as it marched eastward. Shots were exchanged on several occasions. Blunt's bluecoats spent the night of August 30, 12 miles west of Scullyville. Their camp was within four miles of Cabell's pickets.

At 2 a.m. on the 31st, a combat patrol from the 2d Kansas Cavalry attacked the Rebel outposts guarding the Beale road. A brisk engagement ensued. The greyclads were driven from their roadblock and compelled to fall back on Colonel Thomson's camp. Having been alerted to the approaching danger, Thomson turned his troopers out on the double.

Thomson's Arkansans skirmished constantly with the Federals as they withdrew toward McLean's Crossing of the Poteau. The Confederates cursed the ordnance people, because of the poor quality of powder with which they were supplied. Minie balls fired by the greyclads kicked up dust, only 60 to 70 feet ahead, when aimed to strike a Federal horseman 100 yards away.

It was 4 p.m. before the Yankees reached a large field near the Poteau bottom, within three miles of McLean's Crossing. Here, Blunt told Cloud to halt the 2d Kansas, pending the arrival of the artillery and the wagon borne infantry. 56

Meanwhile, Cabell had instituted preparations to receive the Union attack. Harrell's Battalion forded the river to reinforce Thomson's troopers; Captain W. M. Hughey had his cannoneers unlimber their four 6-pounders, which were sighted to cover the crossing.

It was dusk by the time Blunt's column had closed up. The general decided not to risk a night engagement and directed his men to camp. Not wishing to blunder into a trap, Blunt told Cloud to make a reconnaissance. As soon as it was dark, Cloud rode down into the bottom at the head of a combat patrol. Thomson's and Harrell's Arkansans fell back in the face of Cloud's advance. Recrossing the Poteau, the greyclads formed into line of battle on the east bank. A brisk fire fight developed. Since it was dark, the men fired at the flashes. Captain Hughey, on being told that the Confederate skirmishers had forded the river, put his guns into action. Double charges of canister crashed into the underbrush on the west side of the Poteau.

Cloud, having stirred up a hornet's nest, ordered his bugler to sound recall. The Yankees returned to their camp with one prisoner. Reporting to Blunt, Cloud announced that Cabell's troopers were strongly posted at the ford. All roads leading to the crossing had been obstructed with felled timber. According to the prisoner, Cabell had six regiments, supported by four pieces of artillery, mustering about 2,500 effectives. 57

General Cabell had spent a good part of the late afternoon questioning his scouts. After evaluating all the available information, Cabell concluded that Blunt had at least 2,300 men and eight pieces of artillery. At the same time, his brigade had been reduced by desertions to about 1,250. Satisfied that he could only rely on about half this number if it came to a fight, Cabell determined to abandon his position. Orders were issued for the wagon masters to put the trains, which had been previously loaded with public property from the Fort Smith depot, in motion. They were to take the road across the Devil's Backbone to Waldron. Cabell would employ his brigade to cover the trains as they rolled across the Ouachita Mountains.

Orders to begin the retreat were issued by the general at 9 p.m. Earlier in the day, the baggage trains had been sent to Jenny Lind. Just as Cabell was leaving McLean's Crossing, a sweat-begrimed courier rode up. He informed Cabell that the ordnance train had reached Waldron. Cabell considered this very good news, because the heavily loaded vehicles of that train were drawn by plodding oxen. 57

Blunt turned his command out well before daybreak on September 1. By the time it was light, the troops had been mustered and formed. Covered by a strong force of skirmishers, the Federals advanced to the attack. They were surprised to discover on approaching the ford that the Confederates had apparently disappeared. Alert to the possibility of an ambush, the vanguard forded the Poteau and found numerous signs of a hurried departure by the butternuts.

Tracks left by the rebels were plainly visible in the dust on the road leading to Fort Smith. Blunt determined to push on. Galloping into Jenny Lind, the bluecoats scattered the pickets left behind by Cabell. When he entered the village, the Union scouts pointed out to Blunt unmistakable signs that the Confederates had turned into the Waldron road. 58

Cloud asked Blunt's permission to "take the efficient cavalry" and four guns of the 2d Indiana Battery and "push the retreating enemy." Blunt told him to go ahead. Within a few moments, Cloud had organized his task force. In addition to the Indiana cannoneers, it included the 2d Kansas and the 6th Missouri State Militia Cavalry. Spearheaded



by Captain Edward Lines' company of the 2d Kansas, Cloud's flying column (600 strong) thundered out of Jenny Lind in a cloud of dust. <sup>59</sup>

After detaching Colonel Cloud, Blunt continued on to Fort Smith with his staff, escort, and the 1st Arkansas Infantry (Union). Blunt took possession of the fort and the city without opposition. <sup>60</sup>

During the night many of the citizens had been aroused. According to a staunch Unionist, Valentine Dell, "we had the indescribable pleasure of seeing the last of Fitzwilliams' band of cut-throats' file almost noiselessly past our residence."

Shortly after sunrise, there was a great commotion in the streets. Within a few minutes, Dell sighted a "dark body of horsemen" advancing rapidly toward the town on the Jenny Lind road. Hastening toward the Garrison, the Fort Smith Unionists "beheld with emotion...the glorious emblem of Freedom, Humanity, and Justice proudly floating from the flagstaff, which but yesterday was disgraced by the display of the ensign of foul treason." <sup>61</sup>

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Cloud's task force, its advance exchanging frequent shots with the pickets which had been driven from Jenny Lind, thundered southward toward the mountains. Hearing the rattle of gunfire, Cabell halted his brigade at the foot of the Devil's Backbone. Colonel James C. Monroe's regiment was deployed at the base of the steep ridge. The troopers dismounted and took cover in the thick undergrowth. The other units were formed en echelon along the sides of the ridge to either side of the road. Hughey's gunners unlimbered their four pieces "to command the whole field of operations." <sup>62</sup>

At noon, the Confederate sighted the onrushing Federals. Captain Lines and his company galloped up the road, "yelling and shouting, confident of success." As soon as the bluecoats had closed to within small-arms range, Colonel Monroe shouted, "fire!" A crashing volley unhorsed Captain Lines and a dozen of his men. The survivors recoiled. Rushing to the point of danger, Cloud called for his men to dismount.

While the Kansans and Missourians were forming, the Indianians threw their four guns into battery; a detachment from the 2d Kansas unlimbered two mountain howitzers. Within a short time, Cloud had brought order out of chaos. <sup>63</sup>

Cabell bellowed encouragement to Monroe's men as he saw the Federals draw back. For a few brief minutes, Cabell believed the tide which had been running strongly against the Confederates of late in the Indian Territory and Arkansas had turned. He felt now was the time to mount a slashing counterattack. Such a move, could only result in the destruction of Cloud's flying column. With Cloud out of the way, the road back to Fort Smith would be open.

The Federal artillery roared into action. This proved to be the straw which broke the camel's back. Half the units constituting Cabell's brigade panicked, the men retreating into the ravines and taking cover behind rocks. The troopers from Colonel J. F. Hill's regiment stampeded over the provost guard. Taking advantage of the confusion, 80 prisoners under sentence for treason and desertion escaped. Subsequently, Cabell wrote, "Thomson's and Hill's regiments acted in the most disgraceful manner. The eight companies of Morgan's regiment acted but little better." <sup>64</sup>

This disaster brought Cabell back to earth. Instead of sweeping the invaders across the Arkansas, Cabell would be called on to exert all the skill gained in 17 years in the army to save the trains. With the remainder of his command, Cabell fought grimly to hold the Federals at bay, until the last wagons had crossed the mountain. For the better part of the next three hours, "the battle raged with variable violence." Cabell breathed a sigh of relief when a messenger rode up and told him the train had crossed the mountain. Shortly thereafter, there was a lull in the fighting. Cabell took advantage of this situation to disengage his command. Covered by a small rear guard, the Confederates withdrew across the Devil's Backbone. <sup>65</sup>

After occupying the field, the Union officers mustered their commands. Patrols were advanced, and a number of prisoners, many of whom had deserted Cabell's brigade were rounded up. In view of the exhausted

condition of his column, Cloud decided to curtail his pursuit. The flying column spent the night of September 1 on Devil's Backbone. Cloud and his troopers, accompanied by 30 prisoners, marched to Fort Smith the next morning.

General Blunt, who had suffered a relapse, was delighted to see Cloud. Reporting himself unfit for duty, Blunt placed Colonel Cloud in charge for the time being at Fort Smith. <sup>66</sup>

Meanwhile, Cabell and his Confederates fell back to Waldron. Upon his arrival there on the 2d, Cabell was disappointed to discover that nothing was known of Steele's or Bankhead's whereabouts. The only information which the general was able to obtain was bad. A powerful Union column (Major General Frederick Steele's) was reported closing in on Little Rock from the east. Cabell accordingly decided he "could do nothing more than look to the protection of the public property" entrusted to his care. He proposed to take the most direct route on which supplies could be had, and seek to rejoin Steele as soon as possible with as many men as he could.

Cabell remained at Waldron until the morning of September 4, waiting for the stragglers to report. When his column moved out, it numbered about 900 strong. The brigade took the Caddo Gap road to Centre Point, in Sevier County. From there, Cabell planned to march to Boggy Depot by way of Doaksville. <sup>67</sup>

FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

Chapter XVIII

The Federals Occupy Fort Smith

Notes

- 1 O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, Pt. II, 462. Schofield at this stage of the conflict commanded the Department of the Missouri.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid., 467.
- 5 Ibid., 438.
- 6 Ibid., 439.
- 7 Ibid., 439-440, 445. At this time, Cloud's command consisted of: eight companies 2d Kansas Cavalry, five companies 1st Arkansas Cavalry (Union), ten companies 1st Arkansas Infantry (Union), and the 1st Indiana Battery, 4 guns.
- 8 O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. I, 553-554.
- 9 O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. II, 466.
- 10 Ibid., 467.
- 11 Ibid., 462-463.
- 12 Ibid., 466.
- 13 Ibid., 466-467.
- 14 Ibid., 465-466.
- 15 Ibid., 466-467; O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. I, 554, 597.
- 16 O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. II, 940-941,
- 17 Ibid., 940. Bankhead commanded the Northern Sub-District of Texas with headquarters near Bonham.
- 18 Ibid., 948.
- 19 Ibid., 948-949.
- 20 Ibid., 950. Steele's seven guns were: four iron 6-pounders, two mountain howitzers and one rifled prairie gun.

- 21 Ibid., 950-951.
- 22 Ibid., 951-952. Captain A. H. Cline, who was familiar with the area, could give Morgan all the information he needed regarding the roads and trails leading southward from Fort Smith into the Quachita Mountains.
- 23 Ibid., 953.
- 24 Ibid., 955.
- 25 Ibid., 956-957, 961; O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. I, 33.
- 26 O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. II, 957-958.
- 27 Ibid., 961; O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. I, 604-605.
- 28 O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. II, 961.
- 29 Ibid., 963-964.
- 30 Ibid., 966. Since Terrell's regiment was "perfectly raw and unarmed," Bankhead questioned its value.
- 31 Ibid. Although Bankhead's command was mounted, the drill had been almost "exclusively" infantry. The men had been instructed in the "rudiments of the school of the trooper."
- 32 Ibid., 965-966.
- 33 O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. I, 605.
- 34 O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. II, 967-968.
- 35 Ibid., 969-970.
- 36 Ibid., 968.
- 37 Ibid., 972; O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. I, 33, 605.
- 38 O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. I, 605.
- 39 Ibid., O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. II, 974-975.
- 40 O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. I, 554, 597.
- 41 Ibid., 33, 600.
- 42 Ibid., 605.
- 43 Ibid., 33, 597, 599.
- 44 O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. II, 981.
- 45 Ibid., 972.
- 46 Ibid., 977.
- 47 Ibid., 975.

- 48 Ibid., 981.
- 49 Ibid., 982.
- 50 O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. I, 597-598, 602.
- 51 O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. II, 980-981.
- 52 Ibid., 981. Since leaving Camp Bankhead, the brigade had been reinforced by four companies of Bourland's Battalion.
- 53 Ibid., 984, 985.
- 54 O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. I, 598, 601, 602, 606.
- 55 Ibid., 605.
- 56 Ibid., 601, 602, 605-606; Harrell, Confederate Military History of Arkansas, 202-203.
- 57 O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. I, 606.
- 58 Ibid., 598, 601, 602.
- 59 Ibid., 554, 598, 602.
- 60 Ibid., 602.
- 61 Fort Smith New Era, Sept. 2, 1865.
- 62 O. R., Series I, Vol. XXII, pt. I, 602-603, 606.
- 63 Ibid., 603, 606-607.
- 64 Ibid., 606, 607.
- 65 Ibid., 598-599, 603, 607.
- 66 Ibid., 599, 603. Cloud listed his losses in the engagement as 14; 2 killed and the rest wounded.
- 67 Ibid., 607.

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## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter XIX

#### The Garrison Returns to a Peace Time Status

A telegram reached Brigadier General Cyrus Bussey's Fort Smith headquarters on the evening of April 10, 1865, telling of the surrender of General Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia the previous day at Appomattox. Court House. Orders were issued by General Bussey for the firing of a national salute of 200 rounds. Seven guns (three from the 1st Arkansas Battery and four manned by the 2d Kansas Battery) were unlimbered. As soon as it was dark, the guns started roaring. The townspeople, according to Editor Valentine Dell of the New Era, "responded with shouts of gladness and rejoicing." Captain Edward A. Smith of the 2d Kansas Battery was in charge of the firing of the national salute, "which was executed in a highly creditable manner. The men handled their pieces with ease and promptness which gave ample proof of fearful efficiency in battle."

As soon as the shooting had ceased, a great throng of people assembled at the Garrison. Brigadier Generals Cyrus Bussey and John Edwards, in response to a cry, addressed the gathering on the significance of the occasion. <sup>1</sup>

During the week ending April 15, the weather along the western Arkansas border had been "very variable." Rain and sunshine "followed each other in quick succession." At times, it was unseasonably cool. The river remained high sweeping by Belle Point "in a majestic volume not often witnessed for so long a period of time." <sup>2</sup>

News of the assassination of President Lincoln arrived at Fort Smith on April 15 and cast a pall of gloom over the community. General Bussey lost no time in telegraphing Major General John Pope, "The news of the assassination of President Lincoln horrifies every true patriot."

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According to Bussey, the troops of his command had vowed "a willingness to re-enlist for twenty-years, if need be, to crush out the last vestige of treason in the country." <sup>3</sup>

Four days later, funeral rites were held in memory of the dead President. The troops, fraternal orders, and citizens assembled outside the Garrison at 11:30 a.m. General Edwards acted as "Grand Master."

A little before noon, the "imposing procession" took up its line of march. Bussey and the members of his staff took the lead. Close behind marched the band of the 18th Iowa, playing with muffled drums a funeral dirge, and then General Edwards and his staff, followed by the Masons and Odd Fellows. Next, came the various regiments, headed by their bands, and finally the citizens.

The "procession" marched into the Garrison and formed around the platform which had been erected in the center of the parade ground. Seats had been provided near the rostrum for the ladies of whom a large number were present.

General Edwards, who acted as chairman, called the gathering to order. He appointed a committee to prepare a resolution expressing the deep sorrow felt by the soldiers and citizens.

A religious ceremony followed. Reverend W. H. Gillam of the Christian Commission gave out the hymn, "There is a Stream whose Gentle Flow, Supplies the City of Our God," in which he was joined by the choir led by Reverend S. F. C. Garrison of the 40th Iowa. Post Chaplain Francis Springer gave the prayer.

After the resolutions had been presented and adopted, the doxology was sung and the benediction pronounced by Reverend Springer.

Throughout the daylight hours half hour guns were discharged. At noon, 21 additional guns "called a great nation at the same time, to pay their last and sad tribute to the memory of the great departed." <sup>4</sup>

There were fewer arrivals and departures of steamboats at the Fort Smith landing in the third week of April than there had been for months. Only two vessels came up river, the Lotus on the 15th and the Virginia Barton two days later. Both boats discharged freight and



returned downstream. The Carrie Jacobs reached Fort Smith from Fort Gibson on the 15th, stopped briefly, and sailed for Little Rock.

Heavy rains drenched the area. On April 17 there was a violent all night thunderstorm. Forty-eight hours later, there was another heavy blow. Amid the flashes of lightning and the roar of the thunder, came a steady downpour, which lasted well into the next day. The runoff from these rains raised the Arkansas to a "prodigious height." No longer was the "raging Arkansas" a figure of speech. <sup>5</sup>

Undercover of the storm on the night of the 19th, five partisans led by Rose visited the Knox farm, six miles east of Fort Smith. At this time, the William Barnard family was living on the farm. Mr. Barnard, realizing that it was unsafe, had spent the night in town. Rose asked Mrs. Barnard as to the whereabouts of her spouse and William Colbart, another "good Union man." When she said that they were in Fort Smith, the partisans vowed to wreak vengeance on them at the first opportunity. Before riding off, the guerrillas took a horse, a yoke of oxen, and a wagon belonging to Barnard.

Commenting on the raid, the editor of the New Era observed, "The leader Rose, remained in this city for nearly a year after its occupation by our troops, took the oath, enjoyed Federal protection, obtained employment in the Quarter Master's Department then repaid all by turning Bushwhacker. His family is still residing in town." <sup>6</sup>

The weather improved during the week of April 22-29. Editor Dell informed his subscribers on the 29th that for "the past week the weather has been more favorable to agriculture than for any whole week this spring." Until the last 48 hours, the days and nights had been clear and warm. Since the 27th, it had been cloudy and warm with an "occasional gentle shower." The farmers of Sebastian County assured Editor Dell that this was "splendid growing weather." Prospects for a bumper crop of fruit were good; the recent frosts had done little or no injury to the buds. Although the river had fallen ten feet in a week, there was still plenty of water to enable vessels of the deepest draft to ascend to Fort Smith. <sup>7</sup>

A large number of officers belonging to Major General Joseph J. Reynolds' staff, headed by Colonel John Levering, reached Fort Smith aboard the Annie Jacobs on April 24 from Little Rock. Levering and the officers spent the day inspecting the post and hospitals. That evening, the entire inspection party (most of the officers had brought their wives) was entertained by General and Mrs. Bussey and Colonel and Mrs. John A. Garrett.

Levering and his party reboarded the Annie Jacobs the next morning for the trip up to Fort Gibson. The group returned to Fort Smith on the 27th. After a brief stop, they continued down to Little Rock. According to all reports, the officers and their ladies "enjoyed the trip largely, especially the novel sight of Indian warriors, squaws, papooses, and the beautiful scenery of the upper Arkansas and Grand." 8

On Saturday night, April 29, there was a wild wind and rainstorm. Many trees in Sebastian and Crawford counties were blown down. Telegraph poles were toppled: for several days telegraphic communications between Fort Smith and Springfield, Missouri, were interrupted. As soon as the rain stopped, the weather turned summer like. Several afternoons during the week ending May 6, the mercury reached 90°. Following the rain, the Arkansas rose rapidly, but by the time the New Era went to press on the 5th, it was falling. Even so, there was plenty of water for steamboating over all the bars between Fort Smith and Little Rock. 9

Captain G. W. Raymond and a detachment of the 1st Arkansas Cavalry was sent out on the afternoon of May 1 to escort in several families of pro-Union proclivities who wished to take refuge within the Fort Smith defenses. Along toward dark, the Federals halted and camped near the edge of Massard Prairie. The soldiers, after eating, were lounging around the camp fire. Suddenly, there was a volley. All the soldiers except one, Sergeant John J. Laster, scrambled for cover. The sergeant collapsed with a bullet through his heart. By the time, Captain Raymond had organized his men for a counterattack, the bushwhackers had made their getaway. 10

Meanwhile, General Reynolds had decided that with the war almost over there was no need for two generals at Fort Smith. Orders were drafted on May 1 relieving General Edwards of duty at that point. Edwards would take command of the Union troops at Pine Bluff. <sup>11</sup>

There was heavy traffic on the Arkansas at Fort Smith in the second week of May. Twelve boats, some bound upstream and some down, tied up at the landing. General Blunt, who had been assigned to command the District of South Kansas, reached Fort Smith by boat from Little Rock on May 6. The transports with the 14th Kansas Cavalry (dismounted), which was being transferred from Pine Bluff to Fort Gibson, passed Fort Smith on the same day. Blunt the next morning reboarded the vessel and continued on to Fort Gibson, where he planned to establish his headquarters. Shortly after Blunt had departed, the steamer Linnie Drown came up from Little Rock. Aboard was a battalion of the 13th Kansas Cavalry. After a brief delay, the transport continued to Fort Gibson. A boat with the rest of the regiment aboard passed Fort Smith on the 12th.

The soldiers in and around Fort Smith observed May 10 "as a day of mourning and deep sorrow in commemoration of the untimely death of their late beloved President." Most of the populace joined the soldiers.

At 10 a.m. the various regiments were formed on Garrison Avenue and marched into the Garrison to the beat of muffled drums. The colors were draped in black.

After stacking arms, the troops fell out. Along with the civilians, they gathered around the speaker's platform. Reverend Springer offered a fervent prayer, while General Bussey delivered an address "which for its appropriateness, fever of patriotism, Christian and soldier-like sentiments, was a rare treat to the vast assemblage."

The sky which had been dark and threatening all morning, turned blacker as Bussey closed his remarks. Consequently, the meeting was curtailed and the soldiers dismissed. <sup>12</sup>

On the day after the ceremony, a man named Monroe, who had come to Fort Smith when the Federals evacuated Waldron the previous year, was shot and killed near the Rogers Cemetery by George Clark and Tyner. Since Monroe was "a poor man," the editor of the New Era felt the crime was senseless. A sergeant and eight men of the 1st Arkansas Infantry (Union) went in pursuit of the bushwhackers. Clark and Tyner were mounted on swift horses, so the patrol was unable to overtake them. 12

By the beginning of the third week of May, the Arkansas was falling rapidly. The bar opposite the town raised "its dreary surface above the water." Two heavy rains caused the river to boom, and the bar "was speedily compelled to hide itself again, not to reappear, we hope for many weeks," wrote Editor Dell.

Word that Jefferson Davis had been captured on May 10 near Irwinville, Georgia, reached Fort Smith on Sunday, the 14th. General Bussey and his officers sought to "keep the news under wraps." The "long roll" was beaten. Many of the soldiers and citizens felt that the garrison was being turned out to meet a Rebel attack. Though it was almost time for church services, the sight of the regiments and batteries marching to points of rendezvous to the sound of martial music proved too much for the congregations. The pious followed the troops down the streets.

Within a short time, a "vast number of soldiers and citizens" were gathered on the parade ground of the Garrison around the rostrum from "which on recent occasions of late, elegant words of rejoicing and mourning had emanated." Reverend Springer opened the exercise with a prayer, and gave "thanks to God under Heaven's blue arch for the utter overthrow of the wicked." General Bussey, Colonel M. LaRue Harrison, and Reverend North of the 1st Arkansas Cavalry followed. After Reverend North had spoken, the meeting was adjourned; the soldiers marched back to their camps. 13

With the end of the Civil War at hand, many of the volunteers expected to be discharged before their enlistments were up. Two

companies of the 2d Kansas Cavalry reached Fort Smith on the Arizona from Lewisburg. At this time, only four companies of this crack unit were still in service, the other six having been mustered out. <sup>14</sup>

General Kirby Smith on May 26 signed a convention with Union Major General Edward R. S. Canby surrendering all the military forces and public property under his control to the authorities of the United States. Upon receipt of this information, General Reynolds, realizing that the war was finally over, issued instructions on May 27 for his subordinates in the Department of Arkansas to see that the militia was disbanded. All public arms and accouterments were to be collected and turned over to the Ordnance Department without delay. <sup>15</sup>

Confederate Brigadier General Thomas P. Dockery reached Pine Bluff on May 29. Calling on General Edwards, Dockery expressed a desire to see General Reynolds "for the purpose of surrendering all rebel troops in the State south of the Arkansas River." A letter which reached Reynolds' Little Rock headquarters two days later from Augustus H. Garland, a former Confederate congressman, indicated that all Rebel troops in the Trans-Mississippi had been disbanded. Relaying this information to General Bussey, Colonel Levering directed, "all armed troops reporting for surrender will be paroled." <sup>16</sup>

Visiting Reynolds' Little Rock headquarters, General Dockery concluded an agreement with the Federal leaders "to surrender all forces and arms in the State" on June 20 at three points -- Monticello, Camden, and Washington. When he transmitted this information to General Bussey on the 3d, Colonel Levering pointed out that Rebel soldiers reporting without arms would be permitted to go to their homes. Where no arms were surrendered, no official notice would be taken. Experience had taught the Federals that the greyclads were likely to hide their arms, before coming in to secure their certificates of parole. <sup>17</sup>

One week later, June 10, Reynolds' headquarters notified Bussey that Fort Gibson would be held. Since the troops at Fort Gibson, the

2d and 14th Kansas were slated to be mustered out at an early date, he was to have them replaced by the 40th Iowa. Colonel Garrett was to hold his regiment ready to proceed without delay to Fort Gibson. 18

With the war in the Trans-Mississippi over, hundreds of demobilized Rebel soldiers, along with many families of pro-Confederate proclivities returned to Sebastian and Crawford counties. Editor Dell of the New Era reported on June 17 that the returning Rebels "have given evidence of agreeable surprise at the unoffending and polite reception with which they have been greeted by old acquaintances of the Union faith." Many of the ex-Confederates had approached the Union lines with caution, not knowing whether insults or the scaffold awaited them. On being greeted "with kindness and cordiality, they seemed transported with delight."

"Well my dear boys," Uncle Sam seemed to say, "you have been away on a bad errand and in violation of the rules of my house; but as you have returned repentent, I cheerfully, receive you again to fellowship and confidence. Now behave yourselves handsomely, and it shall be well with you." 19

One former Rebel soldier who returned to Fort Smith had an interesting encounter with a bluecoat of the 1st. Arkansas Infantry. The Southerner claimed that his officers, not he, had been whipped; that his principles were still the same as before.

"Not whipped, eh?" exclaimed the bluecoat, "that's to my hand exactly, I'm around whipping rebels — that's what Uncle Sam hired me for. Off with your duds, and I'll give you the satisfaction."

At this, the butternut pulled off his coat. The two men waded into each other. After "a severe course of tumbings and thumps the vaunted sprig of chivalry cried 'enough!'"

"Now I reckon" cried the Yankee "you'll quit your gassen round here, and telling the boys you ain't whipped eh!" 20

In the week ending June 24, three boats (the Farragut, the Alamo, and the Mattie Cabler) arrived and departed from Fort Smith. By

Saturday, the stage of the Arkansas had fallen to a point, where fears were expressed that it would be closed to navigation for the present season. 21

An unexpected rise occurred on the Arkansas at the end of June. Boats of the largest size for several days could again reach Fort Smith. By the time the New Era appeared on the streets on July 8, the river had fallen considerably, "so as to admit but very small boats up to this place." Though the weather was warm, it wasn't oppressively hot. The mercury during the day generally rose to the mid-eighties in the shade.

Several regiments formerly stationed at Fort Smith were being demobilized. Six companies of the 18th Iowa had left Fort Smith on July 5 on the Randolph for Iowa. The remainder of the regiment would follow on the "first boat." At Little Rock, the 12th and 13th Kansas had been mustered out the previous week.

Numbers of these sturdy Iowans and Kansans had written or told Editor Dell that they were impressed with the "boundless resources and agreeable" climate of the Arkansas Valley. After receiving their discharges, they planned to return to the country which "their valor" had thrown open "to intelligent free labor." According to the editor, "No one has better claim to possess and dwell in the beautiful South than the loyal men North and South, who have made such immense sacrifices.... We will gladly welcome the truly loyal wherever they may hail from." 22

The Mattie Cabler reached Fort Smith on July 8 with a cargo of private freight. As soon as she was unloaded, the four remaining companies of the 18th Iowa went aboard, and the vessel cast off for Little Rock. Shortly after the Mattie Cabler had gotten under way, she passed the Kate Bruner en route to Fort Smith with "as much freight as she could carry." Within 24 hours, the Kate Bruner had discharged her cargo and was heading downstream. Because of the low water, the Fort Smithites were surprised to see these two steamers for they believed that navigation on the reaches of the river below the town

was about "played out." According to the passengers who disembarked at Fort Smith, several boats were aground and would in all probability have to turn back.

Except for a shower on Sunday, July 16, no precipitation had fallen in the area for several weeks. While the days were warm, "the constant cool breezes from the west" kept it from getting too hot during the day, while the nights were "refreshing." 23

The departure of most of the soldiers had stifled the Fort Smith economy. Businessmen complained to Editor Dell that there seemed to be "no money in the country." 24

With the strength of the army being rapidly cut back to a peace time footing, the Fort Smith military found its hands full of surplus public property. Survey boards were organized. During the third week of July, a sale of condemned horses and mules was held at the government stables on the military reservation. The sale proved very satisfactory to "Uncle Sam." High prices were received for all the animals sold. This was easily understood, when one realized that between the Jayhawkers and Bushwhackers, the area had been "almost completely stripped of horses and mules." With the return of peace, the farmers wanted to get back to work to "redeem the land and make it smile in plenty once more."

On Friday, the 21st, an auction was held at the "old commissary building," for the disposal of condemned stores. Again, the bidding was lively. So many items had to be disposed of that the auction was resumed on the 23d. 25

Twice during the third week of July there were heavy rains over the middle reaches of the Arkansas. As was to be expected, the river rose three feet. When the New Era went to press on July 21, the Arkansas and Poteau were rising. Taking advantage of this situation, three steamers (the Alamo, the Annie Jacobs, and the Conroy No. 2) reached Fort Smith from Little Rock, an occurrence not often taking place in July. 26



The Fort Smith New Era for July 22 carried an interesting description of the military reservation. Editor Bell informed his readers:

The reservation embraces a tract of 300 acres, in the northwest corner of which are the public buildings raised for the accommodation of the officers and private soldiers on duty at the post. Most conspicuous among these government buildings are the two commodious brick edifices for headquarters offices, and temporary apartments for the families of the officers. Each of these houses is 100 feet in length and three stories high. They are fine structures of substantial and durable workmanship, and are separated from each other by an intervening space of about 80 feet. Each edifice is supplied with two ample porches in front and two in rear, running the entire length of the building. From the upper one of these long porches very fine views may be had of the adjacent forests, valleys, and mountains -- of the meanderings of the Poteau and Arkansas, and of the clear, calm skies, with their host of constellations that nightly perform their silent marches there.

In front of these two main buildings and about 100 feet distant is a large two story brick edifice, intended as barracks for the garrison. The barracks is the apex and the two buildings for headquarters, offices, etc., form the base of an isosceles triangle. These structures, together with a guardhouse, powder magazine, and a few wooden sheds, are encompassed by a stone wall enclosing an area of seven acres of ground. The wall has an average height of nine feet, with two feet thickness, and is perforated with embrasures for musketry.

At the two angles of the wall nearest the river, and at the length of the wall from each other are two stout, dingy stone buildings. One of these is the quartermaster's office and storehouse, and the other is used for similar purpose by the commissary of subsistence. The entire premises encompassed by the stone wall, and including the various edifices referred to, is called the "Garrison."

Previous to the Rebellion, the Garrison grounds and buildings were said to have been kept in fine order, and constituted an attractive resort of leisure and fashion.

But both the Garrison and the city of Fort Smith have been greatly injured by harsh severities of the war. Yard and garden fences have disappeared; fruit trees and shubbery have been destroyed; and even the hallowed resting place of the dead have been spoiled. 27

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The 2d Kansas Battery left Fort Smith on July 21 for home. Most of the Fort Smithites were sorry to see the cannoneers go, because they had made many friends during the nearly two years they had been stationed in the neighborhood. Captain Smith had brought his unit to a high degree of efficiency, and they enjoyed a well-deserved reputation for discipline and good behavior. <sup>28</sup>

Orders reached General Bussey at this time that all Arkansas units still in Federal service were to be mustered out immediately. The 40th Iowa which was currently stationed at Fort Gibson was to be demobilized during the first week of August. Troops from the 2d Brigade, Second Division, XV Army Corps were to replace the units being mustered out. Orders were accordingly issued by General Reynolds on July 21 alerting Colonel Wells S. Jones to start transferring his command (the 2d Brigade, Second Division) from Little Rock to Fort Smith. <sup>29</sup>

Large caravans of Missourians passed through Fort Smith almost daily. These people who had fled to Texas to escape the Jayhawkers seemed anxious to return to their homes. Generally, the refugees had with them large numbers of horses which were in remarkably good condition. <sup>30</sup>

As July passed into the first week of August, the Arkansas continued to boom. The "oldest inhabitant" was unable to recall having seen the "raging Arkansas in better state for navigation at this late season."

Editor Dell reported on August 5 that "for more than two weeks the river has been almost as high as it usually is in the spring." He believed that this late "swelling" was caused by either heavy rains on the upper reaches of the Arkansas, late melting snow in the Rockies, or both. According to other western papers all the rivers in the Trans-Mississippi were high, while the "Father of Waters" was "coming" at St. Louis. <sup>31</sup>

General Bussey, desiring to confer with General Reynolds about the projected troop movements, took passage for Little Rock on the evening of July 30 aboard the Argos.

High water on the Arkansas facilitated the redeployment of Colonel Jones' brigade. The advance battalion of the 57th U. S. Colored Troops reached Fort Smith by boat at the end of July. The battalion unit was scheduled to replace the Arkansas troops as the garrison at Fort Smith. The remainder of the regiment camp up on the Convoy No. 2 on Monday night, July 31. <sup>32</sup>

Many of the Fort Smithites were surprised to learn that one-third of the enlisted personnel in the 57th U. S. Colored Troops could read. According to the chaplain, he believed that all would be literate before another 12 months had passed. Editor Dell advised his readers, "Their [the Negroes'] desire for self improvement is remarkable and notwithstanding the heavy guard and fatigue duties they have to perform, [they] are making rapid strides toward the attainment of knowledge and knowledge is power." <sup>33</sup>

After discharging the soldiers of the 57th U. S. Colored Troops, the Convoy No. 2 continued on to Fort Gibson with four companies of the 62d Illinois. The Illinois soldiers were to relieve the 40th Iowa. The other six companies of the 62d Illinois reached Fort Smith on the Gem, the following day. Before going on to Fort Gibson, the Illinoisians transferred to the Annie Jacobs.

As soon as the 57th U. S. Colored Troops and the 62d Illinois reached their new stations, the 1st Arkansas Cavalry and the 40th Iowa were mustered out. <sup>34</sup>

It was August 11 before General Bussey returned to Fort Smith. When he did, he came back up river on the Argos. Undoubtedly, the exceedingly high water had helped delay the general. The Arkansas crested in the second week of August. On Sunday, the 6th, it began "to swell and boil up." Great amounts of driftwood and debris were brought down by the flood. By the next morning, it had risen ten feet and was still booming. Having risen 20 feet, the river crested on the night of the 8th. Fears were freely expressed that the river would flood the farm lands below Fort Smith. Buffeted by the powerful current, steamboats encountered considerable difficulty in running upstream. One vessel, the Gem, burst her boilers battling the current and had to turn back. The Arkansas dropped almost as fast, when the New Era went to press on the evening of the 11th, it had fallen 12 feet. <sup>35</sup>

As a forerunner to the group health plans of the 20th Century, the employees of the Fort Smith Quartermaster's Depot entered into an agreement with several local doctors to receive treatment and medicine in return for a fee of 75¢ per month. Since there were several hundred employees of the depot, this form of health insurance promised to be advantageous to both parties.

When General Bussey disembarked at Fort Smith, he found that the 57th U. S. Colored Troops had relieved the 1st Arkansas Infantry at the Garrison. <sup>36</sup>

Just to confuse everybody, the Arkansas, after receding about 15 feet, started to rise again on August 15. The "oldest inhabitant" was unable "to recall anything like the present river season." Normally at this time of the year, the Arkansas was navigable for little beyond "a good sized bark canoe."

A large number of bushwhackers entered Fort Smith on the 16th to be paroled. Everybody who saw these men, pronounced them the "hardest" looking group they had ever seen.

Information reached General Bussey that the 3d Iowa Battery had left Little Rock on the 15th for Fort Smith. Since the battery was coming by land, it would be about ten days before the cannons reached their new station. <sup>37</sup>

The number of troops at Fort Smith was reduced in the period August 19-26. On the 25th the battalion of the 22d Ohio (Companies A and B) went aboard the Kate Bruner. Upon reaching Little Rock, the Ohioans were slated to be mustered out. While at Fort Smith, the Ohioans had been assigned provost duty. So well had they carried out their task that the townspeople were sorry to see them to. A number of the soldiers had told Editor Dell that they planned to return to Fort Smith as soon as they were paid off. <sup>38</sup>

Meanwhile, the soldiers of the 1st Arkansas Infantry and the 1st Arkansas Battery had been mustered out. As soon as they received their back pay, the Arkansans "rapidly scattered to their homes." Before

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doing so, many had visited the Fort Smith merchants to lay in a good supply of the "necessaries of life."

Colonel Mathew M. Trumbull of the 9th Iowa Cavalry had reached Fort Smith on the Kate Bruner when she came upstream. (The colonel had been in charge at Lewisburg since June.) Reporting to General Bussey, Trumbull announced that three companies of his regiment were en route to the post from Little Rock.

The end of the Civil War found the Nations of the Indian Territory in a very chaotic condition. Many of the tribes had allied themselves with the Confederacy. Large numbers of warriors from the Five Civilized Nations had fought in regularly constituted units of the Rebel army. Consequently, it had been necessary for the military authorities to assume supervision over them and restore these tribes to their former status with the United States government. For this purpose, a general council was scheduled to be held in September 1865 with the Indian leaders at the Garrison. Preparatory to holding the council, additional troops were ordered to Fort Smith. Among these units were the 3d Iowa Battery, three Companies of the 9th Iowa Cavalry, and the 54th Illinois.

The three companies of the 9th Iowa Cavalry (A, C, & D) reached Fort Smith on August 27. A day later, the guns of the 3d Iowa Battery rolled into town. It had taken the cannoners 13 days to march from Little Rock. The 54th Illinois arrived at Fort Smith in two detachments. One battalion arrived aboard the Argos on the 28th, the second clambered off the Kate Bruner three days later.

As August drew to a close, the Arkansas fell rapidly. According to the masters of the steamboats, there wasn't more than three feet of water over any of the bars between Little Rock and Fort Smith. <sup>39</sup>

The river continued to drop during the first week of September. By September 9 there was only two feet of water over the principal bars. None but the lightest draft vessels could now ascend to Fort Smith. The cost of transportation, though high enough already, could be expected to zoom. <sup>40</sup>

An evening parade was held by the 57th U. S. Colored Troops at the Garrison to which the public was invited. One of the spectators announced that he was free:

to confess that we never saw a finer exhibition of a regiment on parade.

The arms and accoutrements of the men were in the finest condition, all were dressed with uniform neatness and cleanliness and the maneuvers performed elicited the admiration of the numerous spectators. No one could fail to see the spirit of manly and soldierly pride with which the men carried themselves, so diametrically opposed to the cringing abject servility inculcated by the spirit of slavery.

Colonel Paul Harwood and his officers could be excused if they felt proud of the way their regiment drilled and looked. Even more remarkable was the behavior of the troops when off duty, for it was "modest and respectful." Since their arrival at the Garrison, there had been no complaints against them. <sup>41</sup>

Major General Henry J. Hunt, who had been at Fort Smith briefly in 1853 as a captain of artillery, reached the Garrison on September 21. The general had come up from Little Rock on the Kate Bruner for the purpose of replacing General Bussey as commander of the Frontier District. Hunt was accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel John N. Craig.

As soon as he had been relieved by Hunt, Bussey left the area. Having been notified that he was to be superseded, Bussey had his gear packed and his papers in order. Bussey and his family boarded the Kate Bruner on the 22d, on the first stage of their journey back to Iowa. <sup>42</sup> Commenting on Bussey's departure, Editor Dell observed:

Bussey has been in command since February and by his firm, wise and honest administration gained the respect of every respectable and well disposed man and woman in this community.

When he was ordered here last winter the corruption in office, the demoralization of the troops, the violence and robbery on the people had reached a fearful pass. There was not the slightest disposition among the people to make any improvements in farms, gardens, homes, or

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anything else. There was security for neither life nor property. Within a very short time after his arrival, Bussey cleared out the Augean stable of corruption and fraud, infused such confidence in the community by his energetic and thorough reforms and his kind and courteous treatment of all who came in contact with him that the people took new courage and went to work with a will to repair as much as possible their desolated farms and homesteads, and even before the close of the war, many families who had been forced to go North for peace and safety returned to their old farms when informed of the happy change.

During the whole period of Bussey's administration, this happy state of affairs continued. As a matter of course, he was most bitterly hated and maligned by all evil doers and such preying upon the public. 43

Colonel Trumbull of the 9th Iowa was especially glad to see General Hunt. Trumbull had served as sergeant in Hunt's old artillery company. Though Hunt hadn't seen Trumbull in years, he recognized him immediately. 44

On September 8 commissioners of the United States government met with the Indian delegations. The redmen were informed that all their rights under previous treaties had been forfeited. They were advised as to the terms under which their Nations could be restored to normal relations with the Federal government. The council then terminated. With the departure of the Indians, the need for a large number of troops at Fort Smith had passed. At the conclusion of the council, the cannoneers of the 3d Iowa Battery turned their horses over to the Post Quartermaster. Receipts were signed and given for 115 horses and 48 mules, "all in excellent condition." The guns and equipment were loaded on the steamer American, which as soon as the officers and men were aboard on October 2 started for Little Rock. 45

Two days later, most of the personnel from the 54th Illinois boarded transports. The regiment's rear echelon left Fort Smith on October 10 on the American. At Little Rock on the 15th, the 54th Illinois was mustered out. 46

Shortly after midnight on November 24, it was discovered that Officers' Quarters B was afire. The alarm was sounded, but the troops were unable to control the blaze. By 3 a.m. the building had been reduced to a pile of fire-blackened bricks. A court of inquiry called by Colonel Trumbull was unable to ascertain the cause of the fire which had destroyed Officers' Quarters B. 47

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General Hunt on February 16, 1866, issued orders for the 3d, U.S. Cavalry to relieve the three companies (A, C, and D) of the 9th Iowa stationed at Fort Smith. At Little Rock, the battalion of Iowans were to rendezvous with the companies of the regiment which had been stationed at Clarksville, Fayetteville, and Van Buren. Upon being replaced at their respective stations the Iowans were to

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proceed to Little Rock to be mustered out. The general took this opportunity to commend Colonel Trumbull and his officers and men for the good service they had rendered while assigned to his command. Before leaving Fort Smith, the Iowans turned their horses and equipment over to the Post Quartermaster. Following the departure of Colonel Trumbull, Colonel Harwood assumed command of the post. <sup>48</sup>

Meanwhile, information had reached the newspapers in the Frontier District that General Hunt was to be replaced. According to news from Washington, General Ulysses S. Grant had appointed Hunt to head the permanent Artillery Board which the War Department had established. In the short time that General Hunt had been in command on the Arkansas frontier, he had made many friends who would regret his departure. <sup>49</sup>

Since General Hunt was slated to go to Washington, it was decided by the army authorities to discontinue the Frontier District. On March 24 General Order No. 11 was issued by headquarters, Department of Arkansas making this administrative change. <sup>50</sup>

General Hunt on April 7 said goodbye to his friend, boarded the steamer Pilgrim, and started down the Arkansas. <sup>51</sup>

A smallpox epidemic broke out at Fort Smith at the end of March. Among the many stricken was Colonel Harwood. The colonel recovered in time to ready his command to participate in the New Mexico Expedition. Colonel Marshal S. Howe of the 3d U. S. Cavalry, who was slated to command the expedition, reached Fort Smith on the steamer Hall on May 10 from Little Rock. Howe on disembarking announced that he planned to start for New Mexico in about ten days. Captain James O. Churchill, the post quartermaster, and his men were kept busy getting the column's supplies in order. Company A, 3d U. S. Cavalry which had been posted at Van Buren since the departure of the 9th Iowa left for Fort Smith on May 14. Since the company was to accompany the expedition, it camped on the reservation near the Garrison. <sup>52</sup>

Apparently, many of the soldiers of the 57th U. S. Colored Troops didn't look with favor on the projected march to New Mexico. When informed



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of its assignment, the regiment became mutinous and refused to go. Colonel Howe lost no time in ordering out the 3d U. S. Cavalry. The troopers surrounded the Garrison and disarmed the Negroes. Not knowing what his next move ought to be, Colonel Howe ordered the regiment to Little Rock. 53

The mutinous 57th returned to Fort Smith on June 3 aboard the Argos and the Pilgrim. General Reynolds had sent the regiment back to the Garrison with instructions for the "previous orders to march to New Mexico to be carried out to the letter." Howe promised the soldiers of the 57th U. S. Colored Troops that any further disobedience of orders would "result seriously to those engaged." 54

As in the previous year, the Arkansas was very high for months. Indeed, at Van Buren it was higher than it had been in 20 years. Before cresting in the third week of June, the river overflowed its banks below Van Buren. Much of the bottom lands, including many cotton plantations, were inundated. Damage to crops was heavy. 55

Prior to the departure of Howe's column, two companies of the 19th U. S. Infantry reached Fort Smith. Company F arrived on May 9 and Company G four weeks later. Captain Robert W. Barnard of the 19th Infantry on May 9 replaced Colonel Harwood as post commander. 56

The War Department on August 6 issued a General Order reorganizing the Military Departments. Arkansas and the Indian Territory were assigned to the Seventh Department. Major General Edward O. C. Ord, who was assigned command of the new department, was to establish his headquarters at Little Rock. General Ord reached Little Rock on August 29. As soon as the general had disembarked, he issued a General Order formally assuming command of the newly constituted department. 57

At the end of the third week of August, the Garrison received a new quartermaster and commissary. Lieutenant John E. Bennett relieved Captain James O. Churchill as post quartermaster and Captain Samuel S. Culbertson as commissary of subsistence. For the time being, these two important staff assignment would be discharged by one man. 58

Cholera broke out at Fort Smith in late September. During the week ending September 29, the Board of Health reported 29 deaths -- 2 Cherokees,

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15 Negroes, and 12 whites. For the next three weeks, deaths averaged two to three per day. With the advent of cooler weather at the end of October, the plague vanished. The Fort Smith Herald for the 27th announced that the Board of Health had no new cases to report, and that the dread disease had "almost entirely disappeared from the city." 59

Company F, 19th Infantry was transferred to Fayetteville on September 3. Seven weeks later, Company G was sent to Dover. On October 25 Captain Culbertson had reached Fort Smith from Boggy Depot with 23 enlisted men. Following the departure of Captain Barnard on the 25th, Culbertson assumed charge of the Garrison.

The soldiers of Company B, 19th Infantry boarded the steamboat Van Buren at Fort Gibson on November 12. The next day, the transport tied up at Fort Smith and the troops disembarked. As soon as he reached the fort, Captain William J. Lyster of Company B relieved Captain Culbertson as post commander. 60

A report reached the Arkansas frontier at the beginning of December that headquarters for the Seventh Military Department were to be transferred from Little Rock to Fort Smith. 61 It wasn't long before this report was verified. The steamer Florence Traber tied up at Fort Smith on December 6. General Ord's family disembarked from the vessel. Mrs. Ord informed the townspeople that the general and his staff would be up in several days, at which time headquarters would be "permanently established" at the Garrison. The editor of the Van Buren Press hailed this move. He informed his readers on the 14th, "We are glad that this department is to have so distinguished and practical officer at the head of its affairs." 62

Meanwhile, Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs on October 3 had issued orders assigning Major Montgomery to duty as department quartermaster. 63 News that Montgomery would return to the area was hailed by his many friends in Crawford and Sebastian counties. The Van Buren Press for October 14 announced, "The major is now at Little Rock and will, we learn soon make his general headquarters at Fort Smith. For many years he well and faithfully filled the position at that post. We welcome him back and rejoice to know that the cloud that has been hanging over him has passed away, and that his worth and fidelity to the United States are at last acknowledged by the department." 64

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Commenting on the transfer of department headquarters to Fort Smith, the editor of the Press observed, "When we see Major Montgomery back chief at the Quarter Master's Department at the Garrison, it will certainly, look like old times and that Arkansas is on the eve of reconstruction." 65

## PORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter XIX

#### The Garrison Returns to a Peace Time Status

- 1 Fort Smith New Era, April 15, 1865. General Bussey had been assigned to command the Frontier District and the Third Division, VII Corps on February 6, 1865. General Edwards commanded the 1st Brigade, Third Division.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 O.R., Series I, Vol. XLVIII, pt, II, 110. General Pope at this stage of the war commanded the Military Division of the Missouri.
- 4 Fort Smith New Era, April 22, 1865.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid., April 29, 1865.
- 8 O.R., Series I, Vol. XKVIII, pt. II, 164; Fort Smith New Era, April 29, 1865. Reynolds commanded the Department of Arkansas, while Colonel Garrett led the 40th Iowa.
- 9 Fort Smith New Era, May 6, 1865.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 O.R., Series I, Vol. XLVIII, pt, II, 284.
- 12 Fort Smith New Era, May 13, 1865. Ibid. Clark was the son of C. J. Clark, who prior to the Union occupation of the area had been one of the leading citizens of Sebastian County.
- 13 Ibid., May 20, 1865.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 O.R., Series I, Vol. XLVIII, pt. II, 632.
- 16 Ibid., 702.

- 17 Ibid., 753.
- 18 Ibid., 805, 844.
- 19 Fort Smith New Era, June 17, 1865.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Ibid., June 24, 1865.
- 22 Ibid., July 8, 1865.
- 23 Ibid., July 15, 1865.
- 24 Ibid., July 22, 1865.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid., The Alamo carried freight and passengers; the Annie Jacobs commissary supplies, chiefly flour; the Convoy No. 2 commissary supplies.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid., July 29, 1865.
- 29 Ibid.; O.R., Series I, Vol. XLVIII, pt. II, 1113.
- 30 Fort Smith New Era, July 29, 1865.
- 31 Ibid., Aug. 5, 1865.
- 32 Ibid., Major Hunter was well-known to many of the Fort Smithites, having previously been stationed at the Garrison as Inspector General for the district.
- 33 Ibid., Aug. 26, 1865.
- 34 Ibid., Aug. 5, 1865.
- 35 Ibid., Aug. 12, 1865.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid., Aug. 19, 1865.
- 38 Ibid., Aug. 26, 1865. When the men who had enlisted for three years' had been mustered out, the soldiers who had been left were consolidated into companies A and B.
- 39 Ibid., Sept. 2, 1865.
- 40 Ibid., Sept. 9, 1865.
- 41 Ibid., Sept. 16, 1865.
- 42 Ibid., Sept. 23, 1865.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Ibid., Oct. 14, 1865.

- 45 Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers in the War of the Rebellion,  
together with Historical Sketches of Volunteer Organizations, 1861-1866,  
 Vol. V (Des Moines 1910), 1756. The American reached Little Rock  
 on October 4, where Captain Orlo H. Lync received orders to turn  
 over the guns and ordnance stores and proceed with his company to  
 Davenport, Iowa, for discharge.
- 46 Fort Smith New Era, Oct. 14, 1865; Report of the Adjutant  
General of the State of Illinois, Vol. III (Springfield, 1886),  
 691.
- 47 "Record of Events" Post Return Fort Smith, Arkansas, for November  
 1865 (National Archives, Post Returns).
- 48 Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers, IV, 1654; Van Buren Press,  
 Feb. 24, 1866. At this time, the officers holding positions in the  
 Frontier District and stationed at Fort Smith were: General Hunt,  
 commanding Frontier District; Colonel Trumbull, commanding post;  
 Colonel Harwood, commanding 57th U. S. Colored Troops; Lieutenant  
 Colonel John P. Knight, commanding 9th Iowa Cavalry; Surgeon John  
 P. Bell, in charge of hospital; Colonel Craig, Assistant Adjutant  
 General; Lieutenant Colonel Fred W. Schawte, ACM; Major G. S. Alexander,  
 Inspector General; Captain James O. Churchill, Quartermaster; Captain  
 M. S. Croswell, Commissary; Lieutenant Thomas Pollock, Provost Marshal;  
 Lieutenant W. W. Hardin, Ordnance; Reverent Springer, Chaplin; Captain  
 G. W. Holland and Lieutenants Richard Wall, Aides. Van Buren Press,  
 Feb. 3, 1866.
- 49 Van Buren Press, Feb. 17, 1866.
- 50 Parker to Bearss, May 22, 1963.
- 51 Van Buren Press, April 14, 1866.
- 52 Ibid., April 14, May 12 and 19, 1866.
- 53 Ibid., May 26, 1866.
- 54 Ibid., June 9, 1866.
- 55 Ibid., June 23, 1866.
- 56 Inspection Returns, Companies F and G, 19th Infantry for June 30, 1866.
- 57 Van Buren Press, Aug. 18, 1866; Parker to Bearss, May 29, 1963.
- 58 Van Buren Press, Aug. 25, 1866. Churchill was mustered out of  
 service on September 15, 1866, while Culbertson was transferred to the  
 28th Infantry on September 21, 1866.

- 59 Ibid., Oct. 5 and 19, and Nov. 2, 1866.
- 60 Parker to Bearss, May 31, 1963.
- 61 Van Buren Press, Dec. 7, 1866.
- 62 Ibid., Dec. 14, 1866.
- 63 GO 13, Oct. 3, 1866 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Sent). General Meigs had been appointed Quartermaster General on May 15, 1861, replacing General Johnston who had resigned on April 22. Montgomery had been dismissed from the service on July 18, 1863, for uttering what were construed as disloyal statements. Cleared by an investigation, Montgomery was reinstated on June 14, 1864, Montgomery had been promoted to major on May 17, 1861. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 40, 719.
- 64 Van Buren Press, Oct. 12, 1866.
- 65 Ibid., Dec. 14, 1866.

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## FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

### Chapter XX

#### The Army Abandons Fort Smith

At the time it was decided to shift departmental headquarters from Little Rock to Fort Smith, General Ord and Major Montgomery realized that additional storage facilities would be required before the transfer could be undertaken.

General Ord on December 11, 1866, told Major Montgomery to submit to Quartermaster General Meigs an estimate and plans for the construction of several additional storehouses at Fort Smith. Montgomery notified Meigs that the cost of the materials to be used would be considerably reduced, because General Ord had authorized the use of lumber and fixtures which could be salvaged from a number of war time warehouses slated to be razed at Little Rock. Since Ord had agreed to permit the use of military labor, construction costs could be expected to be less than anticipated.

Within the week, General Ord directed Major Montgomery to head for Fort Smith. Besides looking after the affairs of the Quartermaster's Department on the Arkansas frontier, the major was to make preparations to facilitate the removal of department headquarters. He would oversee the erection of the buildings to be used to stockpile the public property sent from Little Rock and to be used as storehouses for supply of the western posts.

Shortly after he reached Fort Smith, Montgomery on December 26 wrote a long letter to General Meigs. The major placed himself on record as opposing Ord's scheme to build additional warehouses and to convert the old Commissary and Quartermaster's storehouses into barracks. Montgomery felt that Ord's plan would involve the expenditure of a large sum of money which ought to be avoided. It was his opinion that the troops should remain where they were, and that the old blockhouses should continue to be used as storehouses.



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As Montgomery had pointed out in a letter written in October 1865,  
Fort Smith was no longer the proper location for a depot to supply the posts  
in the Indian Territory, consequently, any large expenditure of money would  
be "injudicious." Already, he continued, <sup>Dec. 1865</sup> in accordance with General Ord's  
instructions a considerable sum had been disbursed. Two chimneys had been  
built in one of the blockhouses to fit it for occupancy by the troops. At  
the same time, the second story was being lathed and plastered, while a  
stone wall to support a gallery on one front had been laid. In the second  
Blockhouse, construction had been commenced on the chimneys.

Ord's project to fix up the basements of the blockhouses as barracks  
made the quartermaster wince. The floors which had been laid in flagstones  
for storage were to be covered with "plank flooring." Only the non-arrival  
of a shipment of lumber had prevented this project from being completed.  
Montgomery believed the flagstone would be satisfactory for the kitchens  
which Ord planned to install in the blockhouse basements.

Under no circumstances did Montgomery think the blockhouses could be  
made as comfortable for the troops as the "Soldiers' Quarters." Ord had  
based his opposition to the troops occupying the barracks on the point that  
it was too close to and in front of the Officers' Quarters. When he marked  
off the area, Montgomery found that it was 56 paces from the barracks to  
the quarters. The blockhouses at the same time were 46 paces from the  
"Officers' Quarters." Besides being to the "Quarters'" flank and rear, the  
blockhouses overlooked the officers' backyards. From a vantage point in  
these buildings, the soldiers could overlook the private arrangements and  
movements of the officers and their families. Montgomery was satisfied  
that for both proximity and privacy the old arrangement was best.

If, however, the "Soldiers' Quarters" were converted into storage  
facilities as Ord planned, the trains in taking on and discharging supplies  
would have to enter the walls of the fort. Heretofore, this had been  
unnecessary, because the wagons could be driven up alongside doors in the  
Commissary and Quartermaster storehouses which opened outside the walls of  
the Garrison.

Montgomery urged Meigs to direct Ord to retain the blockhouses as  
storehouses. Only such additional warehouse facilities should be constructed  
on the reservation as would be indispensable, pending the establishment of

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a new depot for the supply of the advance posts. The bulk of the supplies in the Little Rock depot could be left there. There, they could be drawn on as occasion demanded, or as room for them became available by the transfer of stores to posts west of Fort Smith.

While awaiting a reply to his letter, Montgomery busied himself collecting materials for building two temporary storehouses. These structures would be ample, if Meigs approved the plan the major had outlined. If it were decided to transfer the depot higher up the Arkansas, the buildings could be taken down and the materials used to build the new post.<sup>2</sup>

For some unexplained reason, General Meigs failed to reply to Montgomery's letter of December 21.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, General Ord had changed his mind. It was decided not to transfer headquarters for the Department of Arkansas to Fort Smith, for the time being at least they would remain at Little Rock. Upon receipt of this news, the general's family returned to the Arkansas capital.<sup>4</sup>

\* \* \*

About the time that Montgomery reached Fort Smith, Captain Charles W. Miner replaced Lieutenant Bennett as commissary and quartermaster officer at Fort Smith. Upon being relieved, Bennett rejoined his company which had been transferred to Little Rock. One of Captain Miner's first official acts on assuming his new duties was to advertise for bids to supply the Quartermaster's Department with 5,000 bushels of corn and 8,000 bushels of oats. The corn and the oats were to be delivered in good quality sacks. All the proposals were to be on the captain's desk by 11 a.m. on December 17.<sup>5</sup>

Company F, 19th Infantry returned to Fort Smith on January 14, 1867, from Dover. At the same time, Captain James B. Mulligan replaced Captain Lyster as commander at the Garrison. Mulligan was in charge at the fort for the next six weeks. Lieutenant Colonel De Lancey Floyd Jones of the 19th Infantry came up the Arkansas at the end of February, and on the 25th he established his headquarters at Fort Smith.

With the passage of the Reconstruction Act on March 2, the Department of Arkansas was abolished. News that ten of the Southern States were to be returned to military government was received with grave misgivings by

many of the people living on the middle reaches of the Arkansas. About the only mitigating factor was that General Ord was to have command of the district to which the state was assigned. The editor of the Van Buren Press informed his readers on March 1 that in Ord they had a man who combined a thorough military education with the gentleman and the scholar, consequently, the Arkansans could expect a just and mild administration. <sup>6</sup>

The War Department in March issued General Order 10 formally establishing the Fourth Military District to be composed of the states of Mississippi and Arkansas. As rumored, General Ord was assigned to command the new district with headquarters at Vicksburg. Upon reaching Vicksburg, on March 26, General Ord issued General Order No. 1, formally assuming command of the Fourth Military District. Ord called on the civil officers in his district to arrest and punish "all offenders against the law so as to obviate as far as possible the necessity for the exercise of military authority under the law of Congress passed on March 2...." <sup>7</sup>

General Order No. 1 was well received in Crawford and Sebastian Counties. Commenting on the situation, the editor of the Van Buren Press wrote:

As we anticipated General Ord contemplates no changes in State organization, but desires the civil authorities to continue to administer the affairs of state. It is no doubt the aim of General Ord to administer the law in the least objectionable manner possible, and it devolves on us to give no cause for the exercise of arbitrary military rule over us -- to enforce the civil laws of the State. <sup>8</sup>

General Ord on April 6 issued a General Order establishing the sub-district of Arkansas. Colonel Charles H. Smith of the 28th Infantry was placed in charge of the sub-district with headquarters at Little Rock. <sup>9</sup>

The transfer of Company B, 19th Infantry from Fort Smith to Monticello, Arkansas, on May 1, left only one company, F, at the Garrison. <sup>10</sup>

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Colonel Floyd-Jones in June was given another assignment besides his duties as post commander. He was named Supervisor of registrations for voting for a district which included: Sebastian, Crawford, Scott, Franklin, Johnson, Washington, Madison, Carroll, and Benton Counties. The headquarters for the registration district would be Fort Smith. <sup>11</sup>

During the fourth week of June, Colonel Floyd-Jones at the request of the Fort Smith city council issued orders prohibiting the carrying of firearms by any person except soldiers on duty. This directive was well received. Indeed, the Van Buren city council planned to follow suit. <sup>12</sup>

Floyd-Jones was promoted colonel to rank from June 25 and assigned to command the 6th U. S. Infantry. It was October 22 before his replacement, Lieutenant Colonel Pinkney Lugenbeel, reached Fort Smith and took charge at the Garrison. <sup>13</sup> The Fort Smithites were sorry to see Colonel Floyd-Jones, whom they considered a "very efficient and well informed officer," leave. <sup>14</sup>

For the second year running cholera broke out during September at Fort Smith. Company H, 19th Infantry which had been camped at Natural Dam in Crawford County for about a month was ordered to the Garrison. Company H reached Fort Smith on September 14. Not wishing to take any chances on getting the newcomers infected, Colonel Floyd-Jones ordered them to remove themselves from the area. The next morning, Company H marched out of the Garrison and pitched tents about three miles outside of town. <sup>15</sup>

At the end of the first week of October, when the Board of Health reported no new cases, Colonel Floyd-Jones sent word that it was safe for Company H to take up quarters at the Garrison. Company H moved into the fort on October 9. <sup>16</sup>

Before the end of 1867, four additional companies of the 19th Infantry were ordered to take station at the Garrison. Company A arrived on October 15 from Natural Dam, Companies G and E from Dover on December 4, and Company K on Christmas Eve from Fayetteville.

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Six of the ten companies constituting the regiment were now posted at Fort Smith. <sup>17</sup>

During the final week of December, the War Department issued General Order No. 106. General Ord and the commander of the Department of the Pacific, Brigadier General Irwin McDowell, were to swap positions. Ord was to turn over the command of the Fourth Military District to Colonel Alvan C. Gillem and leave for San Francisco immediately. On being replaced by Ord, McDowell would proceed to Vicksburg and relieve Gillem. <sup>18</sup>

Tragedy struck on May 6, 1868. 1st Lieutenant Charles M. Clarke and several soldiers of the 19th Infantry took passage on the steamer Celeste for Little Rock. The lieutenant, although there was a strong wind blowing, sat down on the rail of the vessel. About three miles below Fort Smith, Clarke lost his balance and fell overboard. Three days later, the lieutenant's body was fished out of the river, and his remains were returned to the Garrison. <sup>19</sup>

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The commander of the Sub-District of Arkansas, Colonel Smith, inspected the military installations at Fort Smith in May 1868. He found that prior to the discontinuance of the Department of Arkansas, all the Quartermaster's property at Little Rock had been shifted to Fort Smith. These stores were still stockpiled at the Garrison.

A storehouse, 250 feet long by 50 feet wide, was "literally filled with them." Among the items on hand was a large quantity of "Cavalry Clothing" for which there was no use in the Sub-District. A great amount of used harness had been boxed and stored. Enough blankets were available to keep the large garrison supplied for ten years, provided they didn't ruin or hadn't spoiled. There were a large number of mess pans and kettles which were "being consumed by the rust for no purpose."

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Colonel Smith placed himself on record as being satisfied that most of these Quartermaster's stores wouldn't be required at the post, or else they were in such excess as likely "to perish" before needed. He thought a competent officer should be sent to Fort Smith to undertake a survey. Stores not needed at the post could be shipped to other stations; the unserviceable gear could be disposed of in accordance with regulations. If this were done, there would be sufficient space at Fort Smith for all purposes. At present, the Commissary Department was paying \$600 per year for rent of a storehouse in town.

A large "excess of transportation," especially wagons was observed by the colonel. These vehicles had recently been put in good repair by civilian mechanics. Now that the mechanics had been discharged, Smith feared that the wagons as they became unserviceable would be surveyed and replaced by ones from the park.

Situated as the Garrison was at a landing, Colonel Smith felt that only a few wagons should be required for post duty. Yet, 76 were employed. A number of these were employed to haul hay from a point 27 miles away. Colonel Smith inquired into the possibility of having the hay delivered at the fort, which would enable Colonel Lugenbeel to reduce the number of work animals accordingly. Eight mules were kept to draw the water wagons. The colonel suggested that a more economical method be adopted. He believed better use could be made of the post cisterns. From what he saw, he felt that not enough conducting pipes were used to keep the cisterns full.

In Colonel Smith's view, the post seemed "encumbered by its supplies, Stores, Animals, Wagons, Workshops &c." It was his opinion that a great improvement would be made in appearances and efficiency by getting rid of these surplus items.

The hospital was "quite inadequate to the wants of the Post." Smith was distressed to discover that a small extension was being added to the old building, which would be but a "slight improvement when completed." Colonel Smith recommended that the hospital be

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abandoned. He wanted plans and estimates for a new structure that would meet the needs of the post. <sup>20</sup>

Colonel Smith's report on the situation at the Garrison was referred to Major John C. Chandler. Major Chandler was Chief Quartermaster for the Fourth Military District. After studying Smith's report, Chandler on June 11 forwarded his comments to General McDowell. Chandler informed McDowell that he had issued instructions for a complete inventory of the Quartermaster's property at Fort Smith. When the report was received, Chandler planned to submit the list with his recommendations to General Meigs. He felt that all serviceable stores wanted in the Indian Territory should be shipped to Fort Gibson, while the unserviceable gear ought to be condemned and sold.

Turning to the hospital question, Chandler pointed out that it was not the policy of the Quartermaster's Department to raise buildings unless a need was shown. In this case it would be necessary for the Medical Department to initiate action. As yet, he had received no word from the Surgeon-General, J. K. Barnes, that a new hospital was wanted at Fort Smith. When such notice was received, it would require approval by the Secretary of War. <sup>21</sup>

General McDowell wasted no time in seeing that the information pertaining to the hospital was placed in the hands of the post surgeon at Fort Smith.

Surgeon J. Fynn Lytton, in accordance with a directive from District Headquarters, reported that on June 23 there were six companies of the 19th Infantry, mustering 12 officers and 383 enlisted men, quartered on the post. The post hospital could accommodate 17 patients. Ward 1 which had a capacity of 3,870 cubic feet contained seven beds; Ward 2 had 4,860 cubic feet and ten beds. Ward 2 which was housed in a new structure was well ventilated. Such was not the case with Ward 1 which was in an old building. Not only was the structure poorly ventilated, but the roof was in disrepair and leaked. Surgeon Lytton felt the building should be condemned and a "more suitable & Enlarged one erected in its place." The hospital outbuildings were old and leaked so badly that they couldn't be used as storehouses. <sup>At the</sup>

same time, the "Watercloset" was ample and in good condition.

It was Lytton's opinion that "more generous Hospital accommodations" ought to be raised at once to meet the "demand required for so large a Command." Medical supplies were indifferent and meagre. The length of time between when supplies were requisitioned and when they were received was unusually long. For example, the surgeon observed, medical stores for the 2d Quarter of 1868 had been called for on March 1, but they didn't arrive until June 2, making three months from the date of application to their reception.

Now with low water in the Arkansas, Lytton was afraid months would pass before steamboats again tied up at Fort Smith. In event of an epidemic, the hospital accommodations would prove inadequate. 22

Major Charles C. Byrne, chief surgeon for the Sub-District of Arkansas, had been on duty at Fort Smith from January to May 1867. He was well aware of the conditions cited by Surgeon Lytton. He had been told by Major Joseph R. Smith (who had been Medical Director for the Department of Arkansas) upon his assignment to Fort Smith that plans for a new hospital had been drafted and forwarded to Washington. Otherwise, Byrne wrote, he would have already brought the matter to General McDowell's attention.

As Byrne recalled, the "original hospital" at Fort Smith was "old, decayed, leaky," and in every way unsuited for the purpose for which it had been erected. Furthermore, the location wasn't good. When he endorsed Lytton's letter on June 30, Major Byrne recommended, "a substantial & commodious hospital be built at Fort Smith -- on a new site; an excellent one being near at hand and quite available." 23

Lytton's letter reached the desk of Lieutenant Colonel Ebenezer Swift, Medical Director of the Fourth Military District on July 9. After studying the dispatch and Byrne's comments, Swift recommended that a hospital with a capacity of 48 beds, with a veranda on each side of the ward, be built at Fort Smith. A plan for such a building appeared in Circular No. 4, Surgeon-General's Office. General McDowell forwarded the correspondence, along with his approval, to Washington.

Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas referred the question to Surgeon-General Barnes. On July 23 Barnes returned the documents to Thomas.



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Before doing so, he had scaled down the size of the projected structure. Barnes believed a 24 bed hospital with a veranda on each side of the ward as depicted in Circular No. 4, Surgeon-General's Office, would be sufficient.

The correspondence dealing with the proposed hospital was back in Vicksburg by August 13. Major Chandler was to have plans and detailed estimates for the prescribed 24 bed hospital prepared. When completed, these documents were to be mailed to General Meigs' office. Plans and estimates for a building costing \$7,929.24 were prepared. After receiving the approval of a number of reviewing officers, the plans, estimates, and correspondence were forwarded to Washington on October 5. Two weeks later, the Quartermaster General sent the plans and estimates to Surgeon-General Barnes. The Surgeon-General returned them on October 22, and notified Meigs' office that the sketch conformed with the plan for the 24 bed hospital shown in Circular No. 4.<sup>24</sup>

The next step was for General Meigs to bring the subject to the attention of the Secretary of War. On January 18, 1869, Secretary of War John M. Schofield approved the construction of a "wooden hospital of 24 Beds" at Fort Smith.<sup>25</sup>

Although approval for a new hospital had been given, the post was abandoned before the necessary money was budgeted. Early in 1869, the post commander, with the approval of the post surgeon, ordered the old hospital abandoned. The Quartermaster building was converted into the hospital. When he inspected the Garrison in late 1869, Assistant Surgeon J. Morris Brown reported that the building now used as the hospital:

is a two-story stone structure, 46 by 45½ feet (inside measurement,) and 36 feet high, and situated at the northwest corner of the garrison. The first story is used for a kitchen and dining-room; the second contains the ward, dispensary, and store-room.

The ward, 45½ by 26½ by 12 feet contains twelve beds, allowing about 1,200 cubic feet of air space to

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each. It is warmed by fireplaces, lighted and ventilated by windows of which there are four, each six feet 10 inches by 3 feet. There are no bath or wash-rooms, water-closet, nor dead-house attached to the hospital. With some repairs the building will answer its intended purpose very well.

Brown found that during the first eight months of 1869, the mean strength of the Garrison had been 107.75. The total number of officers and men reporting for sick call was 114. Of these, 82 were for malaria, 5 for dysentery, 5 for venereal diseases, 3 for rheumatism, and 2 for Catarrhal infections. One of the men on sick report had died. The assistant surgeon found the general "sanitary condition of the post good." 26

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War Department General Order No. 15 issued at the end of July 1868 constituted the Department of Louisiana. The state of Arkansas was assigned to the new department, which was to be commanded by Brigadier General Joseph A. Mower, who would establish his headquarters in New Orleans. Pending Mower's arrival in the "Crescent City," Colonel Robert C. Buchanan was to be in charge of the department. 27

Lieutenant Colonel Romeyn B. Ayres reached Fort Smith during the fourth week of July. Ayres, a hard-bitten combat veteran of many Civil War Battles, had been sent by Colonel Buchanan to inspect the fort and garrison. On July 25 Ayres had Colonel Lugenbeel form the troops. The six companies (A, E, F, G, H, and K) of the 19th U. S. Infantry stationed at Fort Smith fell out under arms on the double. After inspecting the men, Ayres examined the "returns." When he did, the colonel found that there were 8 officers and 39 men on extra duty, 17 on sickcall, and a like number in the guardhouse. 28

When he looked over the post, the Civil War hero was shocked at the sight of the post hospital. The building was ancient and the timbers were so rotten "as not to admit of being repaired." Ayres recommended that a new hospital be erected on a more suitable site.

The inspecting officer thought a cistern should be built on the southwestern end of the "Soldiers' Quarters." This work, he told

Colonel Lugenbeel, could be done by the soldiers. A steam engine on the bank of the river to pump water into a reservoir on the bluff, Ayres pointed out, would enable Lugenbeel to replace the post water wagon and the eight mules used to draw it.

Since Colonel Lugenbeel had told him there was "no suitable place upon which to review the command," Ayres recommended that a portion of the wall which enclosed the post be taken down. The stone could be salvaged to erect quarters, and a "suitable parade and drill ground laid off." At the same time, the stables would be moved.

Ayres agreed with Colonel Smith that the Quartermaster's depot contained a large quantity of supplies (cavalry equipment, tents, mess pans, camp kettles, cavalry clothing, blankets &c.) which would never be used at Fort Smith. Ayres suggested that articles which might be useful at the posts beyond should be transferred, while the items for which there was no demand ought to be sold. <sup>29</sup>

Upon returning to New Orleans, Colonel Ayres turned in his report and a sketch map to General Mower. General Mower on September 29 had his adjutant, Major Thomas H. Meill, notify Colonel Lugenbeel that the changes proposed by Ayres should be undertaken. In addition, the entire wall, except perhaps the section indicated on the attached map (See map titled -- U. S. Military Reservation -- 1868) between A and E, was to be taken down. A fence would be run from point S perpendicular to line M-N, and a second fence from S to O. A third fence, enclosing the area west of the post, was to be run "where the nature of the ground will indicate it to be the most advisable."

The Quarters marked K were to be moved to a point near that marked S, just inside the fence L-P.

The stables, shops, and sheds were to be shifted a suitable distance beyond line L-P, while the school building was to be moved off the projected parade ground.

A new barracks was to be erected at or near the point marked R and inside line L-P. Stone from the wall would be used as building material.

Finally, the area between line L-P and line 1-2 would be laid out and graded as a drill and parade ground. <sup>30</sup>

General Mower waited almost four months before following up on his letter to Colonel Lugenbeel. On January 19, 1869, he had Major Neill address a short note to the Fort Smith commandant. The department commander wished to know what progress had been made in carrying out "certain changes to be made in the quarters, sheds and fences, &c. of Fort Smith." <sup>31</sup>

Colonel Lugenbeel was taken back when he opened the letter signed by Major Neill. He was unable to report much "progress." The first project which the commandant had planned to undertake on the plan sketched by Mower was to erect the fences. Requisitions had been made for the necessary materials. They had arrived, and the fatigue parties were ready to start work as soon as the rain ceased.

Since December 1, Lugenbeel reported, the weather had been too severe for the troops to work outside. With the advent of the rainy season, the ground was now too soft and spongy for the wagons.

After building the fences, the shops and stables would be removed. Work could then be started on the drill and parade ground.

As a further excuse for his failure to accomplish any of the projects outlined, Lugenbeel cited General Order No. 95 which he had received from Army Headquarters. This order, dated November 23, provided that because of the reduction of the army, no repairs or alterations other than those necessary to keep the posts in good and habitable condition should be undertaken. In view of this directive, Lugenbeel wanted to know, if it were still Mower's desire that "the quarters occupied by Co. K, the walls surrounding the garrison, and the buildings now occupied as stables, subsistence storehouses and granaries should be taken down and removed." <sup>32</sup>

General Mower was absent, so Colonel Buchanan was in charge at New Orleans when Colonel Lugenbeel's letter arrived. No one at department headquarters knew what effect General Order No. 95 would have on Mower's directive to the Fort Smith commander. Several of the officers present argued that the alterations recommended by Colonel Ayres were necessary for the discipline and health of the troops. Buchanan decided to pass the buck. All correspondence dealing with the projected changes at Fort Smith were forwarded on February 16 to the Adjutant General's Office. <sup>33</sup>

Adjutant General Thomas had visited Fort Smith at the beginning of February. Although he wasn't on an official tour of inspection, Thomas observed a number of things which he thought should be called to the attention of Secretary of War Schofield.

Writing Schofield from Fayetteville on the 3d, Thomas pointed out that at the moment Fort Smith was garrisoned by a much larger force than that for which it was designed. This situation had been accentuated when Officers' Quarters B had burned in November, 1865. At the time of Thomas' visit, all the officers assigned to the post were quartered in block A. With the exception of Colonel Lugenbeel, who had two rooms, the remainder of the officers had only one room. This might have been satisfactory if all the officers had been single. But, in more than one instance, Thomas reported, he found a married officer in the front room and a single one in the back room. A folding door divided the apartments. Unless a conversation was carried on in a whisper, the voices carried into the adjoining room. Moreover, Thomas continued, there was one privy to four rooms, two of which were occupied by married officers with families and two by single officers. "Is this conducive to good morals?" the general asked.

Thomas, not knowing that estimates and plans for a new hospital had been approved, complained about the appearance and "evil" condition of the present structure. According to Thomas, it was the oldest structure on the post. Seventeen years before, recommendations had been advanced for its replacement. These pleas had been repeated

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frequently in the intervening years. Each time, the argument that Fort Smith was about to be abandoned prevailed, and funds for a new hospital had been stricken from the budget.

Thomas was shocked to learn of Ayres' recommendation that the "brick wall" around the Garrison should be taken down and certain buildings removed. He believed this was unnecessary. If Colonel Ayres wished to review the troops or see them drill, he should have had Colonel Lugenbeel march them out onto the reserve where there was space a plenty. The Adjutant General estimated the changes suggested by Ayres would cost the government \$50,000. He thought this money could be better spent to erect a hospital and additional quarters for the officers. <sup>34</sup>

After studying Thomas' letter, Schofield sent it to Quartermaster General Meigs. The Quartermaster General forwarded the communication to General Mower's New Orleans headquarters. When the Quartermaster for the Sub-District of Arkansas saw the correspondence, he agreed that General Thomas' report was "a plain statement of facts as they exist." Furthermore, he noted, an application had been forwarded to the War Department on January 19 for authority to rebuild Officers' Quarters B which had been destroyed by fire four years before. Permission, he wrote, to build a new hospital had already been received. Information available at Little Rock was that Ayres' recommendations had been approved at department headquarters. But, in view of the conflict with General Order No. 95, Colonel Lugenbeel had declined to take action. <sup>35</sup>

General Mower, who had returned to duty, showed Thomas' letter and the attachments to Colonel Ayres before drafting his reply. Ayres' blood boiled as he affixed his comments. He noted sarcastically that former Adjutant General Thomas had referred to the wall enclosing the Garrison as brick. "The wall," Ayres wrote, which he had recommended be taken down was "the relic of a stone wall built many years ago as a defence against Indians, and inclosed but a small area." A portion

of the wall had been taken down at the time of his inspection, and the stone used by "industrious troops" to erect "two nice sets of Company quarters." These quarters were currently "enjoyed by two companies of Col. Lugenbeel's command."

His suggestion that the remainder of the wall be removed and a barracks with a capacity for four companies be constructed had been merely "prospective." It was only to be done after the proper steps had been taken, and the sanction of the Secretary of War to permit the purchase of the necessary "woodwork" obtained. The putting up of fences around the grounds and the purchase of a steam engine had been the only items involved in Ayres' recommendations that would have required an immediate outlay of public funds. Had these projects been attended to promptly, Ayres felt, Thomas' proposals that a block of Officers' Quarters be erected to replace the one burned in 1865 would be unnecessary. Finally, Post Quartermaster Frank D. Baldwin had assured Ayres that the troops would be able to move the stables and small buildings off the proposed parade ground without outside assistance.

For his authority in urging the laying out of a parade ground, Ayres referred the people in the Adjutant General's Office to General Order No. 5 issued by General Thomas three years before. This order which established regulations for officers assigned to the inspection service provided: An inspection was to be "generally preceded by a review." Ayres observed that all authorities on this subject required a "review." If General Thomas in his military career had ever had the fortune to command troops, Ayres caustically wrote, "he would probably have comprehended the meaning and learned the value of that requirement."

Next, Ayres turned his ire on Colonel Lugenbeel. If the commandant had obeyed instructions at the time they were received, Ayres noted, there would now have been a "large and handsome parade and drill ground," and the Fort Smith troops would be acquiring a practical knowledge of battalion drill.

Ayres pointed out that a number of merchants having shops on the west side of Garrison Avenue had built "small rear sheds" on the reservation. If Colonel Lugenbeel were required to run the fence as directed, these structures would be removed and these encroachments checked. <sup>36</sup>

General Mower forwarded the correspondence to General of the Army William T. Sherman. (Sherman had succeeded Grant as commander of the army on March 8, 1869.) On doing so, he invited attention to Ayres' comments.

Meanwhile, Ayres had placed his hands on an inspection report by Lieutenant John G. Leefe of Fort Smith for February. Leefe found that 13 of the 14 commissioned officers listed as present were quartered in 16 rooms. Four of the 13 had families. The situation would be more embarrassing when the officers who were currently on leave or detached duty returned, because three of them were family men. To emphasize the inequities of the situation, Leefe had pointed out that a set of quarters was being erected for the Superintendent of the National Cemetery at Fort Smith. This man, whose pay and emoluments were those of an ordnance sergeant, was to have more "elegant, comfortable and commodious quarters" than those occupied by Colonel Lugenbeel.

Leefe pronounced the appearance of this three room, stone dwelling, "decidedly tasteful." A dozen such quarters for the officers, Leefe wrote, would "be more ornamental than the present structure which is, in appearance, a good deal like a factory lodging house, and is quite inconvenient." Leefe estimated that cottage type quarters could be put up for about \$2,000 each. The cost would be less if the stone in the Garrison wall were used. Besides being an eyesore, the wall as it stood, the inspecting officer wrote, was "utterly useless." <sup>37</sup>

Mower, in accordance with Ayres' request, forwarded Leefe's report to Adjutant General E. D. Townsend on March 20. (Townsend



on February 22 had succeeded Thomas as Adjutant General.) The War Department returned all the papers bearing on the subject to department headquarters on April 9. Ten days later, Brigadier General Oliver O. Howard, who had succeeded Mower, sent the documents back to the Adjutant General. When he did, the general recommended that in view of the reduction of the army, "no repairs or alterations other than those necessary to keep the post in a good habitable condition be made." 38

Adjutant General Townsend relayed this information to Quartermaster General Meigs on April 21. Since Fort Smith had been transferred from the Department of Louisiana to the Department of Missouri on March 16, the Adjutant General would see that General Schofield was notified of this action. 39

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Some three months before Leefe filed his report, Colonel Lugenbeel on November 11, 1868, had replied to a request from department headquarters for information regarding the Officers' Quarters at Fort Smith. For the better part of the past year, the post had been garrisoned by six companies of the 19th Infantry. Currently, the colonel wrote, there were 14 officers (one lieutenant colonel, five captains, and eight lieutenants) at the Garrison. One captain and four lieutenants were on detached duty, while a fifth subaltern was on leave. According to regulations these officers were entitled to 30 rooms. Since Officers' Quarters B had burned in November 1865, there had been one block of 16 rooms to house all the officers stationed at Fort Smith.

To relieve this situation, Colonel Lugenbeel requested authority to rebuild the burnt quarters. Care would be taken to make the projected structure conform in every respect with the burned building. Brick, stone, and labor were readily available in the area. In addition, the troops could be organized into fatigue parties to assist with the work. Lugenbeel attached a set of plans and specifications (See Appendix DD) for the proposed quarters to his letter. 40

Sub-District Quartermaster Major Richard N. Batchelder endorsed Colonel Lugenbeel's request in the strongest terms. He reported that if the present garrison were to be retained at Fort Smith, it was important that another block of Officers' Quarters be erected. When he forwarded the necessary documents, Batchelder enclosed a report of all the buildings at Fort Smith and an estimate of the cost of building the proposed quarters. 41

The correspondence reached Department Headquarters at New Orleans at the end of January. After studying the documents, Colonel Charles S. Tompkins decided to return them to Major Batchelder at Little Rock. Tompkins, who was departmental quartermaster, wished to know if there were any suitable buildings contiguous to the reservation which might be rented by the government for use as officers' quarters. In addition, Tompkins wanted information as to what extent Colonel Lugenbeel proposed to employ his men in the construction of the quarters. Tompkins if possible would like to discover the strength of the Fort Smith garrison before the Civil War, and any other information which would enable his office "to act understandingly." 42

Batchelder replied on February 9. Having checked with Colonel Lugenbeel, the major assured Tompkins that there weren't any buildings adjoining the reservation which could be rented as officers' quarters. Rooms could be had in town for about the commutation price.

Both Batchelder and Lugenbeel were satisfied that it would be best to contract the construction of the quarters. Past experiences indicated a contractor could do the work cheaper than hired labor assisted by fatigue parties. Since it was desirable to have the stone wall enclosing the Garrison removed, Batchelder suggested that the wall be razed. The stone would be salvaged and used to construct the new quarters in place of brick.

Information concerning the number of troops posted at the fort before the war was unobtainable at either Little Rock or Fort Smith.

Since the Garrison was located on the line separating Arkansas from the Indian Territory, Batchelder felt certain it would be maintained as a frontier post for many years. <sup>43</sup>

General Mower's office, on receipt of this information, forwarded the plans, estimates, and correspondence to the Secretary of War. Along with these documents went a recommendation that authority to erect an Officers' Quarters to replace the one which had burned be granted. <sup>44</sup>

In Washington, it was decided to defer action on the matter until General Howard, who had been assigned to command the Department of Louisiana, reached New Orleans. Quartermaster General Meigs on March 31 forwarded the papers relative to the Officers' Quarters to General Howard. A letter calling Howard's attention to "the reduction of the estimates by Congress, and the determination of the General of the Army to confine expenditures within the appropriations" was attached to the packet. <sup>45</sup>

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In line with the decision to reduce the strength of the army, a General Order was issued by the War Department on March 3, 1869. The 45 infantry regiments currently on the active rolls were to be reduced to 25. Of particular interest to the soldiers of the 19th Infantry was the news that their unit was to be consolidated with the 28th Infantry. At this time, the headquarters and most of the companies of the 28th Infantry were at Little Rock. The 19th would retain its designation, while the 28th would be dropped from the active rolls.

The senior company officers of each grade present and fit for active service when the units were reorganized would be the officers of the consolidated regiment. Supernumerary officers were to be ordered to their homes to await further orders. Non-commissioned officers in the same category would be honorably discharged, unless they elected to remain in service at a lower grade.

The billets of all officers of the first 25 regiments who were absent from their unit on detached duty or leave of absence of more than 30 days were to be regarded as vacant.

All vacancies that occurred henceforth in the 25 active regiments were to be filled by the senior officer of the same grade on the list of officers awaiting orders.

No new enlistments would be received until the number of men was reduced to the maximum authorized by law for the 25 regiments. Re-enlistments in the subject units would continue to be permitted in accordance with existing regulations. <sup>46</sup>

The consolidation of the 19th and 28th Regiments took place on March 31 in accordance with the Secretary of War's directive. On the following evening, the regimental band of the 19th Infantry gave a "Grand Concert" at the St. Charles Hotel Hall. <sup>47</sup>

Upon the reorganization, Colonel Lugenbeel was transferred to the 1st Infantry and ordered to Detroit, Michigan. Many of the Fort Smithites were sorry to see the colonel go. The editor of the Weekly Herald informed his readers, "We part with Col. Lugenbeel with regret. He is a gentleman, social and kind, and while here made a good commander, and in the discharge of his duties as an officer, was just to all, without regard to party or person." <sup>48</sup>

Word that the War Department intended to transfer the 19th Infantry from Fort Smith to Louisiana caused much head shaking along the Arkansas frontier. As one citizen put it, "we are not, nor ever have been, an adorer of brass buttons, nor ever pinned our faith much to them, yet we cheerfully bear testimony to the fact, that we have never witnessed the same number of U. S. troops stationed at any place, from whom so little trouble came."

The officers and men of the 19th Infantry had exerted themselves to respect the rights of the citizens. Their conduct while stationed at the Garrison had earned for them much good will.

It was rumored that the 6th Infantry would replace the 19th at Fort Smith. 49

Before leaving Fort Smith for Louisiana, the regimental band gave a final concert. The last piece played was "The Girl I Left Behind Me." Undoubtedly, it was reported, this tune would ring in "the ears of many, and cause some sleepless, dreamless hours to pass quite heavily." To such young ladies, the editor of the Weekly Herald sent his "condolence." 50

When the regiment departed on April 10 and 13, a small detachment commanded by Regimental Quartermaster John S. Hammer remained. These men were to look after and provide for the security of the buildings, and the quartermaster's and medical stores, pending the arrival of the 6th Infantry. 51

Companies I and K, 6th Infantry which had been stationed at Fort Gibson reached Fort Smith by boat on April 26. Captain John J. Upham of the 6th Infantry took command of the Garrison at this time. Before turning over the post to Captain Upham, Quartermaster Hammer prepared a report describing the public buildings at Fort Smith on April 30. (See Appendix EE) This report was forwarded to headquarters Department of the Missouri. 52

At the end of April orders were issued by the commander of the Department of the Missouri discontinuing the Sub-District of Arkansas. Another administrative change was made at this time. Superintendent of Indian Affairs Colonel William B. Hazen was directed by General Schofield to shift his headquarters from Camp Washita to Fort Smith. For the time being, Fort Smith would be the headquarters for Hazen's command -- the Lower District of Arkansas. 53

Shortly thereafter, Colonel Hazen issued orders for Company D, 6th Infantry to join the battalion at Fort Smith. The soldiers of Company D boarded the steamer Van Bennen at Fort Gibson on June 8. The next day, the men disembarked at Fort Smith and marched to the Garrison. Since he ranked Captain Upham, Captain Montgomery Bryant of Company D on June 10 assumed command of the post. 54

The strength of the Fort Smith garrison was reduced by two-thirds in August.<sup>1869</sup> At that time Companies I and K were ordered to Table Rock, Kansas. 55

The number of troops quartered on the post had been drastically reduced, so the upper story of Officers' Quarters A was turned into offices for the post quartermaster and adjutant. December 19, 1870, was very cold on the middle reaches of the Arkansas. Private William L. Leon of Company D served as clerk in the Post Adjutant's Office. To ward off the chill a roaring fire was kindled in the fireplace. The fire was roaring when Private Leon went off duty at 3:30 p.m. Before locking the room, the private picked up the papers which had fallen on the floor and stacked them on a table near the fireplace.

Acting Assistant Surgeon William S. Hendrickson was quartered in the Officers' Quarters. His apartment was underneath those used as the Post Quartermaster's and Adjutant Office. Hendrickson was awakened by "something falling on the floor above." Lighting a candle, the doctor raced upstairs. When he opened the door to the Adjutant's Office, he was engulfed in a cloud of smoke. The room was in flames. Dashing downstairs, the doctor sounded the alarm.

At 3:40 a.m. on the 20th, Private William M. Palmer, who as acting sergeant of the guard, was sleeping in the guardhouse was awakened by the cry of "Fire!" Leaping out of his bunk, Palmer rushed outside to discover flames leaping out of the upper story windows of the Officers' Quarters. Palmer dashed to the barracks and shook the drummer, directing him to beat the "Long Roll." As soon as the drummer started to rattle his drum, Palmer raced to the old Commissary Storehouse, where post commander Lieutenant Frederick W. Thibaut had his quarters. (Captain Bryant had gone on leave the previous month, and Thibaut was in charge of the Garrison.) The lieutenant met Palmer at the door. Palmer shouted that the Officers' Quarters were afire. Thibaut told Palmer to organize a detail of men with "axes and proceed to the work of preventing the spread of the fire and saving of the property."

Private John Meier was on duty at Post No. 1 when Doctor Hendrickson sounded the alarm. At first, Meier couldn't tell whether it was murder or fire, as the same cry was used for both. Meier as he looked up saw flames belching from the chimney of the Officers' Quarters. Repeating the cry, Meier discharged his piece. This brought the rest of the guard on the run.

1st Sergeant John J. Bowman was awakened by the outcry. Tumbling out of bed and putting on his clothes, the sergeant organized a bucket brigade. This attended to, he went in search of Lieutenant Thibaut. He found the lieutenant in the rear of the Officers' Quarters trying to hammer down a partition. Spotting Bowman, Thibaut told him to take his men and "use every exertion to put out the fire and save the Government property. A detail would be sent to guard the magazine and the storehouses where the quartermaster's and commissary supplies were stockpiled. Although there were only 13 men on duty at the post, 1st Sergeant Bowman carried out the lieutenant's orders to the best of his ability. The fire, however, had gained too much headway. It was soon apparent that the soldiers were fighting a losing battle. Within a short time the building had been gutted.

The building was a total loss. Lieutenant Thibaut estimated that it would cost at least \$25,000 to rebuild the structure. As if the loss of the Officers' Quarters weren't bad enough, all the Garrison records, and the post quartermaster's papers were destroyed.

At noon on December 20 while the rubble was still hot, Thibaut convened a "Board of Citizens" to investigate "the circumstances connected with the destruction by fire of the Officers' Quarters at the Post of Fort Smith...." According to regulations, the lieutenant was supposed to assemble a "Board of Inquiry," but there being no other commissioned officers at the post this would be impossible.

Besides questioning Surgeon Hendrickson, Sergeants John J. Bowman and John Harris, and Privates Palmer, Leon and Meier, the

"Board" took testimony from James H. Reed, a local brick mason and plasterer. Reed told the "Board" that in 1867 Major Montgomery had called his attention to a defect in one of the chimneys of the Officers' Quarters. Montgomery had made a verbal agreement with Reed to tear down the chimney until he "could discover the cause of the defect." Before Reed could carry out the task, Montgomery was transferred. Although apprised of the situation by Reed, Montgomery's successor took no action to repair the defective chimney.

After listening to all the testimony, the "Board" reported that the conflagration which had destroyed the Officers' Quarters was caused by:

- 1st. -- A defect in the flue of the chimney of said building.
- 2nd. -- The accumulation of soot in said chimney.
- 3rd. -- The ignition of said soot from the large fire made in the fire-place of said chimney which caused it to fall on the floor thereby setting the same on fire. The fire was made thus large in consequence of the extraordinary cold weather. That the flames of said conflagration had gained such headway when discovered that though the members of the Garrison were promptly on hand and all available means were adopted, it was impossible to save the said building, or such property as was lost. 56

About six weeks passed before Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Huston's report of his investigation of the fire at Fort Smith reached the Adjutant General's desk. Writing to the commander of the Department of the Missouri, Brigadier General John Pope, on February 11, General Townsend informed him that General Sherman and the Secretary of War had decided "no further proceedings" were necessary in regard to the fire. These two high officers were in agreement that Fort Smith and its reservation should be abandoned and sold. Nine days before, Secretary of War William W. Belknap had recommended to Congress



1871

that Fort Smith "be included in the pending bill for the disposition of useless Military reservations." 57

Congress lost no time in passing the necessary legislation. An "Act to provide for the disposition of useless military reservations" was signed by President Grant on February 24. The bill authorized and empowered the Secretary of War:

to transfer to the Secretary of the Interior, for disposition for cash, according to the existing laws of the United States relating to the public lands, after appraisement to the highest bidder, and at not less than the appraised value, nor at less than one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre, the United States military reservations at Forts Lane and Walla Walla, in the State of Oregon; Fort Zarah, in the State of Kansas; Camp McGarry, in the State of Nevada; Fort Sumner, in the Territory of New Mexico; Forts Jessup [sic] and Sabine, in the State of Louisiana; Fort Wayne and Fort Smith, in the State of Arkansas; such portion of the Fort Abercrombia [sic] as lies east of the Red River of the North; and such portions of the reservation at Fort Bridger, in the Territory of Wyoming, as may no longer be required for military purposes.... 58

Four weeks later on March 24, Secretary of War Belknap transferred to the Department of the Interior for disposition, in accordance with the act passed by the 41st Congress, certain military reservations, including Fort Smith. Belknap on May 15 wrote Secretary of the Interior Columbus Delano, asking that the National Cemetery at Fort Smith be restored to the custody of the War Department. 59 President Grant by executive order on May 22 carried out Belknap's request. 60

Captain Bryant, having returned to duty in January, was in charge at the Garrison at the time the decision to abandon Fort Smith was made. Orders reached Fort Smith in July from headquarters Department of the Missouri for Captain Bryant to proceed to Fort Gibson with his command — Company D, 6th Infantry. Lieutenant Thibaut and a small detachment would be left to take care of the public property until such time as authorities from the Department of the Interior could take charge.

Bryant and his men marched out of the Garrison on July 19. It took the small column five days to reach Fort Gibson. At Fort Gibson, Bryant received instructions to push on to the Cheyenne Agency at Red Hills. The company left Fort Gibson on the last day of July and reached Red Hills on August 23. Bryant and his men stayed at Red Hills until October 3, when they marched for Fort Zarah, Kansas. <sup>61</sup>

To facilitate the transfer of the Garrison, the Adjutant General's Office called on Quartermaster General Meigs for a list of the public buildings on the reservation. It was the end of October 1871 before a satisfactory inventory was submitted. (See Appendix FF) Upon its receipt, it was forwarded to Secretary of the Interior Delano. <sup>62</sup>

Thibaut's detachment of Company D, 6th Infantry remained at Fort Smith for several months after the reservation was transferred. As the months passed, the generals began to fret. They had more important work for these men. General Pope had recommended that a number of troops in his Department of the Missouri be reassigned to make them available for service in the field. In effecting this, companies of the 6th Infantry had been withdrawn from Fort Gibson and Little Rock, in addition to Fort Smith. Orders had been issued breaking up Fort Gibson as a military post and transferring Fort Smith to the Department of the Interior. Except for Thibaut's detachment at Fort Smith and a company at Little Rock, the 6th Infantry had moved out onto the plains. Pope was dissatisfied with this situation, because he wanted the entire regiment on one station. Consequently, he decided to get in touch with his immediate superior, Lieutenant General Philip H. Sheridan.

Sheridan wasted no time in bringing the subject to General of the Army Sherman's attention. Writing Sherman on September 19, Sheridan urged that the Secretary of the Interior be requested to designate an agent to take charge of the public property at Fort Smith. A unit from some other command should be sent to relieve the company of the 6th Infantry at Little Rock. <sup>63</sup>

Sherman acted promptly. On the 22d he asked Secretary of War Belknap to ask Secretary of the Interior Delano to name an agent to take possession of the land and buildings at Fort Smith. Sherman at the same time issued orders for one of the infantry companies posted at Baton Rouge to proceed to Little Rock. Upon being relieved, the troops at Fort Smith and Little Rock were to report to regimental headquarters of the 6th Infantry at Fort Dodge. <sup>64</sup>

Chief Clerk John Potts of the War Department on September 26 addressed a note to the Secretary of the Interior. Secretary Delano was notified of the decision to pull Thibaut's detachment out of Fort Smith. The military accordingly wanted Mr. Delano to designate an agent as soon as possible to take charge of the property, "which should not be left without proper protection." <sup>65</sup>

Secretary Delano was unable to think of any suitable person for this assignment. Two days later, he wrote Attorney General Amos T. Akerman, requesting that he direct the United States Marshal for the Western District of Arkansas "to place a proper person in charge of said property for the present, on such terms as may involve little if any expence to the United States." <sup>66</sup>

Two weeks before, Logan H. Roots, the U. S. Marshal for the Western District of Arkansas, wrote Attorney General Akerman. Roots had learned from the newspapers that Secretary of the Interior Delano was about to appoint commissioners to dispose of the military reservation at Fort Smith. On his last visit to Washington, Roots had broached the subject of the government retaining a portion of the land and several of the buildings thereon for U. S. Court purposes. He thought it would be wise for Akerman to discuss this question with Mr. Delano.

District Judge William Story had endorsed his marshal's request. The judge was satisfied that the rooms in Fort Smith weren't suitable for his court. Rents were very high on the small and inconvenient rooms that were currently used by the court. Story calculated it would

cost the government not less than \$800 a year to obtain the use of these unsatisfactory quarters. He urged Ackerman to have the Secretary of the Interior set aside buildings on the reservation for "Post & Internal Revenue offices, Court House &c." <sup>67</sup>

The correspondence from the marshal and the judge were referred to the Secretary of the Interior on September 18 by the Attorney General's Office. <sup>68</sup>

Secretary Delano replied immediately. The act of February 24 by which the Fort Smith Garrison had been transferred to the Department of the Interior, he explained, required the sale of the reservation. Moreover, all the buildings thereon would have to be appraised and sold. For some time, his department had been in contact with the War Department with a view to ascertaining what improvements there were to be disposed of. In view of the delay, Delano thought it improbable that the land or structures at Fort Smith would be disposed of before Congress convened in December. There would be plenty of time accordingly for the Attorney General's Office to seek legislation to carry out the steps urged by Judge Story and Marshal Roots. <sup>69</sup>

At the end of September, Secretary Delano received a disturbing letter from Fort Smith. John Carnall wrote the Secretary that "the improvements on the Military Reservation at this place are being very much depredated on." While he shunned "no responsibility," Carnall didn't want any publicity. <sup>70</sup>

Delano referred Carnall's letter to the Attorney General. Mr. Akerman telegraphed Marshal Roots on October 11 to undertake an investigation. Roots, however, was unable to take any action, because the military still occupied the premises, and no orders had yet been received by the officer in charge to transfer the property to him. Roots referred the Attorney General's wire to the officer in charge, 2d Lieutenant David L. Craft of the 6th Infantry. <sup>71</sup>

Lieutenant Craft reported to Roots on November 6 that he knew of "no depredateions committed on the Government Reservations," since he had

taken charge from Lieutenant Thibaut on September 30. The lieutenant questioned Carnall's motives. First, because he didn't cite any specific acts. Second, Carnall had failed to lodge his complaint with him, (Craft's position as an officer of the United States was common knowledge). If this had been done, the lieutenant could have taken immediate steps to prevent the commission of the alleged acts and bring the culprits to justice. <sup>72</sup>

On November 10 Marshal Roots received important news from Lieutenant Craft. The lieutenant announced that he was in receipt of orders to turn the public property over to the marshal as agent for the Department of the Interior. The transfer was to take place as soon as the military had disposed of all the quartermaster's and commissary stores. Moreover, Craft continued, his command was being greatly reduced. In the future, it would be impossible for him to maintain a "rigid guard." Craft would transfer to Roots the "control and guardianship" of all the public property except the buildings currently occupied by the troops and the military stores. Roots promptly assumed responsibility for looking after the "unused property." <sup>73</sup>

Almost two years passed before Secretary of the Interior Delano appointed three commissioners (Edward M. McCook, N. H. Van Vorhes, and James R. Laffery) "to appraise the lands & building" on the Fort Smith reservation. The team visited Fort Smith in October 1873. They had no trouble identifying the land as described in their instructions. The plats and field notes with which the commissioners were provided enabled them to avoid hiring a surveyor. No difficulty was encountered in locating the corners of the reservation as they were marked by permanent stone monuments placed there by the officers who had previously run the lines.

If Secretary Delano deemed it expedient to have the old lines reurveyed, the commissioners recommended that he send a government officer to do the job. Experience had taught the commissioners that there weren't many skilled surveyors in western Arkansas. Indeed, no

surveyor's instruments could be located in Fort Smith. More important, they warned, "the local and individual interests of the community" conflicted to a great degree with the government's. It would therefore be best to get a man whose interests were in no way allied with those of the Fort Smithites.

After making a careful reconnaissance of the reservation, the commissioners concluded that it would be best to sell the land in a block rather than lots. Their reasons for reaching this decision were: It would be impossible to sub-divide without running the streets or alleys through some of the more valuable public buildings. Between 15 and 20 acres near the town boundary were badly eroded. If divided, these acres would either not sell or if they did, they would bring very little. At the same time, the land on the southern part of the reservation was elevated and covered with a heavy growth of small oak. If the reserve was disposed of in a "body," it was assumed that the good land could sell the bad. Finally, a sub-division superintended by the commissioners would require considerable time and more expense than the group believed justified.

When they ran the line along the northeast side of the reservation facing Garrison Avenue, the commissioners found that citizens had erected enclosures behind their houses which intruded onto the reservation. Several sheds and barns were found on government property. These circumstances would make the people involved desirous of seeing the reservation sub-divided. Nevertheless, the commissioners held to their recommendation that the land be sold as a whole. The purchaser, the commissioners held, could sub-divide the land in a manner much more satisfactory to the citizens than they.

The commissioners thought the reservation, exclusive of the buildings, should be disposed of for \$200 per acre.

Colonel Basil L. LeFlore, the attorney for the Choctaws, informed the commissioners that several of the government buildings were "in whole or in part" within the limits of the Indian Territory. The commissioners didn't feel they were qualified to make a decision on

this vital question. They accordingly indicated on the list of buildings appraised those pointed out by LeFlore as being inside the boundary of his Nation.

After examining the buildings on the reservation, the commissioners prepared a table giving a brief description and a valuation. (See Appendix GG) They estimated the buildings and other property (the wall) on the reservation to be worth \$22,855.

The commissioners called the Secretary's attention to the fact that all the wooden buildings, both occupied and unoccupied, were decaying rapidly. Several more years of neglect would render these structures valueless to both the government and the purchaser.

No consideration had been given to the ruins of the Officers' Quarters which had burned in December 1870. At the time of their visit, the Superintendent of the National Cemetery was salvaging some of the brick to pave his walks.

When they filed their report, the commissioners certified that they hadn't been governed by any speculative impulses in estimating the value of the land and buildings. Instead, they had prepared their estimates by comparisons with similar real estate in the Fort Smith area. 74

FORT SMITH 1838 - 1871

Chapter XX

The Army Abandons Fort Smith

Notes

- 1 Montgomery to Meigs, Dec. 11, 1866 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 2 Montgomery to Meigs, Dec. 21, 1866 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 3 Parker to Bearss, May 29, 1963.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Van Buren Press, Dec. 14, 1866.
- 6 Ibid., March 1, 1867; Parker to Bearss, May 31, 1963. Company F had marched from Fayetteville to Van Buren on September 26, 1866. From Van Buren, the company had been taken on the steamer Ozark to Norristown, from where the troops had marched to Dover, arriving there on October 7.
- 7 Van Buren Press, March 22 and 28, 1867; Parker to Bearss, May 29, 1963.
- 8 Van Buren Press, April 12, 1867.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Parker to Bearss, May 29, 1963.
- 11 Van Buren Press, June 21, 1867.
- 12 Ibid., June 28, 1867.
- 13 Ibid., Aug. 9, 1867.
- 14 Ibid., Aug. 2, 1867.
- 15 Ibid., Sept. 20, 1867.
- 16 Ibid., Oct. 6, 1867.
- 17 Parker to Bearss, May 29, 1963.
- 18 Van Buren Press, Dec. 28, 1867. General Ord left Vicksburg on January 9, 1868.
- 19 Ibid., May 8 and 15, 1868.



- 20 Smith to Tyler, June 1, 1868 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 21 Chandler to McDowell, June 11, 1868 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 22 Lytton to Byrne, June 23, 1868 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Case of Post Hospital at Fort Smith, Arkansas (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 25 Schofield to Meigs, Jan. 18, 1869 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 26 A Report on Barracks and Hospitals, with Descriptions of Military Posts (Washington, 1870), 272, 273.
- 27 Van Buren Press, July 28, 1868.
- 28 Special Inspection Report, July 25, 1868 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Neill to Lugenbeel, Sept. 29, 1868 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 31 Neill to Lugenbeel, Jan. 19, 1869 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 32 Lugenbeel to Neill, Feb. 2, 1869 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 33 Buchanan to Adjutant General, Feb. 16, 1869 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 34 Thomas to Schofield, Feb. 3, 1869 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 35 Inspection of Fort Smith, Adjutant General's Office, March 1869 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 36 Ayres to Mower, March 12, 1869 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 37 Inspection Report, Fort Smith, Feb. 28, 1869 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 38 Mower to Sherman, April 9, 1869 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

- 39 Townsend to Meigs, April 21, 1869 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.). With the advent of the Grant administration on March 4, 1869, Schofield had been replaced as Secretary of War by John Rawlins and placed in command of the Department of Missouri.
- 40 Lugenbeel to Headquarters Dept. of La. & Ark., Nov. 11, 1868 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 Tompkins to Batchelder, Feb. 1, 1869 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 43 Batchelder to Tompkins, Feb. 9, 1869 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 44 Buchanan to Schofield, Feb. 19, 1869 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 45 Meigs to Howard, Mar. 31, 1869 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 46 Fort Smith Weekly Herald, March 27, 1869; Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the U. S. Army, I, 117, 128.
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 Fort Smith Weekly Herald, April 3, 1869.
- 49 Ibid., April 10, 1869;
- 50 Ibid., April 17, 1869.
- 51 Ibid.; Parker to Bearss, May 31, 1863. Companies F and H left Fort Smith on April 10, companies A and E on the 13th, the dates of the departures of Companies G and K are not shown on the return. Company G reached Baton Rouge on April 19, while Company K arrived at Little Rock on the same day.
- 52 Easton to Meigs, Feb. 5, 1870 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, QMG, Ltrs. Recd.).
- 53 Van Buren Press, April 30, 1869.
- 54 Inspection Return, Company D, 6th Infantry, June 30, 1869.
- 55 Inspection Returns, Companies I and K, 6th Infantry, Aug. 31, 1869.
- 56 Thibaut to GHQ Dept. of the Missouri, Dec. 20, 1870 and Report of "Board of Citizens," Dec. 29, 1870 (National Archives, War Dept. Files,

OMG, Ltrs. Recd.); Van Buren Press, Dec. 27, 1870. The members of the "Board" were: H. L. McConnell, Irving W. Fuller, Thomas G. Scott, and W. W. Bailey.

57 Townsend to Pope, Feb. 11, 1871 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, OMG, Ltrs. Recd.).

58 GO 19, War Dept. March 6, 1871 (National Archives, War Dept. Files, AGO, Ltrs. Sent).

59 Belknap to Secretary of the Interior, May 15, 1871 (National Archives, Record Group 49, GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File).

60 Secretary of Interior to Gore, March 11, 1915 (National Archives, Record Group 49, GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File).

61 Inspection Returns, Company D, 6th Infantry, Aug. 31 and Oct. 31, 1871.

62 Townsend to Meigs, Aug. 31, 1871 (National Archives, Record Group 49, GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File).

63 Sheridan to Sherman, Sept. 19, 1871 (National Archives, Record Group 49, GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File).

64 Ibid.; Sherman to Halleck, Sept. 31, 1871 (National Archives, Record Group 49, GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File).

65 Potts to Secretary of the Interior, Sept. 26, 1871 (National Archives, Record Group 49, GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File).

66 Delano to Akerman, Sept. 28, 1871 (National Archives, Record Group 49, GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File).

67 Story & Roots to Akerman, Sept. 13, 1871 (National Archives, Record Group 49, GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File).

68 Bristow to Cowen, Sept. 18, 1871 (National Archives, Record Group 49, GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File).

69 Delano to Bristow, Sept. 19, 1871 (National Archives, Record Group 49, GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File).

70 Carnall to Delano, Sept. 26, 1871 (National Archives, Record Group 49, GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File).

71 Roots to Akerman, Nov. 10, 1871 (National Archives, Record Group 49, GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File).

72 Craft to Roots, Nov. 6, 1871 (National Archives, Record Group 49, GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File).

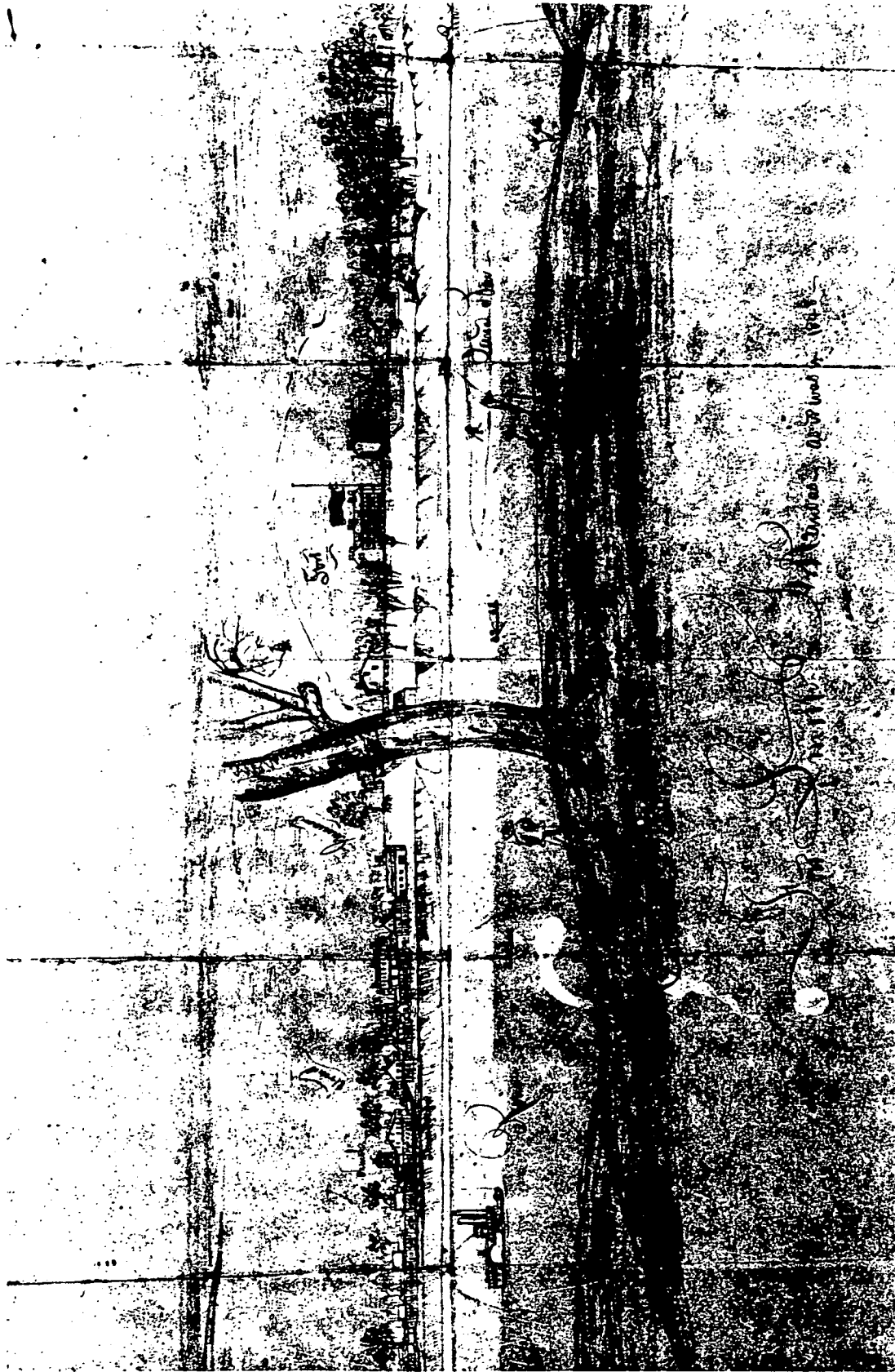
73 Roots to Akerman, Nov. 10, 1871 (National Archives, Record Group 49, GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File).

74 Commissioners to Delano, Oct. 21, 1873 (National Archives, Record Group 49, GLO, Fort Smith, AMR File); Smith to Bearss, May 31, 1963.

I

"FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS AS IT WAS IN 1848."

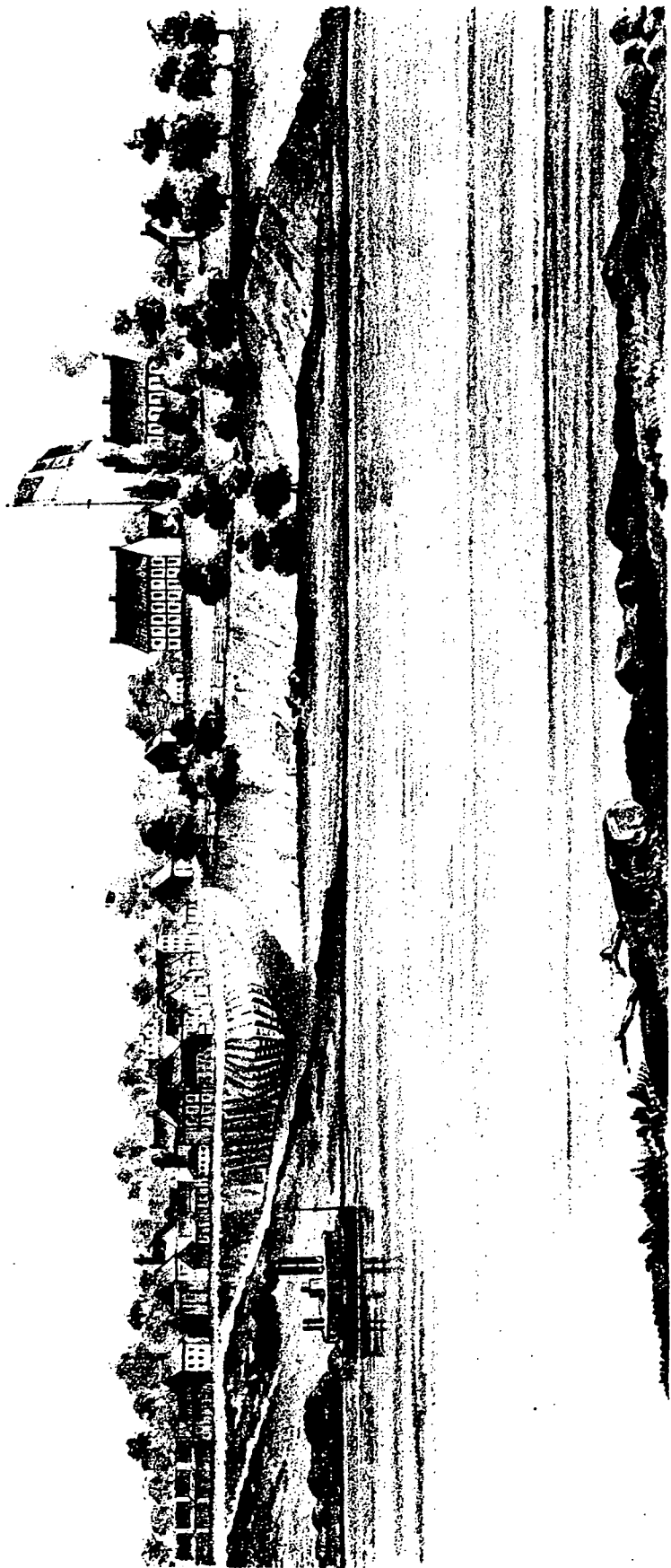
Since the Soldiers' Quarters are not shown, it is probable that this sketch was done in the period between April 1849 when the two-story Soldiers' Quarters burned and the spring of 1850 when the new one-story Soldiers' Quarters was raised.



II

"FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS."

This sketch by Mollhausen was drawn in July 1853.



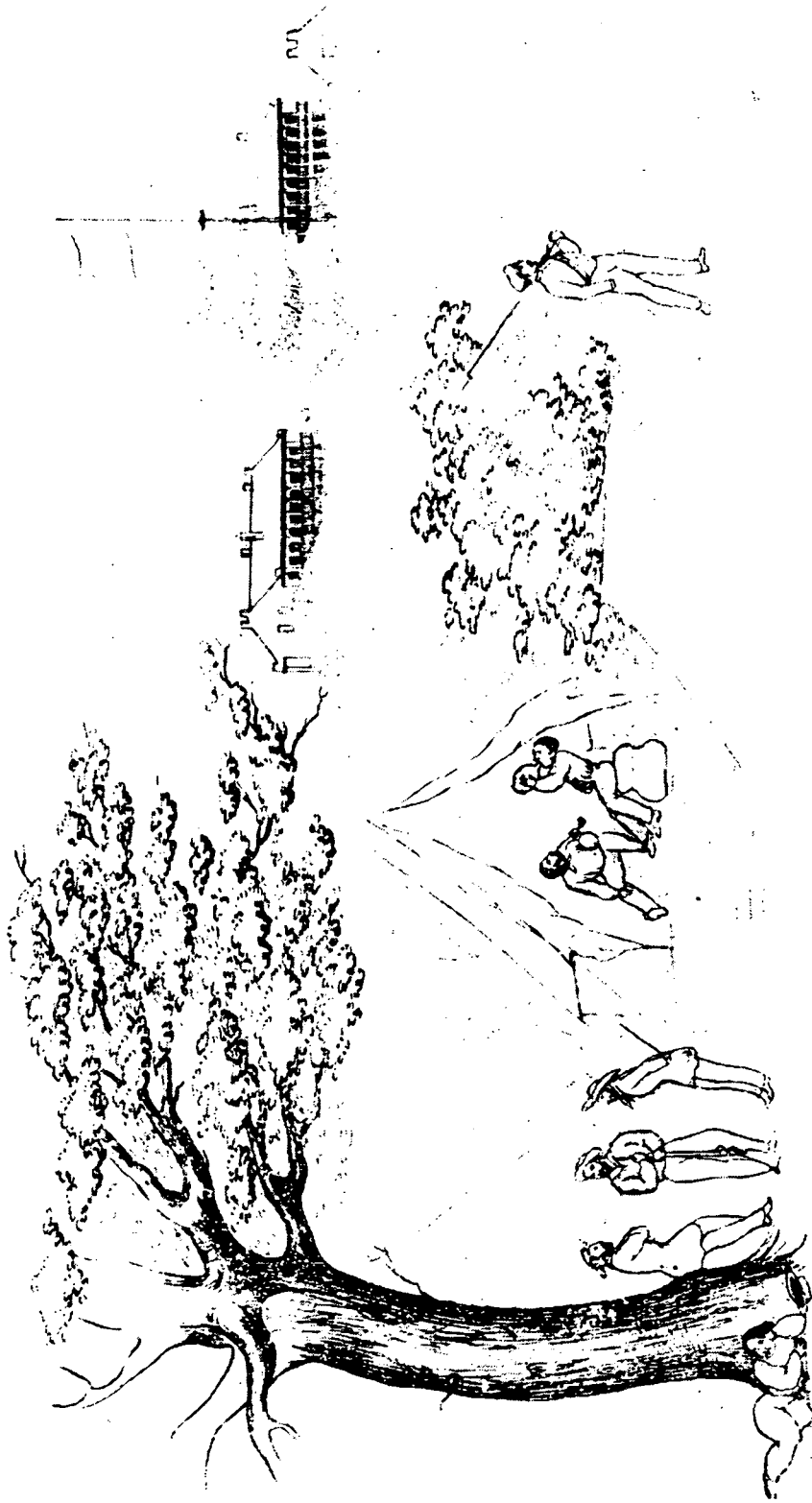
FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.



III

"CAMP WILSON WITH GLIMPSE OF FORT SMITH IN BACKGROUND."

This sketch by Mollhausen was drawn in July 1853.



*Fort Smith*

Camp Wilson with glimpse of Fort Smith in background.  
(From original drawing by H. B. Mollhausen, Whipple Collection)

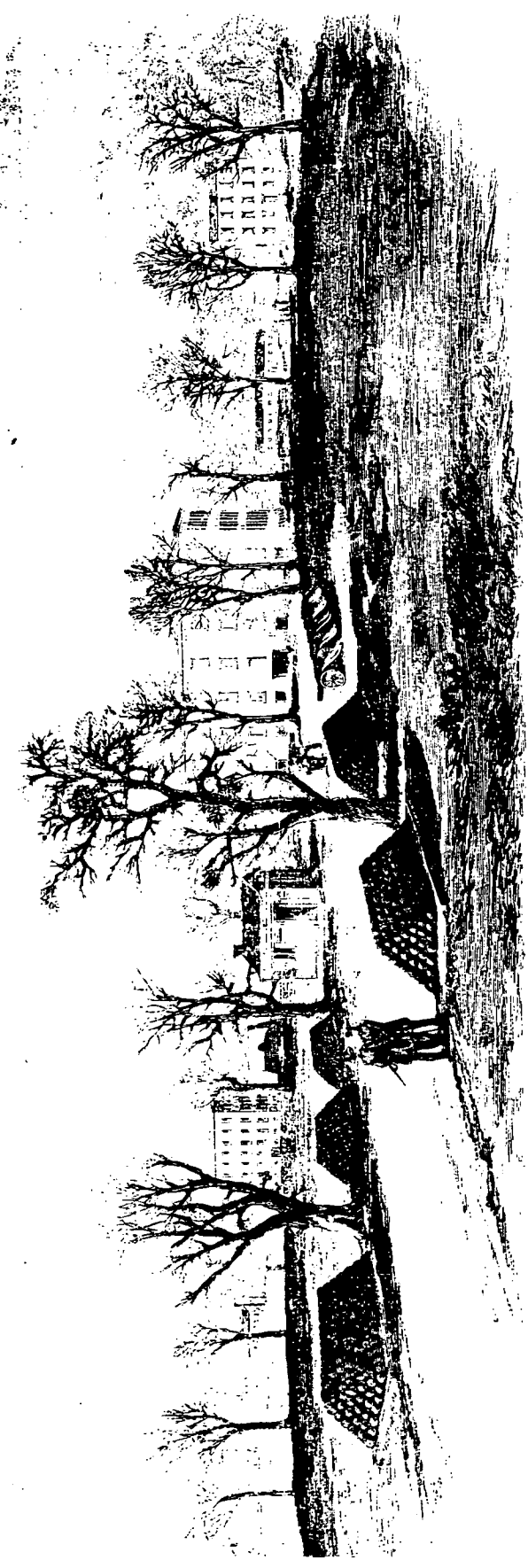
IV

"CITY AND GARRISON OF FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS."

This sketch appeared in Harper's Weekly in 1861.



CITY AND GARRISON OF FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

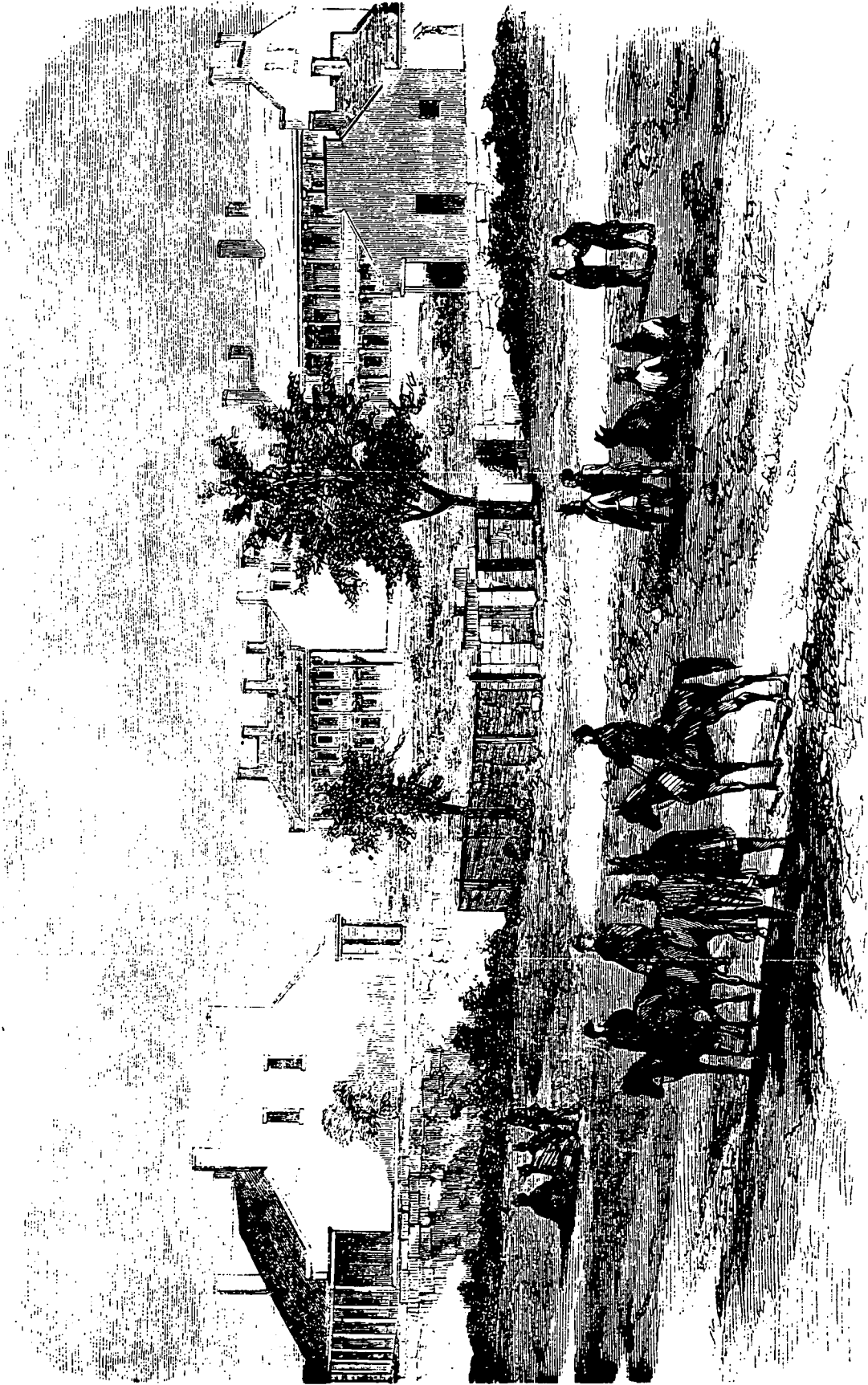


UNITED STATES ARSENAL AT LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, SURRENDERED TO THE STATE TROOPS, FEBRUARY, 1864.—FROM A DRAWING BY A GOVERNMENT DRAFTSMAN.—[See Page 155.]

V

"FORT SMITH, INDIAN TERRITORY, ARKANSAS, THE PLACE  
WHERE THE GREAT INDIAN COUNCIL WAS HELD, AND  
TREATY OF PEACE SIGNED, SEPT. 14 [1865]."

Since Officers' Quarters B is shown, this sketch was  
prepared prior to the fire of November  
1865.



FOUR SMITH, INDIAN TERRITORY, ARKANSAS, THE PLACE WHERE THE GREAT INDIAN COUNCIL WAS HELD, AND TREATY OF PEACE SIGNED, SEPT. 14.

VI

SOLDIERS' QUARTERS AND OFFICERS' QUARTERS A, FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

This picture taken between November 1865 and December 20, 1870.





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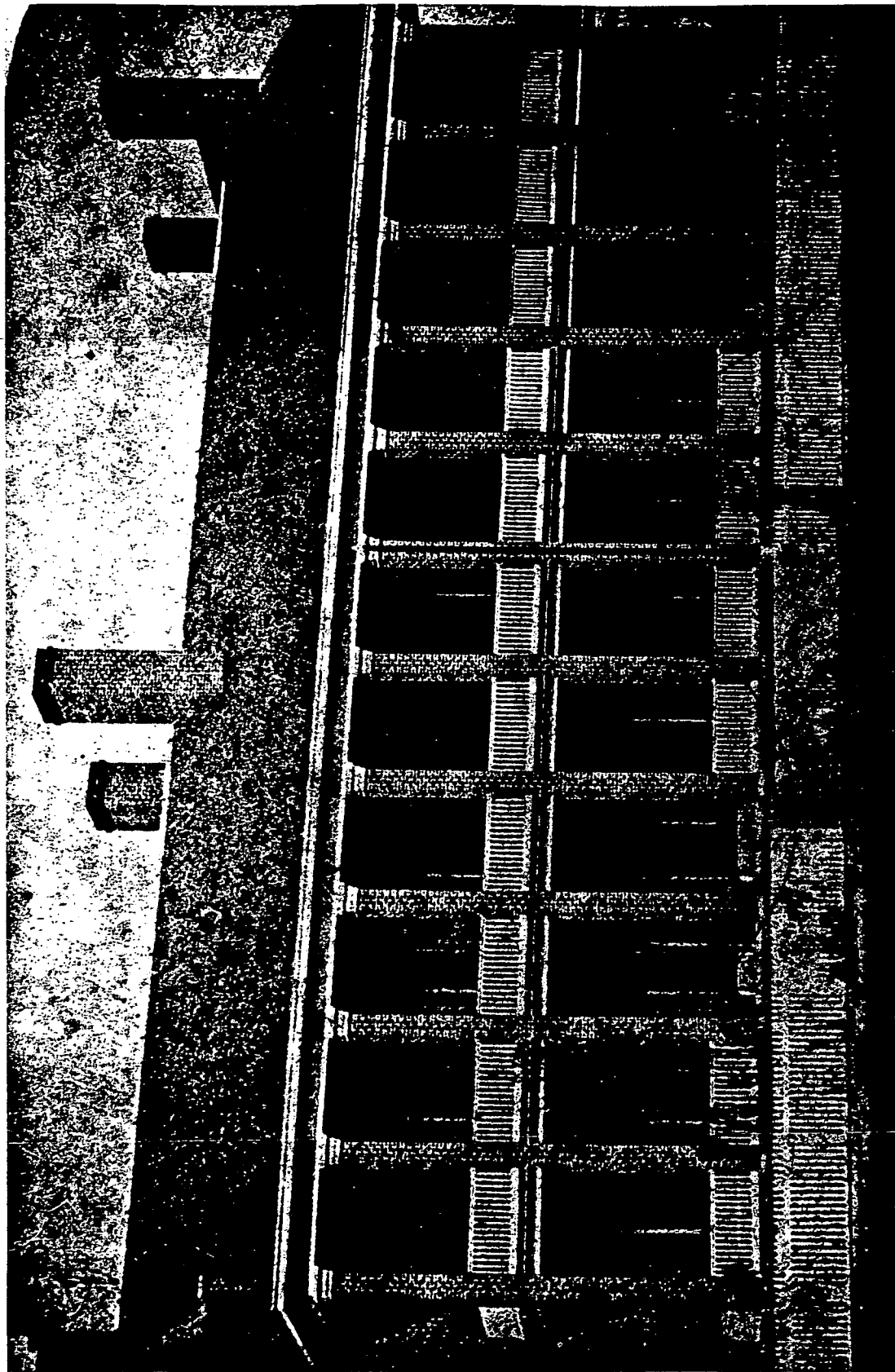
VII

OFFICERS' QUARTERS A, FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

1865 - 1870



VIII  
E  
OFFICERS' QUARTERS ~~A~~, FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.  
1865 - 1870



IX

FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS, 1870 - 1885.

The original of the drawing hangs in the "Old Commissary" Museum at Fort Smith. Since both Officers' Quarters A and B are gone, it has to date from the period after December 20, 1870.

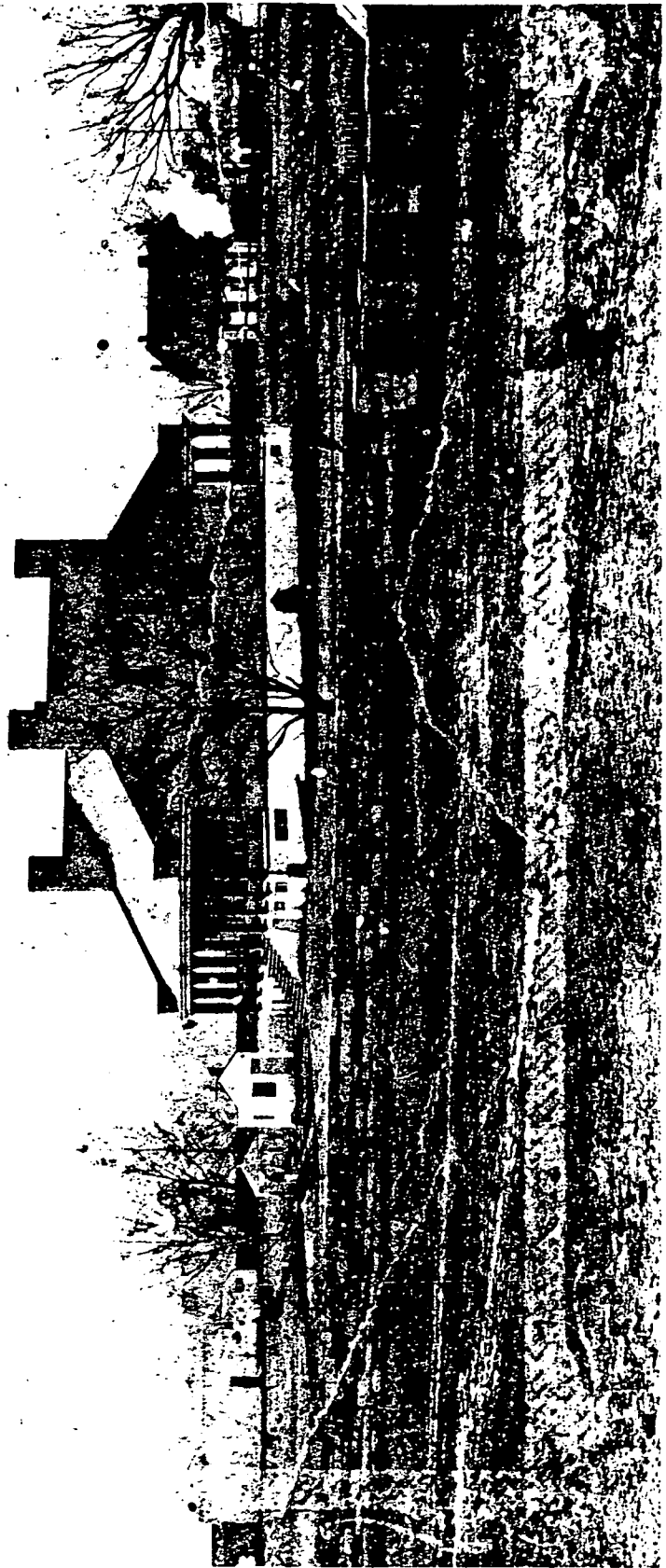


X

FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS, 1872 - 1885.

This picture was made while the Soldiers' Quarters served as the courtroom for the Court for the Western District and before the new jail was erected.

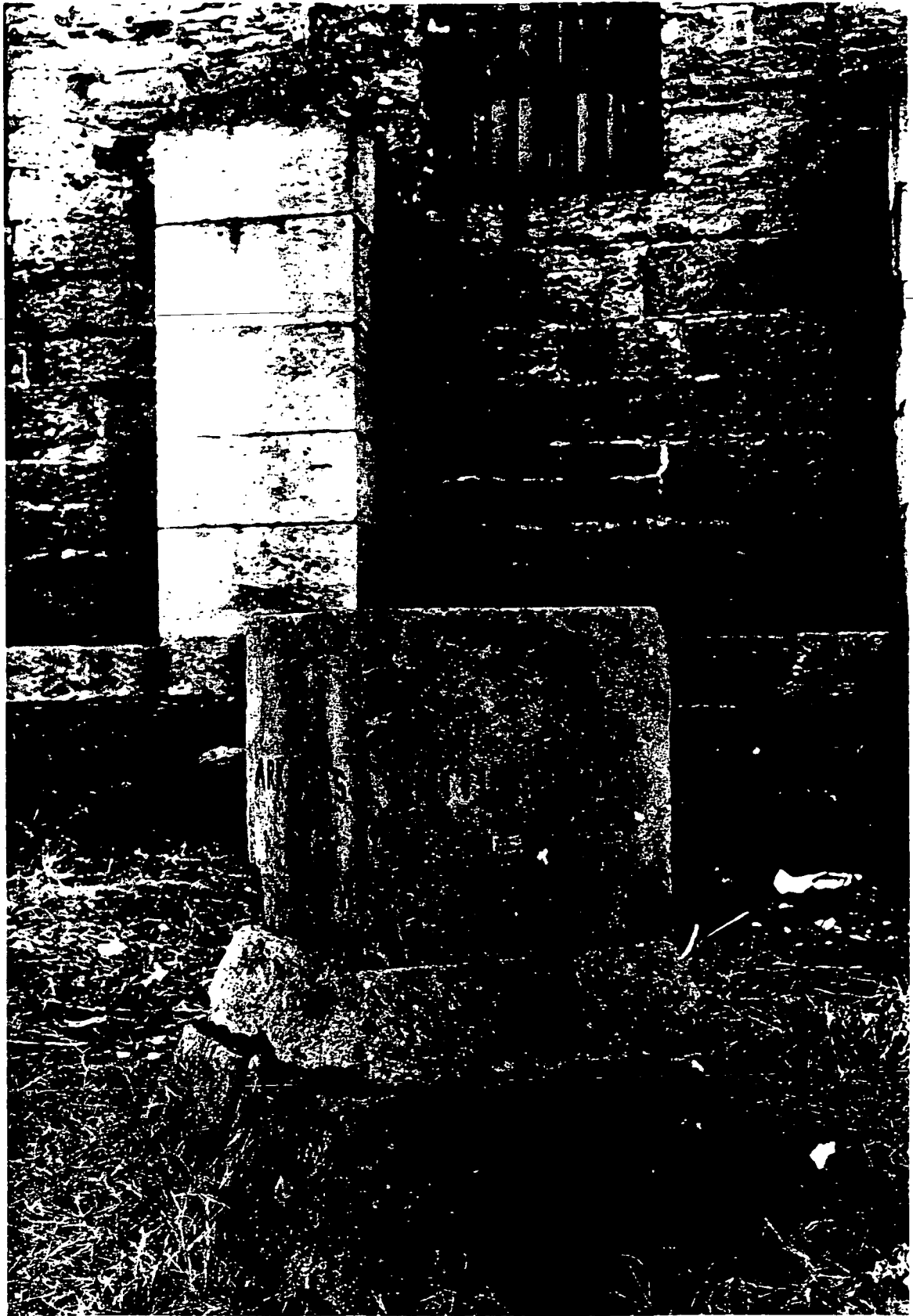
1882-1887





XI

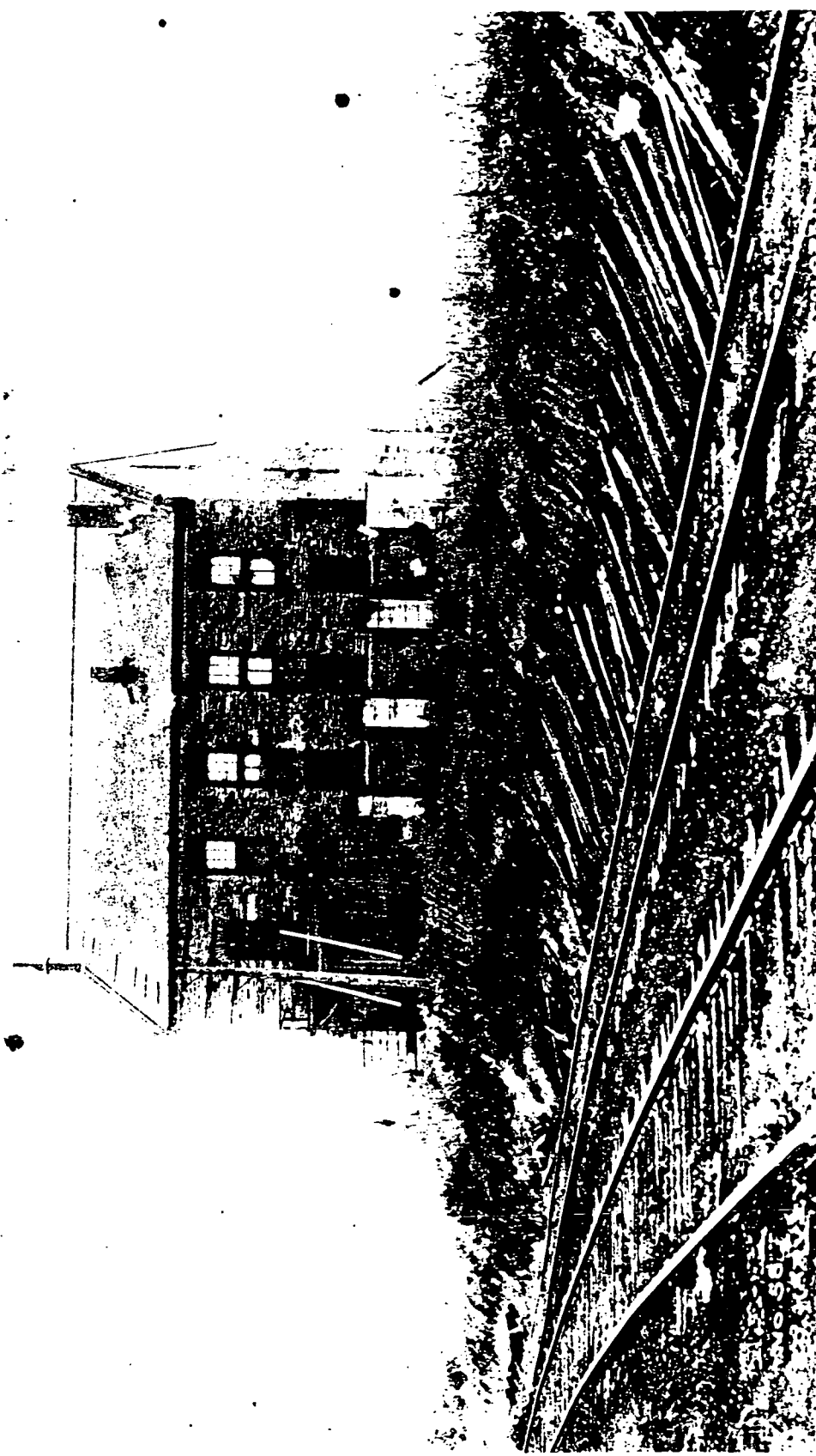
Initial Point Marker, with Quartermaster's Storehouse in background.



XII

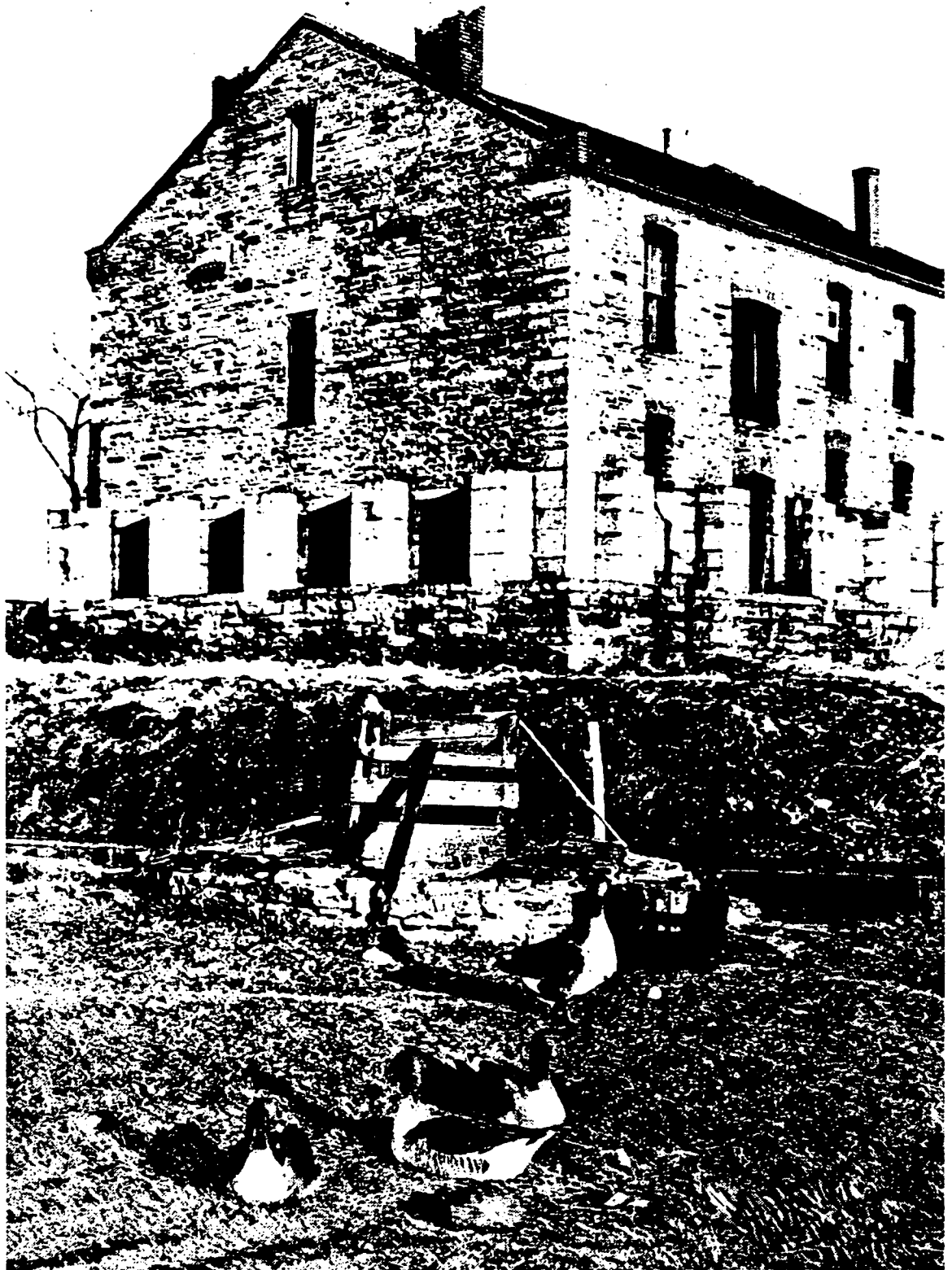
Quartermaster's Storehouse, Fort Smith, Arkansas.

COMMISSARY BUILDING  
FORT SMITH, ARK.  
"ON THE FRISCO"  
Quartermasters  
Building



XIII

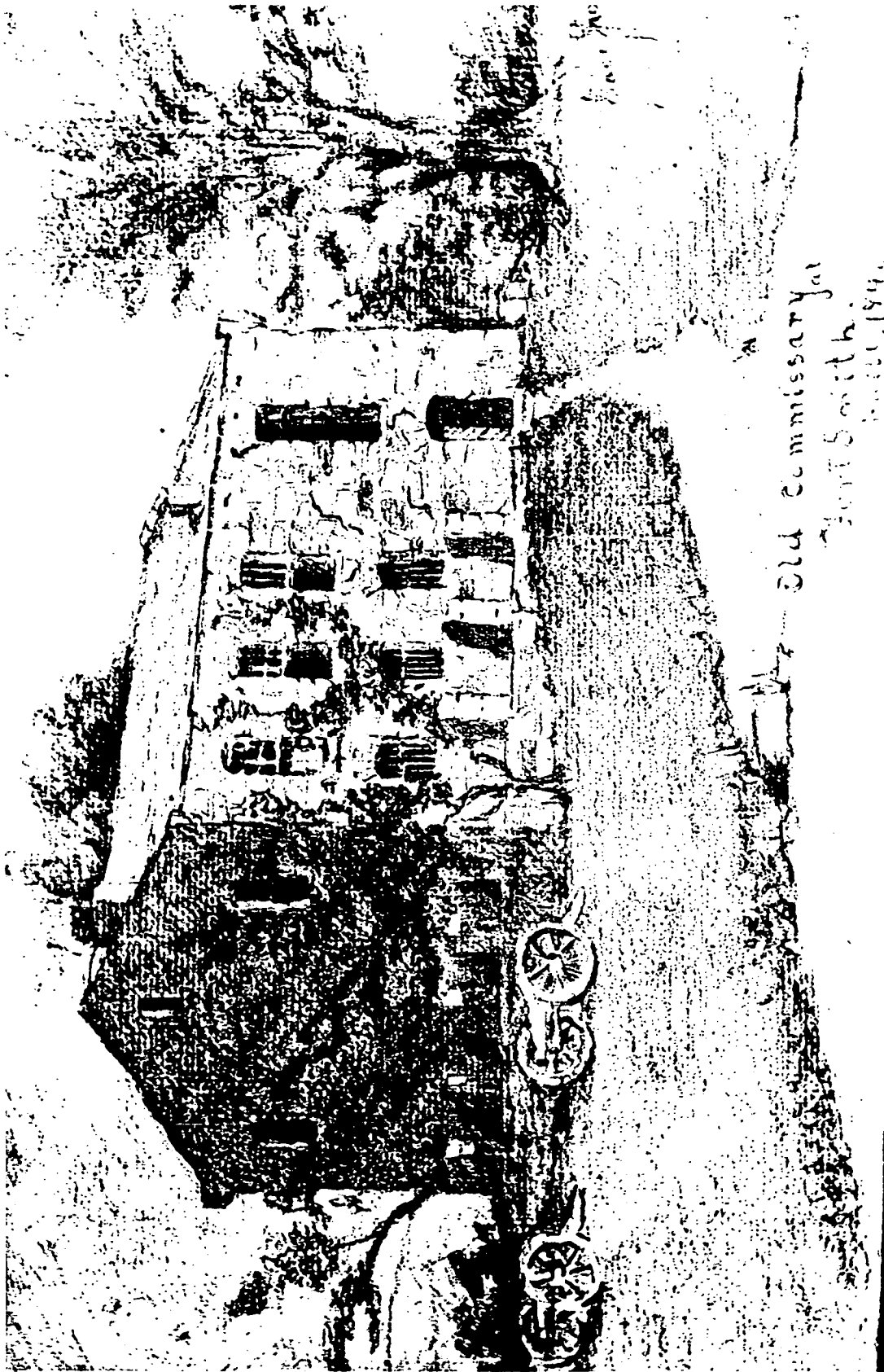
QUARTERMASTER'S STOREHOUSE, FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.



XIV

SKETCH OF "OLD COMMISSARY AT FORT SMITH...."

The Commissary Storehouse was completed in 1845, not  
1840 as indicated in caption.



Old commissary at  
Fort Smith,  
Ark., 1940

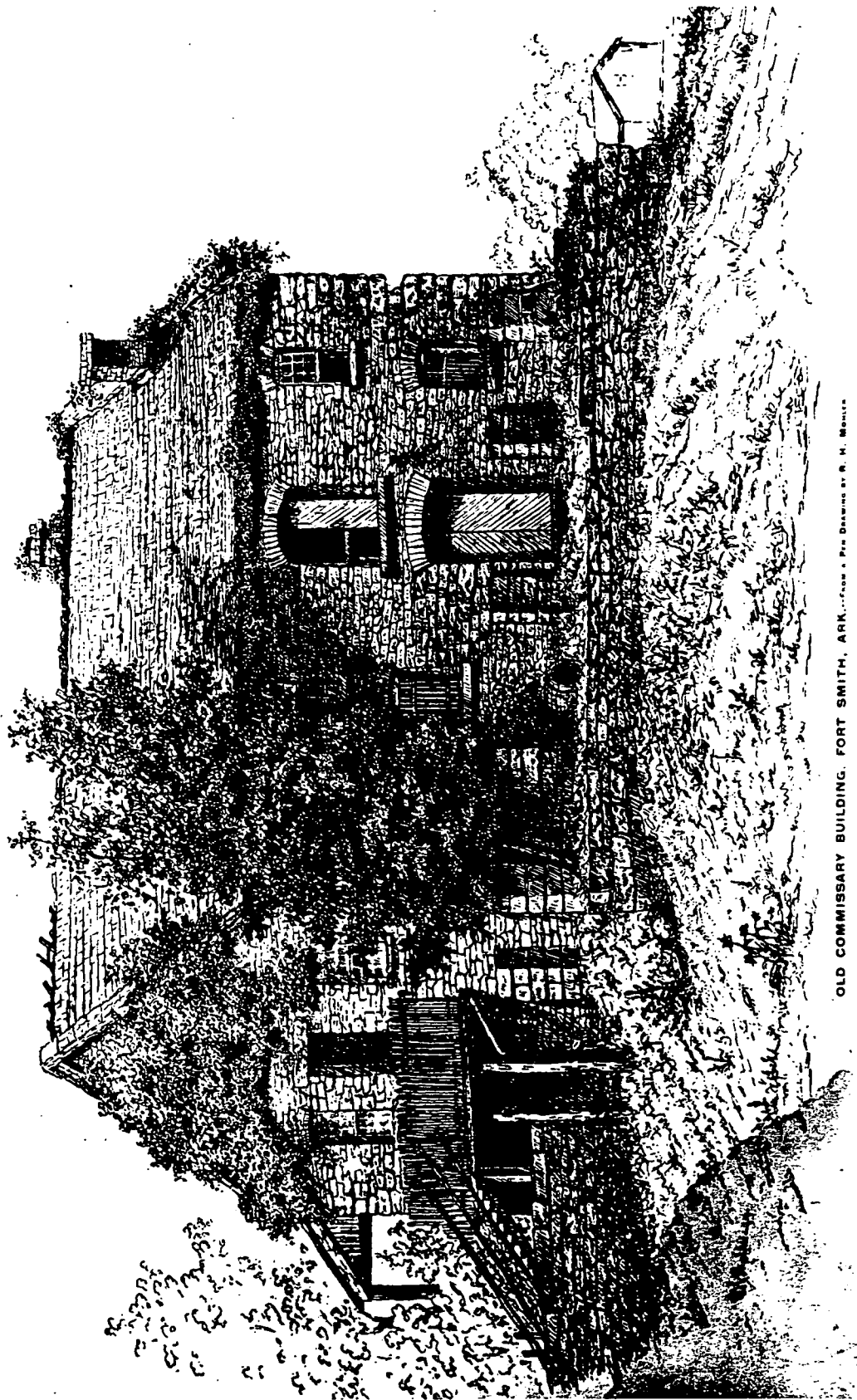


XV

"OLD COMMISSARY BUILDING, FORT SMITH, ARK...

FROM A PEN DRAWING BY R. H. MOHLER."

Mohler's Fort Smith; A Souvenir of the Queen  
City of the Southwest from which this sketch  
was taken was published in 1898.



OLD COMMISSARY BUILDING, FORT SMITH, ARK.—From a Pen Drawing by R. H. Meeker

XVI

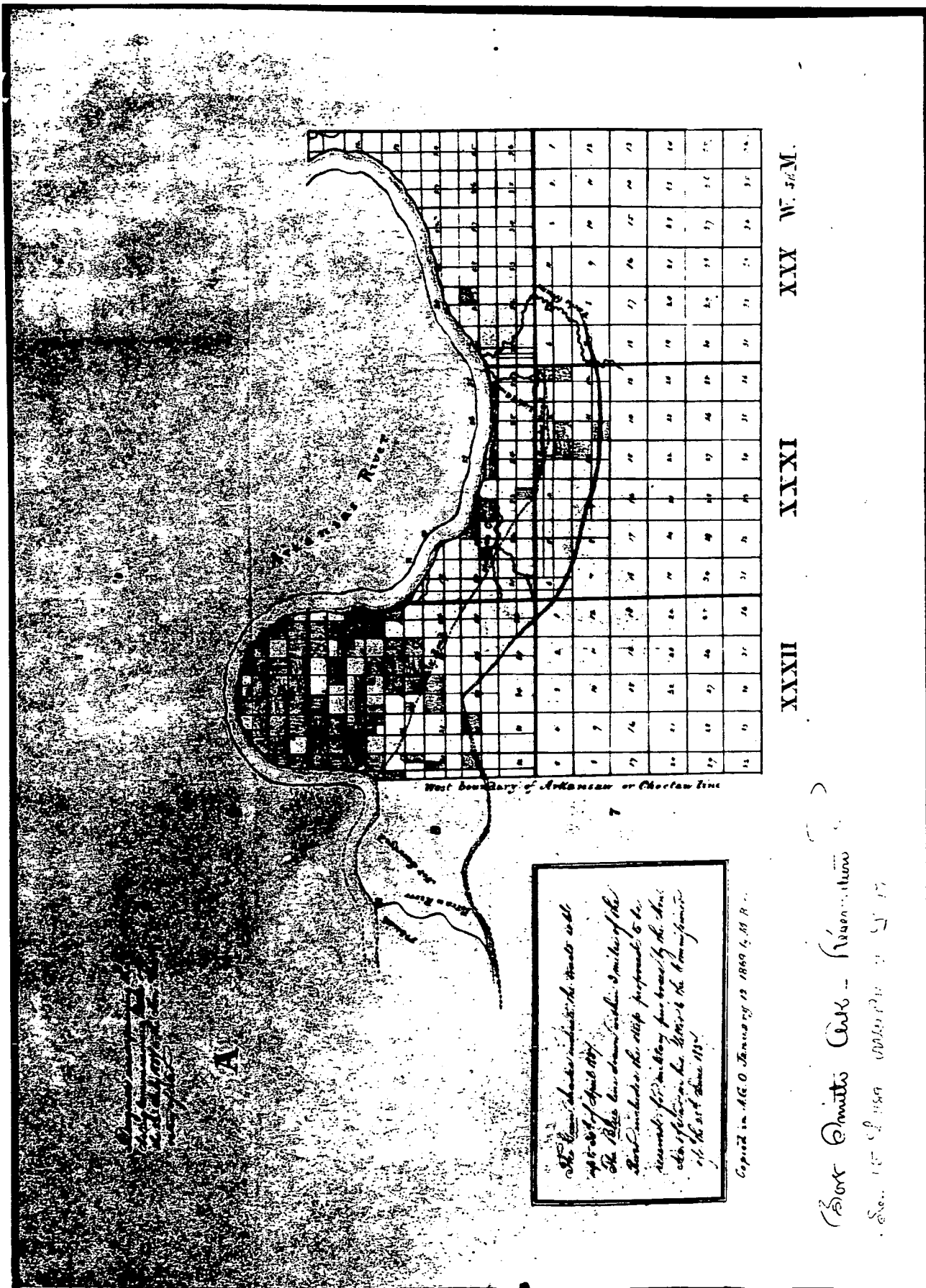
Painting of the Garrison as it appeared  
between 1850 and 1865 by Treseder. As  
this painting was done in 1911, it is merely  
the artist's conception of how the Garrison  
might have appeared.



© 1911 BY TINSFEDER.

PLATE I.

DIAGRAM ACCOMPANYING THE ACTING COMMISSIONER'S LETTER  
OF THE 22D JULY 1837 TO THE HON. SECRETARY OF WAR.



The Louisiana Purchase includes the lands sold  
 1803-1804 of April 1804  
 The State has drawn within 5 miles of the  
 River includes the strip proposed to be  
 reserved for military purposes by the State  
 of Louisiana in 1804 & the remaining  
 of the old State 1804

Copied in A.C.O. January 12 1869 L.M.R.

XXX W. 30M.

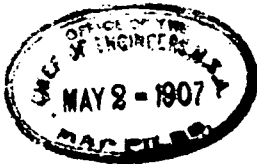
XXXI

XXXII

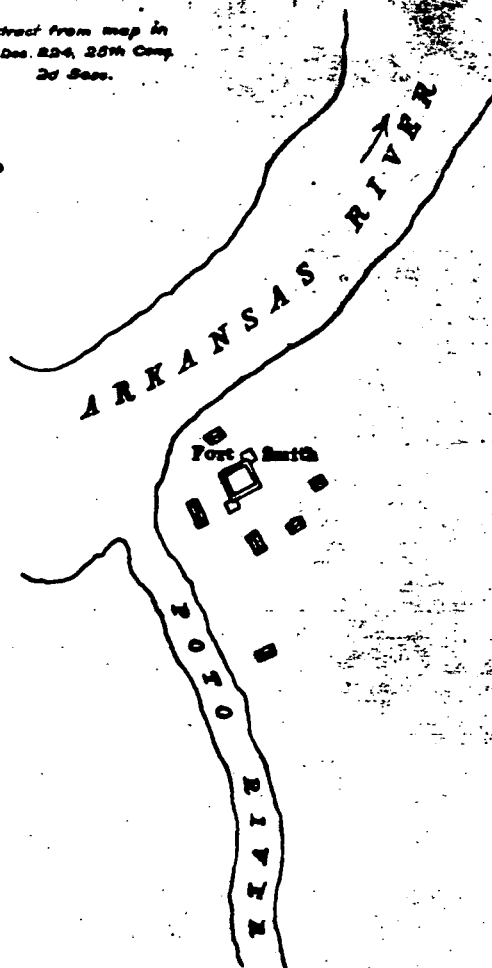
Fox Pointe Park - New Orleans  
 Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> 1869

PLATE II.

MAP OF "OLD FORT SMITH," EXTRACTED FROM MAP  
IN S. DOC. 224, 25TH CONG. 2D SESS.



Extract from map in  
S. Des. 224, 25th Comp.  
2d Edn.



"The site of Fort Smith was selected by Major Long in the fall of 1817 and called Belle Point, in allusion to its peculiar beauty. It occupies a point of elevated land immediately below the junction of the Arkansas and the Potomac, a small tributary from the southwest. Agreeably to the orders of General Smith, then commanding the ninth military department, a plan of the proposed work was submitted to Major Beaufort at that time and since commandant of the post, under whose superintendence the works have been in part completed, not without some deviation from the original plan. The buildings now form two sides of a hollow square, terminated by strong block-houses at the opposite angles, and fronting towards the river."

(From Page 28, Vol. III, of "Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains, performed in the years 1819, 1820, Under the command of Maj. S. H. Long, of the U. S. Top. Engineers.")

Dr. 123, 30a

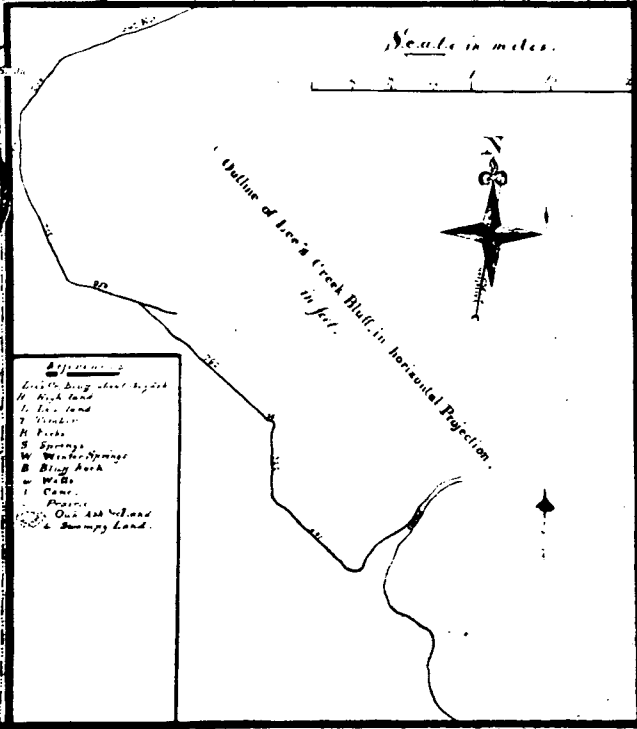


PLATE III.  
MAP OF LEES CREEK BLUFF.

**MAP**

OF

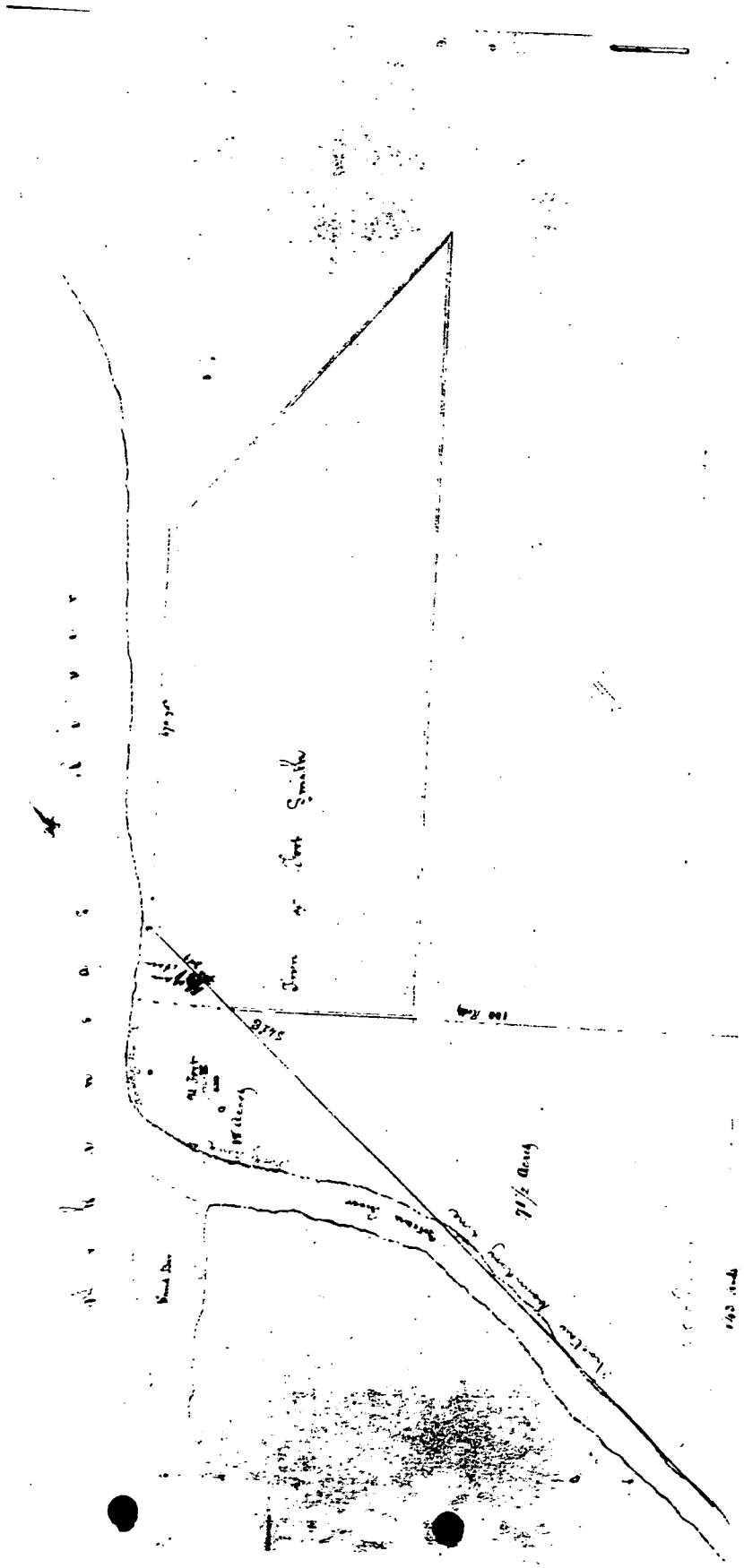
**LEES CREEK BLUFF**  
in Military Location  
**ARKANSAS.**



CHESAPEAKE  
NATION.

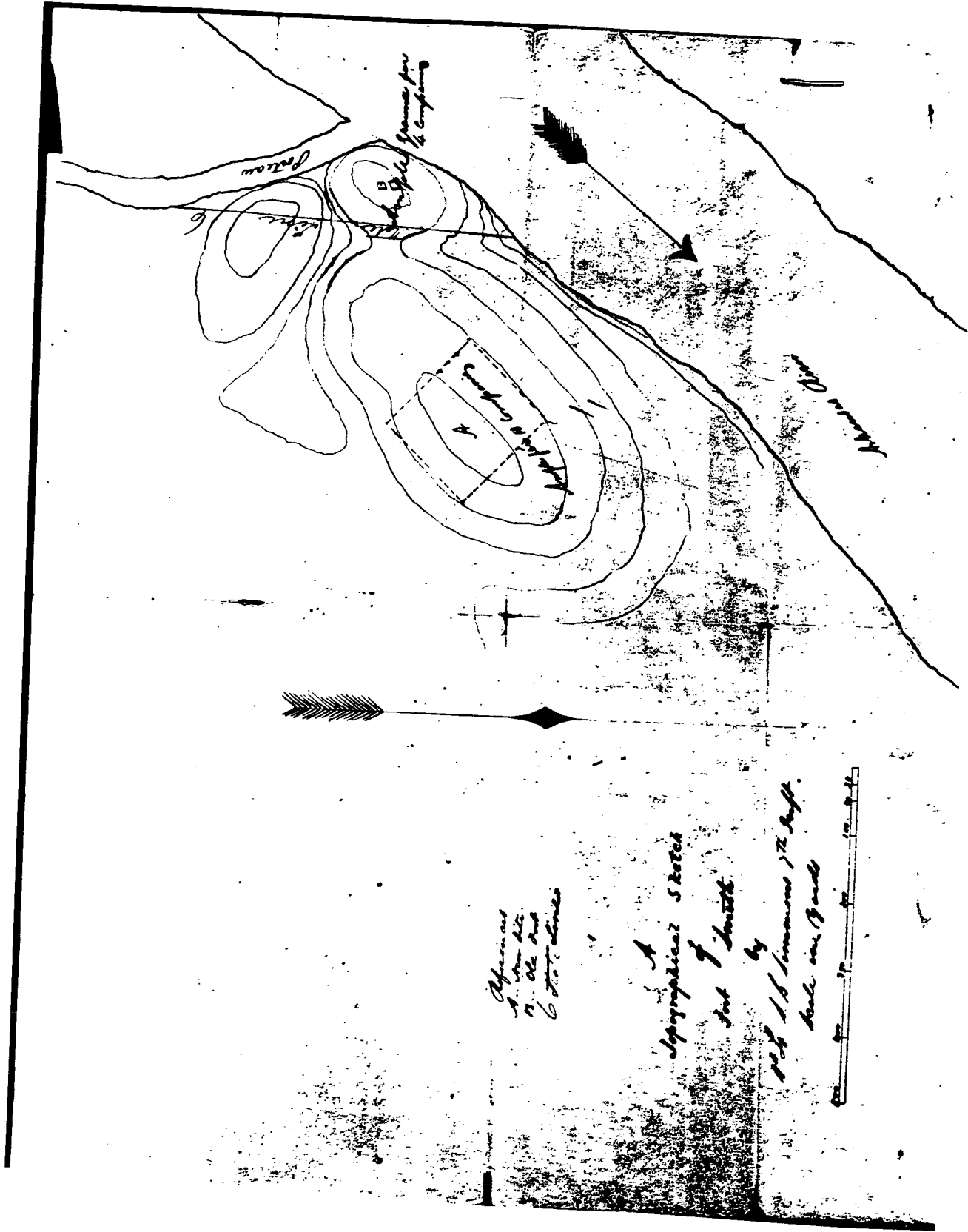
PLATE IV.

PLAT A -- AREA WHICH JOHN ROGERS PROPOSES  
TO SELL TO THE GOVERNMENT ON OCTOBER 13, 1837.



1993

PLATE V.  
A TOPOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF FORT SMITH BY  
1ST LT. S. G. SIMMONS



Appenas  
 A. in etc.  
 B. de etc.  
 C. etc. etc.

A  
 Appenas States

J. Smith

by  
 1881 1882  
 State in Bond

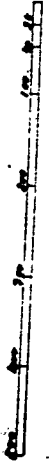


PLATE VI.

MAP ILLUSTRATING THE PLAN FOR THE DEFENCES OF THE  
WESTERN & NORTH-WESTERN FRONTIER, AS PROPOSED BY CHARLES GRATIOT,  
IN HIS REPORT OF OCT. 31, 1837.

**INDIAN FRONTIER**  
 as prepared by  
**CHARLES GRAYSON**  
 in the report of Oct. 2, 1851

Compiled in the U.S. Geographical Station  
 under the direction of Wm. H. LITTLE, U.S.G.  
 in 1852

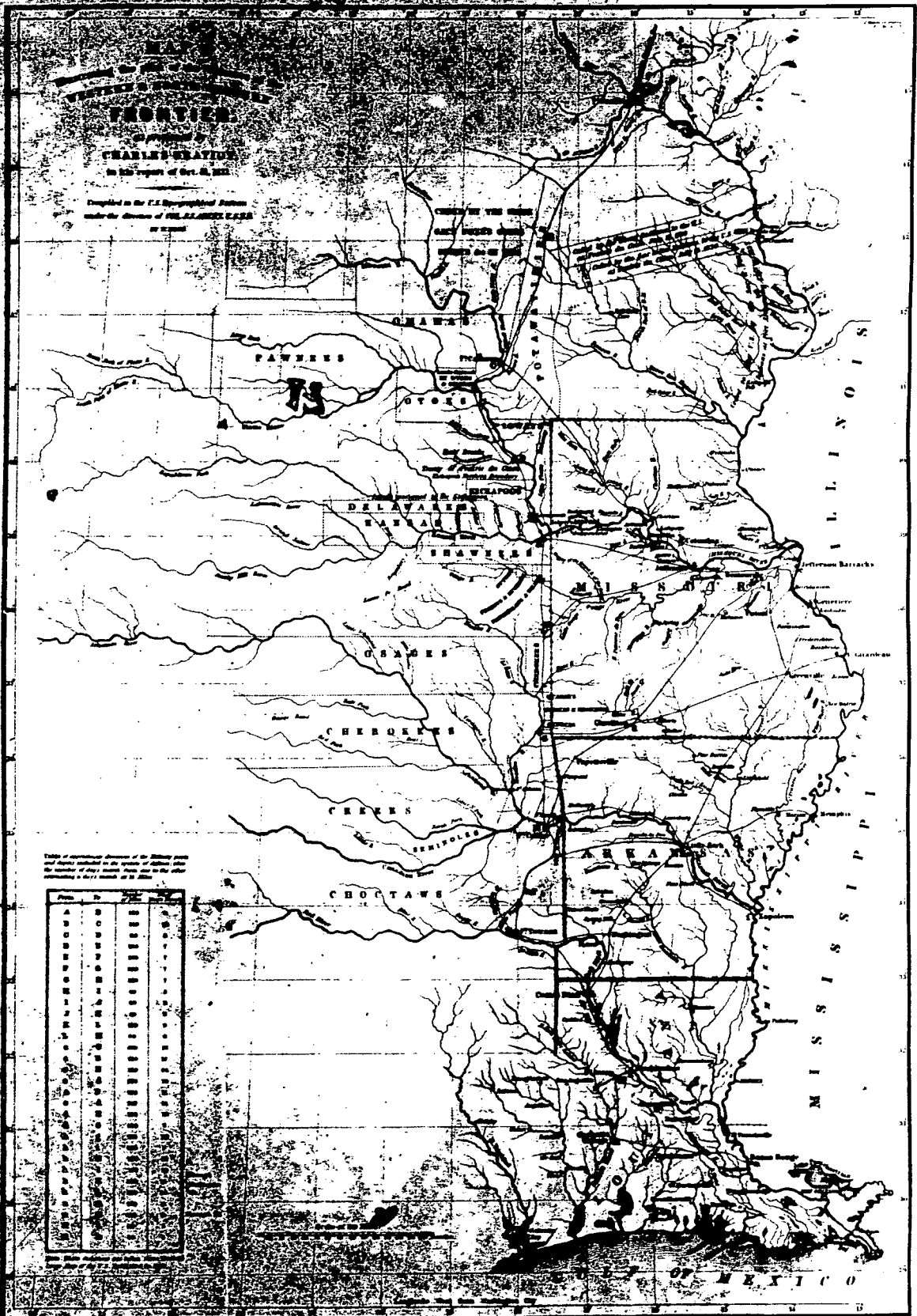


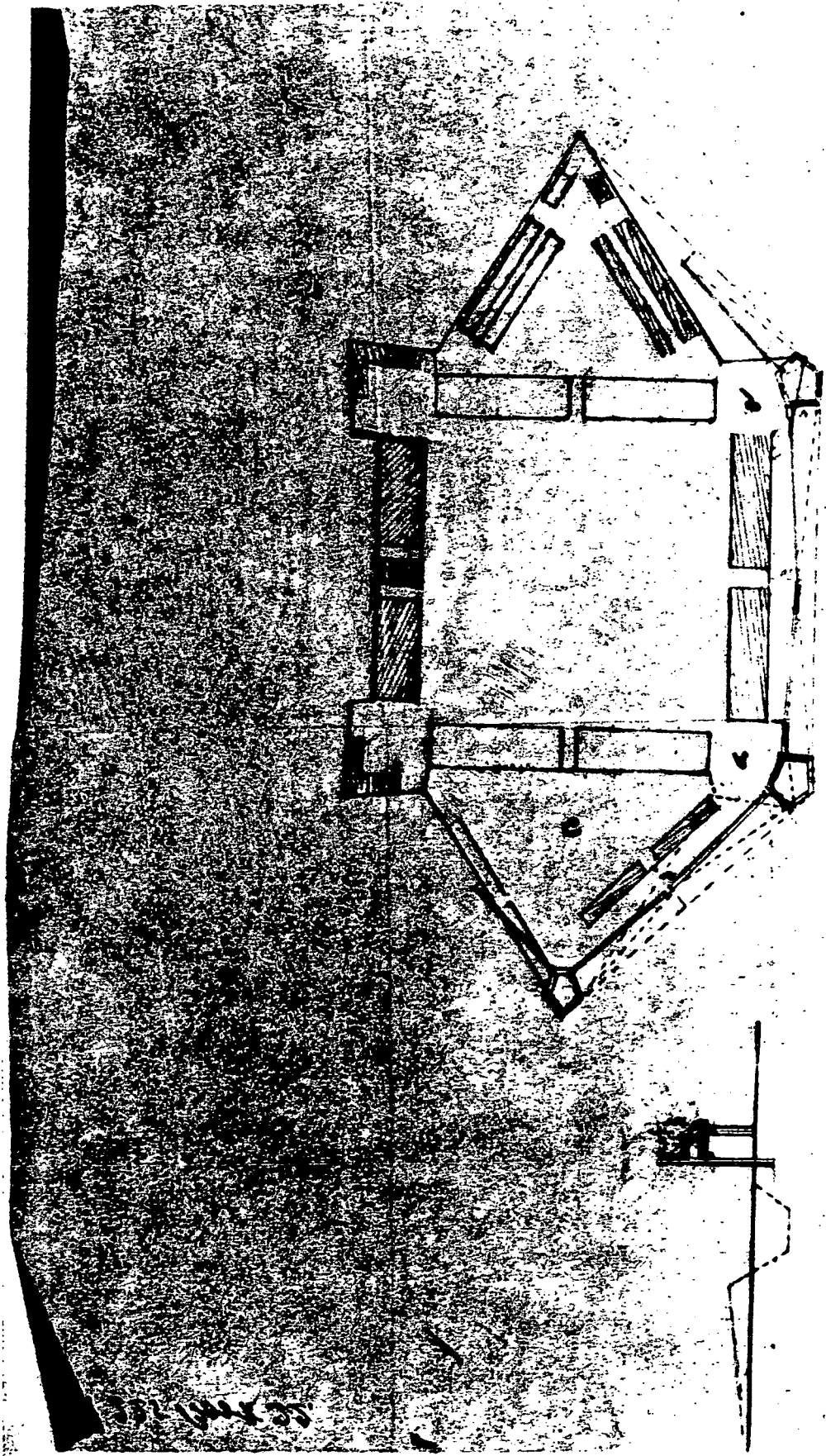
Table of geographical names of the States and Territories of the United States, and of the Indian Tribes, as they appear on the map, and the names of the principal rivers, lakes, and mountains, as they are given in the report of Oct. 2, 1851.

Name	Page	Page	Page
A	1	1	1
B	1	1	1
C	1	1	1
D	1	1	1
E	1	1	1
F	1	1	1
G	1	1	1
H	1	1	1
I	1	1	1
J	1	1	1
K	1	1	1
L	1	1	1
M	1	1	1
N	1	1	1
O	1	1	1
P	1	1	1
Q	1	1	1
R	1	1	1
S	1	1	1
T	1	1	1
U	1	1	1
V	1	1	1
W	1	1	1
X	1	1	1
Y	1	1	1
Z	1	1	1



PLATE VII.

TOTTEN'S AND THAYER'S PLAN FOR THE FRONTIER POSTS.

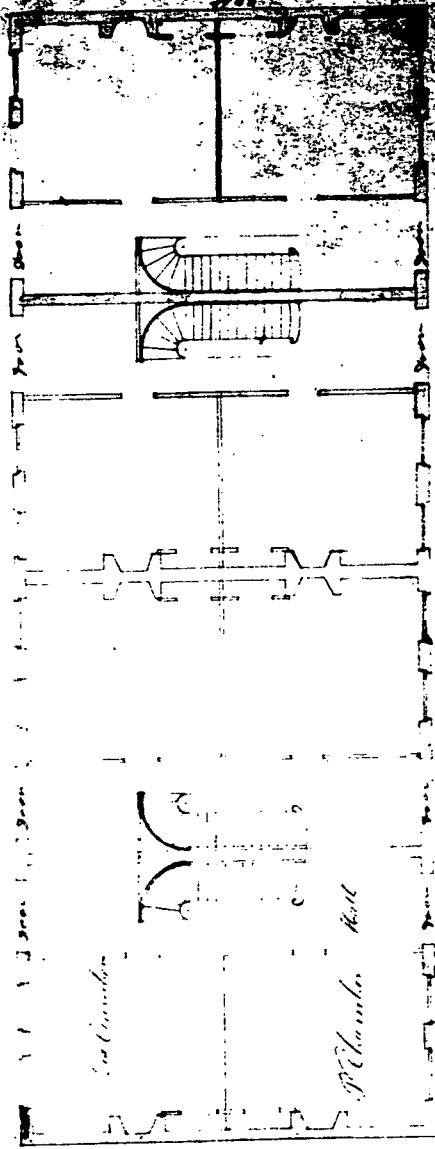


337 1444 37

PLATE VIII.

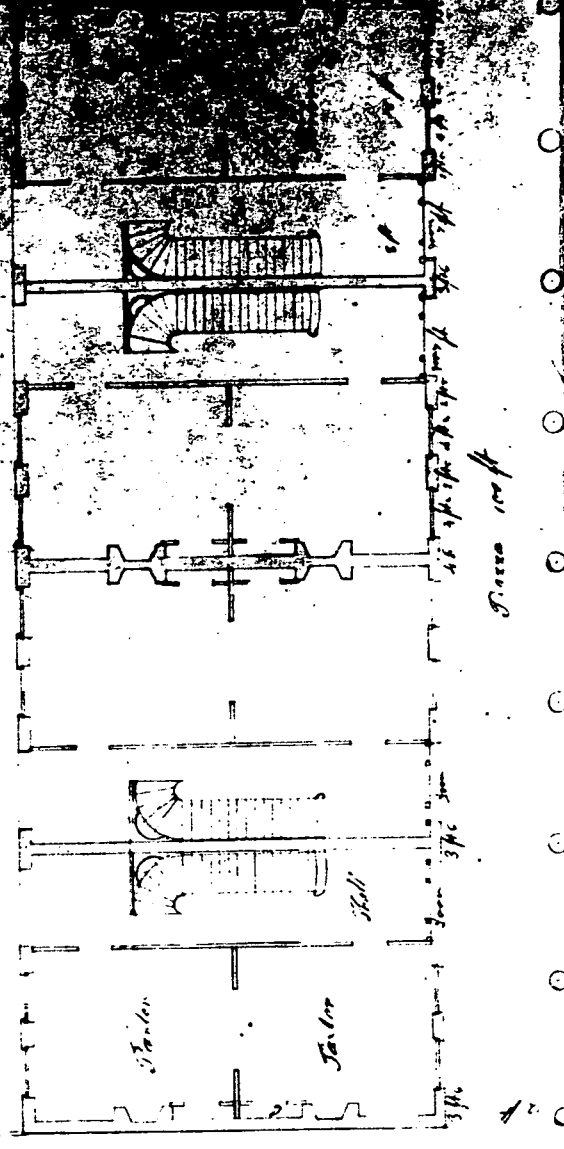
PLANS FOR FORT SMITH TRANSMITTED IN JUNE 1838  
TO CAPTAIN CHARLES THOMAS BY MAJOR TRUEMAN CROSS.

A -- OFFICERS' QUARTERS (INTERIOR), FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.



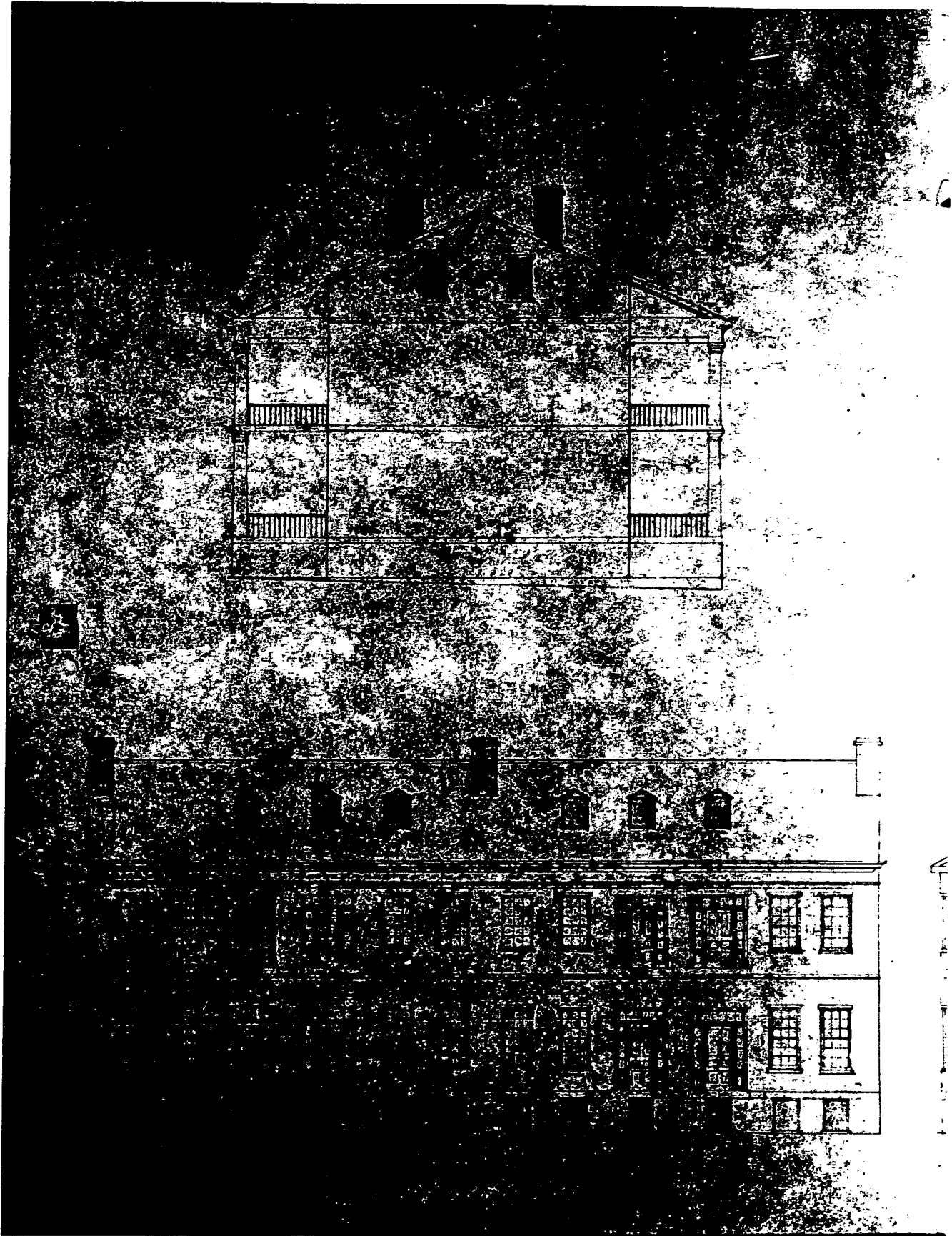
Plans 200-1170!

Officers Quarters  
 Fort Smith Arkansas

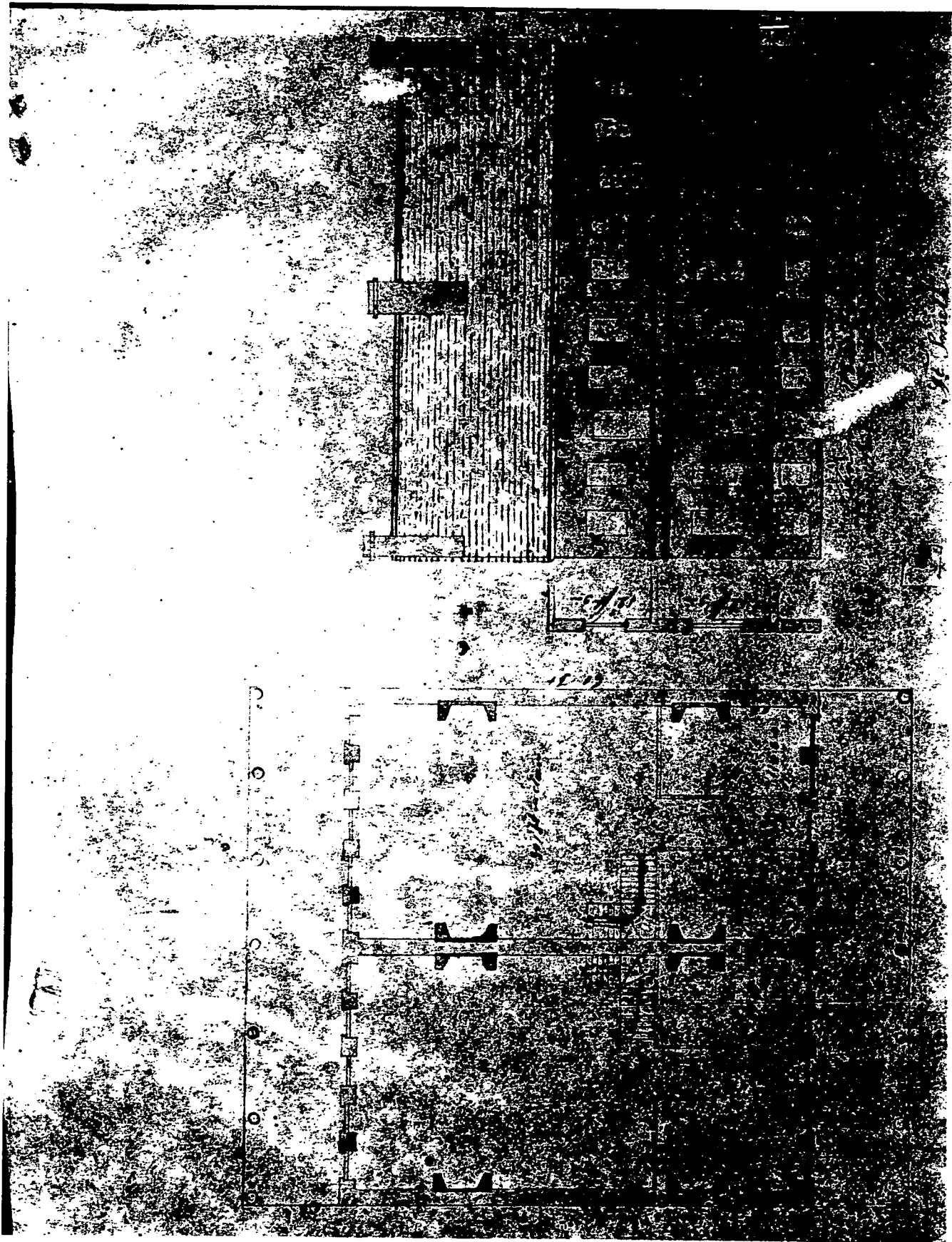


Plans 100 ft

B -- OFFICERS' QUARTERS (EXTERIOR), PORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

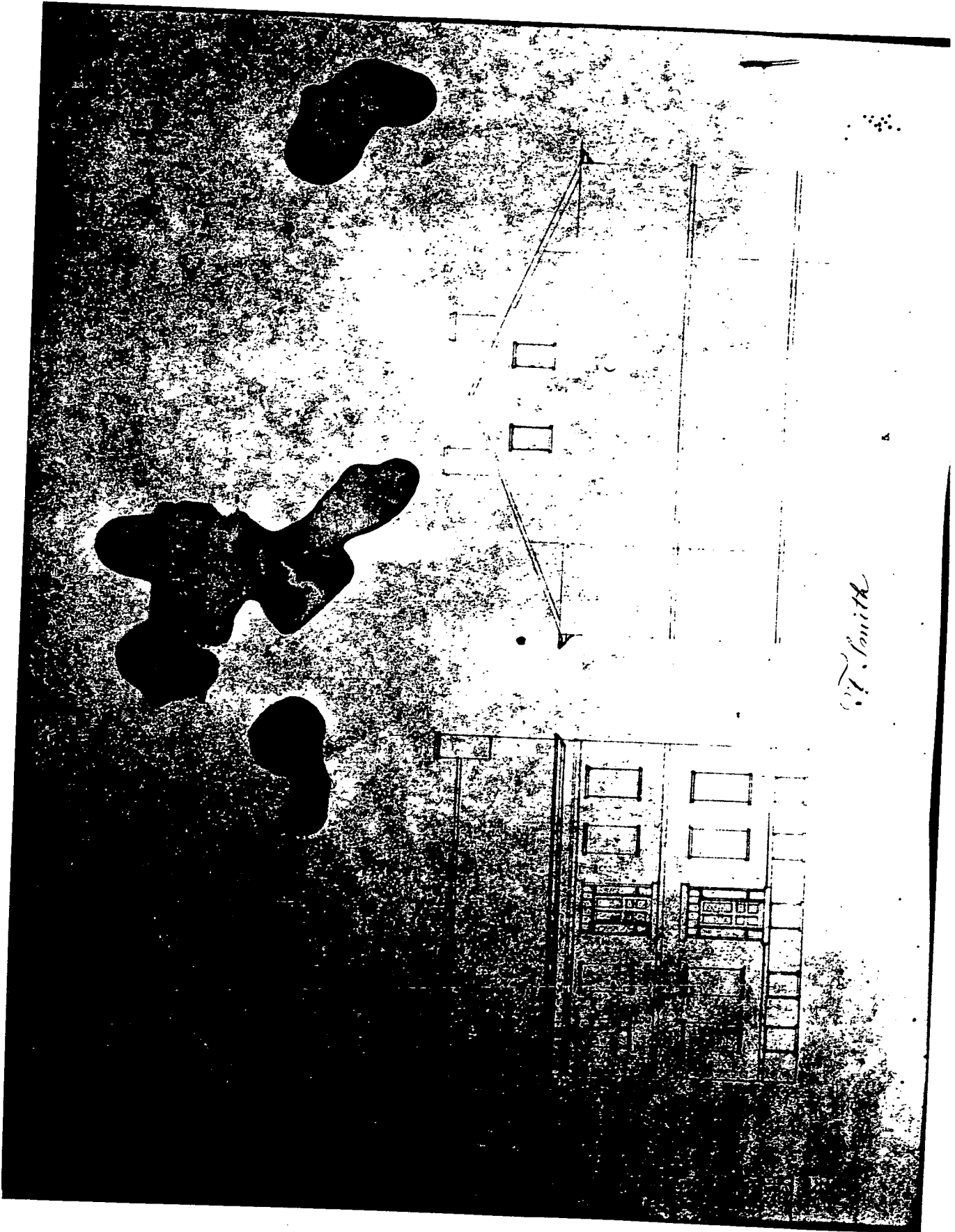


C -- COMMANDANT'S QUARTERS (EXTERIOR), FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.



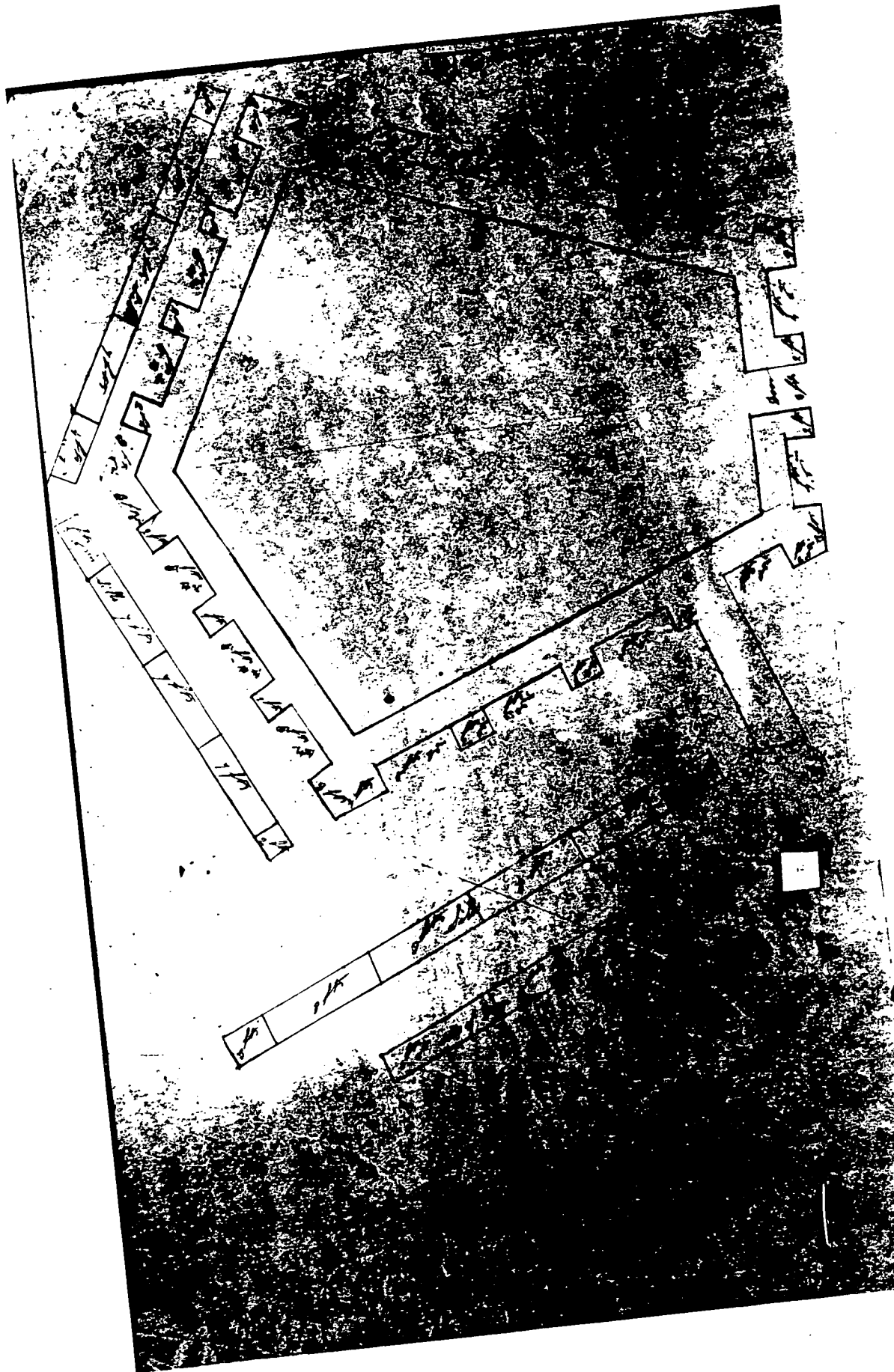


D -- FRONT ELEVATION OF BARRACKS, FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

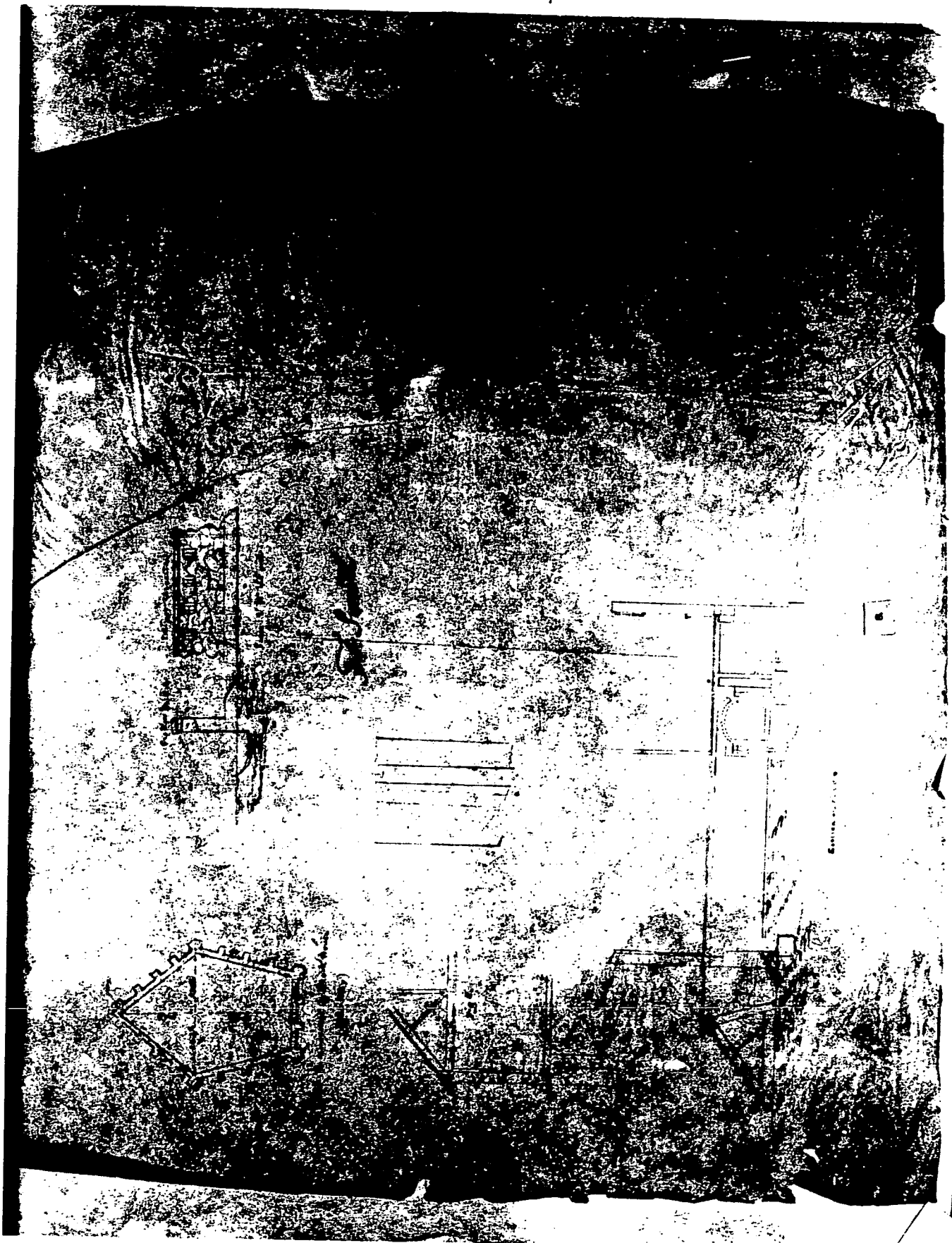


*W. Smith*

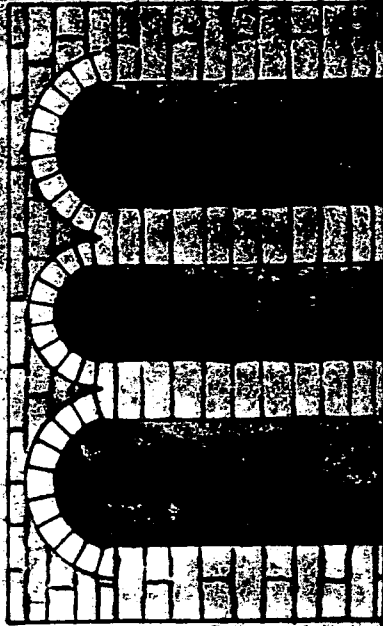
~~E~~-- BLOCKHOUSE BASTION, FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS



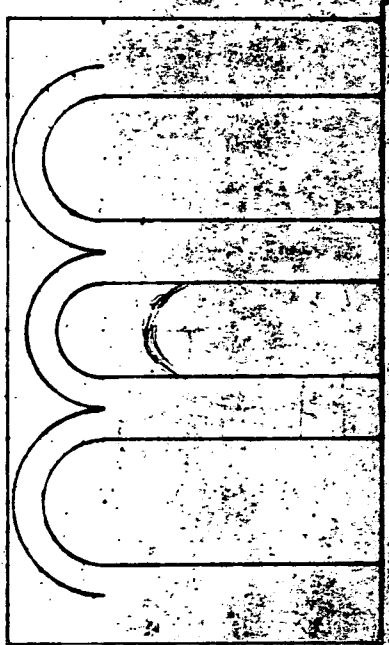
F -- DIMENSIONS OF BLOCKHOUSE BASTIONS, FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.



G — GORGE OF BLOCKHOUSE BASTIONS, FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS



*Large of Glass  
Book 10*

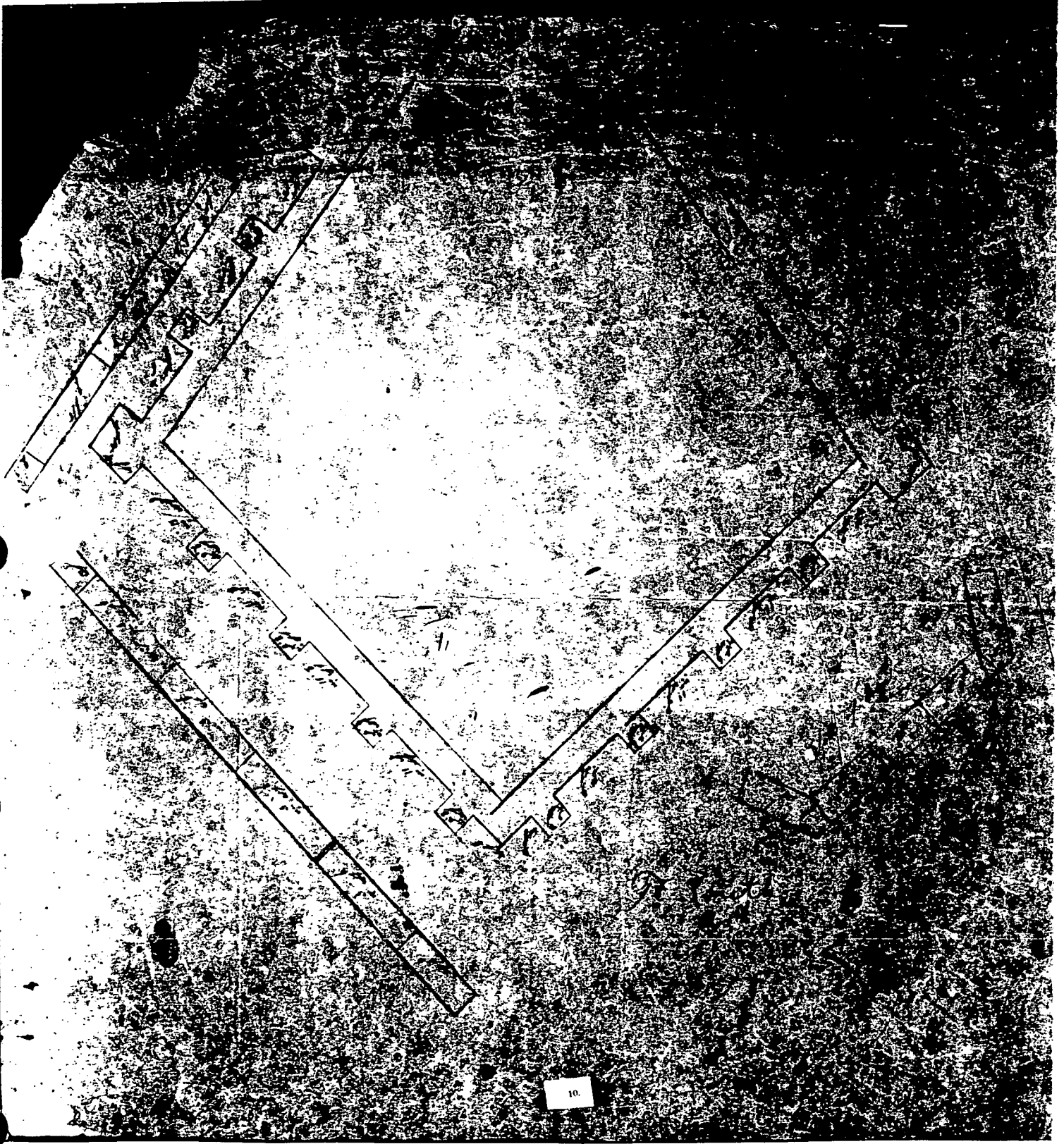


*Large of Glass  
E. H. Smith.*





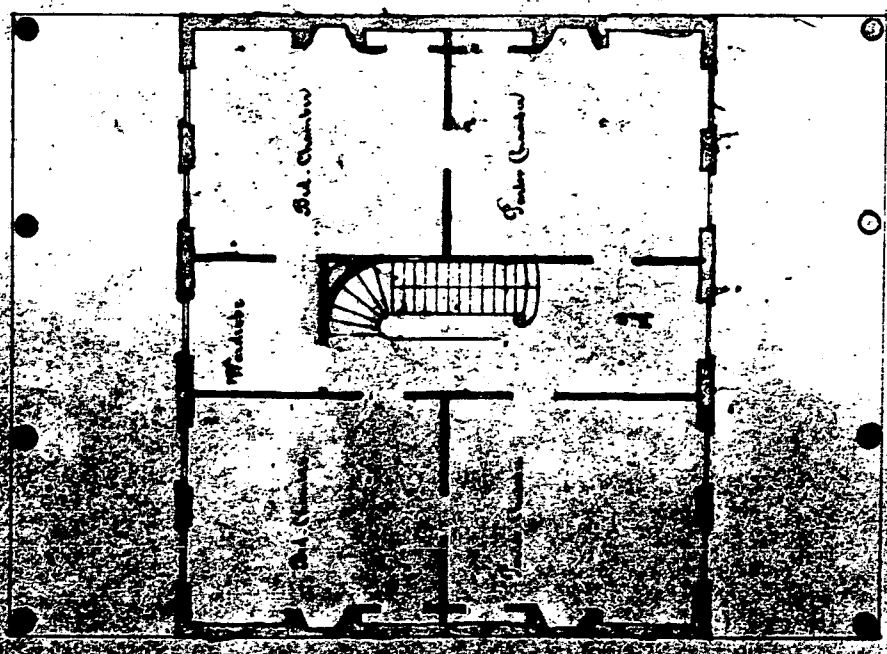
H -- BLOCKHOUSE BASTION, FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.



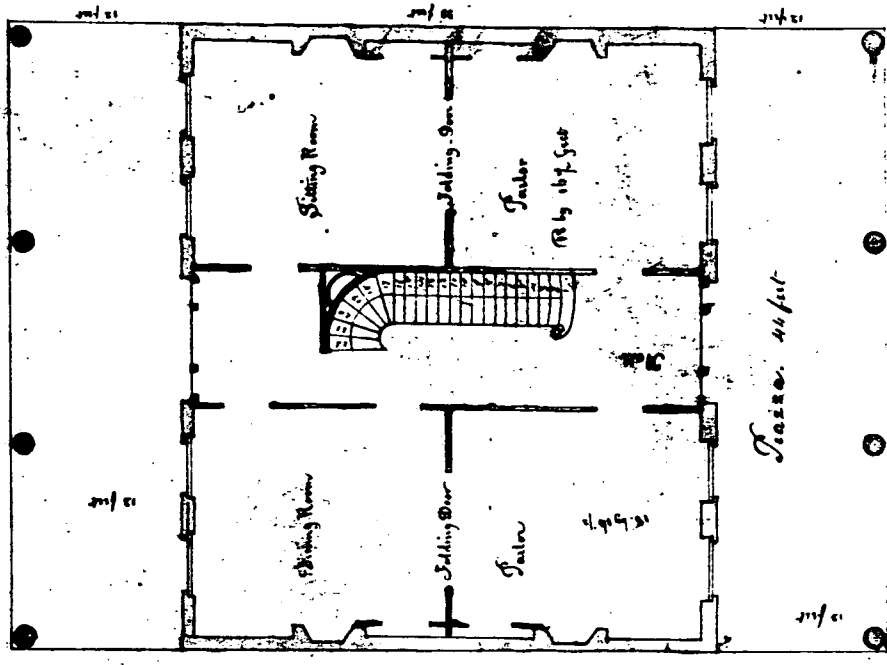
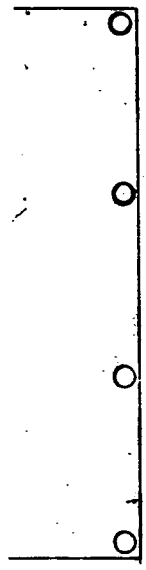
10.

I -- COMMANDANT'S QUARTERS (INTERIOR), FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

*Commanding Officers Quarters  
J. H. Smith.*

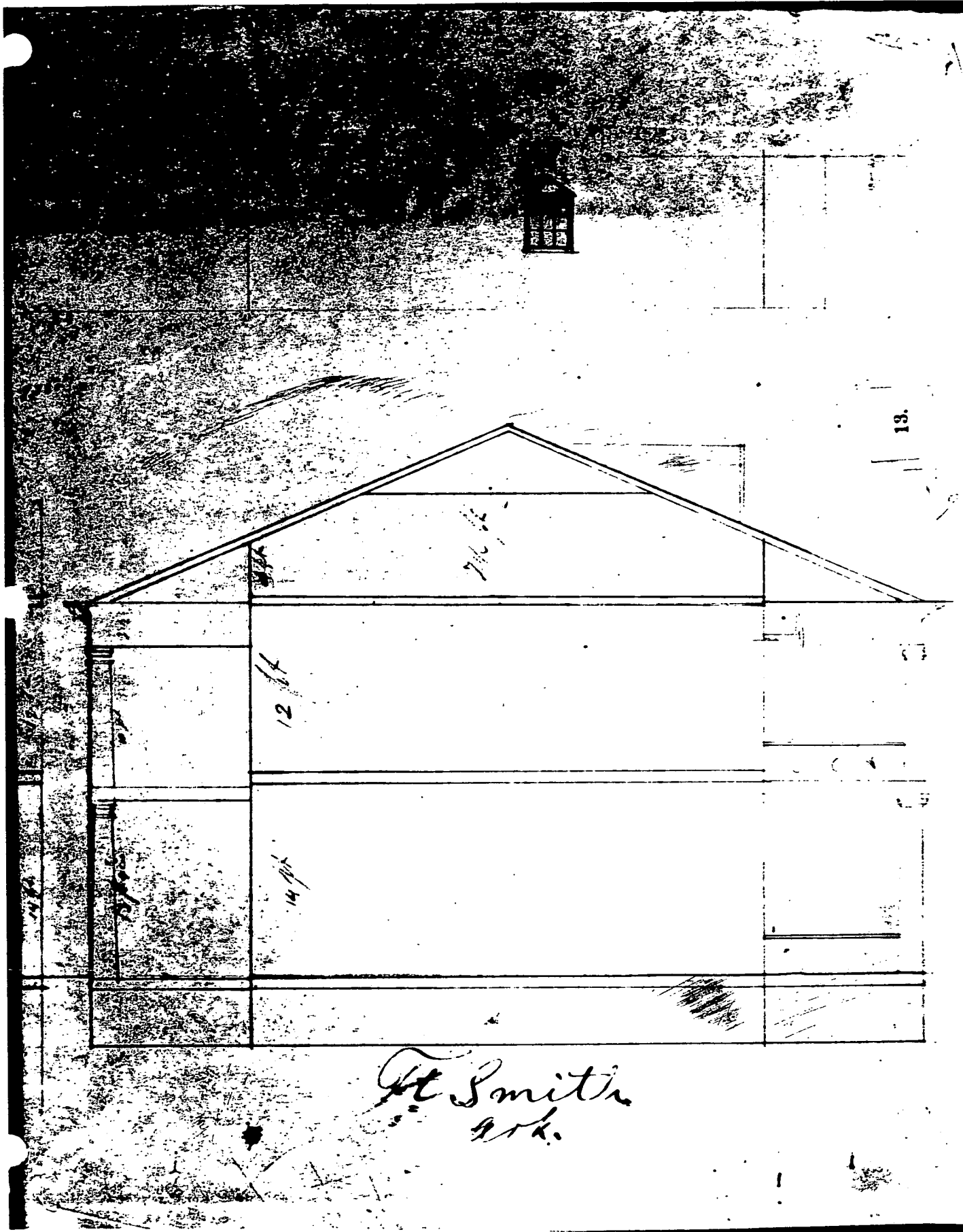


*Commanding Officers Quarters*



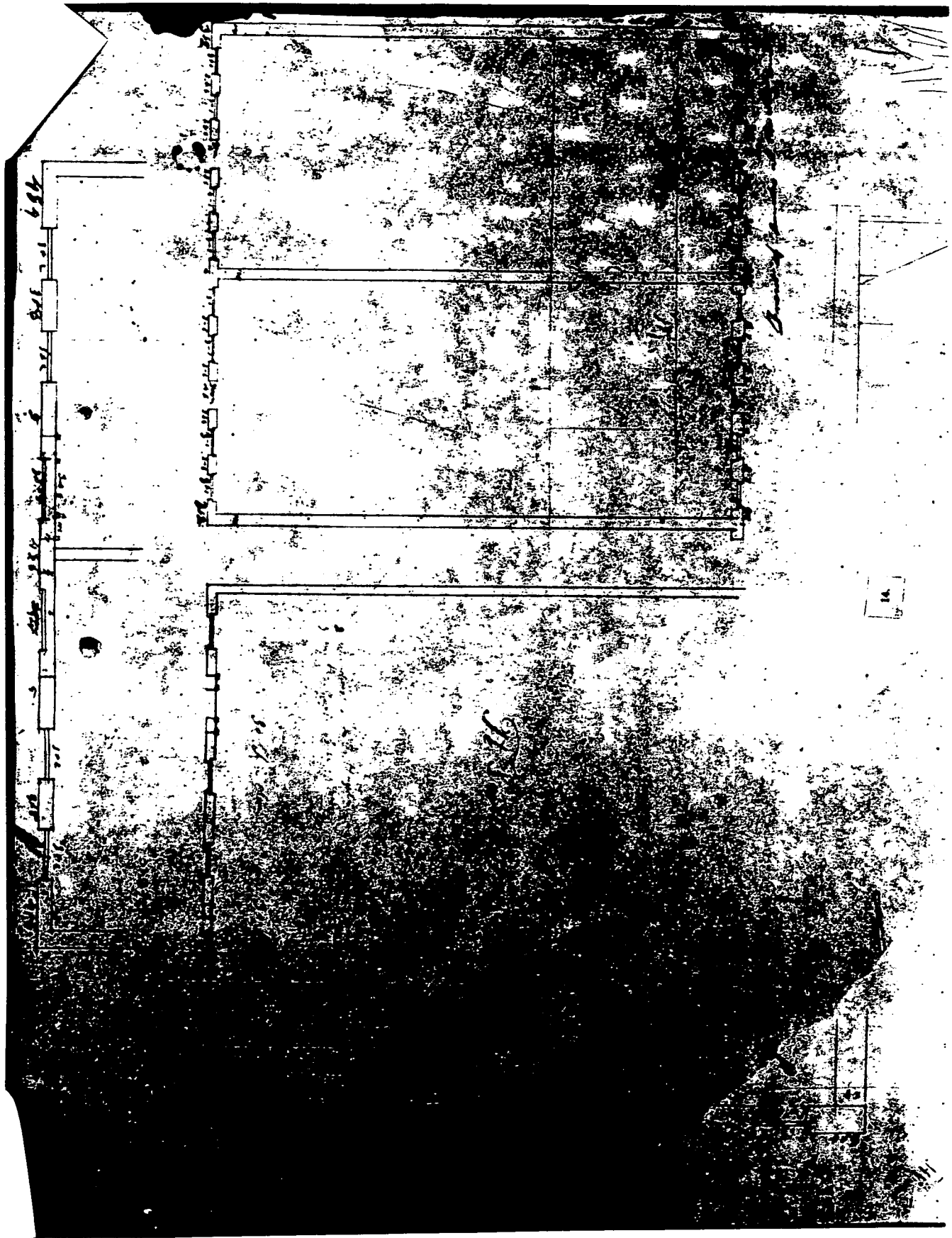
*Passage 40 feet*

J -- SIDE ELEVATION OF BARRACKS, FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.



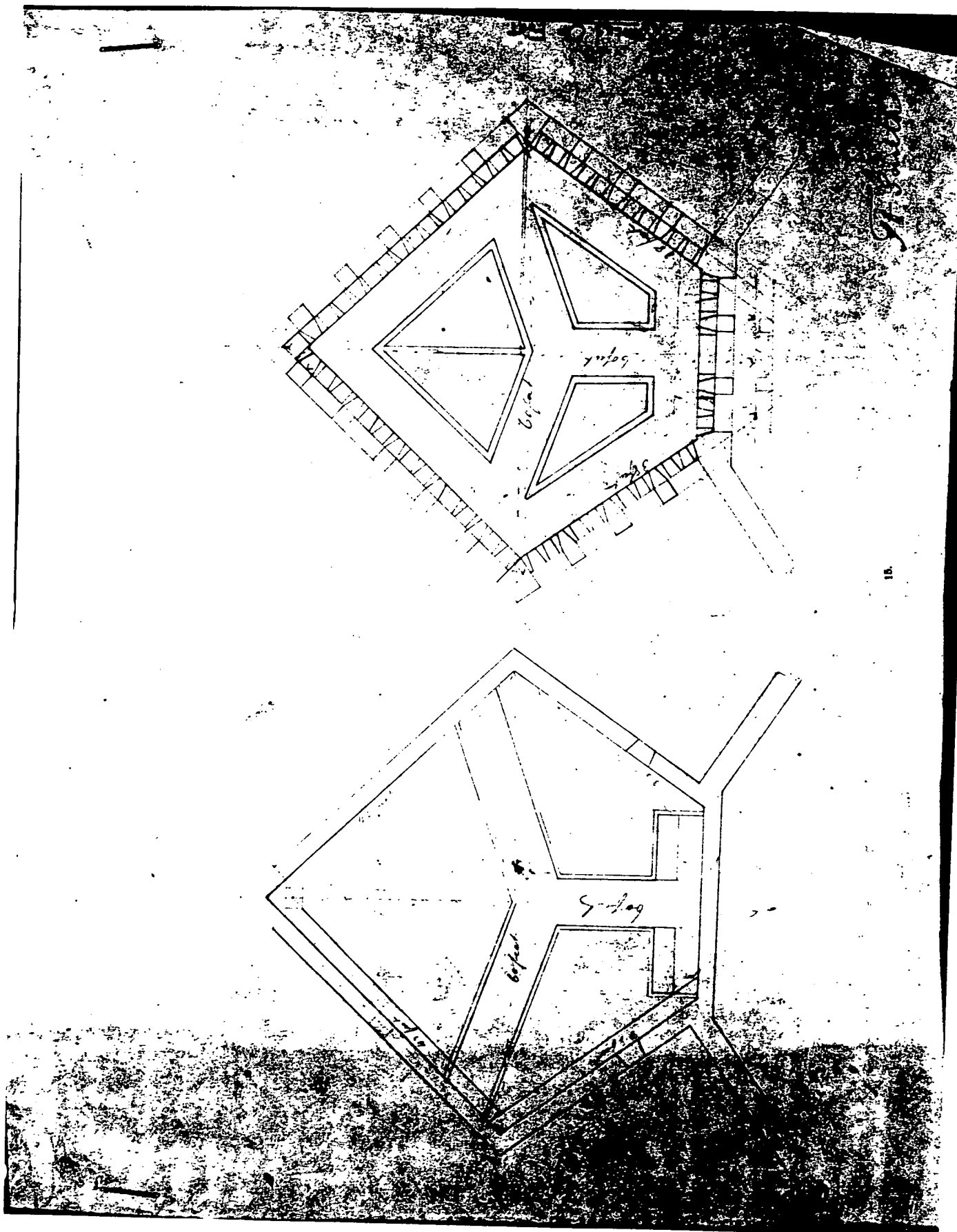
*H. Smith  
Arch.*

K -- FRONT ELEVATION OF BARRACKS, FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

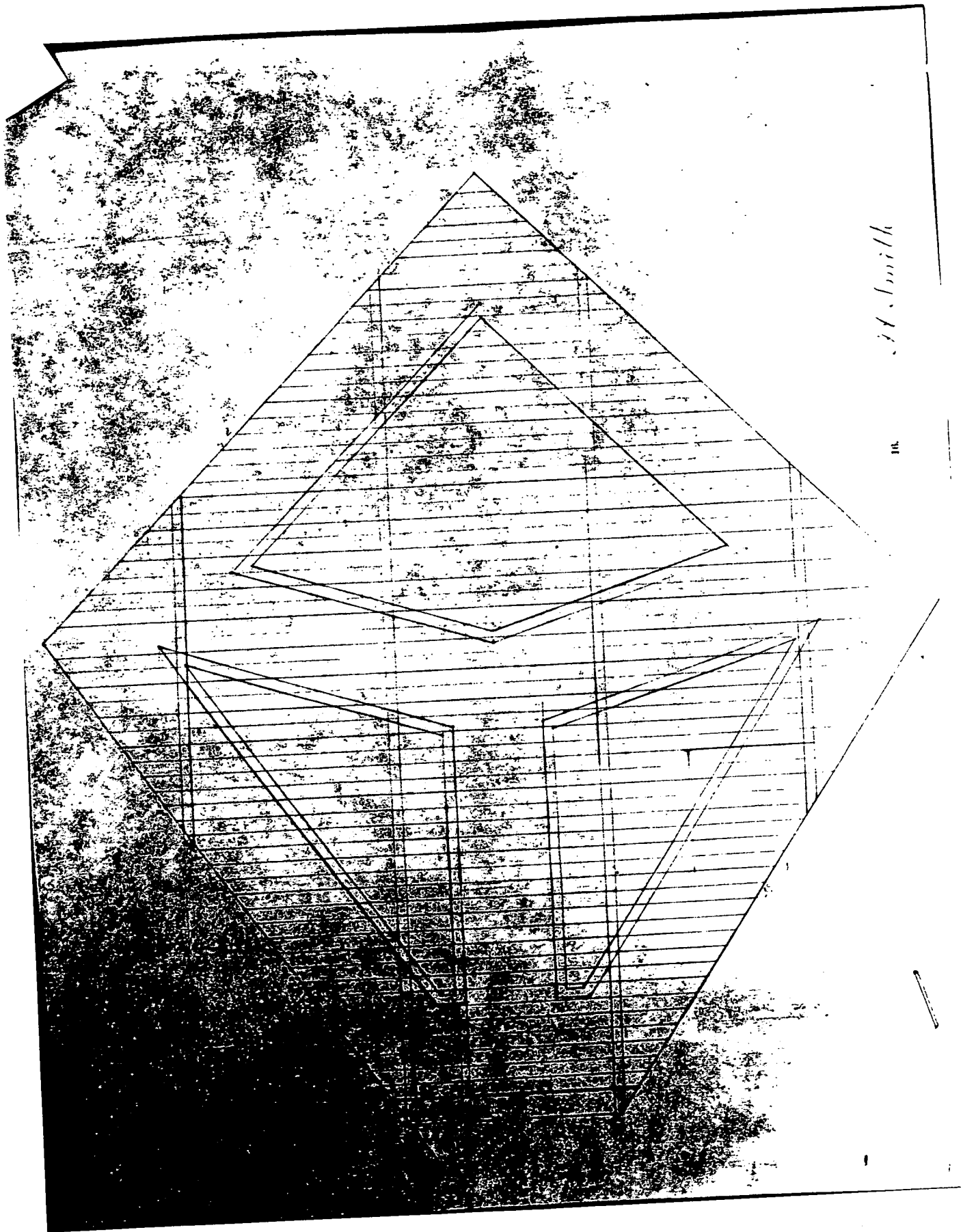




L -- BLOCKHOUSE BASTION, FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

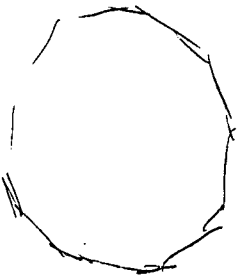


M -- BLOCKHOUSE BASTION, FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

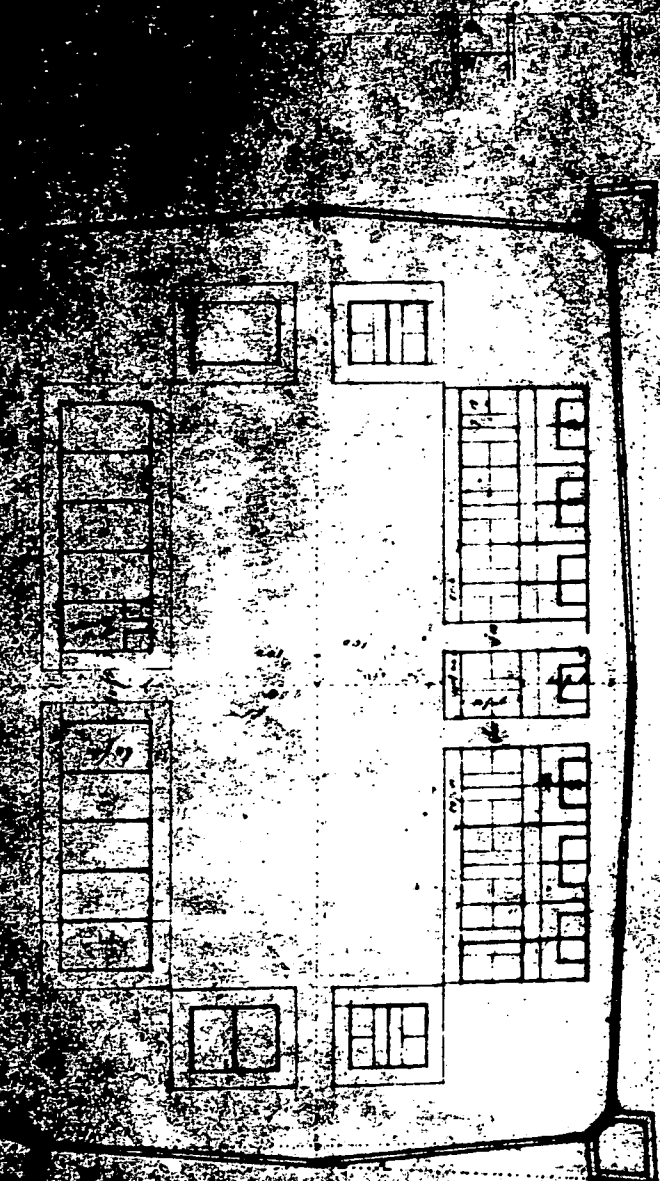


*A. Smith*

■ -- PLAN OF GARRISON, FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

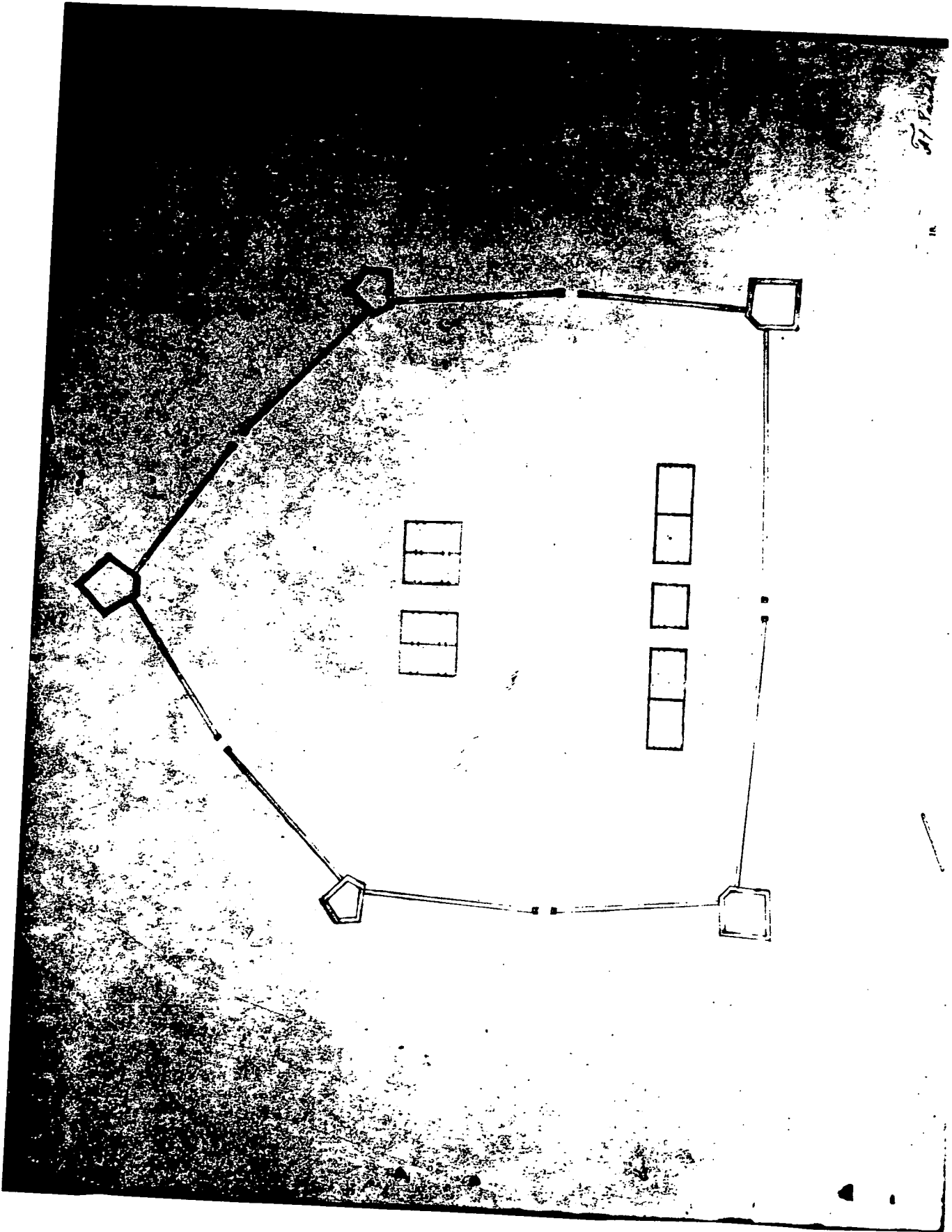


*W. Smith*



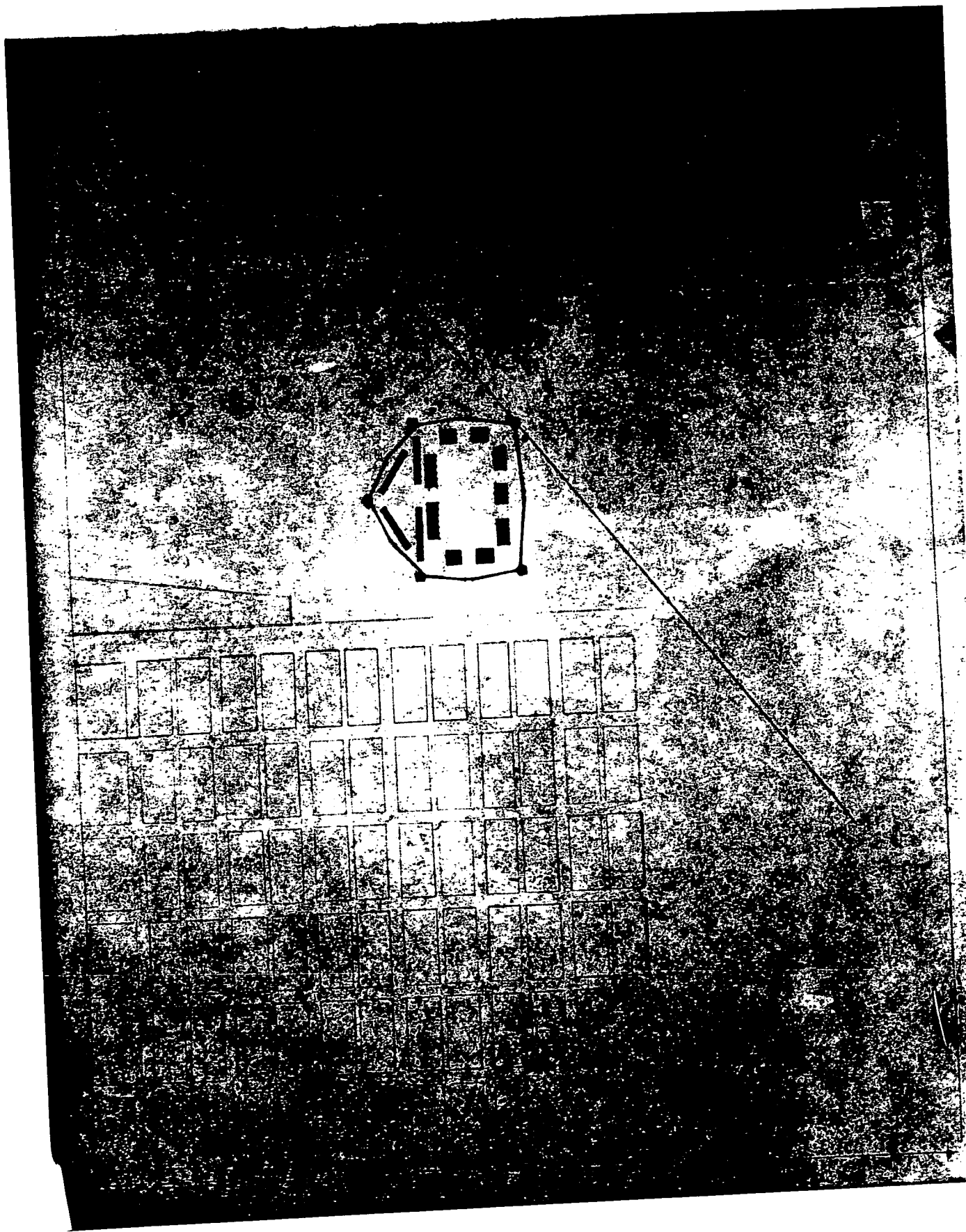
*Sub 1*

0 -- PLAN OF GARRISON, FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.





P -- PLAN OF GARRISON IN RELATION TO TOWN OF FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

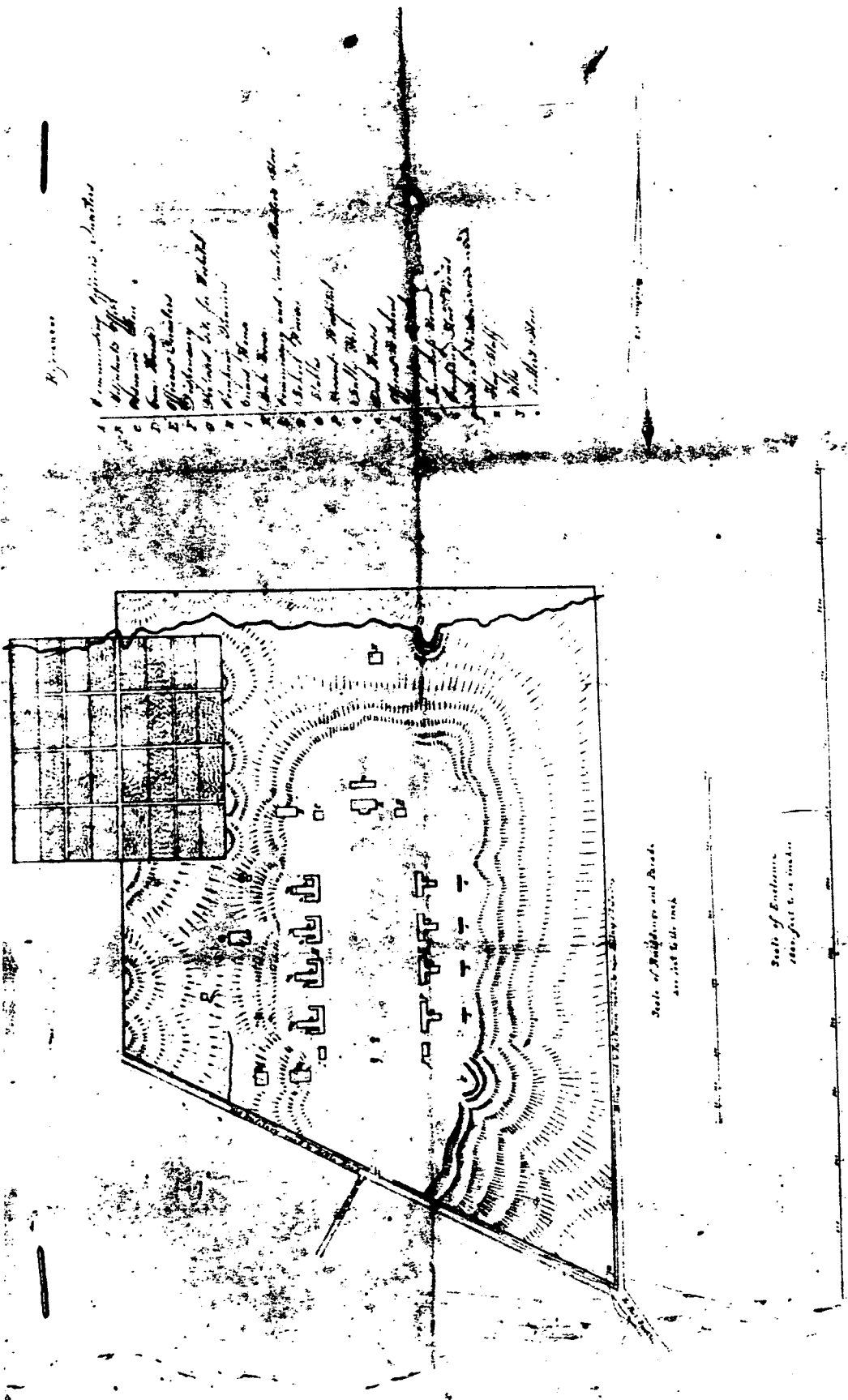


Q → DIAGRAM OF GARRISON WITH DESCRIPTIVE NOTES AFFIXED.



PLATE IX.

PLAN OF THE CANTONMENT AT FORT SMITH.



By *[Signature]*

- 1. Commanding Officer, Quarter
- 2. Adjutant General
- 3. Surgeon
- 4. Chaplain
- 5. Quartermaster
- 6. Commissary
- 7. Medical Director
- 8. Engineer
- 9. Artillery
- 10. Cavalry
- 11. Infantry
- 12. Signal
- 13. Ordnance
- 14. Provost Marshal
- 15. Chaplain
- 16. Quartermaster
- 17. Commissary
- 18. Medical Director
- 19. Engineer
- 20. Artillery
- 21. Cavalry
- 22. Infantry
- 23. Signal
- 24. Ordnance
- 25. Provost Marshal

Scale of Buildings and Roads  
as laid to the inch

Scale of Elevation  
100 feet to an inch

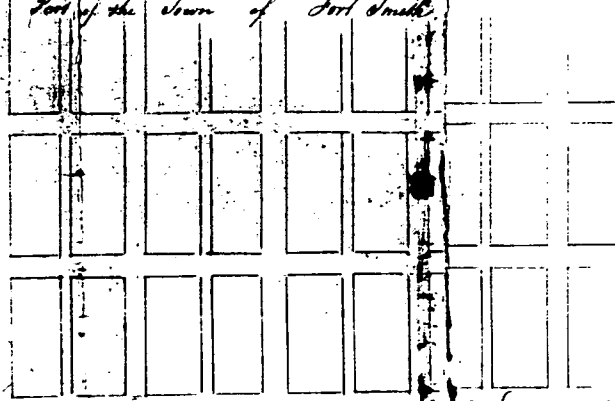
REPORTS OF THE WAR DEPARTMENT  
Office of the Adjutant General



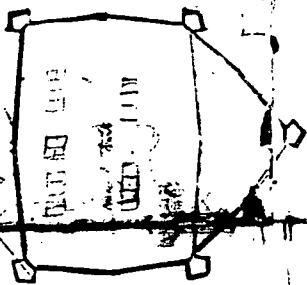
PLATE X.  
SKETCH OF NEW FORT SMITH, ARK.

Fort of the town of Fort Smith

R I V E R



Fort Smith  
John W. Fort Smith



Col. M...  
11/19/1874  
R. S. ...

A N S

Bank of the river, to ...

K A N

A R

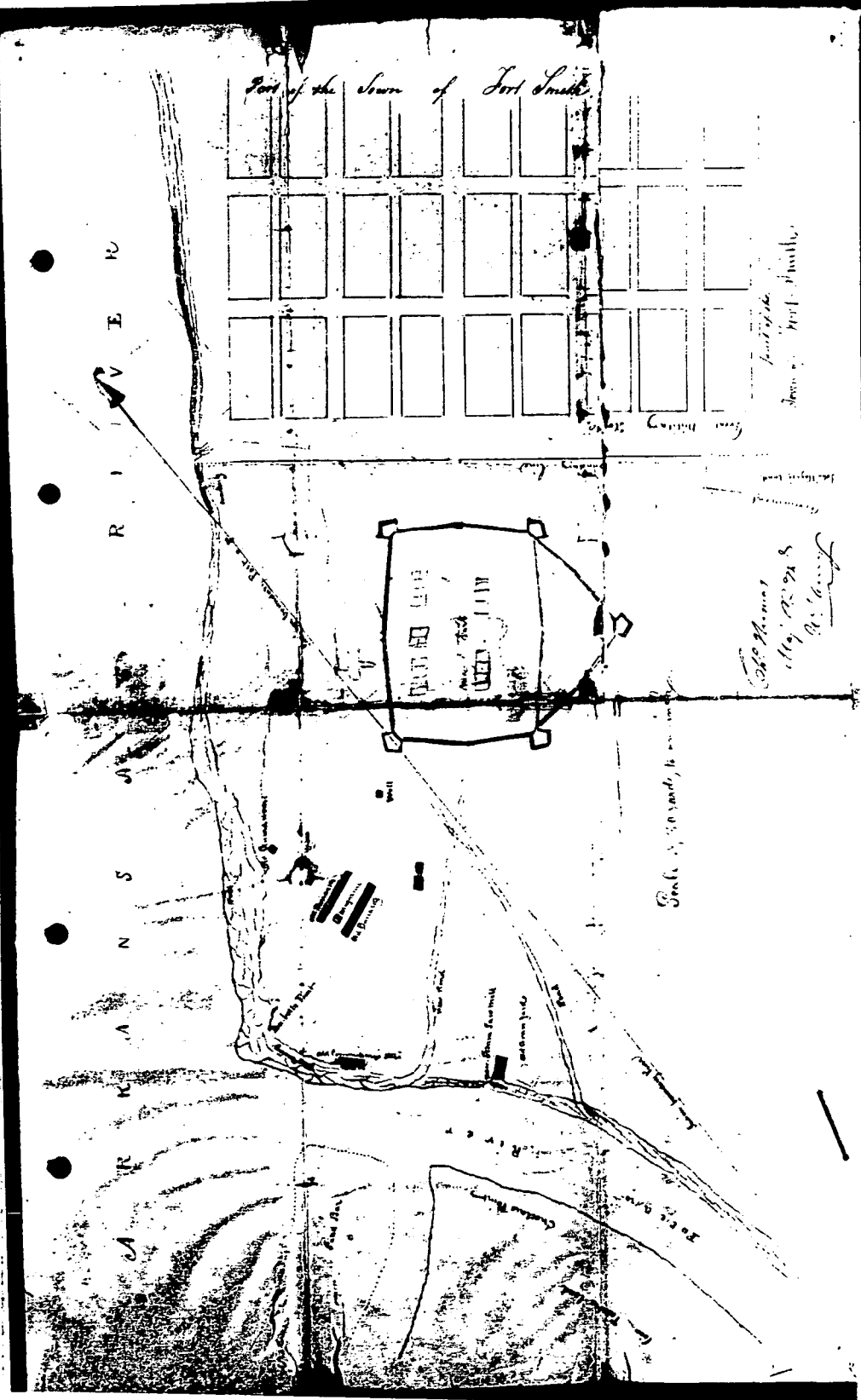




PLATE XI.

PLOT OF THE LAND PURCHASED BY THE UNITED STATES FROM  
JOHN RODGERS [SIC] AT FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

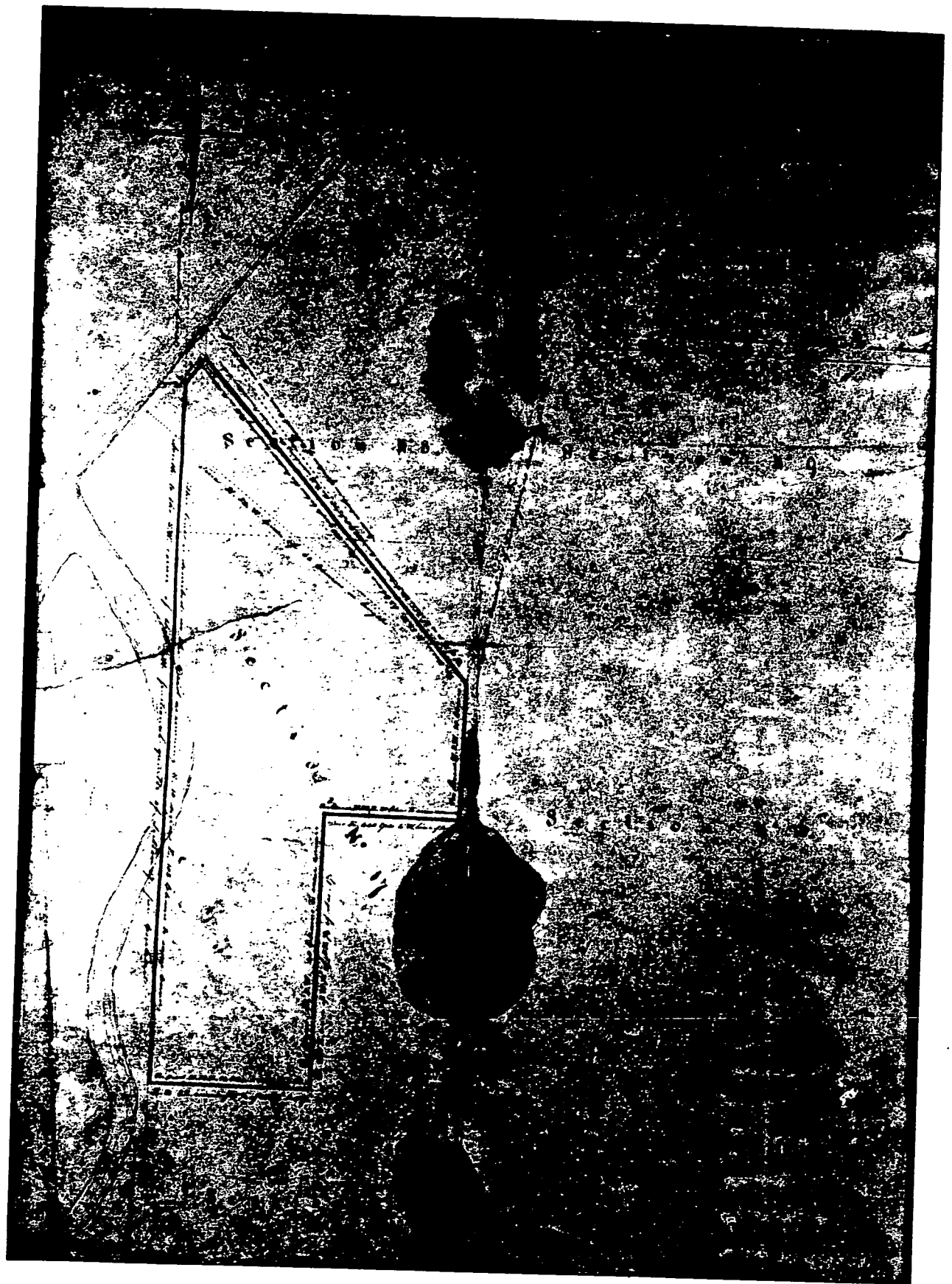


PLATE XII.

SKETCH OF THE AREA IN DISPUTE PREPARED BY MAJOR THOMAS.

(1562)

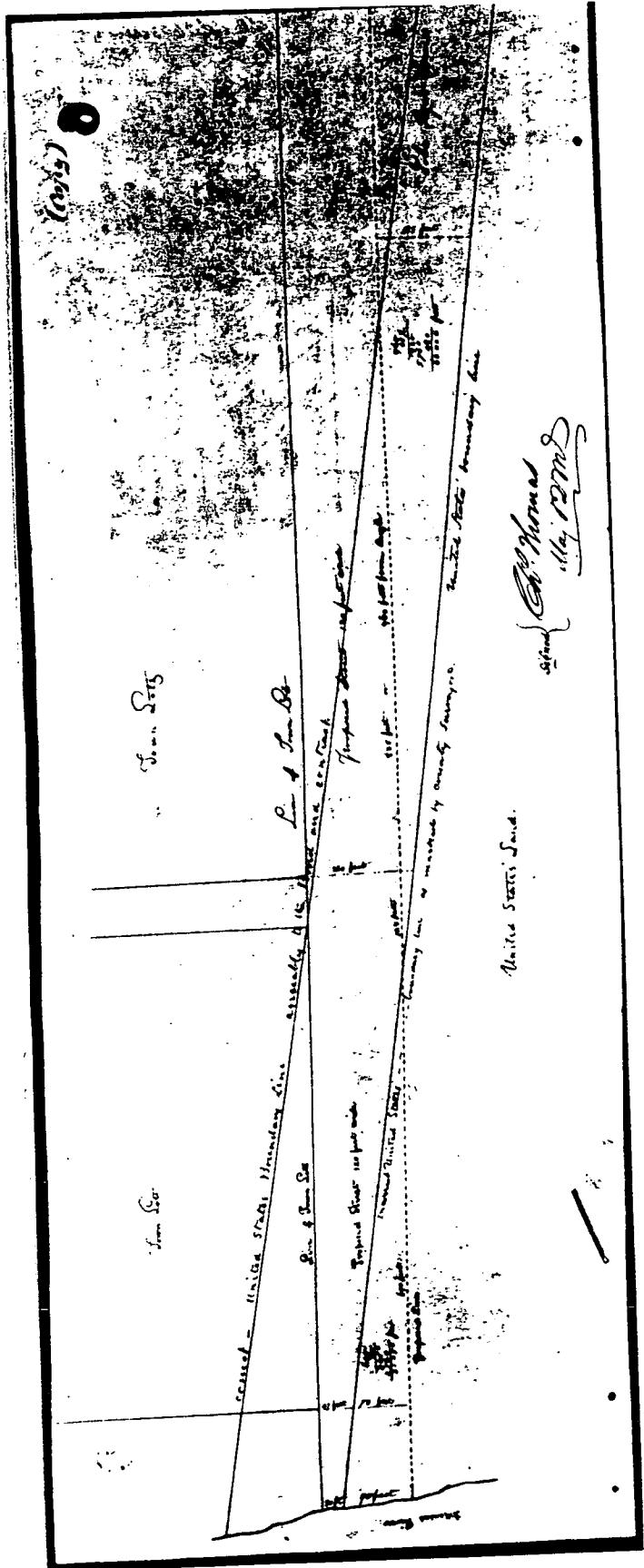
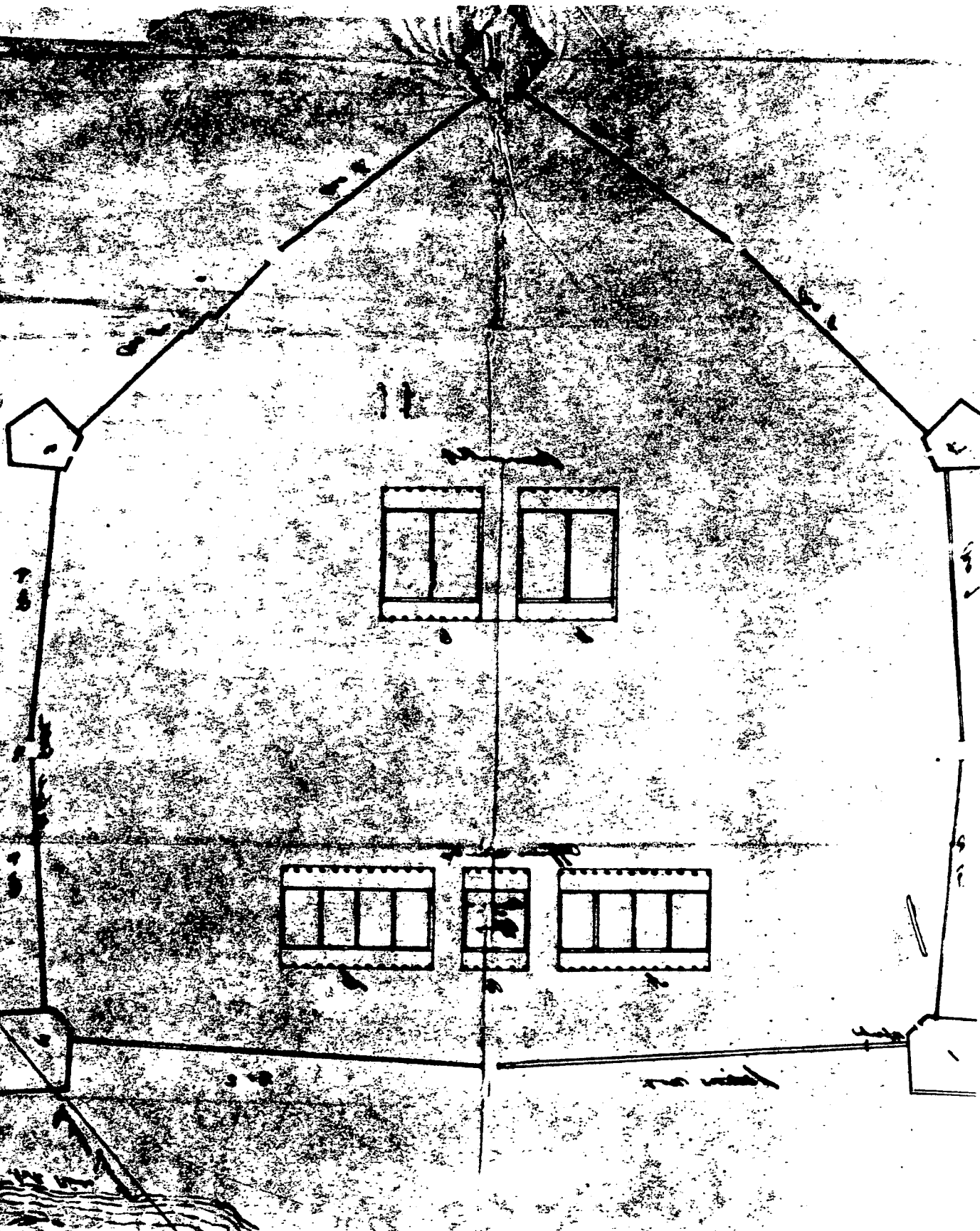


PLATE XIII.  
ALEXANDER'S MAP OF FORT SMITH.

Chickadee



**PLATE XIV.**

**PLAN INDICATING PROGRESS IN THE CONSTRUCTION  
OF THE WALL AT FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.**

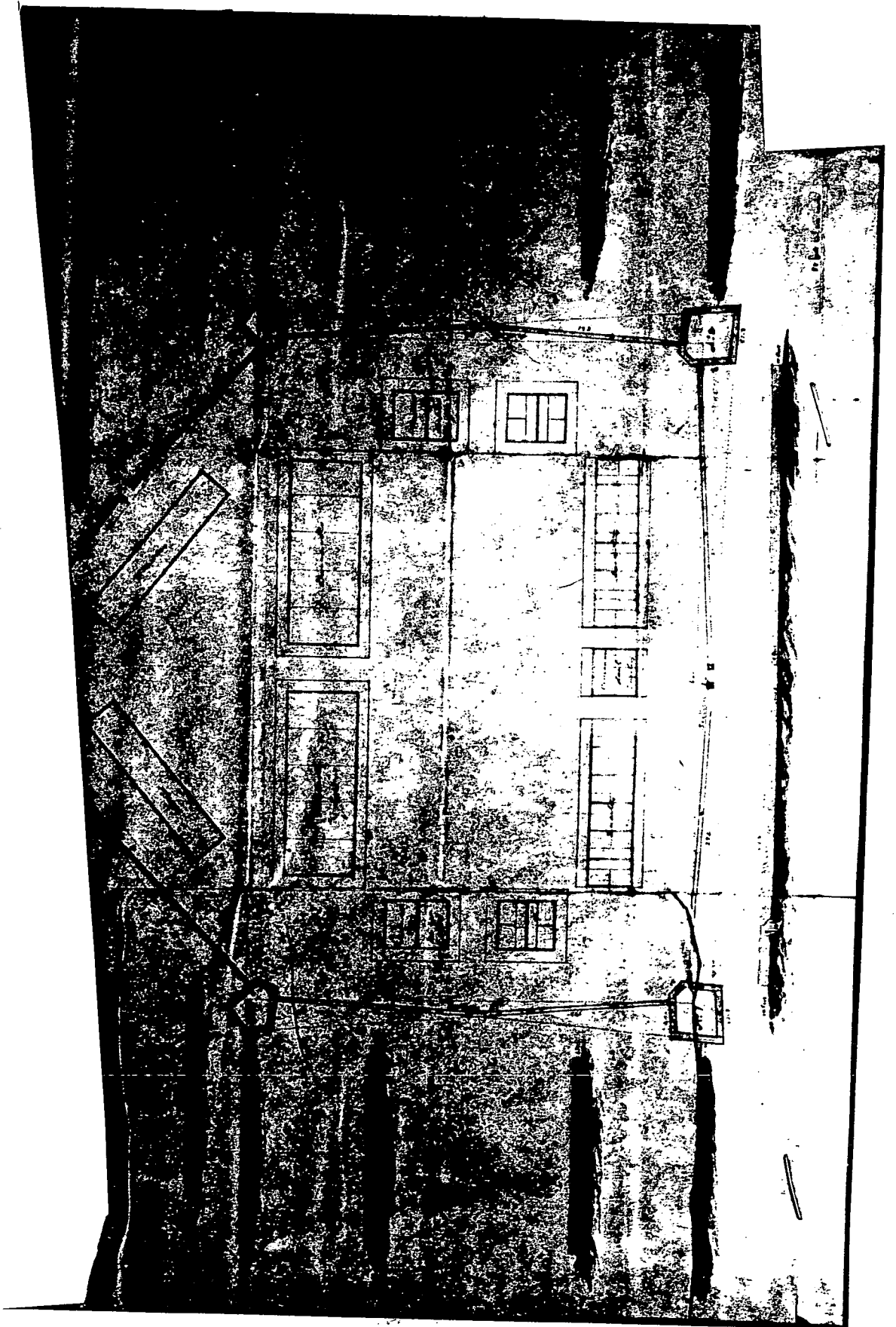


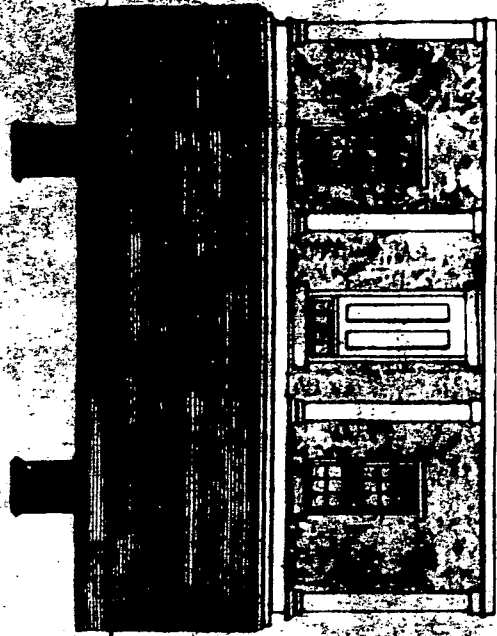
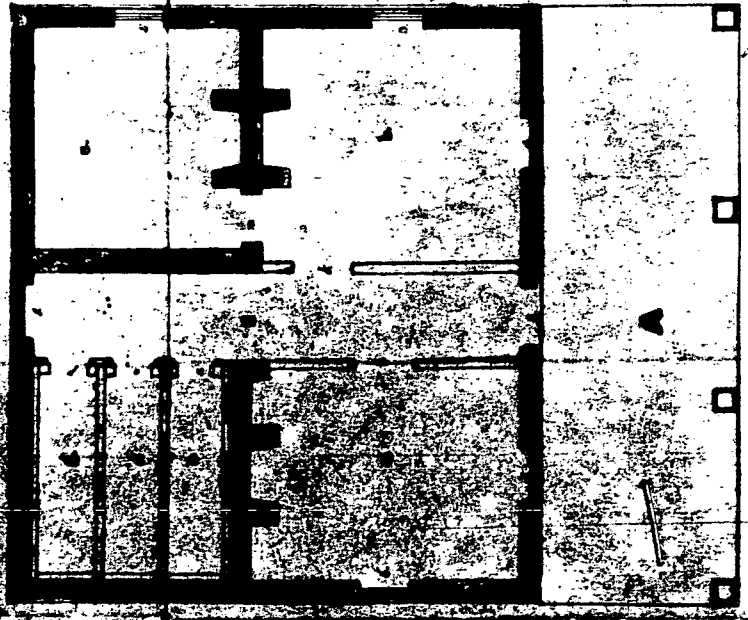


PLATE XV.

PLAN FOR A GUARD-HOUSE AT FORT SMITH.

# PLAN FOR A GUARD-HOUSE AT FORT SMITH

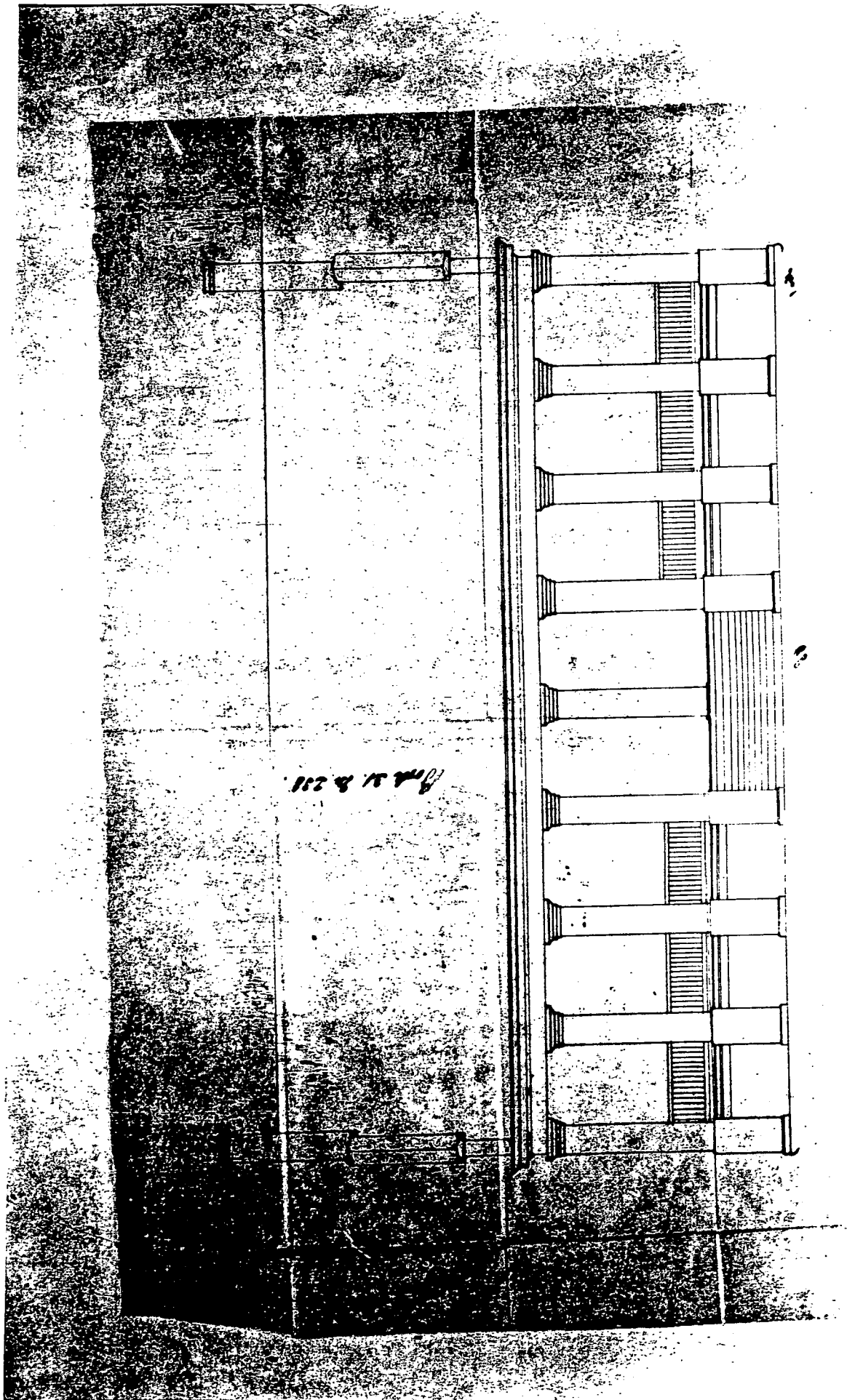
- A Horizontal Projection. 8' 11" in height
- B Vertical Projection. 11' 11" from floor to ceiling
- C Room for Guard's Bed. 11' 11" by 10' 0"
- D The Guard's Bed. 11' 11" by 10' 0"
- E Windows not in plan. 4' 0" wide. 6' 0" high.
- F Hall.
- G Stairs. Double door.
- H Guard's window.
- I. A. M. H. P. door.



Plans made by...

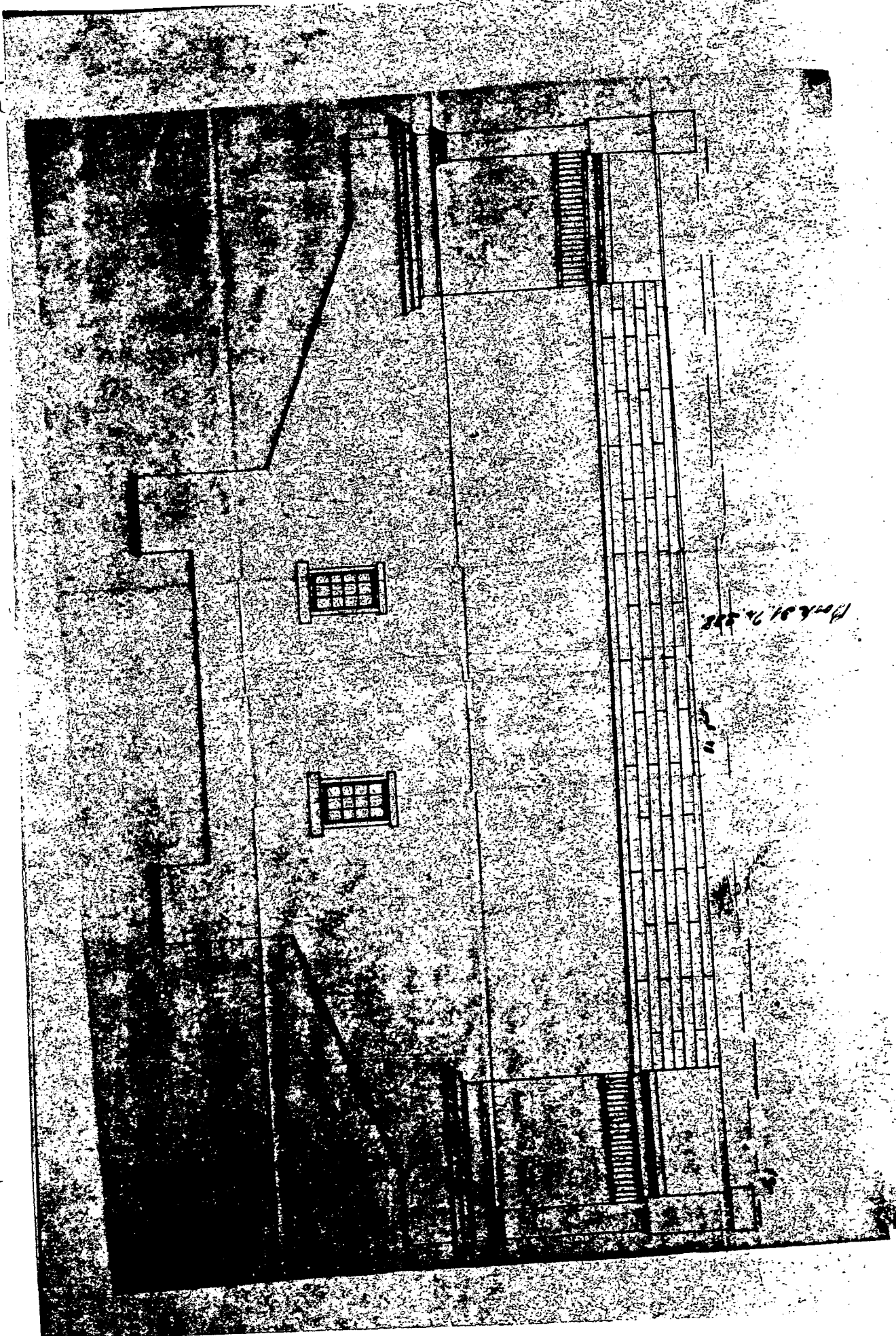
PLATE XVI.

ARBUCKLE'S AND BURNS' PLAN FOR REBUILDING  
THE SOLDIERS' QUARTERS AT FORT SMITH.  
A -- FRONT VIEW OF SOLDIERS' QUARTERS.



Am. M. 231

B -- SIDE VIEW OF SOLDIERS' QUARTERS.



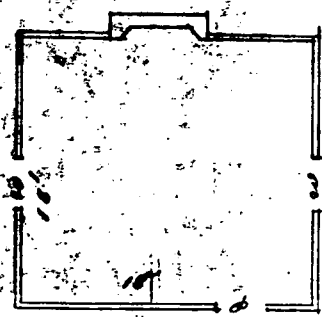
1/10/81 72-228

1/11

PLATE XVII.

MONTGOMERY'S PLANS FOR POST HOSPITAL.

*Kitchen*



*Hospital*





PLATE XVIII.

PLANS & ELEVATION OF WHEELWRIGHT SHOP AND HAY SHED.



**PLATE XIX.**

**PLAN, MATERIALS, AND COST OF BUILDING OF HOUSE  
FOR ORDNANCE SERGEANT AT FORT SMITH, ARK.**

*Plan, Materials, and Cost of Building of Steam  
for Ordnance Department at Fort Smith, Ark.*



*Materials*

5000 feet Lumber at \$25.00	\$ 125 00
3500 Shingles at 4.00	14 00
2400 Bricks at 7.50	15 00
— Lime	21 00
Nails, Licks, Hinges, Doors	18 00
Carpenter's Work	10 00
Plaster " "	20 00
Laborer " "	18 00

*Total Cost of Building \$350 00*

*Note, A house of the dimensions allowed by Regulation  
to an Ordnance Sergeant, would cost not less than \$550.00  
The above plan is convenient and sufficient large, in the  
present instance.*

**PLATE XX.**

**PLANS FRONT AND SIDE ELEVATIONS OF BARRACKS AT  
FORT SMITH WITH PROPOSED ADDITION OF SECOND STORY.  
A -- FRONT ELEVATION OF BARRACKS AT FORT SMITH, ARK.**

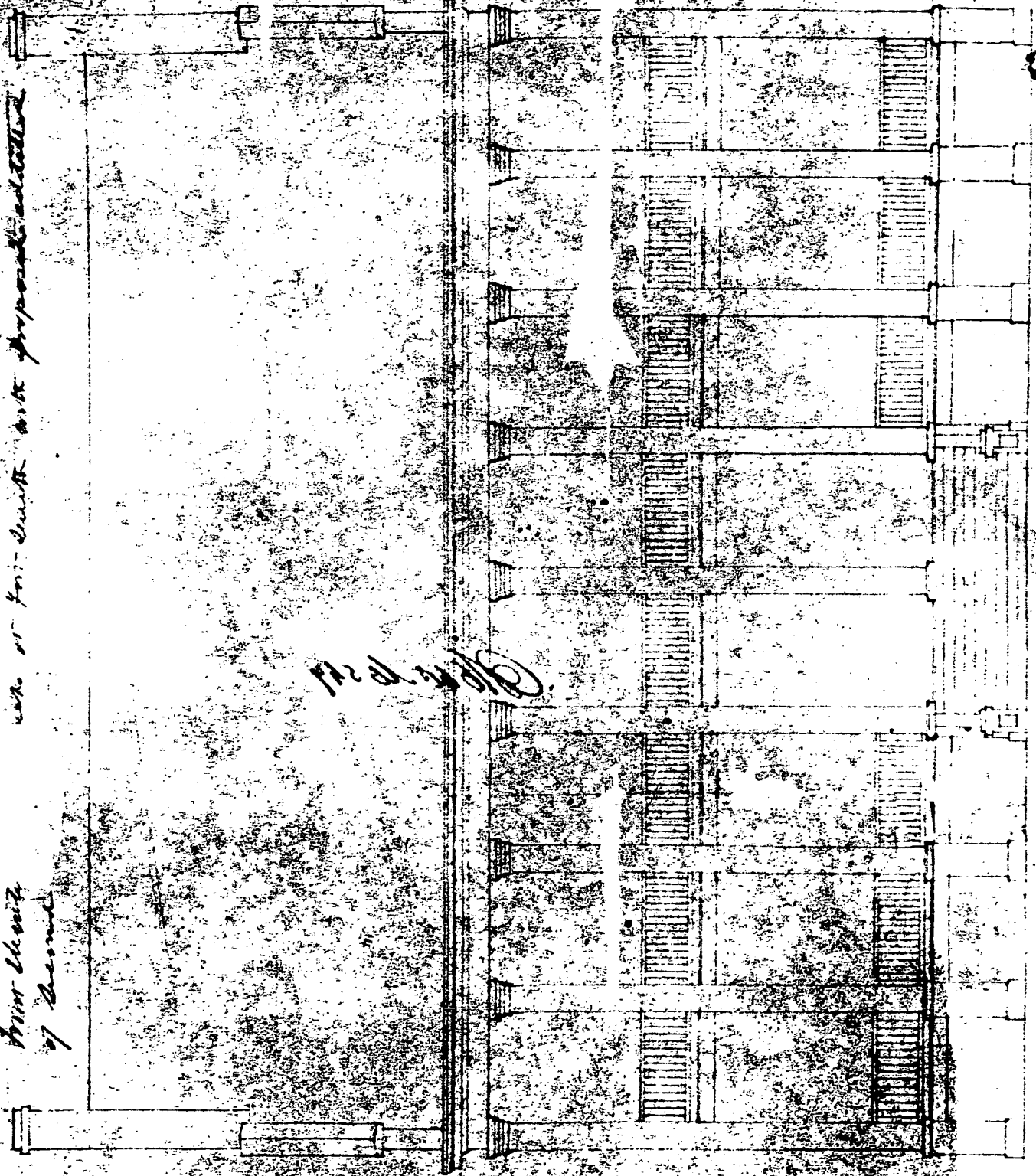


B -- FRONT ELEVATION OF BARRACKS AT FORT SMITH  
WITH PROPOSED ADDITION OF SECOND STORY.

with 17 feet - built with proposed addition

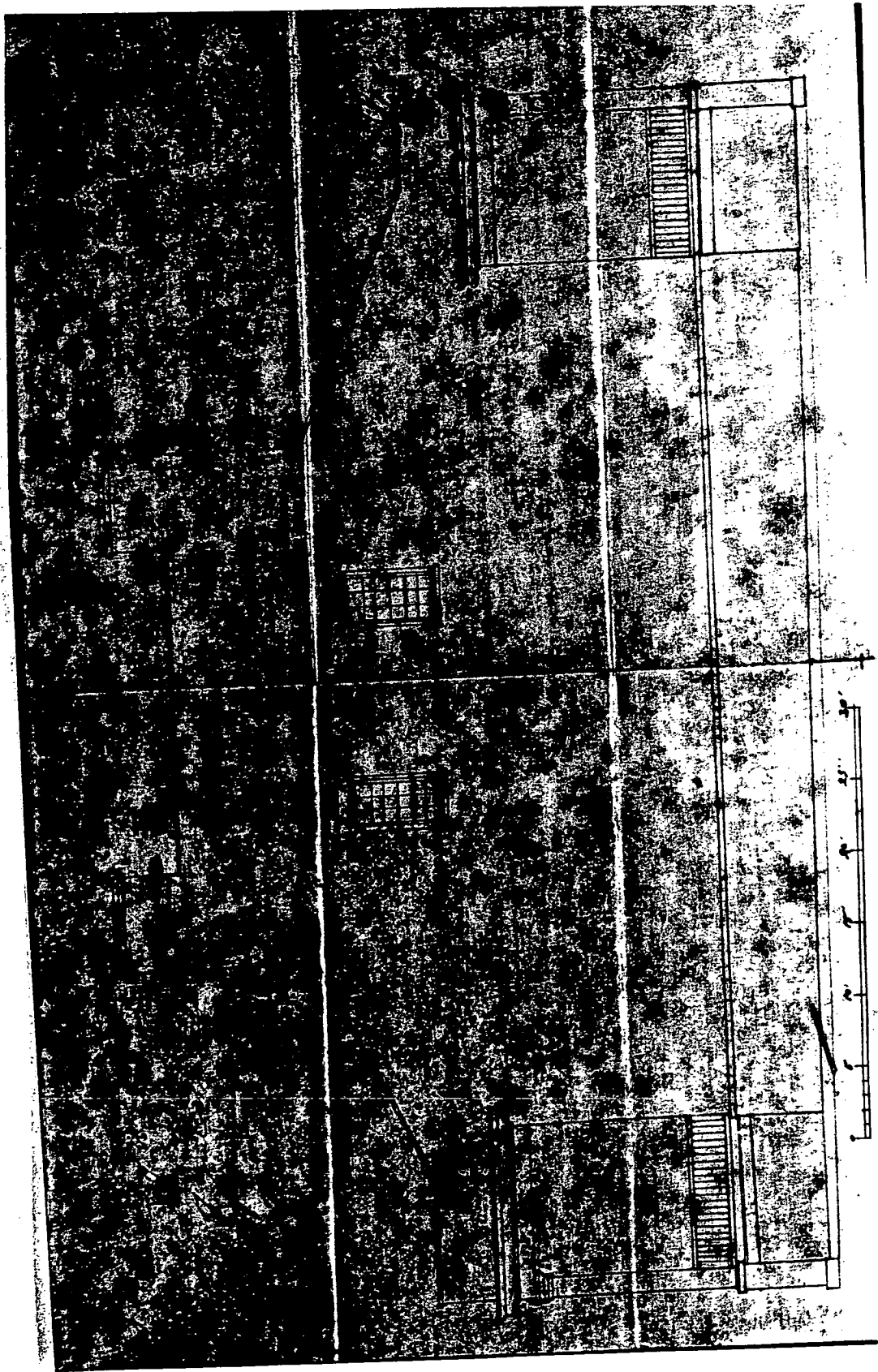
from level  
of ground

Sept. 1921





C -- SIDE ELEVATION OF BARRACKS AT FORT SMITH, ARK., AS BUILT BY DIRECTION  
OF GEN. [SIC] ARBUCKLE ON RUINS OF BURNED BARRACKS.



D -- SIDE ELEVATION OF BARRACKS WITH PROPOSED ADDITION OF SECOND STORY.

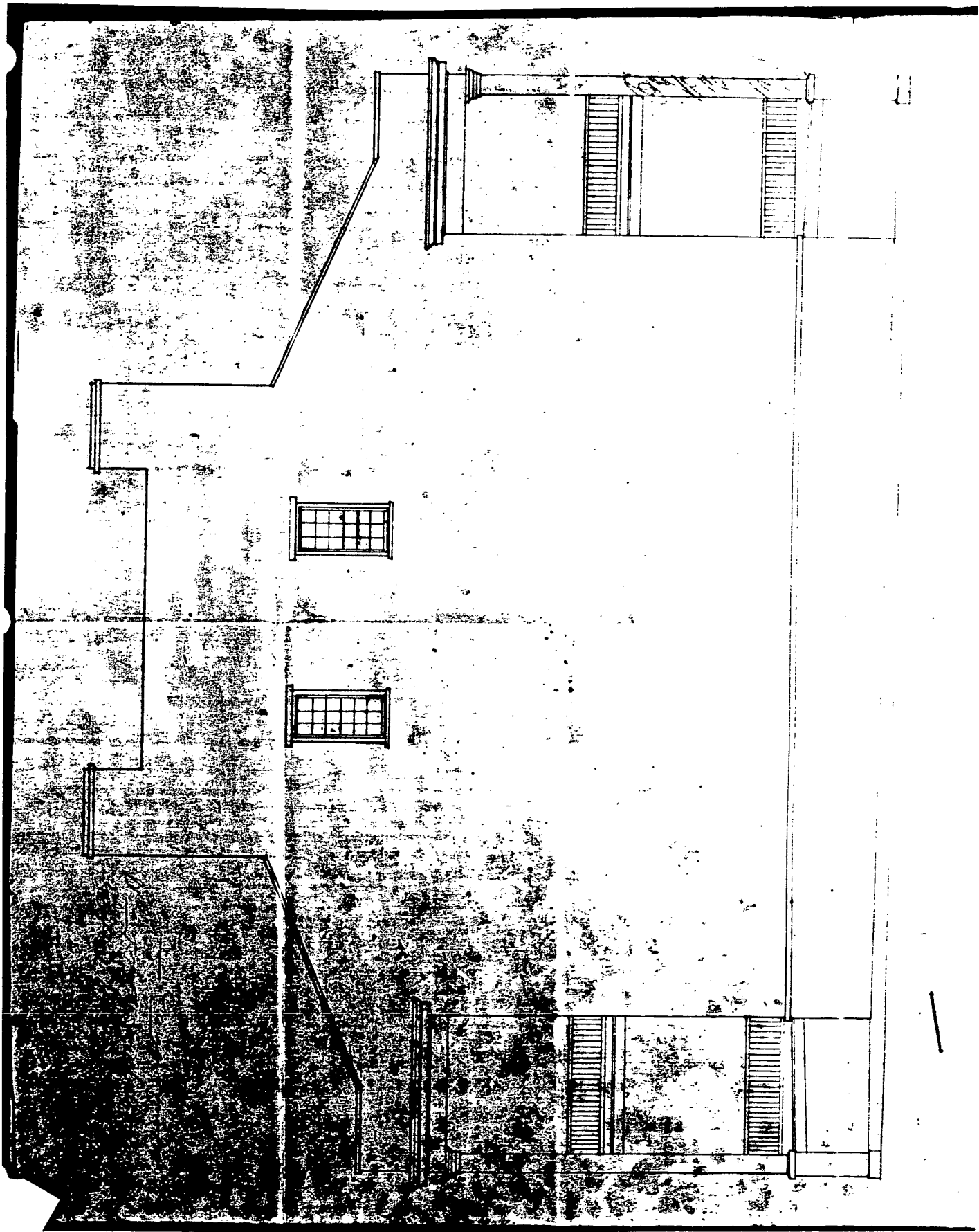
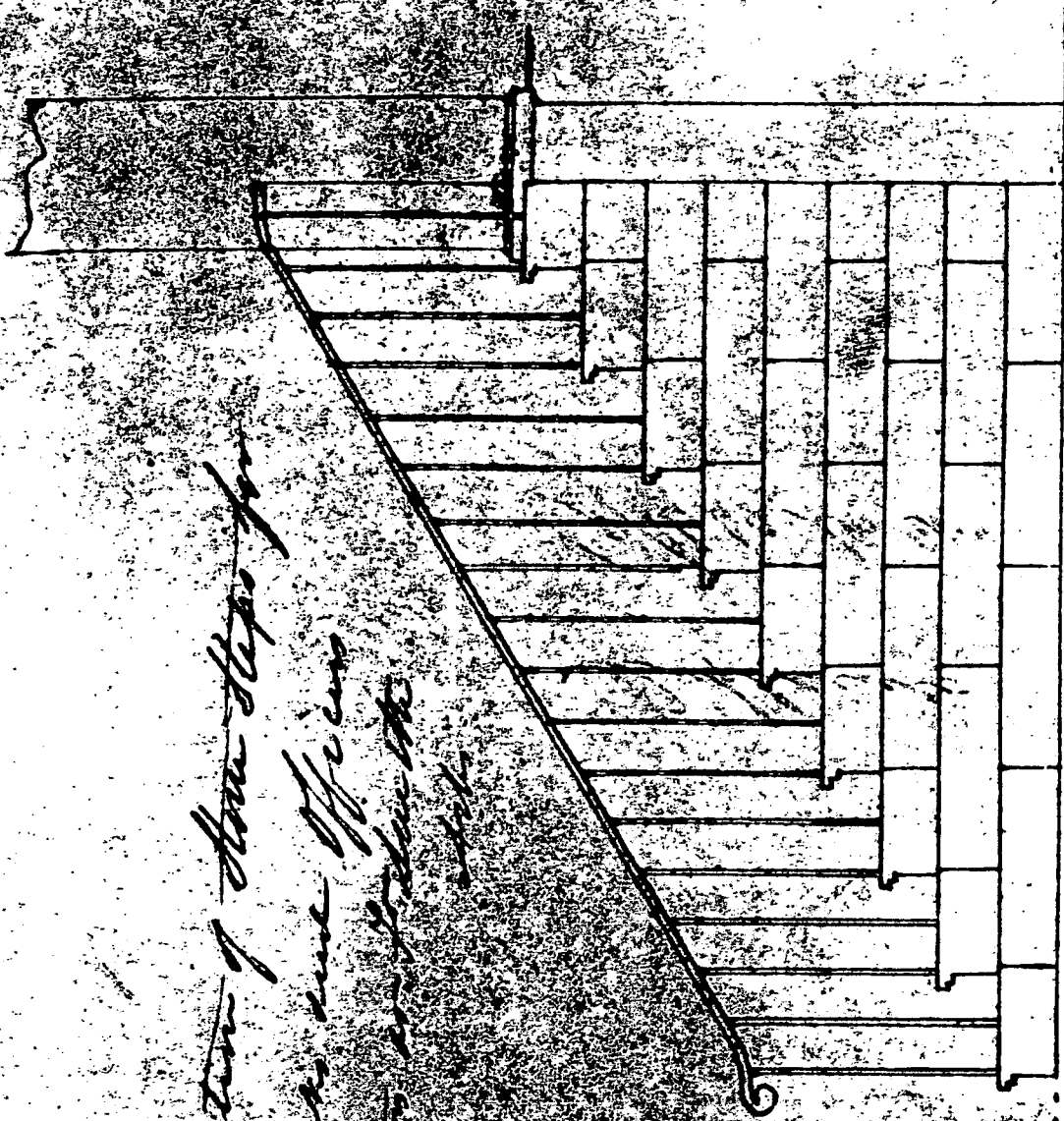


PLATE XXI.

ELEVATION OF STONE STEPS FOR BARRACKS AND  
OFFICERS' QUARTERS AT FORT SMITH, ARK.

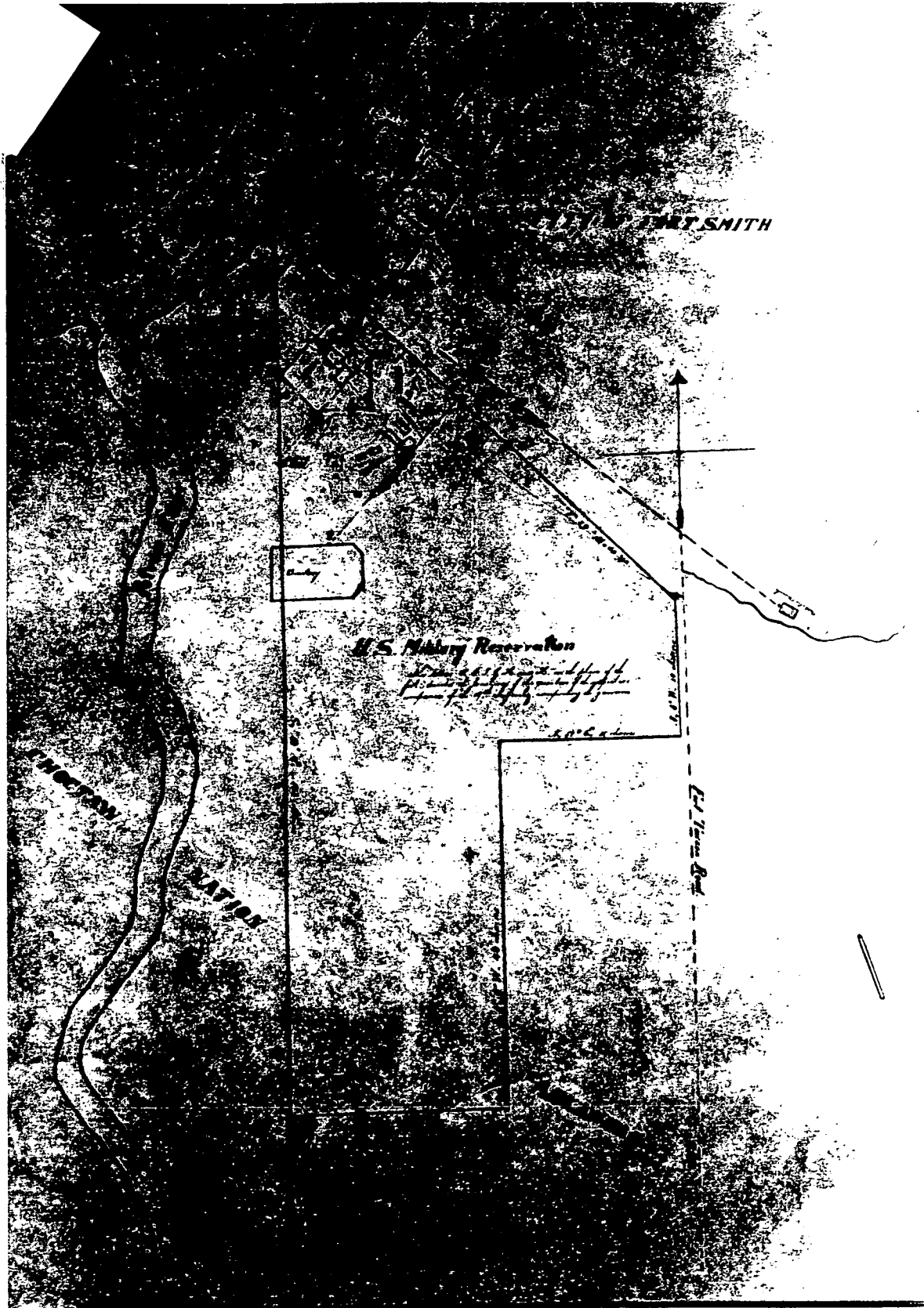
Plan of stone steps for  
Honorable and Officers  
Quarters in the  
Army



Scale one half inch to feet

PLATE XXII.

U. S. MILITARY RESERVATION - 1863.





**PLATE XXIII.**

**PLAT A, ACCOMPANYING REPORT OF BOARD OF OFFICERS, APPOINTED  
BY SPECIAL ORDERS NO. 52, SERIES 1870, HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE  
MISSOURI. PORT SMITH RESERVATION, ARK., AS SURVEYED BY THE BOARD,  
APRIL 1870.**



APPENDIX A

Accounts of Receipts and Expenditures  
made by Major Charles Thomas  
at Fort Smith, Arkansas.  
July 1 - September 30, 1839.



Fort Smith, Sept 9th 1839

I hereby certify, that on the 25th Sept 1838, W. S. Parker turned over to me \$115 <sup>67</sup>/100.... At the time I discharged him from on board the United States Keel Boat (United States) on her voyage from Pittsburgh to Fort Smith Ark, which money I credited the United States with, instead of Maj. Charles Thomas QM US Army. As I now learn from him, ought to have been, as a credit, against the expenses of said Boat; he (Parker) having been supplied with funds, as I am informed by Major Thomas.

duplicates signed E. B. Alexander, AQM.

I Certify, on honor, that the above Statement is correct; The said Parker was supplied with funds, for which I was accountable to the United States: and for which he, the said Parker was accountable to me; and would have accounted, if he had been suffered to navigate the Keel Boat, as he was hired to do. He was overtaken in the Arkansas River, by the Detachment of the 3 Regt. Infy. under Command of Lieut. W. S. Henry -- Capt Alexander AQM when the Boat was taken possession of by them; and the men discharged & without taking Receipts for Any of the Money which had been paid by Parker to the Boatmen on my account, the account of said Boat from Pittsburgh to the Arkansas River, Amounting to nearly four hundred dollars. Why or by what authority they took possession of the boat, and discharged the Commander & men, neglecting to take Receipts for the Money paid in my name, I have not been able to learn Satisfactorily. When I am able to meet with Parker, or obtain his Receipt for the money paid on my account, I shall present it of course, and insert in my account against the United States.

signed Chas Thomas  
Maj & QM

## Layton &amp; Co. To the United States

Dr

1839

Aug. 15th	To	2 Measuring Rods	@ 12/	3.00
"	"	6 1/2 in. augers	2/	1.50
"	"	6 3/4 do	3/	2.25
"	"	18 in do	4/	9.00
"	"	1 Stock & die		35.00
"	"	1 Beck iron		3.43
"	"	9 doz Log lines	7.50	67.50
"	"	5 Steel Squares	14/ & 16/	18.75
"	"	28 bars German Steel	147 lbs @ 16¢	<u>23.52</u>
				\$163.97

New Orleans, Aug 15th 1839

I Certify, on honor that the above account is correct & just. The Articles were purchased of Layton & Co. in May 1839, but not being such as were required by me, they were returned to them. The Articles were credited to them in the 2d Qr and placed on my property return, and are expended on my property return for the 3d Qr.

Signed Chas Thomas

Maj &amp; QM

Voucher No 1 A

The United States to Wm. Maxey Dr

---

July 18th 1839

To 432 lbs Indian Corn meal @ 2½ cts.....\$10.57

Received at Fort Smith Ark. July 18th 1839 by  
Maj. Chas Thomas QM US Army, Ten dollars fifty  
seven cents in full of the above acct.

duplicates

signed Wm C. Maxey

---

Voucher No 2 A

The United States to J. H. Shannon Dr

---

July 11th 1839 to 69 bushs Lime @ 60¢.....\$41.40

" 12th " " 39 do do 60¢..... 23.40

" 22 " " 42 do do 60¢..... 25.20

\$90.00

Received at Fort Smith Ark. July 22d 1839, of  
Major Chas Thomas QM US Army, Ninety dollars  
in full of the above account.

duplicates

signed John H. Shannon

---

Voucher No 3

The United States to John Wallace Dr

---

July 25th 1839. For 9855 ft pine Plank @ \$30. per 1000 ft. 295.65

" 1527 " do \$15. per 1000 ft 22.90

\$318.55

Received at Fort Smith Ark. July 25th 1839 of  
Maj Chas Thomas QM US Army three hundred &  
Eighteen dollars & fifty five Cents, in full  
of the above account.

duplicates

signed John Wallace

---

Voucher No. 4 A

<u>The United States to Subsistence Dept.</u>		Dr
July 1-31, 1839.	For 5 barrels Pork @ \$16	\$ 80.00
	" 7 do Flour " \$ 9	63.00
	" 1 " Beans 3 bush. & 16 qts. at \$4.25 per bush	14.87 $\frac{1}{2}$
	" 1 " Sugar 195 lbs. at 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ cts.	<u>22.42<math>\frac{1}{2}</math></u>
		\$180.30

Fort Smith Ark. July 31 1839.  
Received of Major Chas. Thomas QM US Army  
one hundred Eighty 30/dollars in full of  
the above account.

duplicates

signed W. L. Henry  
Lt. & ACS

Voucher No. 5 A

<u>The United States to Y. Stephenson</u>		Dr
Aug 1st 1839.	For 8 second hand gauge Cocks @ 50¢.....	\$4.00

Received at Fort Smith Ark Aug. 1st, 1839 of  
Maj. Chas Thomas QM US Army, Four dollars in  
full of the above account.

duplicates

signed Y. Stephenson

Voucher No. 6 A

<u>The United States to Merchants Bank</u>		Dr
Aug 13th 1839.	For 1 Keg 2.50 1 Box 1.00.....	\$3.50

Received at New Orleans Aug 13th 1839, of Maj.  
Chas Thomas QM US Army Three 50/100 dollars in  
full of the above acct.

duplicates

signed W. Waters  
Teller, Merchants Bank



Voucher No 7 A

The United States to Layton & Co.

Dr

1839

Aug 15th For 180 ft 3/4 in Cop. pipe.....	\$156.	
4 sheets border iron 355.....	44.38	
1 Bale 4 bolts Copper ass @ .....	76.40	276.78
1 Bdl. Cont. 1 sheet braziers Copper ea 16.30 for 40 lbs..	30.10	
1 Bdl. Cont. 78 3/4 in Cast Steel		
55 7/8 do 238 @ 3/.....	59.50	
105 1 do .....		
1 Bdl. German Steel 150 @ 16 .....	24.00	
1 package cont 1 measuring Stick .....	2.75	
1 Box Cont.		
6 guage Cocks 14/3 pump cocks 10/.....	14.25	
2 Stop Cocks @ 6.50/.....	13.00	
400 Boiler Rivets.....	17.00	
1 pint Globe for Engine \$10 .....	10.00	
6 lbs swift Twine @ 5/.....	3.75	
1 Black Smith Iron Brace & Bitts .....	15.00	
1 Book Iron \$8.....	8.00	
36 Augers Ass.....	24.00	
2 3 In. flush Bolts @ 2/ .....	.50	
3 Zinc Pumps @ \$12.....	36.00	
1 Steel Square ea 14/ 16/.....	3.75	
1 pr Callipers 8/.....	1.00	
2 pr Compasses Ea 8/ 10/ 12/ .....	7.50	
1 Horse Fleam 8/.....	1.00	
Box .....	.75	155.50

\$549.63

Received New Orleans Aug 15th 1839 of Maj. Chas  
Thomas QM US Army, Five hundred & forty nine  
dollars and Sixty three Cents, in full of the  
above Amt.

duplicates  
signed Layton & Co

Voucher No 8 A

<u>The United States to Nashville M. Woodruff</u>		Dr
Oct 16th 1838	To pr Hinges, 1 Hasp & 2 Staples.....	2.00
	" Staples.....	1.00
	" putting iron on Boat.....	1.00
		\$4.00

Received Fort Smith Ark. Oct 18th 1839 of Maj.  
Chas Thomas QM US Army Four dollars in full of  
the above account.

duplicates  
signed N.M. Woodruff

Voucher No 9 A

<u>The United States to Subsistence Dept.</u>		Dr
Aug 1-31	For 7 bbls Pork @ 1600 per bbl	112.00
	" 6 " Flour " 9 " "	54.00
	" 1 " Coffee 170 lbs @ 154	25.65
	" 1 " Sugar 212 11 1/2	24.38
	" 1 " Vinegar 25 Galls @ 62	15.50
	" 1 box Soap 49 lbs @ 6	2.94
		234.47

Received Fort Smith Ark Aug 31st 1839 of Maj  
Charles Thomas QM US Army two hundred & thirty  
four 47/100 Dollars in full of the above account.

duplicates  
signed W. L. Henry  
Lt & ACS

Voucher No 10 A

<u>The United States to Matthew Moore</u>		Dr
Sept. 9th 1839	For 601 lbs Beef @ 6¢ .....	\$36.06

Received at Fort Smith Ark Sept 9th 1839 of Maj.  
Chas Thomas QM US Army, thirty Six 6/100 dollars.

duplicates  
signed Matthew Moore

Voucher No 11 A

The United States to A. J. Raines Dr

Aug 9th 1839. For 111 Tons & 375 lbs Hay delivered at Fort Smith Ark agreeably to Contract dated 1 July 1839. @ \$12.95 per Ton of 2000 pounds.....\$1439.87

Received, Fort Smith Ark Sept 9th 1839, of Maj Chas Thomas QM US Army, One thousand four hundred, thirty nine dollars and Eighty Seven Cents in full of the above acct.

duplicates  
signed A. J. Raines

Voucher No 12 A

The United States to Geo. & Chas. Birnie Dr

July 6th 1839	To 1 lb Pepper 25¢ 1 Salaratus 37½ .....	62½
" 20	lb Salaratus 50. (23d) ½ lb Swine 50¢.....	1.00
" 30	1 Copper pipe 10½ lbs 56½¢ 32½ Sheets Copper.....	16.02
" 30	4½ yds Tecking @ 50¢ (Aug 6) 1 lb pepper 25¢.....	2.50
Aug 14	1 lb Brimstone 25¢ (31) 1 fine seive \$1.....	1.25
	3 prs brass Sunk Knobs @ 75¢.....	2.25
		\$23.64

Received, Fort Smith Ark Sept 9th 1839, of Maj. Chas Thomas QM US Army, twenty three 64/100 Dollars in full of the Above Acct.

duplicates  
signed Geo & Chas Birnie

Voucher No 13 A

The Unites States to Dennis Tramell Dr

Sept. 26th 1839. For 30 cords of Wood (ash) 23.50.....105.00

Received, Fort Smith Ark. Sept 26th 1839, of Maj. Charles Thomas QM US Army, One hundred and five dollars, in full of the above acct.

duplicates  
(signed) Dennis Tramell

Voucher No 14 A

The Unites States to Subsistence Dept.

					Dr
Sept 1 to 30th 1839	For 9	bbls	Flour @ 9.....		\$ 81.00
	" 7	do	Pork @ 16.....		112.00
	" 2	"	Beans .....		24.43 $\frac{1}{2}$
	" 1	"	Coffee 189 lbs 15¢.....		28.35
	" 1	"	Sugar 209 lbs 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ .....		24.3 $\frac{1}{2}$
	" 1	"	Vinegar 29 Galls 62¢ .....		17.98
	" 1	box	Soap 51 lbs .06¢ .....		3.06

290.86

Received, Fort Smith Ark. Sept 30th 1839 of Maj  
Chas Thomas QM US Army, Two hundred, Ninety dollars  
& Eighty Six Cents, in full of the above Account  
duplicates

Signed W. S. Henry  
Lt & ACS

Voucher No 15 A

The United States to Jonathan Voiles

					Dr
Sept 30th 1839	To 455	lbs	Beef @ .06¢.....		\$27.30

Received, Fort Smith Ark Sept 30th 1839 of Maj  
Charles Thomas QM US Army, twenty seven 30/100  
Dollars in full of the above Account.

duplicates

Witness Nat Gookin

signed Jonathan Voiles

X

his mark



Voucher No 19 B

The United States to Lorenzo N Clarke

Dr

May 27th 1839 For 3366 bush. Corn delivered at Fort Smith  
agreeably to Contract dated Dec 14th 1838  
@ \$1.06 $\frac{1}{2}$  per bush.....3576.37 $\frac{1}{2}$   
68 $\frac{1}{2}$  bushs Cats @ 75¢..... 51.37 $\frac{1}{2}$   
  
\$3627.75

Received, Fort Smith Ark. Sept 20th 1839 of Maj  
Chas Thomas Q<sup>l</sup> US Army, three thousand, Six  
hundred & twenty seven 75/100 dollars in full of  
the above acct. (duplicates)

Signed Lorenzo N. Clarke

Abstract of Disbursements on Acct of Transportations, Repairs &c by Maj.  
 Chas Thomas QM US Army at Fort Smith Ark. in the quarter ending on  
 the 30th September 1839

Date of Payment	No Voucher	To whom paid	On what account	Amount Dollars	Amount Cents
July 1	1	Joshua Tibbetts	Traveling Expenses	9	25
12	2	S. B. Trident	Freight	488	00
26	3	Budd, Colby & Steek	Advertising for Labourers	5	00
31	4	Pay Roll	hired mechanics	1469	57
Aug 4	5	S. B. Cinderella	freight	4	50
4	6	Edward Cole	Advertising	3.	50
6	7	SVR Ryan	Charges on Ordnance Stores	1	50
15	8	S. B. Gen Harrison	freight	20	00
18	9	S. B. Adventure	freight	28	86
22	10	S. B. Meteor	freight	10	00
31	11	Pay Roll	hired mechanics &c	1577	51
Sept 9	12	Lt. W. L. Henry	QM Department	1000	00
21	13	Smith Thornton	Keeping public horse	15	00
27	14	Thos McConnell	Transportation Blocks	1	50
30	15	Maj. Chas Thomas	Transportation Baggage	412	20
30	16	Pay Roll	hired mechanics &c.	1591	49
				6642	88

Voucher No. 1 B

The United States to Joshua Tibbetts

Dr

July 1, 1839. The Expenses incurred in a journey from Fort Smith Ark. to the Timber Camp in Poteau Valley, and his Return with provisions &c. in the Service of the United States.  
See Memorandum Annexed. \$9.25

I certify, on honor, that the above Account is correct & just, and that the journey was performed, and the Expenses incurred in the Service of the United States

signed Chas. Thomas, Maj. & QM

Received at Fort Smith Ark. July 1st 1839 of Maj. Chas Thomas QM U.S. Army, sum of nine dollars twenty five cents in full of the above account.

Signed Duplicates

signed. Joshua Tibbetts

Voucher No. 2 B

The United States to Steam Boat Trident

Dr

July 12. The freight of Subsistence Stores from Fort Smith Ark. to Fort Gibson, agreeably to the annexed Bill of Lading.  
To wit 363 barrels of Flour @ 1.00 per bbl. \$363.00  
100 do Beans 1.25 125.00  
\$488.00

Received at Fort Smith Ark. July 12th 1839 of Maj. Chas Thomas QM US Army the sum of four hundred & Eighty Eight dollars in full of the above account.

Signed Duplicate

Signed John Heloway



Voucher No. 3 B

The United States to Budd Colby & Steck Dr  
March 18th. For Advertising Labourers Wanted 1½ Squares,  
6 weeks, in the Arkansas Times and Advocate..... \$5.00

Received at Fort Smith Ark. 26th July 1839  
of Maj. Charles Thomas QM US Army, The sum  
of five dollars in full of the above Account  
Signed in duplicate (signed) Budd, Colby & Steck

Voucher No. 6 B

The United States to Edward Cole Dr  
March 31, 1839. To Advertising in Arkansas Gazette  
Labourers wanted to 24th April.....\$3.50

I certify that the above amount is correct and  
just and that the advertisement was inserted by  
my order.

signed Chas Thomas Maj & QM

Received at Fort Smith Ark. Aug 3 1839 of Maj.  
Chas Thomas QM US Army, the Sum of three dollars  
and fifty cents in full of the above account.

Signed duplicates

Signed E Cole

Voucher No. 5 B

The United States to Steamer Cinderella Dr  
Aug 4th, 1839. For freight on 1 box & 28 bars  
Steel &c from Fort Smith Ark. to  
mouth of White River.....\$4.50

Received at Fort Smith Ark. Aug. 4th 1839 of  
Maj Chas Thomas QM US Army, the Sum of four  
dollars & fifty Cents in full of the Above  
account.

Signed duplicates

Signed Y. Stephenson

Capt.

Voucher No. 4 B

Pay roll for July, of hired mechanics and labourers  
58 men..... \$1469.57

---

Voucher No. 7 B

The United States to S.V.R. Ryan Dr

---

Aug 6th. To charges (Storage) Drayage & Bills of lading on  
Eight Boxes of Ordnance Stores, shipped the day  
before stated on board the L. E. Adventure for  
Fort Smith ..... \$6.50

Received at Napoleon Ark. Aug. 6th 1839  
of Maj. Chas, Thomas QM US Army, the sum  
of six dollars & fifty cents in full of  
the above account.

Signed duplicates

signed SVR Ryan

forwarding Agent US Army

---

Voucher No 8 B

The United States to S. E. Gen. Harrison Dr

---

For Freight on 1 box gold  
on 1 Ky silver from New Orleans  
to Natchez..... \$20.00

Received at Fort Smith Ark Aug. 15th 1839,  
of Maj. Chas. Thomas QM US Army, the sum  
of twenty Dollars, in full of the above  
account.

Signed duplicates

Signed W. H. Love

---

Voucher No 9 B

The United States to Steam Boat Adventure

Dr

Aug 18th 1839. For freight on 8 boxes ordnance Stores  
weight 1924 lbs @ 1½ doll per 100 lbs ..... \$28.86

Received at Fort Smith Ark. Aug 18th 1839 of  
Maj Chas Thomas QM US Army, the sum of twenty  
eight dolls, Eighty six Cents, in full of the  
above account.

Duplicates

signed  
Lewis W. Uttermall  
clerk S.B.A.

Voucher No. 10 B

The United States to Steam Boat Meteor

Dr

Aug 22, 1839. For freight on 1 box & 1 Ky specie from  
Natchez to mouth of Arkansas River.....\$10.00

Received Aug. 22, 1839 of Maj. Chas Thomas  
QM US Army, Ten dollars in full of the above  
acct.

duplicates

Signed Jas. M. Butler  
clk.

Voucher No. 11 B

Pay Roll hired mechanics & Labourers

56 men for August 1839..... \$1577.51

Voucher No. 12 B

Received Fort Smith Ark. September 9th 1839 of Major  
Charles Thomas QM, One thousand dollars on account  
of the QM Department.

signed W. L. Henry  
Lt & AAQM

---

Voucher No. 13 B

The United States to Smith Thornton Dr

---

Aug 6th 1839. For Keeping a Public Horse left with me  
(lame) by Gen. Wool Apl. 20th to Aug 6th  
1839.....\$15.00

Received at Fort Smith Ark. Sept 21, 1839  
of Maj. Chas Thomas QM US Army, Fifteen dollars  
in full of the above account.

duplicates

signed Smith Thornton

---

Voucher No. 14 B

The United States to Thos McConnell Dr

---

Sept 27th 1839. For transporting 2 large Tackle Blocks  
from Fort Smith to Ozark ..... \$1.50

Received at Fort Smith Ark Sept 27th 1839 of  
Maj. Charles Thomas QM US Army, one dollar and  
fifty Cents in full of the above account.

duplicates

signed Thos McConnell

---

Voucher No. 16 B

Pay roll, hired Mechanics and Labourers 56 men  
for the month of September 1839..... \$1591.49

---

Voucher No. 15 B

The United States to Maj Charles Thomas QM US Army Dr

Aug 2 to Sept 6th 1839. The transportation of Baggage from Fort Smith Ark to New Orleans La. via Natchez Miss. and back to Fort Smith Ark by the route of the Mississippi and Arkansas Rivers from Little Rock, down and back being 2290 miles at 10 cts per mile..... \$229.00

For transportation of one servant on the whole of the Route above stated being 2290 miles at 8 cts per mile 183.20

\$412.20

I certify, on honor, that the foregoing account is correct (illegible) that I have actually performed the journey therein charged for in discharge of my official duties, as QM and superintendent of the New Works at Fort Smith Ark. for the purpose of obtaining funds at Natchez & New Orleans for drafts of the Treasury of the United States. That I was not on furlough, or leave of Absence, but on Actual duty when the journey was commenced, and that I have not been supplied with public transportation, nor received money in lieu thereof, for any part of the distance charged for.

I further Certify that I am not in arrears to the United States on any account whatever. The servant I took with me was a trusty white man: and I took him as much as an assistant as a servant, thinking it necessary for the better security of the funds I was to transport. Especially as the City of New Orleans was very sickly, and liable to sickness during the whole journey.

(Signed)  
Chas Thomas  
Maj & QM

Received, Fort Smith Ark. Sept 30th 1839,  
of Maj. Chas Thomas QM US Army, four hundred & twelve Dollars, and twenty Cents,  
in full of the above account.

duplicates  
signed Chas Thomas  
Maj & QM

I certify on honour that the foregoing copies of vouchers numbered 1 to 16 are correct and that the original vouchers, at large, were mailed at this place for Washington, directed to the QM Genl. U. S. Army.

Chas Thomas  
Maj. & QM

Fort Smith Ark  
March 12th 1840



SUBSISTENCE

STEAM ENGINE										SUBSISTENCE																				
Haps No.	Horse-Plans	Kegs, empty	Lbbs, sum	Measuring sticks No.	Tar, coal barrels	Pepper lbs	Staples No.	Salteratus	Sets, fine No.	Steel, as-sorted lbs	Squares, Steel No.	Twine, sewing lbs.	Ticking	Bolter, Iron lbs.	Cocks, guage No.	Cocks, steam No.	Cocks, pump No.	Copper pipe lbs.	Copper Globe No.	Rivets for boiler No.	Pumps, fine No.	Beef lbs.	Pork barrels	Flour barrels	Meal lbs.	Beans bushels	quarters	Lbs.		
				2			6			388	2	6				8	3		208	1	400	3			5	7	3	16		171
													42						102				600	7	6				189	
																							455	7	9	5	24		189	
1	1	1	3	2	2	2	6	2	1	388	2	6	42			14	3		218	1	400	3	1056	19	22	9	8		360	
1	1	1	3	2	2	2	6	2	1	388	2	6	42			14	3		218	1	400	3	1056	19	22	9	8		360	





APPENDIX B

Thomas' Comparisons and Comments Regarding  
the Bonding Agreement Signed by John Rogers on April 12, 1838  
and His Deed of Trust as Recorded in the Crawford County Deed  
Book on \_\_\_\_\_. (illegible)

## Agreement

1. Commencing on the Arkansas river at the post marking the Indian boundary.
2. thence south to the south west corner of the south west fractional quarter of section 17.
3. thence east to the south east corner of the west half of the south east quarter of section 17.
4. thence north to the north east corner of the west half of the south east quarter of section 17.
5. thence due east four hundred & forty yards, to the west line of Section 16.
6. thence north on this west line of section 16 four hundred & forty yards.
7. thence by a line running west of north, so as to strike the Arkansas river 100 yards below the post marking the Indian boundary upon the river.
8. and closing by this line running up the Arkansas river 100 yards. contents 296 acres

## Deed

1. Beginning on the Arkansas river at the post marking the Indian boundary line.
2. running thence S.  $10^{\circ}$  East on the Indian boundary line 102 chains, to the S.W. corner of the S.W. fractional quarter of section 17.
3. running north  $82^{\circ}$  E. 24 chains to the South East corner of the west half of the S.E. quarter of section 17.
4. running thence north  $8^{\circ}$  W. forty chains to the north east corner of the west half of the S.E. quarter of section 17.
5. thence N.  $82^{\circ}$  East 20 chains, (440 yds) to a stake in the middle of the west line of Section 16.
6. thence N.  $8^{\circ}$  west 20 chains (440 yds) to a stake on the west line of section 16.
7. thence north 54 degrees west 62 chains to a stake 100 yards, below the Indian boundary post on the Arkansas river.
8. thence S.  $17\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  W. 4 chains  $54\frac{1}{2}$  links, or 100 yards to the said Indian boundary post. contents 307 acres

You will perceive that in the point of starting -- to wit -- "The post marking the Indian Boundary, is the same, the word "commencing," being used in one case and "Beginning" in the other -- no very essential difference, and I humbly conceive one and the same. Yet, here lies all

the difficulty -- Mr. Rogers says "the post" is the one set up by the late Capt. Stewart [sic] of Army, as a guide (or pointer I believe surveyors here call it) -- this post cannot be, the post marking the "Indian boundary on the Arkansas river," -- it is 16.5 feet distant from the river up on the bluff banks -- all surveys here run to low water mark -- the nearest tree is marked, which is some times 100 yards, or more from the bank of the river, yet the line does not stop here it is only known as a "guide" or "pointer": the line continuing to low water mark -- of this I do not think you can entertain a doubt -- it is a well established fact here -- If the "line" does not extend to low water mark, how did Mr. Rogers ever acquire a title to his land further than the post or whatever else may have been the point marked and would there not be a part of the state of Arkansas and of the Indian nation without and boundary between them? I. E. from Cap. Stewart's [sic] post to the river, and across it, where I suppose it would again take up its line of march after it had left the river a sufficient distance to meet the views of another Mr. Rogers on the opposite side.

The lines around the tract of land do not vary, except verbally, one is the magnetic [sic], the other the true course -- they all tend to the same points, and we again approach the river -- here the agreement says -- "thence by a line running west or north to ~~strike~~ the Arkansas river one hundred yards below the post marking the Indian boundary line upon the river and closing by this line running up the Arkansas river one hundred yards." -- The deed varying its phraseology says -- "thence N.  $54^{\circ}$  west sixty two chains to a stake one hundred yards below the Indian boundary post on the Arkansas river thence S.  $17\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  west one hundred yards, or 4 ch:  $54\frac{1}{2}$  links to said Indian boundary post."

Now as I have already mentioned the great difficulty and only one I may say is the point of "commencing" or "Beginning." I have always been of opinion the place was and should be on the river at low water mark (as usual) because if not there, how could the line according to the contract after "striking the Arkansas river" be closed by running

up the river 100 yards? would it not leave the river immediately? the "post" being away from the river -- and would the United States purchase or own by the Agreement more than a mere point where it "strikes the river" -- Mr. Rogers [sic] owning a strip in front the whole distance, commencing at the point & widening as it extends up the river to his Indian boundary post. It is not only unreasonable to suppose such was the intentions when the contract was made at Washington, but is actually more against the United States than Mr. Rogers claim [s] and it would not contain the quantity purchased or agreed to be purchased.

It certainly was the intention to purchase a front on the Arkansas river -- and I have always supposed so and claimed it for the United States -- yet if my construction of the "contract" is not the correct one, the United States never purchased or contracted for a front on the Arkansas river -- and I respectfully state that I cannot, therefore by my neglect or oversight, have deprived the U. States of said front, in receiving the deed from Mr. Rogers [sic].

I understood, by the contract, from Col. Cross who made it, and from Rogers himself when I first arrived here & until May last, that the U. S. had purchased one hundred yards front on the river -- I yet believe it and am fully persuaded that a Court of Law would award & declare the line to be agreeably to my view of the case. If however I am in error and the U. States loose the front on the river -- the oversight is in drawing the contract and not in the Deed for they must both stand or fall together -- for if the contract covers the shore so does the Deed, as must be acknowledged by all; as at the very point the difficulty originates (the place of starting) the contract and and Deed perfectly agree and they agree also in returning the line to the river, 100 yards below the place of beginning.

The survey as made by the County surveyor, his line, his calculations, his stakes amount to nothing -- if he has blundered in running his lines & in calculating the quantity of land within them, either for or against Mr. Rogers it is no importance -- no curved, wrong, or false lines will avail Mr. Rogers [sic] -- The metes & bounds being given by which the

U. States purchased, and for which a Deed, approved by the District Attorney of the U. S. has been given, and this Deed has been properly recorded, no act or claim of Mr. Rodgers [sic], can deprive the United States of one foot of the land included within said boundaries -- nothing but a Deed from the U. S. to Rogers can reinvest him with it, or any part of it -- I never agreed to his lines, I never acknowledged their correctness -- I was not present when they were run -- on the contrary, I always spoke of his mistake on the river, and never agreed to it -- But even if I had it is nothing to the purpose -- I could not alter the bounds, but as mentioned in my letter of the ... [23d] June to relieve Mr. Rodgers [sic] at the same time not injure the United States, I proposed an exchange or rather to recommend one -- which he agreed to, and since has refused to fulfill -- by which he has lost all claim to the benefit of it --

I must again state, that the only point to be defined is the "Beginning," that settled upon, the rest is plain -- if I am correct in my construction of the contract. Under existing circumstances, not having made it, I will not be too confident, the United States now own by Deed given and recorded, all the land intended to be purchased by said contract -- If Rogers is correct and the starting point is not at the river (but at Stewart's [sic] guide post) neither contract or Deed will cover one foot of the river shore -- and for which I respectfully request you will not blame me -- agreeing as the two instruments do -- But supposing for an instant that Mr. Rodgers [sic] had drawn a defective Deed -- the District Attorney should have refused to approve of it -- He was to judge of its correctness -- and we have also Mr. Rodger's [sic] bond for \$20,000 -- to compel him to fulfill his contract; which is, "to give a good & sufficient Deed of conveyance" --

Having such a Deed & Bond I really supposed the interests of the U. States were safe and sufficiently guarded -- and still think so.

APPENDIX C

Monthly Summary Statement  
June 1840





APPENDIX D

Nature and Extent of Work Done at  
Fort Smith 1838 - October 1840

The space enclosed within the walls (upwards of 7 acres) was much broken and required much leveling and grading to prepare it even to commence the walls. It is an irregular pentagon, the principal side, next the Arkansas river, being 600 feet, the two flanks extending back 400 feet each, at right angles with the principal front, and connected by a projecting angle from each -- A Bastion is erected at each angle -- the walls connecting the Bastions project 15 feet, and form an angle at each gate way, this allows a close fire along the walls and a cross fire at and close to the gates without the possibility of firing into, or injuring the opposite Bastion -- see plan.

On the front section (section No 1 on the plan) the foundation of the wall, although laid as near the surface as could be with safety, is from two to three feet deeper than on the other sides, the ground being that much deeper for the whole length of the line (600 feet) -- It has since been secured by embankment inside and outside.

The foundation of section No. 2 (commencing at bastion No. 2 and extending to Bastion No. 3) at its junction with No. 2 Bastion is as low as Section No. 1 the ground rising as it approaches the gateway. When excavation became necessary to the depth of seven feet between gate No 2 and Bastion No. 3 near which the ground again fell off, and required an excavation of but three feet.

On section No. 3 extending from Bastion No. 3 to No 4 the ground fell off rapidly and required embankment increasing until it reached the gateway, where it is ten feet; when it again rose gradually as it approached Bastion No. 4 at which point it was on a level with the work as graded. This embankment was raised a foot at a time, and allowed to settle before another-layer-of earth was placed upon it; and had become perfectly firm and solid, previous to laying the foundation of the wall.

Section No. 4, extending from Bastions No. 4 to No. 5 required from two to three feet embankment from bastion No 4 to within a few feet of Bastion No. 5, when the surface again rose and required excavation.

On section No. 5, extending from Bastion No. 5 to No 1 the surface rose rapidly and required an excavation of nine feet at the deepest point

between Bastion No. 5 and gate No. 5 where it commenced sloping gradually as it approached Bastion No. 1 where the foundation is again near the surface.

From the foregoing account of the embankment and excavation required to commence the foundation of the walls of the Fort; it will be seen that it is situated on a ridge running lengthwise through the Fort, the highest part of which ridge was between gate No. 2 and Bastion No. 3 and Bastion No. 5 and gate No. 5. On the side next section No. 1 the slope was gradual and but little broken, extending beyond the wall toward the Arkansas river. This rendered it necessary to commence the foundations of Bastions No. 1 and No. 2 lower than the front wall (section No. 1 which is two feet lower down than the rest of the work) as they extend beyond it toward the river. The salient angle of No. 1 took seven feet to bring it up to the level of the foundation, and of No. 2 nine feet decreasing as they joined the walls of the Fort. The interior of these Bastions have been filled with earth to the level of the interior of the Fort, say to the top of the foundation of the walls which is two and half feet, except the section No. 1 which is five feet deep.

The ridge after passing through section No. 2 commences falling off gradually towards the point (old Fort) and Poteau river, and more rapidly at bastion No. 3 for a few hundred yards, when it again rises to nearly a level with the foundation of the walls.

On the outside of section No. 3, the ground is much broken and lower than where the embankment and wall are laid. The embankment extends beyond, or outside the wall a sufficient distance only to render the wall secure.

On the outside of section No. 4, the ground falls off but a few feet, and is nearly level for several hundred yards.

On the outside of section No. 5, the ridge continues nearly on a level, falling off but little for several hundred yards, when it again falls off rapidly. It has been reduced to a level with the top of the foundation of the wall, nearly as far as the public ground extends. The earth was carried within the walls of this Fort to fill up where required, to fill the foundation of Bastion No. 1 to make the embankments of sections 3 and 4 and in front of section No. 1 so as to render it secure from injury from frost, that section being laid near the surface as before stated.

The ridge within the Fort was reduced to the required level, part of the earth being required to raise the space between it and the front wall (section No 1) and the remainder for embankment, and in filling the space between it and sections No 3 and No 4. The grading of the interior was completed except that portion lying within the angle formed by Bastion No. 3, 4 and 5, which was not entirely filled up, to complete this earth must be brought from outside of the walls, outside of section No. 5 will afford sufficient for the purpose.

When the grading shall be completed the Fort will be on an elevation; the ground sloping away on all sides except on the ridge outside of the part of section No. 5 where it will be nearly level until it passes through the village. No ground within from half a mile to a mile is higher than the parade of the fort.

The foundations of Bastions No. 1 and No 2 are five feet thick, and were built up to the top of the foundation of the walls. No. 1 requiring seven feet, and No. 2 requiring nine feet of masonry to bring them up to that level. The thickness was required to support the abutments of the arches upon which the second story were to have been erected (see plan). The foundation of No 3, 4 and 5 being on higher ground, are four and a half feet thick, and from two and a half to three and a half feet deep.

The gorges of Bastions No. 3 and 4 were built as high as the walls, breaking off on the flanks and faces. The foundation of the arches were also laid on these and No. 1. The gorge of No 1 was not built as high as the walls of the body of the work. No work was done above the foundations on No 2 and No 3.

The foundation of the wall of the body of the Fort was commenced three feet thick and continued that thickness to the top, when the decrease of thickness begins gradually so as to leave it two and a half feet in thickness at the height of twelve feet.

The wall of the Fort was built seven feet above the top of the foundation, and leveled ready to commence the loop holes with the next course of masonry.

The foundations were first carried entirely around the work, then a course four feet high, and then one of three feet. This allowed the wall to settle previous to the last course of masonry, in case the embankments were not perfectly solid and firm. The settling was very trifling on the second course and none on the last.

The gate posts (of dressed stone) were erected a foot or two higher than the walls, with the exception of those for gate No. 2 which were dressed but not put up, a space being left for the passage of teams during the erection of the buildings.

The stone quarry is situated at the junction of the Arkansas and Poteau rivers. The ledge had been uncovered of earth by the freshets in those streams, and was covered by a strata of rotten slate varying from one to two feet in thickness. This being removed, exposed a strata of good stone for building about four feet thick, then another strata of slate about one foot thick, upon the removal of which a strata of most excellent stone varying from six to eight feet in thickness. In opening and working the quarry, I kept in view the quantity and kind of stone required to complete the work, and took measures to have it extensively and properly opened, so that a large force could be placed to work in it. When I left it a hundred men, with teams in proportion could have been employed without interference. The opening was commenced on the edge of the Poteau river, extending round the point. A good road was made from it to the Fort, which road is nearly level after ascending from the quarry to within a short distance of the Fort where it rises gradually. By this road the loaded teams passed. Another road was on the Arkansas and by which the empty carts &c. went into the quarry. By this arrangement the teams did not interfere with each other and a number could be loaded at the same time, passing off as soon as loaded.

After the works are finished, with a little leveling it [the quarry] will answer for a public landing. The shore is bold, and there is always a sufficient depth of water for Steamers. The distance from the Fort is not much greater than the landing at present in use and it would be much cleaner especially in wet weather.

The basement storys of Barracks and Quarters for four companies were built ready for the principal or first floor. They consist of a building for the Commandant forty four feet front by thirty eight feet deep, and four on each side of it twenty five feet front by thirty eight feet deep each, for Company officers. On the opposite side are the basements of the Barracks, four in number, each thirty feet front by sixty feet deep. The basements rise four feet above the parade in front.

These basements contain sufficient material and work to have finished the ... walls at the heighth of twelve feet.

The mill is situated on the banks of the Poteau river near its junction with the Arkansas, about four hundred yards from the Fort, and is protected by Bastions No. 2, 3 and 4. It is built on the solid ledge, the foundations is of stone ten feet high and three feet thick. Iron bolts fasten in the ledge extend up in the wall to which the sills of the frame of the mill are secured on the foundation by nuts and screws. The wood work is two stories high and is strong and substantial. No necessary work was spared to render it permanent in all its parts. It has two seven feet saws on the upper floor. A turning lathe and the machinery for the circular-saws and a run of mill stones is ready to be put in motion on the lower floor. They would have been put in operation in a month or two if the work had not been stopped in 1840.

Expenditures of Major Thomas White at Fort Smith

2d Qr.	1838	Military road from the Missouri to the Red River	2,011.93
3d Qr.	1838	Military road from the Missouri to the Red River	19,155.80
4th Qr.	1838	Military road from the Missouri to the Red River	9,018.11
1st Qr.	1839	Military road from the Missouri to the Red River	2,978.41
2d Qr.	1839	Military road from the Missouri to the Red River	47.15
3d Qr.	1838	For Site	15,000.00
2d Qr.	1839	Barracks for Western Frontier	25,456.08
3d Qr.	1839	Military road from the Missouri to the Red River	14,492.27
4th Qr.	1839	Barracks for Western Frontier	9,847.82
1st Qr.	1840	Barracks for Western Frontier	4,285.55
2d Qr.	1840	Barracks for Western Frontier	3,424.88
3d Qr.	1840	Barracks for Western Frontier	35,418.59
4th Qr.	1840	Barracks for Western Frontier	<u>4,108.90</u>
		Total Amount Expended	\$145,685.49

The aggregate expenditures made at Fort Smith, Ark., in 1838, 39, and 40 by Maj. Charles Thomas QM amounts to..... \$145,685.49  
 From which should be deducted

Amount sales of public property and transfers to QM Department ..... \$8463.90  
 Amount paid for site ..... 15000.00

Amount expended in buildings &c..... \$122,221.59  
23,463.90

APPENDIX E

Estimate of the cost of the cantonment built near Fort Smith,  
Ark., in the years 1838, 39 & 40.



Amount of material &c furnished to the Act  
Asst QM by Maj. Chas. Thomas QM as  
per statement furnished..... 4,532.77

Amount of expenditures made by Lts.  
Britton and Henry a.a.q.m. 1838-39  
& 40 under the head of repairs &c &c..... 2,181.39

Amount paid for extra labour during the  
same period..... 239.25

**\$6,953.41**

In addition to which should be added part of the amount  
paid for forage. If the troops had been cantoned  
at the old fort one half of the teams could have  
been dispensed with 2,605.96

**\$9,559.37**

In addition the stores received at sundry times from  
Maj. J. Clark QM New Orleans \$200

The amount of labour bestowed on the work cannot be estimates. The troops were engaged on it from Dec. 1838 to Sept. 1840 (except part of them in 1839). The amount of Extra Pay is small as the soldiers were reported on "fatigue" and not on "Extra Duty."

APPENDIX F

This agreement, made this Second day of September in the year of our Lord 1841, between William Whiteside and Capt. [sic] J. R. Irwin, Assistant Quarter Master of the United States Army, Witnesseth, that the said William Whiteside of the first part, binds himself by this instrument, to serve the United States as a carpenter on the Public Works at Fort Smith, on the Arkansas River, for a term of one year, or till the completion of the works (unless sooner discharged). And the said William Whiteside further agrees that, at the discretion of the Officer in charge of the works, he may be assigned to any labor or duty other than his especial trade or occupation for which he has been engaged; Provided the good of the service in the estimation of the Superintendent demand such change.

And the said Capt. [sic] J. R. Irwin, of the second part, agrees in behalf of the United States Government, to give the said William Whiteside of the first part, the sum of fifty-five dollars per month, and the Government ration of subsistence, or its equivalent in money, at the Contract price of Provisions at the Post, at the discretion of the United States Quartermaster or other Officer superintending the work. And the said Capt. [Lt.] J. R. Irwin, further agrees to furnish the said William Whiteside with transportation and subsistence free of expense to Fort Smith; and the monthly pay will commence from the day of departure from Cincinnati or Louisville. The ten hour system to be followed.

Witness our hands and seals this Second day of September 1841.

Wm. R. Irwin  
Witnessess

William Whiteside  
J. R. Irwin  
AQM

APPENDIX G

Alexander's Court of Inquiry

Saturday Dec 31, 1842

The court met pursuant to the adjournment of yesterday, all the members present. The accused having no further evidence to produce and no defence to make the court closed and after mature deliberation upon the testimony adduced find the following facts:

On the 1st Charge -- The between Oct. 1840 and October 1842 certain animals varying from time to time in number and description, the property of Captain Alexander, were fed from the public forage; that the persons in charge of the public forage were ordered by the Captain to keep an exact account of all the forage thus issued, that about the period of discharge from the employment of the government, the prosecutor Thos. J. Earhart was ordered to get this account, that it might be settled and the forage accounted for; that he manifested an unwillingness to do so, when Francis McKeiman was told to make out the account.

On the 2nd Charge -- That Captain Alexander caused public lumber to be worked into a bedstead for his ~~own~~ house; that this bedstead replaced one, which, was afterwards used by one of the workmen in the public employment, and is now held as public property; that a small quantity of Public iron was made into five dogs for Captain Alexander's quarters - the only evidence on this point is that of the prosecutor, who could not say whether the iron was returned; that the public leather was used to fill bridle bits for Captain Alexander, but that T. J. Earhart before his discharge was ordered to render an exact account of all public leather used for private purposes.

On 3rd Charge -- "The Court do not find from the evidence presented that Captain Alexander furnished public quarters to citizens when required for the public service."

On 4th Charge -- The Court finds that some time in Nov. or December 1840 [sic] Captain Alexander exchanged some public hay with Dr. Main for fodder; it does not appear that this fodder was appropriated to his private use.

On 5th Charge -- The Court finds that in April 1841 Captain Alexander loaned a public team to James K. Logan of Pittsburgh to haul public Stores

from the river landing to the Store house, that, in December 1840 he loaned the public team to Captain Rogers of Fort Smith to haul ice, to his ice house, that in neither of these cases were the teams required at the time for the public service and that in both the public interest appears to have been benefitted by the loans in question.

On 6th Charge -- The Court finds that during the years 1841 & 1842, Charles Tyler, the clerk of Captain Alexander was permitted to ride a public horse when not required for public purposes, that no particular horse was exclusively devoted to his use and that the same privilege had been extended both to him and to the prosecutor by Major Thomas the predecessor of Captain Alexander on the Public Works.

On 7th Charge. -- The Court finds that in the spring of 1841 two men employed in the public stables, viz. Francis McKeiman and D. Mahoney having leisure time in the Middle of the day, worked occasionally at such intervals in Captain Alexander's garden, receiving then for a share of the vegetables thus realised. It does not appear that this work interfered in any manner with their public duties.

Although much evidence was taken on the 8th Charge, the Court do not find that Captain Alexander at the public works at Fort Smith, has kept or employed men who could not or did not render adequate Service to the government.

On 9th Charge -- The Court find that on the resumption of the public works at Fort Smith, Captain Alexander on the earnest and reiterated representations of the Master builder, caused the chimneys which had been previously built up some seven feet in the basements of the quarters to be taken down and erected at different points, the representations of the master builder Setting forth that the plan of the buildings so far as regarding the chimneys was vicious and required alteration.

On 10th Charge -- The Court find that Joseph O. Sawyer the Master Carpenter at Fort Smith was allowed full time about two weeks in August 1842, when he was sick and confined to his house; that during this time he was consulted daily by Captain Alexander and the workmen on matters pertaining to his duties.

The Court do not find that E. Goble was allowed hay when corresponding service was not rendered.

On 11th Charge -- The Court find that after about thirty Stone piers or pillasters had been cut for the new quarters at Fort Smith, the plan was changed and it was determined to substitute brick for stone; that this change was urged upon Captain Alexander by the Master builder; that the Stone piers thus cut can be advantageously used for other purposes. In the change made in the mode of measuring timber at Fort Smith as disclosed in the evidence the Court do not find anything to support the charge.

On 12th Charge -- The Court finds no facts whatever.

APPENDIX H

Statement of the New Work, at Fort Smith, Arkansas,  
together with an Estimate for its completion.



WALL

Section of Main Wall	Whole amount of work necessary	Amount of Work finished	Necessary for completion	Lineal feet of capping required to finish	Remarks
	Perch	Perch	Perch	Feet	
1	558	389	169	280	There has been laid on the ten walls 2804 perch of rough stone. It will require 758 perch of rough stone, to finish the same — ten walls worth seven dollars — per perch when layed — \$5,306.00. In these walls, there is required 400 loop holes — cut stone worth two dollars each, \$800.00 and 1960 lineal feet of capping — required to complete the main walls, at two dollars per foot, capping \$3920.00
2	548	379	169	280	
3	322	217	105	175	
4	297	192	105	175	
5	301	301	X	175	
6	301	301	X	175	
7	301	301	X	175	
8	301	301	X	175	
9	297	192	105	175	
10	318	213	105	175	
	3,582	2,804	758	1960	

Ten gate posts, to finish requiring 125 lineal feet, each at one dollar per foot, \$125.00. Five gate sills 270 feet, at seventy 5 cents per foot, \$204.00, pointing walls, when finished \$1000....

Total amount required to finish the main wall of the Fort is twelve thousand four hundred, and eighty dollars \$12,480.

Iron hangings and fastenings for five gates not estimated.

BLOCK HOUSES

	Whole amount of Work necessary	Work Finished	Necessary for Completion	Lineal feet of casing required	Remarks
	Perch	Perch	Perch	Feet	
1	907	421	486	190	There is yet required to finish five block houses 1899 perch of rough stone, worth when layed seven dollars per perch \$13,293, and 830 Lineal feet of casing at two dollars per foot \$1660 - 300 loopholes at two dollars each \$600 -- 200 embrasurers and slits at six dollars each \$1,200, stone to cut for 100 arches at twenty
2	872	386	486	190	
3	448	234	214	125	
4	831	330	501	200	
5	440	228	212	125	
	3498	1599	1899	830	stone to cut for 100 arches at twenty

five dollars each \$2,500. Total amount of stone work required for the five blockhouses - is nineteen thousand, two hundred and fifty three dollars, \$19,253.

There will be required for the magazines, store rooms &c at blockhouses  
 three hundred thousand bricks at fifteen dollars per thousand \$4500.  
 Stone foundations for same, 200 perch \$7 1400.  
 Raking out mortar and pointing outsides 1000.

Total amount of masonwork required to finish the five Blockhouses - twenty six thousand one hundred and fifty three dollars.

No plan for a roof, no estimate is made. They should be metal.

Memorandum for an Estimate for the completion of the works at Fort Smith, Ark., by T. J. Earhart, Late Supt.

Commanding Officer's Quarters

This Building required in the first place, 218 perch of Rough Stone, of which 100 perch remains to be laid at \$7 per perch, \$700, and 938 superficial feet of Cut Stones in the shape of water table, plinths, Caps, sills &c at 75 cents per foot (\$703.50¢) and 844 superficial feet of Barge capping, and capping for aera walls at 75 cents per foot (\$633.) 4 shoe stones, for conductors, at \$10 each (\$40) -- 12 capitals for Porch columns at \$30 each (\$360) -- 200 superficial feet for the rear Porch \$300 and 230,000 Brick at \$15 per thousand (\$3450) -- and 2100 Yards Lathing and Plastering at 50 cents per yard (\$1050) And 31 squares of Slating at \$15 per square (\$465) and 50 pounds of Sheet Lead for Ridge at ten cents per pound (\$5) -- and Copper gutters, Conductors, and Fastenings (\$300) Total amount for the finishing of the Commanding Officer's Quarters \$8156.50 -- Eight Thousand one hundred and Fifty six Dollars, and fifty cents.

One Block of Officers' Quarters

Will require 200 Perch of Rough Stone at \$7 per perch (\$1400) and 1902 Superficial feet of cut stone in water table, plinths caps, sill &c at 75¢ per foot (\$1427) and superficial 980 feet of Barge capping, and capping for Aera walls at 75¢ per foot (\$735) and six Shoe Stones for Conductors at \$10 each (\$60) and 26 Capitals for Porch Columns at \$30 each (\$780) and 800 superficial feet of Cut Stone for Four Flights of Front Steps at 75¢ per foot (\$600) and 1,600 feet for the Rear Steps (\$1200) and 500,000 Bricks at \$15 per 1,000 (\$7,500) and 3000 yards of Lathing and Plastering at 50¢ per yard (\$1,500) and 70 squares of Slating at \$15 per square (\$1050) Lead for Ridges, and Copper for Gutters and conductors and Fastenings (\$600).

Total amount to finish one Block of Officer's Quarters \$17,672. Seventeen Thousand, Six Hundred and Seventy two Dollars.

One Block of Barracks

Requires 100 perch of Rough Stone at \$7 per perch (\$700) and 1450 Superficial feet of Cut Stone, in water table, plinths, Caps, Sills & at 75¢ per foot (\$1059) and 14 Capitals at \$30 each (\$420) and 4 Shoe Stones for Conductors at \$10 each (\$40) and 994 Superficial feet of Cut Stone for Barge Caping, and Caping for Aera walls, at 75¢ per foot (\$746) and 400 superficial feet of Cut Stone for Front Steps at 75¢ per foot (\$300) and 800 feet for the Rear Steps (\$600) and 400,000 Bricks at \$15. per 1,000 (\$6000) and 3000 yards of Lathing and Plastering at 50¢ per yard (\$1,500) and 59 Squares of Slating at \$15 per Square (\$885) Lead for Ridges, Copper for Gutters, Conductors, and Fastenings (\$537).

Total for one Block of Barracks \$12,787. Total, Twelve Thousand, Seven Hundred & Eight-Seven Dollars.

My Estimate for a Stable, 60 by 35 feet, is \$2123: Two Thousand, one Hundred and Twenty-three Dollars, the detail of which I can furnish if required, together with the Estimates of Glass, Nails and Carpenter's work in detail for the Quarters & Barracks.

Signed

Thos. J. Earhart

Estimates of Funds Required

To finish Fort Walls, Sections No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 9 & 10, 790 perch of rough Stone work @ \$4. per perch including loop holes .....	\$ 3,160.
To Finish block Houses to the height walls (12 feet) loop &c \$ 4.90 perch of rough dressed stone work @ \$10 per perch.....	4,900.
3,000 feet (running measure) capping for walls & block Houses @ \$1 per foot.....	3,000.
To finish 5 gates, Posts & Hinges &c.....	<u>1,640.</u>
	\$12,700

Commanding Officer's Quarters (B)

To finish foundation 74 perch rough Stone work at \$4. per perch .....	\$ 296
cut Stone work including water table, door and window Sills and Caps, (illegible) & caps for porch &c .....	1,350
Making and laying 240 thousand brick @ \$12 per thousand.....	2,880
Lumber for finishing interior 32,000 feet @ \$20 per thousand .....	640
Hardware, Locks, Hinges &c.....	165
Roofing 30 squares of slate @ \$14 50/100 .....	435
per square	
Copper work, pipes & gutters.....	250
Painting & glazing (workmanship & material).....	270
Carpenter work .....	1,100
Enclosing yards privies &c.....	<u>400</u>
	\$8,350

Officers Block C

To finish foundation 112 perch rough Stone work at \$4 per perch .....	\$ 448
Cut Stone work including water tables Door & window sills & caps (illegible) & caps for porch.....	2,150
500 thousand brick (making and laying) @ \$12 per thousand.....	6,000
Hardware, locks, Hinges &c .....	375
74 Squares of Slate put on @ \$14 50/100 per square.....	1,073
Copper work, Pipes and gutters.....	525
Painting & glazing (workmanship & material) .....	380
3,800 yards plastering @ 40/100 per yd.....	1,520
Carpenter work .....	3,200
Enclosing yards privies &c.....	<u>1,200</u>
	\$16,870

Barracks E

Laying 350 thousand brick including lime @ \$5 per thousand (the brick being hard).....	1,750
Cap Stone work. Dor & window sills & caps (illegible) & caps for porch.....	932
12 Squares slate @ \$9 per Square.....	180
Putting on 60 squares @ 2 50/100 (Slate on hand) .....	150
Hardware, locks, Hinges &c .....	170
Copper work, Pipes, gutters &c.....	300
Painting & glazing .....	230
2,510 yds plaster at \$40/100 per yard.....	1,000
Carpenter work .....	1,000
Sink & privies .....	<u>700</u>
	\$6,405

Total Amount

To finish block Houses & walls	12,700
Commissioned Officers Quarters (B)	8,358
Officers Quarters (C)	<u>116,871</u>
Soldiers Barracks (E)	<u>6,405</u>
	\$44,329

APPENDIX I

Memoranda

Under the 3d Section of the law approved July 2nd 1836 appropriating \$100,000 for the protection of the Western Frontier, Fort Smith was commenced.

Out of this appropriation Major Thomas expended..... \$47,643.63

Under a resolution of Congress April 4th 1838 out of the appropriation of \$50,000 made in the year 1836 to remove troops from Fort Gibson. Fifteen thousand dollars was authorized to be taken for the purchase of the site for Fort Smith...

15,000.00

On the 3d of March 1839 an appropriation of \$52,125.67 was made for the better protection of the Western Frontier, being the balance of appropriation of July 2nd 1836, carried to the surplus fund: and on the same day an appropriation of \$80,000.00 was made for the Barracks Quarters & necessary defences on the Western Frontier. Out of these two appropriations Major Thomas expended..... 43,014.33

On the 20th July 1840 there was appropriated for continuing Barracks at

Fort Smith .....	50,000
On the 3d March 1841 .....	50,000
On the 23rd Aug 1842 .....	10,000
On the 3rd March 1843 .....	<u>20,000</u>

Total 130,000

Brought over.....\$105,658.00

Out of these appropriations Major Thomas expended in the 3rd and 4th Quarters of 1840..... 40,027.49

Capt. Alexander.....	108,331.70
Forage Master Neek.....	70.85
Captain J. R. Irvin.....	314.79
Captain N. C. Macrae.....	<u>369.00</u>

\$254,771.83

Recapitulatich

Major Thomas expended	\$145,685.49
Capt. Alexander	108,331.70
Forage Master Neek	70.85
Captain Irvin	314.79
Captain Macrae	<u>369.00</u>
	\$254,771.83

Total amount of appropriation \$325,000.



APPENDIX J

Contract with A. A. Blumenthal for Converting  
the Foundations of Blockhouse 2 into a  
Storehouse and Building a Two Story Warehouse

*Quantities Estimated*

Specification for Work required to be done, to convert a foundation of a Block House into that of a Store house and build a two story Warehouse of it in the shape and form as the one erected for Commissary Store house last year.

To take down one corner of the door of the foundation and build it up in right Angles, with a door.....	\$ 30.00
To take down a part of the wall and build one door.....	20.00
To build the first story of rock, to be 10 feet high in the clear when finished, containing 206 Perch of rock @ 2.50 per perch.....	515.00
To build the Second Story to be 12 feet high when finished contains 218 perch @ \$2.50 per perch.....	545.00
3 Door Sills containing 45 feet hammered Stones at 75 cents per foot .....	33.75
To turn 22 arches above doors and windows containing 95 feet at 50 cts per foot.....	47.50
To lay 95 feet of Brick cornice at 50 cts per foot.....	47.00
To lay 120 feet of fine wall at 25 cts per foot.....	30.00
To cut 320 feet of cornice stone at 40 cts per foot.....	128.00
To cut 12 Window sills 48 feet at 75 cts per foot.....	36.00
Twelve window frames, Sash, including glazing and painting \$9 each.....	108.00
2 Double and one Single doors, crosslined including frames and painting \$10 each for Double doors and \$5 dollars for the single door.....	25.00
Floors 23 squares at \$7 per Square.....	161.00
Floors laid in the lower story with rock.....	30.00
Framing six girders, 12 posts and braces \$95.00.....	95.00
Framing and laying joists in Second Story.....	106.00
Framing uper joists and Rafters.....	86.25
To lay 30 Squares of Sheeting at \$1.00 per Square.....	30.00
To lay 30 Squares of Shingles at \$2.00 per Square.....	60.00
To Build a hoisting machine \$25.00.....	<u>25.00</u>
	\$2158.50

Signed

Augustus A. Blumenthal

APPENDIX K

Proceedings of a Board of Survey convened  
at Fort Smith, Arkansas

Fort Smith Ark, May 29th 1849.

The Board met pursuant to the above order, all the members present, finds as follows, Viz. On the 9th of April at about 3 o'clock P.M. the officers of the Post observed smoke issuing from the roof of the building occupied as Soldiers' quarters; the alarm of fire was instantly given, and on rushing to the place the attic in the southern end of the building was found to be on fire, the door at the foot of the staircase was soon broken in, and plenty of water in buckets being by this time at hand, a party headed by an officer rushed up and made every exertion to extinguish the fire, but the flames had extended along the whole sheathing of the roof, and dashing down against them, they, were compelled to give way and retreat down the Stairs. About the same time another party entered the attic at the northern end of the building between the two was a brick partition carried up to the roof with a door, or passage way nailed up, the fire had extended along the roof to this room also, and so rapid was its progress, that this party was soon driven down, both the attics were occupied as company store rooms, and the southern one in which the fire originated had not been entered for two days previous. Notwithstanding repeated exertions, it was found impossible to save the property of the companies.

After abandoning the attic, well directed efforts were made to save the building, until falling timbers drove all from the second to the lower story, where ineffectual efforts were still continued. The chimney of the basement occupied as kitchens had been burned out at one o'clock P.M.

The inhabitants of the town with hundreds of California emigrants then here rushed to the Spot and rendered every assistance in their power.

APPENDIX L

List of Quartermaster's Supplies  
Requisitioned by Captain Montgomery on May 4, 1851

8 Wall Tents and Poles & Flies.  
30 Common Tents and Poles.  
24 Camp Kettles.  
1,000 Horse Shoes.  
1,000 Mule Shoes.  
300 lbs. Horse Shoe Nails (Small).  
10,000 lbs. Iron Assorted.  
1,000 lbs Steel Assorted.  
100 Kegs Nails -- 6d, 8d, & 10d.  
8 Tarpaulins (for covering stores).  
4 Dozen Hand Saws -- 12 Doz. Files.  
1 Dozen Rip Saws.  
1 Dozen Whip Saws -- 6 Doz. Files.  
1 Dozen X Cut Saws -- 3 Doz. Files.  
2 Dozen Broad Axes.  
1 Dozen Hand Axes.  
4 Dozen Slinging Hatchets.  
4 Dozen Nail Hammers .  
4 Sets Blacksmith's Shoeing Tools.  
2 Dozen Drawing Knives.  
6 Sets Bench Planes.  
4 Sets Wortising Chisels.  
4 Sets Firmer Chisels.  
4 Sets Framing Chisels.  
100 Wagon Sheets or covers.  
150 Tar Buckets.  
200 Water Buckets (heavy iron hoops and bales).  
1 Travelling Forge (Complete).  
6 Dozen Wagon Whips.  
100 Chain Halters and neck Straps.  
50 Sides Harness Leather.  
20 Sides Bridle Leather.  
10 Gross Harness Buckles.  
6 Dozen Door Locks.  
6 Dozen Door Latches.  
4 Coil 3/4 inch Hemp Rope.  
10 Feet of Hose for water cart with brass fastenings.

APPENDIX M

Estimate of Cost of Material and of Erection of Hospital  
Building and Kitchen on Plan Herewith Submitted

28,288 Feet of Lumber @ \$20 per 1,000.....	\$ 565.75
25,000 Shingles @ \$4 per 1,000,.,.,.	100.00
3 Chimneys @ \$75 each.....	225.00
Plastering and materials.....	274.00
Stove work & Stove.....	25.00
Carpenter's Work.....	600.00
Paints and painting.....	150.00
Locks, hinges, glass, nails &c.....	<u>100.00</u>
	\$2039.75

Signed

A. Montgomery  
Capt.

Office of Quartermaster  
Fort Smith, Ark  
June 20, 1851

There is no building materials on this reserve. The cost of the carpentry may be reduced by the employment of Soldiers, provided mechanics can be obtained from the commands at -  
Forts Gibson, Washita and Towson



APPENDIX N

Estimate of Funds Required for Improvements, Alterations, and Repairs  
at Fort Smith, Ark., During the Fiscal Year Ending, 30th June 1852.

For completion of officers' quarters, as follows, Viz.

Lumber for ceiling, 4 galleries 100 ft long by 12 feet wide.....	120.00	
64 pairs Venetian window blinds or shutters.....	320.00	
Hardware.....	113.00	
Paints.....	33.00	
Painting.....	67.00	
Carpentry.....	250.00	903.00

For completion of Barracks, as follows, Viz.

Lumber.....	20.00	
Hardware.....	25.00	
Paints.....	25.00	
Painting.....	60.00	
Carpentry.....	150.00	
Lathing & plastering.....	337.00	617.00

For wheelwright's shop, as follows, Viz.

Lumber.....	200.00	
Hardware.....	50.00	
Carpentry & labor.....	225.00	
Masonry.....	65.00	
Shingles.....	56.00	596.00

For Subsistence Store House, as follows, Viz.

Lumber.....	220.00	
Masonry.....	46.00	
Hardware.....	40.00	
Carpentry.....	318.00	<u>524.00</u>

\$2640.00

Signed A. Montgomery  
AQMG USA

Approved  
R. C. Gatlin  
Bvt. Maj. U. S. A.  
Comdr. Post

APPENDIX O

Report of the capacity and condition of the Barracks, Quarters, Hospital, and other public buildings at Fort Smith, Ark., and of the additions, alterations, and repairs needed during the year ending June 30th 1853

BUILDINGS	DESCRIPTION	NO. OF ROOMS	DIMENSIONS	ADDITIONS, ALTERATIONS & REPAIRS MADE WITHIN THE PAST YEAR
Soldiers' Barracks 1 Block	Brick	2 Basement 2 First Floor	56 x 30 feet 56 x 30 feet	Requiring brick floor in basement gallery and painting of woodwork throughout.
Officers' Quarters 2 Blocks	Brick	16 Basement 16 1st Floor 16 2d Floor	19 x 16 feet 19 x 16 feet 19 x 16 feet	Front galleries requiring repairs and painting. The front steps are of wood and have become rotten and unsafe. The lower galleries have never been celled.
Quartermaster Storehouse	Stone	1 Basement 3 1st Floor	44 x 43 feet 44 x 43 feet	
Subeistence Storehouse	Stone	1 Basement 3 1st Floor	44 x 43 feet 44 x 43 feet	
Magazine	Stone	1	34 x 24 feet	Requiring slate roof.
Guardhouse	Brick	3 3 cells	10 x 12 feet 10 x 4 feet	
Hospital	Log			Old rotten and not worth repairing.
Blacksmith shop	Log	2	18 x 18 feet	
Stables	Frame	2	137½ feet each	

There have been no repairs at this Post during the past year of any moment, except the repairing of the line of fences fronting the city; putting a new flight of steps to the Quartermaster's Office, and repairing the fences enclosing the yards in rear of the Officers' Quarters. The repair on the latter are not yet completed.

Signed A. Montgomery

APPENDIX P

Additions, alterations & repairs required for the better  
accommodation of the Officers and men and for the preservation of the public  
property at Fort Smith, Arkansas

<p>Repairing of the flooring of the basement galleries of the Officers' and soldiers' quarters. 4000 Brick @ 9. per 1,000 Laying the same</p>	<p>36.00 3.60</p>	<p>39.00</p>
<p>Painting Soldiers' Quarters and Galleries of Officers' Quarters</p>		<p>124.00</p>
<p>Wheelwright and Carpenter's Shop 64 x 22 feet 5,100 feet Sawed Lumber at \$25 per 1,000 50 pieces of round timber 10,000 Shingles at \$4. per 1,000 200 lbs Nails at 8¢ Carpentry</p>	<p>127.50 13.00 40.00 16.00 135.00</p>	<p>331.50</p>
<p>Hay Shed 80 feet by 20 feet 5,400 feet Sawed Lumber @ \$25 per 1,000 36 pieces of Timber for sleepers 7,000 Shingles at \$4 per 1,000 300 lbs of Nails at 8¢ Carpentry</p>	<p>135.00 9.00 28.00 24.00 250.00</p>	<p>446.00</p>
<p>Post and Rail fence to enclose a portion of the public reserve for the protection of timber thereon and to afford pasturage &amp; better security for the public animals 1,036 Posts @ 12½¢ 6,210 Rail @ 3¢ Labor of Extra Duty men</p>	<p>129.50 186.30 45.00</p>	<p>360.80</p>
<p>Four flights of steps leading up to front galleries of Officers' Quarters 2,000 feet Lumber @ \$25 per 1,000 100 lbs Nails Carpentry</p>	<p>75.00 8.00 400.00</p>	
<p>Or if constructed of Stones 780 feet dressed stone @ \$1 per foot 96 feet of Iron railing for same @ \$2 Masonry work</p>	<p>780.00 192.00 72.00</p>	<p>1044.00</p>
		<p>\$2345.00</p>
<p>Office Asst. Qr Master Fort Smith, Ark. July 14th 1853 Henry Wilson (signed) Col. 7th Inf Condg.</p>		<p>A. Montgomery (signed) Capt QM U. S. A.</p>

APPENDIX Q

Report of the capacity and condition of the Barracks, Quarters, Hospital and other public buildings at Fort Smith, Ark., and of the additions, alterations, and repairs needed during the year ending June 30th 1854

BUILDINGS	DESCRIPTION	NO. OF ROOMS	DIMENSIONS	ADDITIONS, ALTERATIONS & REPAIRS MADE WITHIN THE PAST YEAR
Soldiers' Barracks 1 Block	Brick	2 Basement 2 1st Floor	56 x 30 feet 56 x 30 feet	Requires a Lightning rod -- having been struck by lightning..
Officers' Quarters 2 Blocks	Brick	16 Basement 16 First Floor 16 2d Floor	19 x 16 feet 19 x 16 feet 19 x 16 feet	Front Galleries want repairs and repainting. To one house there are <u>no</u> front steps, and all the steps require some repairs. The front and back galleries of the lower piazza have never been called.
Quartermaster Storehouse	Stone	1 Basement 3 First Floor	44 x 43 feet 44 x 43 feet	
Subsistence Storehouse	Stone	1 Basement 3 First Floor	44 x 43 feet 44 x 43 feet	
Magazine	Stone	one	34 x 24 feet	This building should by all means have a slate roof and a lightning rod. A proper regard for safety of those residing within the garrison requires that the magazine be protected from lightning..
Guardhouse	Brick	3 3 cells	10 x 14 feet 10 x 4 feet	
Hospital	Log			Much deperidated -- not worth repairing.
Blacksmith Shop	Log	2	18 x 18 feet each	
Stables	Frame	2	137½ feet each	The stalls and mangers are now being repaired.

The flagstaff is much decayed and will not stand much longer. The fences enclosing the most of the public lands (being common "worn" fences) have been partly repaired to keep out the animals on the common. The picket fence around the stables will be repaired as soon as the proper season arrives for cutting new pickets.

Sgt. Branch (signed)



APPENDIX R

Special Requisition for Quarter Master's Stores for Depot  
at Fort Smith, Ark., for issue to the Troops Stationed on  
the frontiers of Arkansas, from time to time as the wants  
of the Service may demand

30	Reams of Letter Paper	3	Quires of Blotting Paper
10	Reams of Fools Cap Paper	6	Office Chairs
2	Reams of Foilo Post Paper	1	Iron Chest
5	Reams of Envelope Paper	2	Pairs of Office Shears
1,200	Envelopes, official size	1	Ambulance and harness (not allowed)
1,000	Envelopes, letter size	8	Single Sets of Horse Harness (Lead)
6	Blank Books (14 qr)	4	Single Sets of Horse Harness (Wheel)
36	Blanks Books Memo	48	Single Sets of Mule Harness (Lead)
24	Blank Books (12 qr)	24	Single Sets of Mule Harness (Wheel)
36	Bottles of Black Ink (pints)	60	Mule Collars
12	Bottles of Red Ink	100	Pairs of Mule Harness
60	Papers of Ink Powder	72	Wagon Whips
3	Pounds of Wafers	10	Wagons (5 galvanize iron)
12	Pounds of Sealing Wax	2	Horse Carts
12	Gross of Steel Pins	100	Halter chains & straps
1 70	Quilts	12	Jacks screws
72	Lead Pencils	12	Riding Bridles
144	Pieces of office Tape	12	Martingales (not allowed)
6	Ink Stands	24	Wagon Saddles
6	Paper Cutters	24	(illegible)
6	Sand Boxes	24	Saddle Girths
6	Sheets of Tracing Fellum	50	Saddle Blankets
2	Cakes of India Ink	72	Water Buckets
36	Water Buckets	30	Pounds of Alves
500	Pounds of Black Lead	12	Quarts of Ammonia
1	Piece of heavy Cotton Duck	24	Bottles of British Oil
50	Pounds of Spanish Whiting	20	Pounds of Calormel
10,000	Pounds of Cut Nails	100	Pounds of Caustic Soap
300	Pounds of (illegible) Nails	4	Horse Syringes
24	Door Locks (Knob)	4	Quarts of Laudanum
24	Door Locks (Plate)	8	Pounds of Mercurial Ointment
36	Cupboard Locks	20	Pounds of Nitre
36	Till or Drawer Locks	8 doz.	Bottles of Opodeldoc
100	Pair of Butt Hinges	4	Horse Phlemes
36	Pad Locks	50	Pounds of Glinder Salts

50	Gross of Wood Screws	30
2	Boxes of Window Glass $\frac{5}{10 \times 12}$ $\frac{20}{10 \times 14}$	24
1,000	Pounds of White Lead	8
100	Pounds of Putty	48
30	Pounds of Glue	1
30	Gallons of Spirits of Turpentine (in cans)	2
24	Papers of Brads	72
120	Gallons of Linseed Oil	48
12	Bottles of Olive Oil	1
100	Pounds of White Chalk	1
5	Pounds of Red Chalk	1
6	Sledges	12
24	Augers (handles)	12
6	Fort Adzes	12
6	Broad Axes	6
6	Hand Axes	3
6	(Illegible) Awls	3
6	Bevils	3
48	Plane Bitts (double tip)	6
4	Braces & Bitts (Each 32 bitts of best quality)	2
6	Sets of Finer Chisels (handles)	12
6	Sets of Framing chisels (handles)	6
6	Carpenters' compasses	6
72	Gimblets	6
24	Auger Bitts	2
2	Glue Pots	12
12	Thumb Guages	12
6	Mortice Guages	6
60	Slinging Hatchets	6
6	Claw Hammers	6
6	Drawing Knives	6
6	Oil Stones	48
24	Carpenters' Pencils	2
3	Sets of Bench Planes	2
12	Punches	200
12	Gross of Harness Buckles	200

Pounds of Sulphur
Bottles of Spirits of Turpentine
Pounds of Blue Titriol
Bottles of Mustary Liniment.
Blacksmith Bellows
Sets of (illegible) Tools
Blacksmith Files
Horse Rasps
Screw Plate (Single size)
Stock & Dm's (right and left hand)
Blacksmith's Vice
Carpenters' Rules (1 ivory for office)
Rip Saws (Hand)
(Illegible) Saws (Hand)
(Illegible) Saws (Brassback)
Steel Squares
Tying Squares
Pannel Squares
Bench Screws
Plough Planes & Bitts
Screw Drivers
Compass Saws
Saw Setts
Spoke Shaves
Spirit Levels
Stone Hammers
Mason Trowels
Plastering Trowels
Pounds of Shoe Thread
Pounds of Saddlers' Thread
Papers of Saddlers' Needles
Saddlers' Awls & Thimbles
(Illegible) Knives
Saddlers' Hammers
Pounds of Iron $2 \times \frac{1}{2}$ inch
Pounds of Iron $1 \frac{1}{2} \times \frac{3}{8}$ inch

6	Gross of Bridle Buckles	200	Pounds of Iron $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch round
4	Felling Axes	200	Pounds of Iron 1 inch round
12	Pick Axes	300	Pounds of Iron $3/4$ inch round
48	Ax Handles	400	Pounds of Iron $1/2$ inch round
12	Paint Brushes (assorted sizes)	200	Pounds of Iron $1/4$ inch round
12	White Wash Brushes	100	Pounds of Nail Rod Iron
96	Horse Brushes	100	Pounds of Hoop Iron
2	Pairs Collipins	100	Pounds of Sheet Iron
96	Curry Combs	3	Putty knives
24	Chuck (illegible)	25	Sides of Bridle Leather
3	Pairs of Carpenters' Clamps or hand Screws	30	Sides of Hump Leather
2	Hand Carts	6	Globe Lanterns
1	Glazier's Diamond	6	Mattocks
12	Hay Forks	2	Tape Measures
6	Froes	2	Sets of Dry Measures
12	Faucetts (metal & wood)	1000	Pounds of Horse & Mule Shoe Nail
24	Dung Forks	24	Sail or Bagging Needles
48	Bartan Files (Assorted sizes)	6	Barrels of Neatsfoot Oil
3	Hand Saw Files (Assorted sizes)	10	Gallons of Lard Oil
24	Tenon Saw Files (Assorted sizes)	3	Chain Pumps - 100 feet of chain for Each
12	Common Hoes	2	Planes for making pipe for pumps
3	Coils of Rope 1 inch	2	Bolts of Girth Webbing
4	Coils of Rope $3/4$ inch	100	Pounds of Solder
6	Coils of Rope $5/8$ inch	2	Cross Cut Saws
100	Pounds of Hemp Rope for Wagon covers &c.	3	Barrels of Tar
2	Grind Stones with crank rollers	36	Papers of Tacks (assorted)
24	Shovels	6	Pounds of Twine
24	Spades	2	Monkey Wrenches
3	Stamps U. S. G. M. D.	8	Wheel Barrows
4,000	Horse Shoes (if furnished with artillery)		
3,000	Mule shoes		
2	Brush Seythes & (illegible)		
6	Grass Scythes		
12	Scythe Stones		
6	Wood Saws		
200	Pounds of Steel (assorted)		

Signed

S. G. French  
Capt. Asst QM

APPENDIX S

List of outstanding debts in the Quarter Master's Dept. at  
Fort Smith, Ark., on the 31st of October 1856

Names of the persons to whom the money is due	Amount	
Employees in the Q.M. Dept.	9477.99	
Extra duty men	79.45	}
Sutton, Griffith & Spring	137.45	
J. R. Kannady	74.00	
John Gardner	22.05	
Abel Warren	128.70	
J. B. Blackburn	11.25	}
Abel Warren	71.00	
M. W. Bunch	593.81	
M. Sparks	14.65	
M. Pelley	577.50	
G. C. Smith	1306.12	
Johnson Perry	112.50	
A. W. Garvey	67.50	
J. R. Kannady	133.00	
Sutton, Griffith & Spring	81.88	
M. Pelley	117.60	
G. D. May	114.00	
John Gardner	134.75	
N. Breedlove	157.50	
John Gardner	333.20	
Steamer <u>Illegible</u> No 3	1192.69	For transportation of stores delivered from Little Rock
M. Pennington	50.00	For Lumber
Johnson Perry	70.00	For corn purchased in Oct.
Purchases in October	20.00	
	15,015.59	

APPENDIX T

**Estimate of Expenditures in the Quarter Master's Department at Fort Smith, Ark., during the fiscal year commencing 1st July 1857**

1	Fuel (Two companies in Garrison)	1000	00
2	Forage (310 animals to be foraged in case the troops be stationed at Washita Mountains are to be supplied from this Depot)	21,250	00
3	Hay in lieu of straw	64	00
4	Materials for Building...See Attached Estimate		
5	Stationery	250	00
6	Hire of mechanics employed in repairing Barracks Building additional Quarters &c.		
7	Hire of laborers employed transferring, receiving, and issuing Army stores, Building additional Barracks &c	3500	00
8	Hire of Teamsters employed in transporting army supplies to Fort Washita, Fort Arbuckle and to Washita Mountains	18,000	00
9	Pay of Extra duty men employed in hauling water for the troops in garrison, repairing wagons, shoeing Public animals &c		
10	Pay of Wagon and Forage masters	3000	00
11	Hire of Clerks, guards, escorts, expences of Court Martials, of burials, of apprehending Deserters, and other incidental Expenses	2,500	00
12	Mileage to Officers	1,500	00
13	Army transportation viz: of troops and their baggage, of Quarter Master's subsistence, Ordnance & Hospital Stores	5,000	00
14	Purchase of Horses & Mules supposing the troops to be posted near the Washita Mountains, & to be supplied from this Depot	18,750	00
15	Purchase of Wagons & Harness	25,530	00
		<u>\$112,197</u>	<u>00</u>

The Estimate for a hospital required here was made at the commencement of the previous fiscal year.

respectfully submitted

A. Montgomery (signed)

Capt QM

TICA

22



Report of the capacity and condition of the Barracks, Quarters, hospital and other public buildings at Fort Smith, Ark. List of alterations and repairs made during the year ending June 30, 1857.

BUILDING	DESCRIPTION	NO. OF ROOMS	DIMENSIONS	ADDITIONS, ALTERATIONS AND REPAIRS MADE WITHIN THE PAST YEAR
Soldiers' Barracks, 1 Block	Brick	2 Basement 2 1st Floor	56 X 36 feet 56 X 36 feet	Soldiers' Barracks Roof (Slate) broken in places & leaking badly, now undergoing repair. Gutters leaking, being repaired. Plastering fallen from ceiling, occasioned by leaking roof. Steps (wood) much decayed, practically broken down & irreparable -- being exposed to the weather, Stone steps should be built. Fire place requiring repairs -- <u>Basement flooring</u> (of Brick) requiring repairs. Wood work interior & exterior requiring repainting -- Lightning rod required.
Officers' Quarters, 2 Blocks	Brick	16 Basement 16 1st Floor 16 2d Floor	15 X 16 feet 15 X 16 feet 15 X 16 feet	Officers' Quarters S. W. block built by contract -- Roof (Slate) broken in places & leaking. Plastering of ceiling of 2d floor and halls fallen down in places, occasioned by leaking of roof. <u>Plastering of halls</u> broken down in places where fuel has been piled. <u>Gutters originally</u> defective in construction, leaking & cornice, in consequence decayed and fallen down in places. New gutters and cornice required. <u>Floors of front and rear galleries</u> decayed from exposure to weather & girders decayed and fallen down. Front steps (wood) decayed & partially fallen down unsafe -- impassable -- being exposed to weather, should be constructed of stone. See estimates. Sheds over rear steps, privies, & galleries leading to privies require recovering. Floors of kitchen (basement) decayed & broken will invite sickness unless relaid. Fire places & doors requiring repairs -- Main walls in this building cracked extensively in places. Construction throughout defective & very inferior to that of the N. E. Block built by an officer of the Quarter Master's Department. Roof (Slate) broken, leaking, & plastering of ceiling of 2d floor & halls fallen in places in consequence. General condition of this building much better than that of S. W. Block -- requiring repairs of same description but not to the same extent.
Quartermaster's Storehouse	Stone	1 Basement 3 1st Floor	44 X 43 feet 44 X 43 feet	Quartermaster's <u>Storehouse</u> Condition good.

ADDITIONS, ALTERATIONS AND REPAIRS MADE WITHIN THE PAST YEAR

BUILDING	DESCRIPTION	NO. OF ROOMS	DIMENSIONS	
Subsistence Storehouse	Stone	1 Basement 3 1st Floor	44 X 43 feet 44 X 43 feet	Subsistence Storehouse Requires new roof & new steps leading to 2d floor, glass in windows broken in a few places, said to have been done by hall.
Magazine	Stone	1	34 X 24 feet	Magazine Roof (Cypress shingles) decayed, should be recovered with slate, of which there is a large quantity being brought down from Fort Gibson — Sills & joists of floor decayed & floor sunken, ventilators imperfect.
Guardhouse	Brick	3 3 cells	10 X 10 feet 10 X 11 feet	Guardhouse Requiring new roof, plastering of ceiling & walls fallen, floors & hearths requiring repairs.
Hospital	Log			Hospital On the 3d of Nov. 1854, Dr. Nick. Spring, the Act. Asst. Surgeon at this place having been called upon by the officer then commanding the Department of the West, to report the Hospital at this Post, reported to Major F. N. Page Asst. Agt. General U. S. A. as follows: "It having been in great part — of unseasoned Cotton wood (a very perishable material) the timbers in the process of drying have warped to such an extent as to cause large cracks & crevices through which the wind has full play from the same cause the doors & windows cannot be properly closed & thus through the winter months the house is exceedingly cold & uncomfortable; Moreover owing to its manner of construction it absorbs an amount of moisture that keeps it so damp that I find it impossible to keep even an insturment carefully enclosed in their cases free from its effect. Many of the lower logs are completely rotted and at every heavy storm threaten to tumble the whole edifice in ruins. Every crevice is filled with creeping & crawling animals life peculiar to the Country from the venemous scorpion to the common black & red ants, that no amount of labor or cleanliness can exterminate. In brief, for the last five years every Officer (& there have been several) that have inspected the building has condemned it." The condition of the Hospital has certainly not improved since the Doctor made the foregoing report. He remarks further "The accommodations such as it is, is sufficient for ten or twelve patients, though at times I have been forced to crowd in double that number" & again in the same report "the Building was not originally designed and constructed for hospital purposes & therefore fails in many necessary arrangements." I will add to this that it is out of position being immediately in rear

BUILDING	DESCRIPTION	NO. OF ROOMS	DIMENSIONS	ADDITIONS, ALTERATIONS AND REPAIRS MADE WITHIN THE PAST YEAR
				<p>of and only eighty eight feet from the S. W. Block of Officers' Quarters. During the prevalence of the cholera here in June 1851 I occupied rooms in this Block &amp; was frequently roused from sleep by the distressing cries of the suffering patients. General Arbuckle lived in this Block also &amp; I have no doubt but that his proximity to the Hospital &amp; the distressing influence of the disturbance it occasioned him, contributed to his death.</p>
Blacksmith Shop	Log	2	18 X 18 feet each	Blacksmith Shop, condition good.
Stables	Frame	2	134½ feet each	Stables Roof leaking badly -- New roof required immediately, cannot put hay in the Lofts until they are recovered.
				<p>A temporary gun shed and ordnance was constructed here about the year 1843. It is now leaking badly &amp; is otherwise very much decayed. Another shed &amp; Store room of greater capacity is required.</p> <p>The hay shed has fallen down, &amp; I shall be obliged to stack this year's supply of hay in the open air. See estimate for new shed.</p> <p>No repairs made during the past year, and none apparently within the last three years. The greater portion of the expense now demanded might have been avoided by timely repairs.</p> <p>The galleries of the Officers' Quarters &amp; Soldiers' Barracks require repainting. Brick flooring &amp; kitchens at S. W. Block of Officers' Quarters recommended.</p>

(Signed)

A. Montgomery  
 Capt QM  
 USA

APPENDIX U

List of Quarter Master's Stores required at the Depot at Fort Smith, Ark., for the Supply of the Troops at Fort Smith, Fort Washita, and Fort Arbuckle

30 Reams	Letter Paper
10 Reams	Fools cap
6 Reams	Folio Post
2 Reams	Envelopes
2 Dozen	Bottles Black Ink
1 Dozen	Bottles Red Ink
3 lbs	Wafers
6 lbs	Sealing Wax
20 Gross	Steel Pins
6,000	Quills
3 gross	Lead Pencils
6 gross	Pieces office Tape
6 yards	Tracing Linen
1 Ream	Blotting Paper
3,000	Envelopes
3 gross	Pen Holders
1 gross	Papers Ink Powder
6 Sets	Six Horse Team Harness
2 Sets	Four Mule Team Harness
10 Sets	Six Mule Team Harness
1 Dozen	Wagon Saddles (Extra)
12 Dozen	Wagon Whips (old fratten - wooden plaited Stocks, Crossed with Bridle Leather. The plaited whips now generally in use in the army are worthless. They fall to pieces in wet weather, and the lash is too heavy.
2 Sets	Cart Harness
3 Dozen	Mule Collars (Extra)
3 Dozen	Pairs Harnes
5	Wagons, iron axles & Bodies
2 Dozen	Wagon Covers
4 Dozen	Tar Buckets
1 Dozen	Iron axles with Boxes
2 Dozen	Boxes for Iron Axles
100 lbs.	Slating Nails
100 lbs.	Wrought Nails, for repair of wagons
	Lightning Rod with points for protection of Soldiers' Barracks.
10 lbs.	Calomel
50 lbs.	Castile Soap
50 lbs.	Alumm
20 lbs.	Sulphur (in box)
20 lbs.	Copperas
5 lbs.	Blue Stone
20 lbs.	Nitre
1 lb.	Blue Vetriol (In powder)
1 lb.	White Vetriol (In powder)
5 lbs.	Green Vetriol (In powder)
5 lbs.	Gentian
5 lbs.	Sugar of Lead
2 lbs.	Opium (In powder)
5 lbs.	Prepared chalk
5 lbs.	Prepared Calamine
5 gallons	Castor oil
150 lbs.	Glander Salts
50 lbs.	Epsom Salts
100 lbs.	Resin
2 lbs.	Powdered Canthurides
10 lbs.	Oil of Turpentine
10 lbs.	Ginger
5 lbs.	(illegible) Turpentine
2 lbs.	Tartar Emetic
6	Shoeing knives (Blacksmith's)
1	Loeing knives
1 Set	Saddler's Tools
20 lbs	Saddler's Thread
3 Dozen	Papers Saddler's needles (assorted)
12 Dozen	Felling Axes
1 Dozen	Pink Axes
1 Dozen	White Wash Brushes

3 Dozen

Curry Combs

24 Dozen

Felling ax Handles

3 Dozen

Mattock Handles

40 Bars

Time iron 16 ft long 2 1/2 inch X 5/8 inch

100 lbs.  
 2 lbs.  
 10 lbs.  
 10 lbs.  
 5 lbs.  
 2 lbs.  
 6  
 1  
 1 Set  
 20 lbs  
 3 Dozen  
 12 Dozen  
 1 Dozen  
 4 Dozen

Resin  
 Powdered Cantharides  
 Oil of Turpentine  
 Ginger  
 (illegible) Turpentine  
 Tartar Emetic  
 Shoeing knives (Blacksmith's)  
 Loeing knives  
 Saddler's Tools  
 Saddler's Thread  
 Papers Saddler's needles (assorted)  
 Felling Axes  
 Pick Axes  
 White Wash Brushes

9 Dozen  
 24 Dozen  
 3 Dozen  
 40 Bars  
 20 Bars  
 1,500 lbs.  
 500 lbs.  
 20 Sides  
 50 Sides  
 1 Dozen  
 120 gallons  
 5 gallons  
 2  
 1 Coil  
 2 Coil  
 100 lbs.  
 6 Dozen  
 3 Dozen  
 1  
 2,000  
 1 Dozen  
 1 Dozen  
 2  
 1

Curry Combs  
 Felling ax Handles  
 Mattock Handles  
 Tire iron 16 ft. long 2 1/2 inch X 5/8 inch  
 Tire iron 12 ft. long 2 1/2 inch X 5/8 inch  
 Band iron 2 1/2 inch X 1/2 inch  
 Band iron 1 1/2 inch X 1/2 inch  
 Bridle Leather  
 Harness Leather  
 Mattocks  
 Neats Foot Oil  
 Olive Oil  
 Iron Pumps  
 Manila Rope (1-inch)  
 Manila Rope (3/4-inch)  
 Manila Rope (1/2-inch)  
 Spades  
 Shovels  
 Sand (illegible)  
 Mule Shoes  
 Brush Scythes  
 Grass Scythes  
 Straw Cutter  
 Corn Sheller

A. Montgomery (signed)  
 Capt. QM  
 In charge of Depot

APPENDIX V

Estimate of funds required for the Service of the Quarter Master's Department at  
 Port Smith, Ark., by Capt. A. Montgomery Asst. Quarter Master U.S.A.  
 in the Months of September and October 1857

1	For Fuel	150 .00
2	For Forage	1,500.00
3	For Stationery	25.00
4	Building new steps in front and rear of Soldiers' Barracks, and in front of Officers' Quarters, See detailed Estimate - Plan forwarded with annual estimate	1304.00
5	Recovering Privies and Galleries leading to them, and repairing enclosures in rear of Officers' Quarters See Detailed estimate.	450.00
6	Building Hay Shed -- See Estimate -- Plan forwarded with annual Estimate.	1,096.00
7	Building Wheelwright and Carpenter's Shop -- See Estimate in detail.	264.00
8	Hire of Labourers Employed in transportation, receiving and Storing Supplies, taking care of public animals, attending pasture &c. &c. &c.	450.00
9	Hire of Teamsters Employed transporting Army Supplies to Ports Washita & Arbuckle &c.	2,500.00
10	Hire of Wagon and Forage masters	330.00
11	Pay of Extra duty men, Drawing water cart, Shoeing public animals, repairing Quarters. Building Hay Shed, Wheelwright's Shop &.	140.00
12	Milage to Officers	500.00
13	Army transportation - to wit - of troops and their baggage	1,000.00
	" Quarter Master's, Subsistence and Ordnance Stores	1,000.00
	Purchase and repair of Wagons and Harness	500.00
		11,109.00

A. Montgomery (signed)  
 Capt. QM  
 USA



Estimates of Funds Required for Repairs and Erection of  
Public Buildings at Fort Smith, Ark.

		\$	¢
1	For building Stone Steps in front and rear of Soldiers' Quarters 4 flights with iron hand rails, Quarrying, cutting, and laying 380 feet 8 inches of Stone at \$1.00 per foot.....	380	00
	For 4 Barrels Lime at \$2.00 per Barrell.....	8	00
	For 4 Sets iron hand rails at \$15.00 Each.....	60	00
		448	00
2	For building 8 flights of Stone Steps in front of Officers' Quarters 720 feet cut stone at \$1.00 per foot.....	720	00
	For 8 Barrels Lime at \$2.00 per Barrel.....	16	00
	For 8 Sets iron hand rails at \$15.00 Each.....	120	00
		856	00
3	Recovering privies and galleries leading to them & repairing en- closures in rear of Officers' Quarters. 2,000 Shingles at \$5.00 per 1,000.....	100	00
	6,000 feet, Lumber at \$22.50.....	135	00
	3 Kegs Nails at \$5.25.....	15	75
	Laborer of Mechanics .....	200	00
		450	75
4	For erecting Wheelwright and Carpenter Shops 50 feet X 25 Feet 20,000 Shingles at \$5.00 per 1,000.....	100	00
	3,500 feet Lumber at \$22.50.....	67	50
	3 Kegs Nails at \$5.25.....	15	75
	2 Boxes glass at \$3.00.....	6	00
	Laborer of Mechanics.....	75	00
		264	25

A. Montgomery (Signed)  
 Capt. QM  
 U. S. A.

APPENDIX W

Estimate of Cost of Erecting a second Story upon Barracks at  
Fort Smith, Arkansas

110,000	Bricks at \$10 per 1000	1100	00
340	Barrels Lime \$3.50 per barrel	850	00
31,000	feet Lumber for joists, Flooring, door, and window frames &c.	697	00
12,000	Laths for plastering @ \$3.00 per 1,000	36	00
300	Zinc & white Lead @ \$12	36	00
30	Gallons Linseed Oil @ \$1.25	37	50
16	Gallons Spirits Turpentine	16	00
6	Lbs. Litharge	1	50
10	Kegs Nails at \$6 per keg	60	00
200	Lbs. Iron for binding timbers &c.	16	00
20	pairs window Sashes, with lights	90	00
1040	Iron weights for Sashes at .06 per lb.	62	40
1 gross	Pullies	12	00
	Cord for window Sashes	5	00
	Hardware, Locks, Screws, Bolts, Hinges &c.	30	00
2	Coils of Rope for scaffolding	24	00
	Hair for plastering	15	00
	Labor of Carpenters	2850	00
	Labor of Brick Layers	440	00
	Labor of Stone Cutters	1042	00
	Labor of Copper Smiths	68	40
	Labor of Painters and Glaziers	200	00
	Labor of Plasters	397	38
	Labor for Leaders	256	38
	Labor for attendents and masons	250	00
		\$8642	74

The above is made by direction of Colonel Wilson now temporarily absent on Court Martial as the Quarters for the present command are being insufficient for the accommodation of two Companies, the Regimental Staff & Band, and the Ordnance Sergeant. There are but 3360 square feet of Quarters, instead of 8960, the Complement of the Regulation allowance, assuming the organization of 84 rank & file to the Company, because of the abandonment of Fort Gibson, probably reducing the necessity for such organization, there being now no Post but this within 170 miles of this Indian frontier.

Respectfully Submitted

A. Montgomery  
Capt.

APPENDIX X

Estimate of Funds Required for the Service of the Quartermaster's Department at Fort Smith, Ark., by  
 Capt. A. Montgomery Asst. Qr. Mr. U.S.A. for the Month of November 1858

For Fuel		300.00
For Forage		1500.00
For Stationery		15.00
For Building Materials, viz.		
Repairing Kitchen of Officers' Quarters, as per detail Estimate forwarded with August Estimates	112.50	
Repairing of Galleries leading to rear of Officers' Quarters	161.25	
Repairing of Basement floors Officers' Quarters	80.00	
Repairing of Roof of Quartermaster's Office & Store House	130.00	
Materials for building Hay Shed	52.36	
Materials for Stone Steps in front of Barracks and Quarters	840.00	1846.11
Hire of Mechanics for Repairs of Kitchens floors to Officers' Quarters	250.00	
Hire of Mechanics for Repair of Galleries leading to rear of Officers' Quarters	115.50	
Hire of Mechanics for Repair of Quartermaster's Office & Store House	500.00	
Hire of Mechanics for Repair of Brick Basements floors to Barracks and Quarters	80.00	
Hire of Mechanics for Shoeing public animals	100.00	
Hire of Mechanics for Painting Officers' Quarters	150.00	1195.00
Hire of Hostlers, Teamsters & Laborers		800.00
Hire of Wagon & Forage Masters		140.00
Hire of Clerks, Agents, Guides, Escorts, Expenses of Court Martial of apprehending deserters and other incidental expenses		500.00
Mileage to Officers		300.00
Army transportation -- of troops and their baggage of Quartermaster's, Subsistence, Medical & Ordnance Stores	500.00 500.00	1000.00
Purchase of Mules (included in Estimate for September)		7500.00
		\$15096.61

I certify that the above is a true copy of the original

A. Montgomery (Signed)  
 Capt, AQM USA  
 88

APPENDIX Y

Abstract of Purchases and Expenditures made by Captain A. Montgomery,  
Asst. Quarter Master U.S. Army at Fort Smith, Ark.,  
for the Department of the West during the Month of March 1859

NAMES	OR WHAT ACCOUNT	PURCHASES	EXPENDITURES	TOTAL
G. W. Bell	Amount paid for Forage issued to Public animals	165.75		
G. A. Mayers	Foraging and taking care of Public animals		583.88	
Same	Foraging and taking care of Public animals		1091.65	
P. Perkins	Corn	1600.00		
John J. Johnson	Hire of Stables for Public Animals		107.50	
Thomas Allen	Shingles			
Morton Pitts	Ferridge of Public Animals & Wagons	80.00		
J. N. Brown	Corn	6390.00		
Capt. E. L. Smith, USA	Mileage		114.00	
Mr. J. A. W. Gaines	Actual Expenses of Transportation		78.00	
Steamer Mary Cook	Transportation of Public Property		207.96	
William Gidger	Building piers -- Forage House		15.00	
J. A. Arnold	Recoopering Subsistence Stores		4.20	
A. W. Gary	Ferridge of Public animals & wagons		9.50	
Same	Ferridge of Public animals & wagons		13.00	
Same	Hay	10.00		
Jackson Jusand	Corn	37.50		
E. S. Mitchell	Ferridge of Public trains		51.00	
G. D. Kay	Corn	727.87		
Jacob Mier	Recovery and delivery of a stray mule		5.00	
Steamer S. H. Tucker	Transportation of Public Stores		32.21	
Jessie Reed	Replastering Guardhouse		30.00	
F. Standt	Cutting and heading timber		618.48	
W. Schultee	Lumber	241.50		
Jacob Coonts	Services as Mechanic at Fort Washita		6.00	
Joseph Humes	Services as Laborer at Fort Washita		3.00	
W. W. Reasoner	Hay	31.68		
	Amount Carried Forward	9224.30	8,272.73	17,497.03

	Amount Brought Forward	9224.30	8272.88	17.15
P. Perkins	Corn	3000.00		
C. D. Tobin	Lumber	797.22		
Steamer YALOGS	Transportation for Public Property		336.53	
M. Pelley	Hay	13.66		
Palley & McCarron	Wood	475.00		
Steamer HAZI COOK	Transportation of Public Property		80.00	
F. M. Monks	Ferriage of Public Trains		129.00	
Maj. F. M. Page	Actual Expenses of Transportation		39.00	
F. M. Monks	Ferriage of Public Trains		12.50	
W. M. Holloway	Ferriage of Public Trains		12.50	
A. M. Gray	Ferriage of Public Trains		12.50	
J. D. Davis	Ferriage of Public Trains		12.50	
W. R. Guy	Ferriage of Public Trains		12.50	
W. Holloway	Ferriage of Public Trains		12.50	
W. R. Guy	Ferriage of Public Trains		12.50	
A. W. Gary	Ferriage of Public Trains		12.50	
J. D. Davis	Ferriage of Public Trains		12.50	
Corp. R. F. Wilson	Expenses while travelling in pursuit of deserters		2.50	
Henry Mayer	Ferriage of Public Trains		19.50	
G. C. Smith	Hay	107.64		
G. A. Meyers	Taking care of and foraging public animals		2,293.12	
Mitchell Sparks	Purchase of Quartermaster's Stores	409.21		
		13,997.00	11,284.88	25,281.91

A. Montgomery (signed)  
Capt. Asst Q.M.



APPENDIX Z

Abstract of Purchases & Expenditures made by  
Capt. A. Montgomery Asst. Q.M. U.S.A. at Fort  
Smith, Ark., for the Dept of the West During  
the Month of June 1859.

NAME	ON WHAT ACCOUNT	PURCHASES	EXPENDITURE	TOTAL
Steamer <u>Corra</u>	For Transportation of Ordnance Stores		79.42	
John Iyer	Services as Asst. Wagon Master		56.77	
Joseph Hammond	Recovery of one stray Public Mule		1.00	
Allen Staunton	Recovery of two stray Public Mules		2.00	
W. H. Gardner	Recovery of one stray Public Mule		2.50	
Steamer <u>S. H. Tucker</u>	Transportation of one U.S. Recruit		15.00	
Lt. P. Stockton USA	Court Martial Service		5.00	
John Fink	Recovery of one Public Stray Mule		2.00	
C. W. Smith	Services at Asst. Wagon Master		21.66	
Henry Mineheart	Expenses incurred while travelling in pursuit of stray animals		9.00	
C. W. Smith	Expenses of Public Train En Route from Fort Arbeckle to Fort Smith		10.50	
Steamer <u>Medora</u>	Transportation of Public Stores		156.93	
Capt. W. W. Burns USA	Actual Expenses of Transportation		57.00	
W. Nash	Services as Blacksmith		62.00	
W. Nash	Services as Blacksmith		100.00	
M. G. Eastin	Expenses of Transportation while Travelling as U. S. Agent		38.00	
M. G. Eastin	Purchase of Forage &c. for Public Service	2,198.75		
Thomas Allen	Shingles	129.24 *		
Steamer <u>Mary Cook</u>	Transportation of Public Stores		29.43	
S. P. Gibson	Services of Same, employed as Hostler		75.00	
		2,327.99	717.21	3045.20

A. Montgomery (signed)  
Capt. U.S.A.

APPENDIX AA

Estimate of Quarter Master's Stores Required for Fort Smith Depot  
and its Dependencies, November 4, 1859.

NO. or QUANTITY	ARTICLES	FOR WHAT PURPOSE REQUIRED	PRICES AT FORT SMITH
2 Reams	Poolscap paper	For issue and expenditure	4.50
20 Reams	Letter paper	For use in Office at Fort Smith Depot & its Dependencies	4.50
5 Reams	Folio post paper		7.50
2 Reams	Envelopes		5.00
50	Blank Books (Post)		
50	Blank Books (Company)		
6	Blank Books (letter illegible)		
4 dozen	Blank Books (Memorandum)		
1 doz. bottles	Red Ink		6.50
3 Lbs.	Wafers		1.50
10 Lbs.	Sealing Wax		1.50
20 Gross	Steel Pens		1.25
150	Pen holders		
2 doz.	Ink Stands		
1 doz.	Wafer Stamps		
10,000	Envelopes 1000 <sup>10s</sup> , 1000 <sup>9s</sup> , 2000 <sup>8½s</sup> , 2000 <sup>8s</sup> , & 4000 <sup>1s</sup>		
2 Reams	Envelope Paper		
400 sheets	Blotting Paper		
12 sheets	Drawing Paper (Medium)		2.50 (doz.)
5yds	Tracing Linen		
1 Case	Drawing Instruments	For use in Office &c.	
2 doz.	Office Chairs	For use in Office	40.00
2 doz.	Office Desks	For use in Office	20.00
6 rs	Shovels & tongs	For use in Office	3.00
25	6 mule wagons (complete)	For transportation of Public Stores	185.00

25	6 mule harness	For transportation of Public Stores	60.00
3	Ambulances & Harness	For conveyance of sick & wounded	25.00
2	Drays & Harness	For use at Fort Smith Depot	
1 doz.	Riding Saddles	For express & other service	12.00
1 doz.	Riding Bridles	For express & other service	20.00
100	Saddle Blankets	For express & other service	1.50
50	Wagon Saddles	Extra for service of trains, those lately received with new harness from St. Louis proved to be worthless, owing chiefly to the inferior construction of the trees. One of Hope's trees is worth a wagon load of these	10.00
50	Pack Saddles with ropes & bridles (complete)	For use of scouting parties &c.	
300	Mule Collars (extra)	For use of trains &c.	1.25
100	Harness Bridles (extra)	For use of trains &c.	12.00 (doz.)
300	Wagon Whips	For use of trains &c.	12.00 (doz.)
150	Water Buckets (Gutta Percha)	For use of trains &c.	
100	Pack covers	For use of trains &c.	
20	Jack screws	For use of trains &c.	6.25
500	Wagon Bows	For use of trains &c.	.20
50	Ridge Poles		.20
24	Martingales (Harness)		.75
100	King Bolts		.40
100	Tongue Bolts		.25
50	Lead Lines		1.75
500	Picket Pens		1.75
6 doz.	Surcingles		9.00
12 doz.	Saddle Girths		6.00

.00	Wagon covers		6.00
	Tar Buckets		.75
100	Wagon wheel Boxes (iron axles)		
1000	Hame Strings		1.00 (doz.)
2 doz. prs.	Parliament Hinges	Repairing Barracks & Quarters	.37½
10 boxes	Glass (8" x 10")	For Repairs of Barracks & Quarters	6.00
10 boxes	Glass (8" x 12")		6.50
5 boxes	Glass (12" x 14")		8.00
50 Kegs	Cut Nails assorted		7.00
100 lbs.	Putty		.12½
2 boxes	Tin		17.50
50 sheets	Zinc		
200 lbs.	Sheet Iron		.10
1000 lbs.	Band Iron 2½ x ¼	For repair of Wagons, shoeing public animals &c.	.08
1000 lbs.	Round Iron 5/8 inch	For repair of wagons, shoeing public animals &c.	.08
1500 lbs.	Round Iron ½ inch		.08
1000 lbs.	Round Iron 3/8 inch		.09
1500 lbs.	Square Iron 5/8 inch		.08
1000 lbs.	Square Iron ½ inch		.08
1500 lbs.	Round Iron 1 inch		.07
500 lbs.	Round Iron ¾ inch		.08
1000 lbs.	Band Iron 1" x ¼"		.08
250 lbs.	Square Cast Steel 3/4		.30
50 lbs.	Lamp Black	For repairs of Barracks & Quarters	.10
20 lbs.	Solder		.37½
200 lbs.	Wrought Nails	For repairing wagons &c.	.16
12 Gross	Wood Screws (assorted)		1.25

100 lbs.	Litharge		.15
10 lbs.	Aloes	For Sick Public Animals	.50
24 lbs.	Mercuric Ointment		1.25
60 lbs.	Calomel		2.25
100 lbs.	Castile Soap		.20
300 lbs.	Lards		.15
20 qts.	Landanum		2.00
24 doz. bottles	Opodeldoc		.75
24 lbs.	Blue Vitriol		.25
1 Set	Wheelwright's Tools	For repair of public wagons &c.	25.00
2 Sets	Blacksmith Tools	For Shoeing Public Animals &c.	
4 Sets	Shoeing Tools		
1 doz.	Shoeing Knives		8.00
doz.	Rasps		12.00
12 doz.	Blacksmith Files (Assorted)		12.00
2	Bellows		25.00
4	Buttresses		1.75
2 doz.	Aprons		18.00
6 Sets	Augers & handles	For repair of Barracks, Quarters, & Wagons &c.	4.50
1 doz.	Drawing knives		18.00
6	(Illegible) Saws		2.25
4	Grindstones with Crank & Rollers		4.50
3	Saw Sets		.50
1 doz.	Hand Axes		30.00
1 doz.	Morticing Gauges		9.00
6	Glazier's Diamonds		7.00
2 doz.	Paint Brushes		10.00 doz.

1 doz.	Wood Files		15.00
6 doz.	X Cut Saw Files		9.00
6 doz.	Framing saw (x cut) files		1.50
2 sets	Saddles Tools (complete) with horses	For repairs public harness	
10 doz.	Saddlers Awls	For repairs public harness	
6 doz.	Whitewash Brushes	For Fatigue & Garrison purposes	15.00
6 doz.	Brooms		9.00
2 doz.	Hay Forks	For Fatigue and Garrison purposes	15.00
2 doz.	Stable Forks		15.00
2 doz.	Mattocks		15.00
6 doz.	Spades		18.00
4 doz.	Scythe Stones		15.00
2	Water Casks (100 gallon)		
1 doz.	Well Buckets		1.25
2	Soldering irons	For repair of Barracks & Quarters &c.	
20 lbs.	Beeswax	For repairing Public Harness &c.	.35
15000	Mule shoes	For shoeing Public animals	.10
6000	Horse shoes		.10
1000 lbs.	Horseshoe Nails		.30
30	Paulins (Large size)	For preservation of Public Stores	
2	Store Tents		
2000	Gunny Bags	For transportation of Grain	.15
2	Bbls Neatsfoot Oil	For oiling public harness	1.25
9 lbs.	Manilla Ropes (for lariats)		.16
100 pls.	Tent cord		.16



500 lbs.	Tallow	For greasing public harness	.12½
100 papers	Tacks (assorted)	For saddlers' use &c.	3.50
50	Grain sacks (for packing or mules)		.42
1	Platform scales & weights		
2 doz.	Cakes	For Fatigue & Garrison purposes	5.00
1	Mowing machine		200.00
1	Sawmill-Circular with Horse Power (Page's Patent)		
3	Driving Shafts	} Extra Irons regular for sawmill	
3	Crib frame pinions		
3	Driving frame pinions		
3	Spur frame pinions		
10	Feed frame pinions		
	Driving cogs		
10	Bevel spur wheels		
10	Section master wheels		
15	Pair couplings		
10	Bores		
From Supplementary estimates approved by Major Emory and sent to this office by Capt. Cabell not as yet submitted to Dept. Head Quarters			
3 doz.	Bricklayers trowels		15.00
1 doz.	Plasterers trowels		15.00
1	Boring machine		9.00
1	Morticing machine		
10	Monkey wrenches		2.00
5	Brace & Bits		5.00

I certify that the above articles are required as stated.

A. Montgomery (signed)  
 Capt. Asst. QM

APPENDIX BB

List of Clothing Purchased at Fort Smith, Ark., Under  
Requisition of Capt. T. G. Pitcher 8th Regt. Inf. Comdg.  
Escort to U. S. Surveying Party

29	prs. Drawers	6	50	doz.	15	70
24	prs. Drawers	7	50	"	15	00
70	prs. Drawers	8	00	"	46	66
21	prs. Socks	3	50	"	6	12
84	prs. Socks	4	00	"	28	00
31	prs. Trousers	3	00	Ea.	93	00
14	prs. Trousers	3	50	Ea.	49	00
1	pr. Trousers	5	00	Ea.	5	00
5	prs. Trousers	4	00	Ea.	20	00
6	prs. Trousers	2	50	Ea..	15	00
41	Blankets	4	50	Ea.	184	50
97	Flannel shirts	20	00	doz.	161	66
13	Flannel shirts	1	50	Ea.	19	50
79	prs. Booties	20	00	doz.	131	66
9	prs. Booties	1	50	Ea.	13	50
					\$804	30

The above is a correct abstract of the purchases so made

A. Montgomery  
Capt. Asst. QM

APPENDIX CC

of which were completed, or in process of construction, Fort 19th, Ark., during the month of December 1868.

No.	DIMENSIONS	MATERIALS		CAPACITY			CHARGES AND REMARKS	
		Wood	Brick	Stone	Artz.	Grv.		Inft.
1	1 60 x 70-32 ft. high		X				2	Com F & H, 19th Infantry
	1-32 x 66-18 ft. high	X					1	Co. K, 19th Infantry
	1-50 x 20-9 ft. high	X					1	Co. G, 19th Infantry
	1-52 x 49-26 ft. high			X			1	Co. E, 19th Infantry
	1-52 x 49-26 ft. high			X			1	Co. A, 19th Infantry
	1-18 x 39-14 ft. high			X				Ammunition Magazine
	1-24 x 69-8 ft. high	X						Ammunition Magazine
	1-198 x 49½-13 ft. high	X						Quartermaster's Warehouse
	1-26 x 100-10 ft. high	X						Commissary Warehouse
	2-136 x 38-12 ft. high	X						Two Stables
	2-15 x 21-16 ft. high	X						Two Forage houses
	1-50 x 25-16 ft. high	X						Offices, QM, Hq, and Paymaster's
	1-101 x 38-41 ft. high		X					Officers' Quarters
	1-48½ x 15-12 ft. high	X						Quarters for Non-Commissioned Officers
	1-28 x 18-12 ft. high	X						Hospital
	1-38 x 18-12 ft. high	X						Hospital
	1-28 x 18-12 ft. high	X						Bakery
	1-50 x 25-15 ft. high 1-127 x 30-15 ft. high	X						2 Shops
	1-21 x 30-12 ft. high			X				Guardhouse
	1-51 x 16-11 ft. high 1-51 x 25-12 ft. high							Quarters for Band
	3-16 x 18-9 ft. high							Laundresses Quarters
	1-18 x 24-10 ft. high							Washhouse
				103				T. A. Baldwin (signed) Capt. 19th Inf.



APPENDIX DD

Estimated Cost of Material and Work Required for Building  
Officers' Quarters at Fort Smith, Ark., as per Enclosed Plan

*that burned Jun Dec 1870*

Sills, Caps & Water Tables	616.00
Brick & Brick Work	1000.00
Stone & Stone Work, 636 perches at \$6. per perch	3816.00
36 Windows (18 lights) 12x14 Box frames, Sash glazed	849.00
40 Doors, 3 ft. 6x8 ft. at \$9 each	360.00
8 Door frames with side lights at \$20 each	160.00
32 Door frames 3 ft. x 8 ft. at \$12 each	384.00
1800 feet of Base at 15¢ per foot	270.00
400 joists 2x12.20 ft. 16000 ft. at \$25 per 1,000	400.00
400 joists 2x12.12 ft. 9600 ft. at \$25 per 1,000	240.00
17589 ft. of flooring at \$30 per 1,000	527.00
97 Squares of Slate at \$50 per square	4850.00
Carpenter Work	4000.00
4600 yards of plastering at 75¢ per yard	3450.00
Timber & Lumber for roofing 45,000 ft. at \$25 per 1,000	1125.00
Painting, inside	2000.00
Hardware, Locks, Screws, Sash, Weights, Flues, Caps, Grating &c.	300.00
Tin Guttering & water spouts	<u>200.00</u>
Total	\$33,547.00



**Specifications for the Projected Officers' Quarters  
to Replace the Block Destroyed by Fire**

Stone wall at base 2 feet 6 inches running up same thickness to top of basement.

Partition walls in basement 13 inches thick. The outer walls of brick are 17 inches in thickness and the partition walls are 9 inches in thickness.

Both stories are 13 feet 6 inches in height and are similar in plan.

The Doors are 5 feet 7 inches in width with side lights & transom.

Stairways are 3 feet 6 inches wide.

The windows consist of 18 lights, each 12 x 14.

Piers of stone for supporting the Porches 22 inches square are used up to the first story and from thence up are brick 17 inches square.

The water table is 7 inches deep. Window sills 5 feet 6 inches of cut stone.

APPENDIX EE

ings, established or in the process of Construction at Fort Smith, Arkansas, during the month ending April 30, 1869

NO.	DIMENSIONS	REMARKS
1	60 x 70-32 ft. high	This building in good condition, is built with brick with porch in front and rear. Kitchen in basement. Will quarter two companies.
2	23 x 64-18 ft. high	This building is in good condition, is built of wood, and bricked inside. Two stories high. Will quarter one company.
3	50 x 20-9 ft. high	A frame building in fair condition and will quarter one company.
4	52 x 44-26 ft. high	A two story stone building, in good condition, with porch in front and rear. Will quarter one company. Was originally built for Commissary Office and storehouse.
5	52 x 49-26 ft. high	A two story stone building, in good condition, with porch in front and rear. Will quarter one company. Was originally built for Quartermaster's office and storehouse.
6	18 x 39-14 ft. high	Ammunition Magazine - A stone building in good condition. (One story)
7	24 x 69-8 ft. high	Ordinance Storeroom. A frame building in good condition. (One story)
8	198 x 49½-13 ft. high	Quartermaster's Storehouse - A frame building in good condition. (one story)
9	26 x 100-10 ft. high	Commissary Storehouse - A frame building in good condition. (One story) Originally Stables.
10	136 x 38-12 ft. high	Quartermaster's Stables - A frame building in good condition. Will shelter 47 animals.
11	136 x 38-12 ft. high	Quartermaster's Stables - A frame building in good condition. Will shelter 45 animals.
12	51 x 20-10 ft. high	Foragehouse - A frame building in good condition. Will hold 8190 bushels of grain. One story.
13	51 x 20-10 ft. high	Foragehouse - A frame building in good condition. Will hold 8190 bushels of grain. One story.
14	52 x 25-16 ft. high	Quartermaster's headquarters and Paymaster's office. A frame building, in good condition, with porch in front and on one end. One story.
15	101 x 38-41 ft. high	Officers' Quarters. A two story brick building in good condition, with porches in front and rear, contains sixteen rooms and eight kitchens.
16	48½ x 15-12 ft. high	A frame building in good condition, containing four small rooms. Built for officers' Quarters.
17	28 x 18-12 ft. high	Hospital - A frame building, bricked inside, and in a very bad condition. Will accommodate 600 patients. (cannot be repaired) - First building built at the post.
18	38 x 18-12 ft. high	Hospital - A frame building, in a very delapidated condition, past repairing, will accommodate 600 patients.
19	28 x 18-12 ft. high	Post Bakery - log building in good condition, two stories.
20	51 x 25-15 ft. high	Carpenter and Saddler Shop. A frame building in good condition.
21	131 x 31-15 ft. high	Blacksmith shop & Wheelwright shop. A frame building in good condition.
22	21½ x 30½ - 12 ft. high	Post Guard House - A Brick building in good condition, with porch in front.
23	51 x 25 - 12 ft. high	A frame building, in good condition, lately occupied by Band 19th Inft. Originally built for mess hall for quartermaster's employees.
24	25 x 16-11 ft. high	A frame building, in good condition, lately occupied by Band 19th Inf. Originally built for mess hall for quartermaster's employees.
25	16 x 18-9 ft. high	A frame building in good condition used by Company Laundresses.
26	16 x 18-9 ft. high	A frame building in good condition used by Company Laundresses.
27	16 x 18-9 ft. high	A frame building in good condition used by Company Laundresses.
28	18 x 24-10 ft. high	Washhouse. A frame building in good condition, contains one wash trough and eight wash tubs.
29	45.8 x 18.8-18 ft. high	Lodge for Superintendent of National Cemetery. A stone building in good condition, with porch in front and rear, contains three rooms. (Late constructed.)

I certify that the above Report is correct.

John Hammer (signed)  
1st Lieut.

List of Public Buildings, established or in the process of Construction at Fort Smith, Arkansas, during the month ending

POST	LOCATION	NO.	DIMENSIONS	REMARKS
Fort Smith, Arkansas	Fort Smith, Arkansas	1	60 x 70-32 ft. high	This building in good condition, is built with brick with Kitchen in basement. Will quarter two companies.
		2	23 x 64-18 ft. high	This building is in good condition, is built of wood, high. Will quarter one company.
		3	50 x 20-9 ft. high	A frame building in fair condition and will quarter one company.
		4	52 x 44-26 ft. high	A two story stone building, in good condition, with porch. Will quarter one company. Was originally built for Commissary.
		5	52 x 49-26 ft. high	A two story stone building, in good condition, with porch. Will quarter one company. Was originally built for Quartermaster's Storehouse.
		6	18 x 39-14 ft. high	Ammunition Magazine - A stone building in good condition.
		7	24 x 69-8 ft. high	Ordinance Storeroom. A frame building in good condition.
		8	198 x 49½-13 ft. high	Quartermaster's Storehouse - A frame building in good condition.
		9	26 x 100-10 ft. high	Commissary Storehouse - A frame building in good condition. Stables.
		10	136 x 38-12 ft. high	Quartermaster's Stables - A frame building in good condition.
		11	136 x 38-12 ft. high	Quartermaster's Stables - A frame building in good condition.
		12	51 x 20-10 ft. high	Forgehouse - A frame building in good condition. Will quarter one company.
		13	51 x 20-10 ft. high	Forgehouse - A frame building in good condition. Will quarter one company.
		14	52 x 25-16 ft. high	Quartermaster's headquarters and Paymaster's office. In good condition, with porch in front and on one end. One story.
		15	101 x 38-41 ft. high	Officers' Quarters. A two story brick building in good condition, front and rear, contains sixteen rooms and eight kitchen.
		16	48½ x 15-12 ft. high	A frame building in good condition, containing four small quarters.
		17	28 x 18-12 ft. high	Hospital - A frame building, bricked inside, and in a good condition to accommodate sick patients. (Cannot be repaired) - 24 beds.
		18	38 x 18-12 ft. high	Hospital - A frame building, in a very dilapidated condition, cannot accommodate sick patients.
		19	28 x 18-12 ft. high	Post Bakery - log building in good condition, two stories.
		20	51 x 25-15 ft. high	Carpenter and Saddler Shop. A frame building in good condition.
		21	131 x 31-15 ft. high	Blacksmith shop & Wheelwright shop. A frame building in good condition.
		22	21½ x 30½ - 12 ft. high	Post Guard House - A Brick building in good condition.
		23	51 x 25 - 12 ft. high	A frame building, in good condition, lately occupied by mess hall for quartermaster's employees.
		24	25 x 16-11 ft. high	A frame building, in good condition, lately occupied by mess hall for quartermaster's employees.
		25	16 x 18-9 ft. high	A frame building in good condition used by Company Laundry.
		26	16 x 18-9 ft. high	A frame building in good condition used by Company Laundry.
		27	16 x 18-9 ft. high	A frame building in good condition used by Company Laundry.
		28	18 x 24-10 ft. high	Washhouse. A frame building in good condition, contains wash tubs.
		29	45.8 x 18.8-18 ft. high	Lodge for Superintendent of National Cemetery. A stone building with porch in front and rear, contains three rooms. ( )

I certify that the above Report

John Hammer (signed)  
1st Lieut.

APPENDIX FF

List of Public Buildings at Fort Smith, Arkansas

NO.	DIMENSIONS	REMARKS
1	60 x 66	Barracks; one story brick building with attic & basement.
2	48 x 50	Quartermaster's Storehouse; A two story stone building in good condition.
3	48 x 50	Commissary Storehouse; A two story stone building in good condition.
4	28 x 31	Guardhouse; A one story brick building in good condition.
5	63 x 23	Barracks; Wood lined with Brick, in fair condition.
6	54 x 15	Officers' Quarters; One story wood building, in fair condition.
7	38½ x 50	Hospital; Wood building, old, dilapidated.
8	16 x 28	Hospital; Wood building in good condition.
9	36 x 16	Laundresses Quarters, built of wood, old, dilapidated.
10	54 x 17	Ordnance Sergeant's Quarters, built of wood, old, dilapidated.
11	59 x 200	Quartermaster's Storehouse; Of wood & in good condition.
12	88 x 15	Quartermaster's Storehouse; of wood & in good condition. (built by the Rebels)
13	69 x 24	Gun Shed; of wood - old & worthless.
14	54 x 20	Used for various purposes; of wood, old & worthless.
15	50 x 25 with extension of 15 x 12½	Carpenter Shop; of wood & in fair condition.
16	59 x 29	Lumber shed & paint shop - of wood & in fair condition.
17	25 x 19	Quarters for Quartermaster Employees; built of wood & in fair condition.
18	50 x 25 with an L 40 x 13	Quarters for Quartermaster Employees; built of wood & in fair condition.
19	143 x 37½	Stable- Of Wood & in good condition.
20	143 x 37½	Stable-Of Wood & in good condition.
21	102½ x 26	Stable-Of Wood & in good condition.
22	50 x 20	Forage House-Of Wood & in good condition.
23	50 x 25	Forage House-Of Wood & in good condition.
24	69 x 17½	Bake House-Of wood & in good condition.
25	Pentagonal 4 faces 30 ft. 2 faces 20½ ft 1 face 15 ft. Interior measurements	Magazine-Of stone, in good condition, except floor & roof.

The above list includes all buildings at this Post except two worthless sheds.

APPENDIX GG

- No 1. Barracks, one-story brick building with attic and basement 60 x 66  
Now used - basement by U. S. Marshal for prison.  
Two rooms up stairs by U. S. Commissioner and U. S. Marshal for offices,  
& court room.  
Attic for jury room. Floor in basement stone, brick underneath - Fit  
for nothing Especially Except its present use.  
Slate roof - Not in very good repair.  
Valued by us at \$6,833.00
- No 2. Quarter Master's Store House. Two story stone building 48 x 50. Wall  
2 feet 6 inches thick. Floor of basement rough stone. Two small and one large  
room on first floor. Now occupied by Col. LeFlore, Attorney of the Choctaw  
Nation.  
Not in good repair. Part of building claimed to be in Indian Territory.  
Valuation \$3,000.00
- No 3. Commissary Store House. Two Story stone building 48 x 50. Same as  
No 2. Occupied by Mr. Berry, Keeper of prison. Not in good repair.  
Valuation \$3,000.00
- No 4. Guard House. One story brick 28 x 31. Used for confinement of condemned  
Murderers. Good condition.  
Valuation \$500.00
- No 5. Barracks - Wood lined with brick 63 x 23. Unoccupied. Fair condition.  
Cannot be moved from ground.  
Valuation \$330.00
- No 6. Officers' Quarters. One story wood building 54 x 15. Unoccupied.  
Partitioned into five small rooms. Bad condition.  
Valuation \$250.00
- No 7. Hospital building. Wood 38½ x 50. Worthless except for fire wood.  
Valuation \$10.00
- No 8. Hospital building. Wood 16 x 28. Unoccupied. No windows or doors.  
Bad condition.  
Valuation \$75.00
- No 9. Laundresses' Quarters. Wood 36 x 16. Dilapidated and Worthless.  
Valuation \$15.00
- No 10. Ord. Sergeant's Quarters. Wood 54 x 17. All this building claimed to be  
in Indian Territory. Old and almost worthless.  
Valuation \$100.00
- No 11. Quarter Master's Store House. Wood 50 x 200. Used as cotton storehouse  
by Citizens. Partly on Indian Territory as claimed.  
Good condition.  
Valuation \$1,500.00
- No 12. Quarter Master's Store House. Wood 88 x 15. Built by Rebels as Quarter  
Master's Storehouse. Hewed log with stone lagging for floor. Occupied by negro  
families. Condition good.  
Valuation \$400.00
- No 13. Gun Shed. Wood 69 x 24. Worthless except for lumber and fire wood.  
Valuation \$25.00
- No 14. Building used for various purposes. Wood 14 x 20. Torn down, and nothing  
remaining, except small part of the roof and chimney.
- No 15. Carpenter shop. Wood. 50 x 25. With extension 15 x 12½. Extension  
common boards, rotten. Rest of building battered. Occupied by negroes. Bad  
condition.  
Valuation \$100.00
- No 16. Lumber shed and Paint shop. Wood 59 x 29. Torn down, and lumber used  
for partitions, flooring and repairs to No 1.
- No 17. Quarters for Q.M. Employees. Wood 25 x 19. Occupied by prison guards.  
Very bad condition.  
Valuation \$75.00
- No 18. Quarters for Q.M. Employees. Wood 50 x 25 with L 40 x 13. Occupied by  
prison guards of U.S. Marshal. Fair Condition.  
Valuation \$175.00
- No 19. Stable. Wood 143 x 37½. Occupied by citizens. Fair condition.  
Valuation \$500.00



No 20.	Stable. Wood 143 x 37½. Occupied by Govt. Employees. Good condition.	
	Valuation	\$700.00
No 21.	Stable. Wood 102 x 26. Unoccupied. Fair condition.	
	Valuation	\$325.00
No 22.	Porage House. Wood 50 x 20. Unoccupied. Bad condition. Roof worthless.	
	Valuation	\$150.00
No 23.	Porage House. Wood 50 x 25. Unoccupied. Good condition.	
	Valuation	\$200.00
No 24.	Bake House. Wood 69 x 19½. Unoccupied. Fair condition.	
	Valuation	\$150.00
No 25.	Pentagonal (Magazine) Stone 2 faces 30 ft. 2 faces 20½ ft., one 15 ft. Occupied for storage of powder belonging to citizens. Good condition.	
	Valuation	\$200.00

The following property is not found on memorandum furnished by War Department.

No 26.	Two story frame house built by sutler and afterwards purchased by the government, 50 x 26. Occupied by U. S. Commissioner - Condition not good.	
	Valuation	\$400.00
No 27.	Little building near No 21. Wood. Worthless except for wood	
	Valuation	\$10.00
No 28.	Stone wall surrounding garrison buildings, containing 3,066 Perches & 11 11/16 cubic feet of Stone.	
	Valuation	\$3,832.00

Edward M. McCook (signed)  
 N. H. Van Vorhes (signed)  
 James R. Laffery (signed)

Commissioners

APPENDIX III

## Garrison of Fort Smith

Units	Period Stationed at Fort Smith
Company F, 7th Infantry	July 27, 1838 - January 9, 1839.
Companies B and H, 3d Infantry**	October 24, 1839 - September 25, 1840.
Company D, 3d Infantry**	December 28, 1839 - July 1840.
Companies F and K, 3d Infantry**	December 28, 1839 - September 25, 1840.
Company E, 4th Infantry**	September 25, 1840 - September 19, 1842.
Companies D and F, 6th Infantry***	September 17, 1842 - July 13, 1846. <sup>T</sup>
Company D, 1st Dragoons	August 10, 1846 - May 10, 1847.
Battalion of Arkansas Volunteers	May 10, 1847 - October 31, 1848.
Company B, 5th Infantry	October 31, 1848 - May 6, 1850.
Company E, 5th Infantry	October 31, 1848 - July 2, 1850.
Company E, 5th Infantry	March 14, 1851 - July 7, 1851.
Company F, 7th Infantry	May 14, 1851 - May 8, 1854.
Company M, 2d Light Artillery	July 9, 1853 - August 16, 1853.
Detachment 7th Infantry	May 8, 1854 <sup>B</sup> - December 8, 1853 <sup>5</sup>
Companies B and F, 7th Infantry	December 8, 1855 - August 1, 1857.
Companies D and H, 7th Infantry	August 7, 1857 - February 8, 1858.
Detachment 7th Infantry	February 8, 1858 - March 1, 1858.
Companies A and B, 1st Cavalry	December 18, 1858 - June 10, 1859.
Detachment 1st Cavalry	June 10, 1858 - September - 1859. <sup>6</sup>
Company E, 2d Light Artillery	September 30, 1860 - October 3, 1840.
Company F, 2d Light Artillery	September 30, 1860 - October 15, 1860.
Companies D and E, 1st Cavalry	September 19, 1860 - April 23, 1861.

\* Posted at Old Fort Smith

\*\* Stationed at Cantonment Belknap

\*\*\* Moved into the Garrison on May 15, 1846.

...plied by Arkansas and Confederate Troops April 23, 1861 - September 1, 1863

Volunteers Detachments Various States September 1, 1863 - May 9, 1866.  
 Company F, 3d Battalion, 19th Infantry May 9, 1866 - September 3, 1866.  
 Company G, 2d Battalion, 19th Infantry June \_\_ 1866 - October 25, 1866.  
 Company B, 19th Infantry November 13, 1866 - May \_\_ 1867.  
 Company F, 19th Infantry January 14, 1867 - April 10, 1869.  
 Company H, 19th Infantry October 9, 1867 - April 10, 1869.  
 Company A, 19th Infantry October 15, 1867 - April 13, 1869.  
 Company I, 6th Infantry April 26, 1869 - August 1869.  
 Company K, 6th Infantry April 26, 1869 - August 1869.  
 Company D, 6th Infantry June 9, 1869 - July 18, 1871.  
 Detachment, Company D, 6th Infantry July 18, 1871 - November 10, 1871.

*where is Co. E?  
 - probably into Commissary*

Commanding Officers at Fort Smith

Officer	Unit	Dates	
Captain Benjamin L. E. Bonneville	7th Infantry	July 27, 1838-October 24, 1838	
Captain William G. Belknap	3d Infantry	October 24, 1838-September 25, 1840	
Captain William W. Lear	4th Infantry	September 25, 1840-September 17, 1842	
Major William Hoffman	6th Infantry	September 17, 1842-May 15, 1843	
Captain Joseph D. Searight	6th Infantry	May 15, 1843-November 16, 1843.	
Major William Hoffman	6th Infantry	November 16, 1843-August 30, 1845.	
Captain Benjamin L. E. Bonneville	6th Infantry	August 30, 1845-December 21, 1845	
Captain William Hoffman	6th Infantry	December 21, 1845-January 4, 1846	
Captain Benjamin L. E. Bonneville	6th Infantry	January 4, 1846-July 13, 1846	7mo
Captain Edmund B. Alexander	* Quartermaster Department	July 13, 1846-October 13, 1846	3
Lieutenant John W. T. Gardiner	1st Dragoons	October 13, 1846-May 10, 1847	7
Lieutenant Franklin F. Flint	6th Infantry	May 10, 1847-November 3, 1848	18
Captain Caleb C. Sibley	5th Infantry	November 3, 1848-July 2, 1850	20
Captain Caleb C. Sibley	5th Infantry	March 4, 1851-June 7, 1851	3
Captain Richard C. Gatlin	7th Infantry	June 7, 1851-May 24, 1852	11½
Colonel Henry Wilson	7th Infantry	May 24, 1852-October 14, 1852	5
Major George Andrews	7th Infantry	October 14, 1852-May 13, 1853	7mo

Colonel Henry Wilson	7th Infantry	May 13, 1853-July 18, 1853	2 mo
Captain Henry J. Hunt	Battery M, 2d Light Artillery	July 18, 1853-August 7, 1853	1
Captain Theophilus Holmes	7th Infantry	August 7, 1853-October 1, 1853	2
Lieutenant Franklin Gardner	7th Infantry	October 1, 1853-November 26, 1853	1
Colonel Henry Wilson	7th Infantry	November 26, 1853-May 5, 1855	18
Lieutenant Joseph H. Potter	7th Infantry	May 5, 1855-May 22, 1855	1/2
Captain Samuel G. French	* Quartermaster's Department	May 22, 1855-December 8, 1855	7
Captain Richard C. Gatlin	7th Infantry	December 8, 1855-January 27, 1856	1 1/2
Captain Isaac Lynde	7th Infantry	January 27, 1856-March 3, 1856	1 1/2
Captain Richard C. Gatlin	7th Infantry	March 3, 1856-December 19, 1856	10
Captain Isaac Lynde	7th Infantry	December 19, 1856-June 23, 1857	6
Captain Richard C. Gatlin	7th Infantry	June 23, 1857-August 1, 1857	1
Captain Lafayette McLaws	7th Infantry	August 11, 1857-September 11, 1857	1
Captain Seneca G. Simmons	7th Infantry	September 11, 1857-February 8, 1858	5
Lieutenant Edward J. Brooks	7th Infantry	February 8, 1858-March 1, 1858	1
Captain Delos B. Sackett	1st Cavalry	December 18, 1858-June 24, 1859	6 1/2 mo.
Captain William W. Burns	* Commissary Dept.	June 24, 1859-July 21, 1859	1
Lieutenant Eugene W. Crittenden	1st Cavalry	July 21, 1859-September 1859	2 1/2 mo.
Captain Samuel D. Sturgis	1st Cavalry	September 19, 1860-April 23, 1861	7 2/3 mo.
Colonel William Cloud	1st Kansas	September 1, 1863-December 1, 1863	3 1/2 mo. Non U.S.
Colonel John Edwards	18th Iowa Infantry	December 1, 1863-March 21, 1864	3 1/2
Colonel Albert Bishop	1st Arkansas	March 21, 1864-May 19, 1864	2
Colonel William R. Judson	6th Kansas Cavalry	May 19, 1864-January 3, 1865	7
Colonel Junius B. Wheeler	13th Kansas	January 3, 1865-February 1, 1865	1
Brigadier General Cyrus Bussey		February 1, 1865-September 1865	9
Colonel Matthew W. Trumbull	9th Iowa Cavalry	September 1865-February 1866	5
Colonel Paul Harwood	57th U.S. Colored Troops	February 1866-May 9, 1866	2 1/2
Captain Robert W. Barnard	19th U.S. Infantry	May 9, 1866-October 25, 1866	5
Captain Samuel S. Culbertson	19th U.S. Infantry	October 25, 1866-November 13, 1866	1
Captain William J. Lyster	19th U.S. Infantry	November 13, 1866-January 14, 1867	2
Captain James B. Mulligan	19th U.S. Infantry	January 14, 1867-February 25, 1867	1

Lieutenant Colonel DeLancey Floyd-Jones	19th U.S. Infantry	February 25, 1867-October 22, 1867	3
Lieutenant Colonel Pinkney Lugenbeel	19th U.S. Infantry	October 22, 1867-April 13, 1869	18
Captain John S. Hammer	19th U.S. Infantry	April 13, 1869-April 26, 1869	1/2
Captain John J. Upham	6th U.S. Infantry	April 26, 1869-June 10, 1869	1/2
Captain Montgomery Bryant	6th U.S. Infantry	June 10, 1869-November 1870	17
Lieutenant Frederick W. Thibaut	6th U.S. Infantry	November 1870-January 1871	2
Captain Montgomery Bryant	6th U.S. Infantry	January 1871-July 19, 1871	6
Lieutenant Frederick W. Thibaut	6th U.S. Infantry	July 19, 1871-September 30, 1871	2
Lieutenant David L. Craft	6th U.S. Infantry	September 30, 1871-November 10, 1871	10