

REPORT
OF
THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

(In compliance with a resolution of the Senate,)

IN RELATION TO

The evacuation of Fort Wayne, Arkansas.

FEBRUARY 22, 1844.

Read, and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT, *February 20, 1844.*

SIR: In answer to the resolution of the Senate of the United States of the 9th instant, requiring the Secretary of War "to furnish the Senate with all correspondence on file in his office, or on file in the office of the Commander-in-chief of the Army, upon the subject of a selection for the site for Fort Wayne, on the frontier of Arkansas; also, to inform the Senate if the building of a fort was commenced upon said site, and the reasons had for abandoning the erection of Fort Wayne at the point aforesaid; and, also, that he further inform the Senate whether it is in contemplation to place any more troops upon the borders of Arkansas, for the safety and proper protection of the people of that State"—I respectfully transmit, herewith, two reports from the Commanding General of the Army of the 11th December last and the 19th instant, and a report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, which contain all the information required by the resolution, so far as it can be furnished by this department.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM WILKINS,
Secretary of War.

Hon. W. P. MANGUM,
President of the Senate pro tempore.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,

February 19, 1844.

Under the resolution of the Senate dated February 9, 1844, I beg leave to submit the within report, made to the Secretary of War in December last, and to add; It is not in the contemplation of this office, nor has it been recommended by Brigadier General Taylor, to re-establish the former military post, Fort Wayne, or any new post within that vicinity. It is within

my contemplation to propose, at an early day, to reinforce the immediate frontiers of Arkansas with a portion of the present regiment of riflemen, or dragoons, should that regiment be remounted.

WINFIELD SCOTT.

History of the evacuation of Fort Wayne.

On the evacuation of Fort Coffee, on the 19th October, 1838, that command (Captain Stewart's) was ordered to establish the *new post* on the Illinois, (Fort Wayne,) 29th October, 1838. This was done at the solicitation of the whites, on account of the numbers of emigrants settling in that quarter. The better class of Indians have always been opposed to this post, on account of the difficulties and fracas between the dissipated of the Indians and the soldiery. February 12, 1839, a dragoon camp was formed there, relieving the company of infantry. This post was subsequently called Fort Wayne. In June, 1840, it was changed to a more healthy site in the neighborhood. It was evacuated in full the 26th May, 1842, and its garrison ordered to establish Fort Scott—a post essential to constrain the lawless Osages—on representations from citizens of Missouri. The post of Fort Wayne has never been upheld by officers or on military considerations, excepting by Lieutenant Colonel Mason, whose report cannot be found. The Cherokees are known to be opposed to it, (that is, the better class,) though there have been petitions for and against it. The treaty of New Echota requires the United States to afford protection in the case of internal dissension and violence; and in some of their petitions they adduce this. July 28, 1841, General Taylor, in relation to Fort Wayne, writes to the adjutant general: "If the post is to be abandoned, the sooner it is done the better, as it will save much *expense to the Government*; and I conceive Fort Gibson sufficiently near the line to effect every object that can be obtained by keeping up Fort Wayne; moreover, the present site of this post is in the most densely populated section of the Cherokee nation, which necessarily *brings the disorderly Indians and soldiers often in contact.* * * By abandoning it, the Indians will be better satisfied, and the inhabitants of Arkansas have nothing more to fear or complain of than they have at present." Fort Wayne was, at this date, merely held by company A, 1st dragoons, to guard the public property; for, by general orders No. 43, August 25, 1840, Colonel Mason had been *directed to abandon it in full*, and take post at Fort Gibson—an order occasioned by the 4th infantry being ordered to relieve the garrisons of Forts Towson, Jesup, and Smith. The 13th February, 1843, General Taylor writes to the adjutant general: "The Cherokee people, with whom I conversed at Fort Wayne, are adverse to the removal of the works from that region, and I was informed that the names of several individuals were placed on a petition for its removal without their knowledge."

The 28th of March, 1843, General Taylor writes to the adjutant general, and says that, notwithstanding the reports sent to Washington, there exist no rumors of danger in the Cherokee nation; that the design of such false reports is to cause the reoccupation of Fort Wayne; and, also, "on the subject of reoccupying Fort Wayne, it is proper to remark, that the position was evacuated by orders from the War Department, without any recom-

mendation to that effect from me ; and, although I thought it expedient to change the particular site, yet it seemed to me, at the time, impolitic to break up the post altogether. Now, however, that *it has been evacuated* for nearly a year, without, to my knowledge, any injurious consequences, I see no *adequate reason for reoccupying it.* The multiplication of small posts is, in some degree, hurtful to the discipline of the troops, and entails heavy expenses in the quartermaster's and subsistence departments. I am therefore *decidedly opposed* to the re-establishment of Fort Wayne, or the creation of any new post within the Cherokee country. In case of any real or apprehended difficulty in the settlements around Fort Wayne, a sufficient force of mounted men can be on the spot from Fort Gibson in forty-eight hours, as was exemplified in May last."

By a letter from the adjutant general, dated February 10, 1842, ordering the evacuation of Fort Wayne and establishment of Fort Scott,* the Secretary of War directs, in consideration of the pending treaty, that it be *held out* to the Cherokees that it shall be *regarrisoned* by the 2d dragoons, on their coming out of Florida.

A further reason for evacuating Fort Wayne was the sickliness of the neighborhood.

Respectfully submitted to the Secretary of War.

WINFIELD SCOTT.

DECEMBER 11, 1843.

Orders to Captain Stewart, originating with the War Department.

By general orders No. 22, July 5, 1838, Captain Stewart, 7th infantry, and Captain C. Thomas, assistant quartermaster, are ordered to select a site on the Illinois, "*in the State of Arkansas,*" and "*within ten miles of its western boundary.*"

By a letter from the Adjutant General's office, July 19, 1838, to Major C. Thomas, quartermaster, (and to Captain Stewart)—

"SIR: I am instructed by the Secretary of War to transmit the following additional instructions respecting the selection of a site and surveying a new road near the Illinois river, Arkansas.

"When the first instructions were given, it was expected that the law of 1836, directing a road to be run west of the States of Arkansas and Missouri, and posts to be established thereon, would be repealed. That not having been done, and the law remaining in full force, it becomes necessary that a site should be selected on the Illinois river, *between the route of the road and the State boundary line.*"

The military road commissioners, however, have never recommended this site, but, in their report, November 16, 1837, on the military road and *intermediate posts*, they recommended *two*, viz: the present Fort Scott, (or its neighborhood, the Marais de Ceygne,) and one at Spring river, about 120 miles from Fort Gibson, or 128 miles from Fort Coffee.

* This fort was named in my absence from Washington, by Mr. Secretary Spencer, without my knowledge and against my wishes.
W. S.

DEPARTMENT OF WAR,
Office Indian Affairs, February 14, 1844.

SIR: A resolution of the Senate of the United States of 9th instant, referred to this office on the 10th, is in the following words:

"*Resolved*, That the Secretary of War be directed to furnish the Senate with all correspondence on file in his office, or on file in the office of the Commander-in-chief of the Army, upon the subject of a selection for the site for Fort Wayne, on the frontier of Arkansas; also, to inform the Senate if the building of a fort was commenced upon said site, and the reasons had for abandoning the erection of Fort Wayne at the point aforesaid; and, also, that he further inform the Senate whether it is in contemplation to place any more troops upon the borders of Arkansas, for the safety and proper protection of the people of that State."

In accordance with the object of the above reference, I have caused a careful search to be made amongst the files of this office, and have the honor to report, that no correspondence can be found which immediately relates to, or from which can be deduced, the information called for in the above-recited resolution.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

T. HARTLEY CRAWFORD.

HON. J. M. PORTER,
Secretary of War.