

Quotes from Fort Scott

Read the following primary sources and answer the questions below:

Reasons for building Fort Scott

- A. "The dragoons should be constantly kept patrolling along this road (military road), to enforce the non-intercourse law, and prevent the introduction of spirituous liquors into the Indian country... They (whites) introduce whiskey into the Indian country, and sell it to the Indians at enormous price. The Indians get drunk, commence quarrelling, and in this state of excitement, commit acts of depredation, which, in many cases, lead to war."

-Captain GP Kingsbury, 1837

- B. "West of the Neutral ground are the Osages, the greatest thieves near the frontier and who have committed more depredations in Missouri than all the other Indians together... These are the Indians, and not the Cherokees that require to be over-awed by the presence of a Military force..."

-Major Ethan Allan Hitchcock, 1842

- C. "A post on the neutral ground would be at all times ready to chastise Osage marauders and by thus protecting the people of Missouri prevent a border difficulty which has several times been on the point of breaking out..."

-Major Ethan Allen Hitchcock, 1842

- D. "The site is a ridge seventy- or eighty-feet high projecting like a wedge into a dry timbered bottom... A fine stream of water flows at its base and the timber is more than sufficient both in quantity and quality..."

-Captain Moore, 1842

Constructing the Fort

- E. "I regret to state that, in consequence of a portion of the Dragoons during the summer, and the want of an adequate supply of lumber, owing to the scarcity of water in the millstream, we have not been able to finish some of the buildings commenced..."

-Captain Thomas Swords, October 1844

- F. "I have received a letter by the last mail from Colonel Kearny...in which he expresses great disapprobation at the slow manner in which the buildings here...I would most respectfully that the Assistant Quartermaster at this Post be authorized to hire as many mechanics as he can employ to advantage, to assist in pushing on the buildings..."

-Captain Graham, October 1844

- G. "Wish you were here to consult with about matters and things am thrown entirely upon my own resources for plans &c. Not one of them here can draw a straight line, even with the assistance of a ruler..."

-Capt. Thomas Swords to Lieut. Abraham Johnston

- H. "Military road as far as completed from Fort Leavenworth to Spring River (170 miles) has been very much injured by the last rains, most of the small bridges having been carried off or so much injured as to be impassable... this road is of very great importance to this frontier both in civilian and military point of view, and particularly to this Post..."

-Capt. Thomas Swords, 1844

- I. "We have hardly had rain to lay the dust since last July...everything as dry as a powder horn... the mill idle...and no lumber..."

-Capt. Thomas Swords, 1845

- J. "I have the honor to report that owing to the reduced state of the garrison I am unable to procure a sufficient number of Extra-duty men to continue building this post...in order to secure the buildings now up (all but two in an unfinished state) and to proceed with the construction of this post, some four or five additional mechanics and from twenty to thirty laborers would be required immediately..."

I have been obliged to increase the wages of the mechanics, from the 1st inst, to the rates of this country otherwise they would have left here and I could not have hired others as competent..."

-Lieutenant Wallace, December 1846

- K. "As there has been and probable will be, owing to the want of water, great difficulty in obtaining the quantity of lumber required to complete the Barracks, Quarters &c, I do most respectfully suggest the propriety of using stone in the construction of the Commanding Officer's Quarters, a sufficient quantity to limestone can be procured with a miles of this post to complete the whole work if

necessary, from the slight knowledge I possess on the subject am induced to believe the stone will cost less than the wood labour &c taken into consideration.”

-Lieutenant Wallace, March 1848

- L. “According to the original plan, this Post is about finished except the Commanding Officer’s quarters and another Dragoon Stable, neither of which will be wanted unless the force of this garrison is increased”

-Captain Morrow, April 1850

Life at Fort Scott

- M. “The fatigue duties must be considered the indirect cause of a large proportion of the fevers and diseases of the respiratory system; at the same time, it is difficult to say whether this produces a greater amount of disease than ardent spirits”

-Dr. Joseph Walker, Assistant Surgeon, 1842

- N. “Our time is mostly passed in reading, within a few days there has been a considerable addition to the library... When the books become irksome, we ride, fish, and walk, collect all the pretty flowers we see and try to become botanist, the flowers have far surpass those of Leavenworth in fragrance...”

-Charlotte Swords, 1843

- O. “I have this day requested of Major R.B Lee C.S at St. Louis one thousand pounds of good hard candles to be forwarded as early as possible; those furnished by the contractor were very nearly as soft as hog’s lard”

-1st Lieut. C. Hoskins, Assistant commissary subsistence, 1844

- P. “We get along here very slowly with the buildings, and Terrett is heartily disgusted with having so many of his men on extra-duty-Duck-shooting and wolf chasing are the only things that reconcile him to the place...”

-Captain Thomas Swords, 1844

- Q. “We are the most humdrum set you ever saw-No body drinks, no body hunts, no body does any thing but eat and sleep, and so our lives pass in vegetable state of existence. The flies and musketoes are so bad that we cannot move out either to walk, ride, fish or hunt...”

-Captain Thomas Swords, 1845

- R. "I hunt with my husband and in the hall stands my bow and arrow ready strung for the first unfortunate Buffalo that makes his appearance at Scott. . . So Mr. Berry is in love-it is no longer necessary [to] conceal it-not with Miss Garland as we all supposed but with a Miss Bows of Charleston. . ."

-Charlotte Swords, 1844

- S. "The opportunities for fishing, and hunting cannot be surpassed at any other post in the Army, and I have improved and enjoyed them too, very much since I have been here. The objections I have to this Post are, a total waste of society, and its great distance from any other place."

-Lieutenant Russell, 1845

- T. "The post was this day broken up, pursuant to Dept. orders no. 9, of March 30, 1853, and the garrison on route for Fort Leavenworth, the Ordinance Sgt. Being left at Fort Scott"

-Captain Van Buren, 1853

Questions on Quotes

1. What two reasons do source A give for the dragoons to constantly be patrolling the military road?
2. According to sources B and C, what are some reasons mentioned for building the fort?
3. According to Captain Moore in source D, why would the location be a good place to build a fort?
4. According to sources E-I, what are some obstacles in the construction of Fort Scott?
5. According to source J, why does Wallace need to hire more mechanics and laborers? Why does Wallace say he has to increase the mechanic's wages?
6. According to source K, what material did Wallace want to use to build the commanding Officer's Quarters? What are two reasons why Wallace wanted to use this material?
7. According to source L, which 2 parts of the original plan were not finished in 1850? Why weren't those 2 structures built?
8. What are the two reasons given in source M for the large number of fevers and diseases?

9. According to source N, what were some activities people at Fort Scott would do on their free time?
10. What was the problem mentioned by source O? Would you consider this a big problem? Why or why not?
11. Why is Captain Terrett disgusted in source P?
12. What does Swords complain about in source Q?
13. What does source R tell you about Mrs. Swords?
14. What are two positives and two negatives Lieutenant Russell mentions in source S?
15. According to source T, what happened to Fort Scott in 1853?