

MILITARY HISTORY OF FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS

MILITARY HISTORY OF FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS

By

LUCILLE ROBINETT SPEAKMAN

Bachelor of Arts

Southeastern State Teacher's College

Durant, Oklahoma

1930

Submitted to the Department of History  
Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

1942

APPROVED BY:

H. Reynolds, J. H. R.  
Chairman, Thesis Committee

G. B. Hawkins  
Member of the Thesis Committee

H. Reynolds, J. H. R.  
Head of the Department

R. M. Intosh  
Dean of the Graduate School

NOV 27 1942 iv

P R E F A C E

This study was made for the purpose of putting into comprehensive form the chronological story of the military history of one of the early frontier posts in the great Southwest. The part played by Fort Smith in the inauguration of the government's policy of removing the Indians west of the Mississippi has been particularly stressed. An attempt has been made to show the role of the garrison in other national movements including: the Mexican war; the gold rush of 1849; the Civil War and the present national emergency.

Acknowledgment of valuable advise is made to the members of the thesis committee. The writer is also indebted to the librarians of this college, of the University of Arkansas and of the Fort Smith Carnegie Library for the kindly interest, enduring patience and inexhaustible consideration which have rendered this work possible.

L. R. S.

146530

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface . . . . .	iv
Chapter I Events On The Poteau And Arkansas Prior To The Fort . . . . .	1
Chapter II The Establishment Of The First Fort . . .	10
Chapter III The Second Fort . . . . .	24
Chapter IV Fort Smith During And After The Civil War . . . . .	42
Appendix . . . . .	52
Bibliography . . . . .	54

## CHAPTER I

### EVENTS ON THE POTEAU AND ARKANSAS PRIOR TO THE FORT

Interwoven into the history of that section of the great American Southwest, which seemed destined by the prodigality of nature and the greed of the white man to become a refuge of the last resort for the red man, runs the story of those outlying posts of civilization, the forts. The life and events that swirled around them shines through the entire pattern as a bright thread through an otherwise sombre cloth. The first of these garrisons to be established by the United States in Arkansas and Indian Territories was Fort Smith, located on the Arkansas River.<sup>1</sup>

To the north and west of this post, over the vast expanse of the prairies, roamed thousands of buffaloes. The herds migrated northward with the spring after wintering in the valleys of the Rio Grande, the Brazos, and the Red Rivers. Following them as a rule were bands of Indians who had established themselves in lands contiguous to winter pastures and in the paths of the spring migrations. The Comanche, Kiowa, Wichita, and other tribes lived near the Red River, in western Oklahoma and Texas. North of the Arkansas River, the warlike Osages challenged all new-comers; extending south from this river to the Red

---

<sup>1</sup> Grant Foreman, Indians & Pioneers--The Story of the American Southwest, 1. Hereafter cited as Foreman, Indians and Pioneers.

River, the Quapaws were recognized as rightful owners of the land. These tribes exercised arrogant sovereignty over their respective territories and challenged other Indians and white men who ventured into their hunting grounds. To the early French and Spanish explorers this jealously guarded region remained practically terra incognita, across which they watched each other with greedy hostility.<sup>2</sup>

Although by right of discovery the Spanish had first claim to the Mississippi River,<sup>3</sup> it was the French who explored it and established themselves upon its shores.<sup>4</sup> In 1686 Henri de Tonti<sup>5</sup> and other members of La Salle's party garrisoned a site on the Arkansas River about fifty miles from its mouth, which they called Arkansas Post.<sup>6</sup> This fort was continuously garrisoned until taken over by the United States in the Louisiana Purchase, and thereafter remained a small but important outpost for many years.<sup>7</sup>

La Salle did not live to see his dream of colonization of the Mississippi by the French come true, but his dreams lived on. For

---

<sup>2</sup> Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 2-15.

<sup>3</sup> De Sota in 1541.

<sup>4</sup> La Salle in 1682; Montigney in 1699; Gravier in 1700.

<sup>5</sup> Henri de Tonti was a young Italian soldier of fortune who had served as an officer in the French army and lost his right hand at the battle of Libisso. He was most faithful to his beloved leader, La Salle, who left him on the Mississippi to await his return from France where he had gone to bring back colonizers for a settlement at the mouth of the Mississippi. Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Reuben Gold Thwaites, The American Nation: A History, VII, (France in America 1497-1763), 85.

<sup>7</sup> Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 3.

decades, yes, centuries, trappers and traders journeyed up and down the Mississippi in their canoes, following the tributaries of that river as far as possible. Some paddled up the Arkansas and eventually made their way across to the Spanish settlements in New Mexico; others followed smaller streams to remote villages to trade with the Plains Indians. Our written records of these journeys are scant, but the names of places, posts established and people contacted bear evidence of their occurrence.<sup>8</sup>

The roving Indian tribes and the migrant white people who followed them took little note of the transfer of territory from France to Spain in 1762 and back to France by the secret Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1800. Settlers had not yet penetrated these areas in large enough numbers for the changes to have any noticeable effect on every day life if indeed they chanced to hear the news. While the events that culminated in the Louisiana Purchase had little bearing on this particular phase of history, the results of the acquisition soon began to take effect. It seemed to Jefferson that this vast domain to the west might well be used as a permanent home for the

---

<sup>8</sup> On the maps of this region we find the Poteau and Verdigris Rivers, the Ouachita and San Bois Rivers; in the annals of our history are the names of families of mixed French and Indian blood: the Le Flores, Chouteaus, and La Forces; in Fort Smith one of the first of the public schools bears the name of Belle Point, commemorating the French trading post on the Poteau by that name. James Shannon Buchanan and Edward Everett Dale, A History of Oklahoma, 32-3. Hereafter cited as Buchanan, Hist. of Okla.



4

Indians and thereby relieve the irritating contact of whites and Indians east of the river.<sup>9</sup>

This new territory was a vast and little known region; even its exact boundaries were in doubt. President Jefferson, thoroughly cognizant of these facts and deeply steeped with a desire for intimate information on the potentialities of the far west, soon sent out exploring parties to examine and report upon the country. In one of these we are particularly interested.

Lieutenant Zebulon M. Pike was chosen to lead an expedition through southern section, with instructions to follow the Arkansas River to its source and explore the mountains in what is now Colorado.<sup>10</sup> At a point near Great Bend, Kansas, Lieutenant James B. Wilkinson and five enlisted men were dispatched by Pike to descend the Arkansas to its mouth. On October 28, 1806 they set out in two canoes of their own construction, one a hollowed-out cottonwood log, the other made of buffalo skins. On the last day of December, they

---

<sup>9</sup> That Jefferson had this in mind is clearly shown by a proposed amendment to the Constitution which he had prepared in July, 1803, providing for the removal of the eastern Indians. Anne Heloise Abel, "The History of Events Resulting in American Consolidation West of the Mississippi River", Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1906, I, 241. It was, however, never presented for adoption. Instead the policy was incorporated in a general act passed by Congress on March 26, 1804, which provided for the government of the Louisiana Purchase. Section Fifteen. The Statutes At Large of the United States, II, 277. Hereafter cited as U. S. Stat. at Large.

<sup>10</sup> James Daniel Richardson, Comp., A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1908, I, 448.

passed the mouth of the Poteau River and in a few weeks arrived at New Orleans. Of his journey Wilkinson left an interesting story. Enroute an Indian village of the Osages was visited. This village, called "The Osages of the Oaks," had been separated from the main body on the Osage River in Missouri.<sup>11</sup> He also reported that Cherokees, Choctaws, and Creeks from east of the Mississippi River were living in nearby communities.<sup>12</sup> Probably there were many American trappers in this region previous to Wilkinson, but he was the first American to make an official exploration and write an account of what he saw.<sup>13</sup>

In 1806 Jefferson submitted a report to Congress based on information derived from his other, the Lewis and Clark expedition. Much of his report bore on the possibilities of removing the Indians from the East to that country. He noted the removal of possibly half of the Osages from the Osage River to the Arkansas River in 1802, adding that he thought others of the tribe could be induced to follow, thus leaving a large scope of country for other tribes.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> The tribe migrated in 1802.

<sup>12</sup> Probably hunting parties in search of game.

<sup>13</sup> Elliott Coues, The Expeditions of Zebulon M. Pike, II, 547-59. Hereafter cited as Coues, Ex. of Pike.

<sup>14</sup> American State Papers, "Indian Affairs", I, 708. Hereafter cited as Am. State Papers, "Ind. Aff."

The Osage Indians had long caused trouble throughout the Southwest. In 1794, August and Pierre Chouteau had been granted by the Spanish Governor, Carondelet, of New Orleans, a monopoly of the Osage trade until 1800. In return for this a local fort was built from which the Indians could be supervised if not actually controlled.<sup>15</sup>

In 1802 the Spanish government retrieved the monopoly of the Osage River trade from the Chouteaus and vested it in a group of four Spanish traders. To offset this loss, the Chouteaus induced two thousand of the tribe to choose as their chief, Cashesegra, (or Big Track) and remove to Three Forks, the junction of the Arkansas, Verdigris, and Grand Rivers.<sup>16</sup>

After Big Track's death (date uncertain) the southern band of Osages were known as Chaneers, Arkansas Osages, and as Clermont's Band. As it developed some of the most unruly warriors of the entire tribe were a part of this group. Needless to say they were a source of much trouble to other tribes and to the government.<sup>17</sup>

With the Louisiana Purchase, the Osage Indians more than all other tribes became a problem child for the United States. In 1808 the Missouri Osages signed a treaty with the United States, ceding to the government all of the country lying north of the Arkansas River

---

<sup>15</sup> Chouteau to the Governor and Intendant-General, cited by Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 19-20.

<sup>16</sup> Am. State Papers, "Ind. Aff.", I, 708.

<sup>17</sup> Grant Foreman, "The Three Forks", Chronicles of Oklahoma, II, (June 1924), 37-47. Hereafter cited as Foreman, "Three Forks", Chron. of Okla., II.

and east of a line running south from Fort Clark to that stream. This included practically all of the land within the present state of Arkansas north of the Arkansas River and part of what is Missouri. In return for this cession a fort and trading post, called Fort Clark, was established in the Osage country, located on the south bank of the Missouri River.<sup>18</sup>

With these preliminary developments effected President Jefferson now inaugurated the policy, which he apparently had long favored, of inducing the Indians east of the Mississippi to remove west of that stream. In this business the government was intermittently engaged for the next fifty years.<sup>19</sup>

The first arrivals on the new domain were a band of about three hundred Cherokees, under Chief Tahlonteskee, who settled on the Arkansas and White Rivers in 1809.<sup>20</sup> Just the opposite of the Osages, in most respects, were these newcomers. They built permanent homes, cultivated their fields, raised cattle, horses, and hogs. Such pursuits differed materially from the Osages who lived by the chase, riding hundreds of miles on buffalo hunts or horse stealing expeditions, mounted usually on stolen horses. The proximity of the Cherokees was just too tempting; presently their fields were raided and their

---

<sup>18</sup> Am. State Papers, "Ind. Aff.". I, 765.

<sup>19</sup> The Seminoles were the last of the Five Civilized Tribes to migrate to the new lands.

<sup>20</sup> Joseph McMinn to Secretary of War, January 10, 1818, cited by Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 38.

livestock was stolen.<sup>21</sup>

From these sporadic and provocative acts ere long an attempt was made by William J. Lovely, agent for the Arkansas Cherokees, to adjust difficulties between the two tribes. At a Council held at the mouth of the Verdigris River, July 9, 1816, the Osages agreed to cede a large tract of land extending from the falls of the Verdigris River east to the Osage line of 1808 to the government. This was known as Lovely's Purchase. Its acquisition made it possible to open a large expanse of hunting grounds for the Cherokees.<sup>22</sup>

This, however, did not bring the expected peace and in August 1817, Tahlonteskee and other western Cherokee chiefs wrote to Governor Clark at St. Louis that for nine years they had tried to live at peace with the Osages but to no avail. They had kept their own promise not to spill Osage blood, but now with the rivers running red with the blood of the Cherokees, they were determined to proceed against their enemies.<sup>23</sup>

Rumors of a formidable coalition of tribes against the Osages flew about the country. The Niles Register contained a story from St. Louis dated December 13, 1817, that related:

---

<sup>21</sup> Grant Foreman, "The Centennial of Fort Gibson", Chron. of Okla., II, (June 1924), 119-28.

<sup>22</sup> Formal treaty drawn up and signed in St. Louis, 1818. Charles J. Kappler, ed., Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties, II, 167. Hereafter cited as Kappler, Ind. Treaties.

<sup>23</sup> Letter, July 11, 1817, by Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 55.

We have received information . . . that the attack on the Osage by the confederate Indians has been more decisive than those conflicts which usually take place in their warfare. The Osage had removed from the neighborhood of Earhart's Saline (on Grand River) towards their village, where their parthian mode of fighting could have more effect. They were, however, driven off the place leaving on the ground a number of dead and wounded and several horses.<sup>24</sup>

It was probably this same battle that an English naturalist heard of and described:<sup>25</sup>

Some quarrel, however, about two years ago arising between the two nations, the Osages way-laid 12 or 14 of the Cherokees and killed them. On this occasion the Cherokees collected together in considerable numbers and ascended the river to take revenge upon the Osages, who fled at their approach, losing about 10 of their men, who either fell in retreat, or becoming prisoners, were reserved for a more cruel destiny.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Cited by Foreman, "Three Forks", Chron. of Okla., II, 42.

<sup>25</sup> Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels 1748-1846, VIII, (Nuttall's Travels into the Arkansa /sic/ Territory, 1819), 191-2. Hereafter cited as Thwaites, Early West. Trav., XIII.

<sup>26</sup> Nuttall further describes the "diabolic cruelty" of a white man called Chisholm who accompanied the Cherokees.

## CHAPTER II

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FIRST FORT

As early as 1806 the attention of the government was drawn by the report of Lieutenant James B. Wilkinson to the need for a trading post on the Arkansas River. He suggested that by such an establishment harmony might be restored between the Osages and the eastern tribes.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the fact that so little was known about this section prevented any action being taken by the government at this time. At any rate little more was heard of this recommendation until the removal of the Cherokees in 1809. Then their agent, William J. Lovely, took up the cudgel and much of his correspondence with Governor William Clark of the Missouri Territory and with the Secretary of War, was in an effort to get a fort established in this region.

In 1814, in pursuance of his ideas, he wrote to Clark:

It is in my opinion absolutely necessary that there should be two companys [sic] of troops stationed here. I beg therefore that if they can possibly be spared that you will send two companys to the place, or one at least as there are some white [sic] of the worst character in this country whose influence with the Indians is dangerous to the peace of the same.<sup>2</sup>

In 1815<sup>3</sup> and again in 1816 Lovely requested a military establishment on the Arkansas River to maintain peace among the Indians.<sup>4</sup> In

---

<sup>1</sup> Coues, Ex. of Pike, II, 387.

<sup>2</sup> Lovely to Clark, October 11, 1814, cited by Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 51.

<sup>3</sup> Lovely to Secretary of War, November 15, 1815, ibid., 44.

<sup>4</sup> Lovely to Clark, April 16, 1816, ibid., 45.

reply to this latter request Governor Clark informed him that he had made application for such a post.<sup>5</sup> More than a year had elapsed with no definite action on the part of the government when news of intended hostilities of the Cherokees and their allies against the Osages finally caused the War Department to act.<sup>6</sup> On August 19, 1817, General Jackson received orders from the Secretary to establish a post to be garrisoned by one company at a point on the Arkansas River where it was intersected by the Osage line.<sup>7</sup> These orders he communicated to General Thomas A. Smith, then in command of Belle Fontaine, near St. Louis,<sup>8</sup> who, in turn, on September 15, ordered Major William Bradford in company with Major Stephen H. Long to proceed up the Arkansas River with a detachment of riflemen to the point where the Osage boundary touched that river. There with the advice of Major Long he was to select,

. . . the best site to be found upon it near to that line and thereon erect as expeditiously as circumstance will permit, a Stockade most sufficient for the comfortable accommodation of one company, with necessary quarters, Barracks, Storehouses, Shops, Magazines and Hospital, conformable to the plan furnished by Major Long, which he will adapt to the nature of the position.

---

<sup>5</sup> Clark to Lovely, May 1, 1816, *ibid.*, 46.

<sup>6</sup> Lovely to Meigs, January 20, 1817; Meigs to George Graham, Secretary of War, March 12, 1817, *ibid.*, 54.

<sup>7</sup> Graham to Jackson, July 30, 1817, *ibid.*, 55.

<sup>8</sup> Jackson to Secretary of War, August 19, 1817, *ibid.*



The department of War, having ordered the establishment of a Post on the Arkansas with the men to prevent the Indian Tribes in that quarter continuing hostilities with each other, you are required to represent to the Chiefs and warriors of those tribes the wish of the President on this subject and use every legal means in your own power to restore tranquillity among them. Should the executive of this territory call upon you to remove any portion or all of the Intruders from the public lands in that section of the country, you will take suitable measures for its accomplishment.<sup>9</sup>

Long and Bradford, with their company, arrived at Arkansas Post October 15. Owing to the illness of a number of the men, Bradford was obliged to remain here for some time while Long, taking provisions for twenty-four days, proceeded in a skiff up the Arkansas River as far as the mouth of the Verdigris River.<sup>10</sup> There he made some astronomical observations, then descended the Arkansas River to the mouth of the Poteau, the proposed site for the new fort. This place which had been called Belle Point by the French was now officially named Cantonment Smith in honor of General Thomas A. Smith. Soon the prefix cantonment was replaced by the word fort which gives to us the much touted Fort Smith.

Not until Christmas day did Major Bradford and his command reach their destination. From the post he wrote his superior officer on the first day of the new year that he had his men all comfortably situated in temporary quarters, with a hospital, storehouse, and a provision

---

<sup>9</sup> The capitalization in this letter conforms to the original copy. O'Fallon to Bradford, September 15, 1817, cited by Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 56.

<sup>10</sup> Major Stephen H. Long to General Thomas A. Smith, October 15, 1817, ibid., 57.

house for the contractor, and was "about a hut" for himself.<sup>11</sup>

Major Bradford continued this communication by relating his interpretation of the existing clash between the Osages and the Cherokees. Although the fort was ordered established to prevent such an internecine clash, the command for the execution of the project had not reached the new location in time. In his account of the bloodshed, Bradford accuses the Cherokees of deliberately instigating the trouble in order to drive the Osages out of their country, so they might divide the good hunting grounds among themselves and their allies. In the clash the Cherokees were "aided by several whites, Isaacs, the Chissons,<sup>12</sup> and Williams." And it would appear that the "Isaacs and King is [sic] more savage than the Cherokees themselves." From such a gruesome report it is not surprising that in the main battle some eighty Osages were killed, and more than one hundred made prisoners. This information Bradford gained "from young August Chouteau who has been down and seen several of the Chiefs who were of the party." The hapless prisoners of this encounter were carried to the Cherokee nation in the East<sup>13</sup> where the news of the great "victory" had proceeded them.<sup>14</sup> These same prisoners were to prove the bone of

---

<sup>11</sup> Bradford to Jackson, January 1, 1818, cited by Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 57.

<sup>12</sup> Probably Chisholm. Cf. Ch. I, f. n. 26.

<sup>13</sup> The Eastern Cherokees had sent a company of warriors to help their brothers in the West. Joseph McKinn to Secretary of War, January 10, 1818, cited by Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 57.

<sup>14</sup> Houston to Secretary of War, November 24, 1817, ibid., 59.

contention for several years—years in which the little fort on the Arkansas was to be the center of activity.

One of the earliest recorded descriptions of the fort was written by Nuttall during his stay there in 1819. He related that it was a typical frontier post, with buildings constructed of heavy hewed logs, enclosed by a ten foot pallisade. Inside its periphery there were two block-houses, lines of cabins or barracks for the accommodation of the seventy men then on duty, and other necessary buildings. Situated at the junction of the Poteau River, on a rising ground of about fifty feet elevation, the garrison was surrounded by alluvium and uplands of unusual fertility. "The view is more commanding and picturesque, than any other spot of equal elevation on the banks of the Arkansa [*sic*]." From here the river was visible to the eastward for more than six miles.<sup>15</sup>

It is interesting to note the differences of opinion expressed by various writers concerning which tribe was to be blamed for the intermittent hostilities carried on in this region over a period of several years. It would seem that a combination of many things caused these clashes: the white man's greed for land which was back of the removal policy; the desire for the best lands by migrant tribes; the infringement of white men on the hunting grounds, wantonly destroying

---

<sup>15</sup> Thwaites, Early West. Trav., XIII, 201. Cf. Thoburn and Wright, Okla. I, 61-2.

the buffalo;<sup>16</sup> the efforts of native tribes and early arrivals to hold their lands against all newcomers, and the source from which the commentators gained their material. Such a situation surely was conducive to the frequent clashes in this vicinage.

While the trouble between the Osage and Cherokee Indians had started with the advent of the first Cherokee bands into western Arkansas, the progressive removal policy of the government greatly aggravated the dissention. The treaty entered into by the Government with the Cherokees in 1817<sup>17</sup> had resulted in the removal of about four thousand members of the eastern band to the new lands west of the Mississippi.<sup>18</sup> Fort Smith, for many years the only fort in the vicinity, became the site for the numerous conferences relating to the troubles of the tribes in the region and as such played an important part in the affairs of both whites and Indians.

In conferring with the Cherokees they professed to Major Bradford a desire for peace but he doubted their sincerity and thought them dissatisfied with the location of the garrison, since it interfered with their plans of aggression against the Osages. The emigrant Indians, he reported, were covetous of the fine lands of

---

<sup>16</sup> Tahlonteskee stated in 1815 that the white hunters destroyed not less than "five thousand buffaloes every summer for no other profit than perhaps than twenty pounds tallow." Am. State Papers, II, 11.

<sup>17</sup> Am. State Papers, "Ind. Aff.", II, 141-4.

<sup>18</sup> Estimate made by Sam Houston. Apparently no official figures available. Houston to Cass, June 13, 1830, cited by Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 76.

their enemies and craftily plotted with other tribes for their support.<sup>19</sup> They told Colonel Meigs, Cherokee agent in Tennessee, that they "intend to possess by conquest the country on the upper Arkansas".<sup>20</sup>

When Nuttall returned to Fort Smith on September 15, 1819, after a trip up the Arkansas River he found the place "filled with a disagreeable bustle" over the pending Indian Councils called by the government. The views of the traveler were indeed well made. To effect a lasting peace between two intransigent groups, the Osages and the Cherokees, was a herculean task. But the treaty stipulations must be enforced.<sup>21</sup> For the Cherokees to surrender their one hundred odd prisoners and for the Osages to condescend to placing at their disposal specific entrees to the wide open spaces were equally galling. Each faction as usual wanted to acquire some advantage without in turn forfeiting any consideration. When the news was circulated

<sup>19</sup> Bradford to Jackson, January 1, 1818, cited by Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 79.

<sup>20</sup> Meigs to McMinn, August 7, 1818, ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Treaty made September 25, at St. Louis. Provided for the cession of area known as Lovely's Purchase to the United States by the Osage for no other consideration than the satisfaction of claims amounting to four thousand dollars held by white people for alleged robberies committed by Osage war parties. Kappler, Ind. Treaties, II, 116.

On October 6 another treaty was signed by which the tribes mutually agreed to a permanent peace. The Cherokees were to deliver prisoners of the war of 1817 to the Osage at Fort Smith. The Osage agreed that the Cherokees and their allies might have a passage to the hunting grounds of the west and permission to hunt on lands south of the Arkansas. Am. State Papers, "Ind. Aff." II, 172.

that the Cherokee Chiefs had arrived without their prisoners with the hope, if not the belief, they would be given the right of adoption the atmosphere became tense. Neither was the stifled condition relieved when Major Bradford ordered the chiefs to have them produced within ten days. This admonition while explicit was ignored and with the passing of the time limit the Osages broke camp, crossed the Arkansas and proceeded toward their villages. Fortunately they had not progressed very far until a runner from the fort overtook and informed them that the prisoners were now available. This statement was only partly true for scarcely three-fourths of them had been brought from the East.<sup>22</sup>

Had all of the prisoners been returned as stipulated there might have been a period of peace and although the Osages accepted the situation, they felt that the Cherokees had not lived up to their obligations in the treaty of October, 1818, and soon retaliated by killing three members of a Cherokee hunting party. So one of the first important councils held at Fort Smith was futilely terminated and the troubles continued unabated.<sup>23</sup>

With the creation of Arkansas Territory by an act of Congress March 2, 1819,<sup>24</sup> James Miller arrived at Arkansas Post in December

---

<sup>22</sup> Thwaites, Early West. Trav., XIII, 277-8.

<sup>23</sup> James Miller to Secretary of War, Arkansas Post, June 20, 1820, cited by Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 86.

<sup>24</sup> Stat. At Large, III, 493-506.

to assume his duties as governor.<sup>25</sup> Early in his term of office he attempted to effect a permanent peace between the Osages and Cherokees, but he found the situation most confusing. Writing to the President from Fort Smith he stated attempts were being made to complete a settlement between these tribes. With this in mind word was sent to the chiefs to come to the fort but to no avail for the Osages.<sup>26</sup> Miller then visited several of their villages where he was equally unsuccessful. Disgruntled but not discouraged he returned to Arkansas Post, February 27, 1821, after an absence of three months feeling that he had accomplished nothing.<sup>27</sup>

There seems to be no record of an attack on Fort Smith, but an event of April 9, 1821 caused a great deal of excitement. A war party of some four hundred Osages under the leadership of Mad Buffalo descended the Arkansas River on the north bank to a point opposite Fort Smith. There he and his colleagues crossed over to the garrison and, under the pretense of wanting to hunt on the south side, asked permission for the entire party to come over. Major Bradford suspected

---

<sup>25</sup> Governor Miller's message to the Legislative Council, February 10, 1820, cited by Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 87.

<sup>26</sup> Miller to the President, December 10, 1820, ibid., 99.

<sup>27</sup> Arkansas Gazette, March 3, 1821, 3, ibid.

that their real purpose was to obtain ammunition with which to continue hostilities against the Cherokees. While he deliberated on the request they took every opportunity to examine the fort and ascertain how many men defended it. Their motives were so apparent that they even refused to eat and drink, which were unprecedented actions. When permission to cross was refused by the commander, the chiefs solemnly returned to their band. The fort authorities were not incorrect in their diagnosis for soon it was observed that they were building rafts. Forty or fifty were constructed, on which some crossed the river above the fort and hid themselves in the cane brakes on the opposite side of the Poteau River and still others tried to beach near the fort but were turned back by soldiers on patrol. When the chiefs persisted in their attempts to land at the base of the fort, two six-pounders were brought into position to command the situation. Upon this show of resistance the Osages abandoned their efforts and retired to the west bank of the Poteau River. Here they killed three Quapaw Indians, employed by a hunter named Etienne Vaugine. When Mr. Vaugine made an effort to reach the fort, only the artillery covering his landing prevented his capture. But to show their animus a number of the homes of white settlers on the Poteau River and Lee's Creek were plundered by the war party as they left the vicinity of the garrison.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Niles' Weekly Register, June 30, 1821, XX, 246-8.



From an appendage to Nuttall's account of the Fort Smith Council of 1819, these pertinent remarks are elicited:

Since this period, as might readily be foreseen, hostilities have again commenced between the restless and warlike tribes, who can perhaps never be prevailed upon to live in friendship, as they will be perpetually transgressing each others hunting bounds . . . . Such is the effect of the imprudent and visionary policy of crowding the natives together, in the hopes of keeping them at peace.<sup>29</sup>

Warfare, however, continued intermittently, and in July, 1821, General Gaines ordered Colonel Matthew Arbuckle at New Orleans to hold the Seventh Infantry in readiness to occupy the southwestern frontier. Six companies were detailed to the Red River and four to Fort Smith.<sup>30</sup> Colonel Arbuckle left New Orleans in November but was delayed by low water at the mouth of the Arkansas River and did not arrive at Fort Smith until February 26, 1822.

This additional force increased the command to five companies, with an aggregate of two hundred thirty-nine men, making it an outpost of considerable importance on this remote frontier.<sup>31</sup>

Attached to the post Colonel Arbuckle reported that he found a farm of eighty acres, with one thousand bushels of corn, one hundred head of cattle, and four hundred hogs. It was reported a sickly station, due, he thought, in a large measure to white settlers nearby

<sup>29</sup> Thwaites, Early West. Trav. XIII, 279.

<sup>30</sup> Gaines to Arbuckle, July 14, 1821, cited by Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 131.

<sup>31</sup> American State Papers, "Military Affairs", II, 456. Hereafter cited as Am. State Papers, "Mil. Aff."

Major Bradford was relieved of his command and ordered to Natchitoches upon the arrival of Colonel Arbuckle.

who sold whiskey to the soldiers.<sup>32</sup>

In March after Colonel Arbuckle took command, Governor Miller again visited the fort in an effort to stop hostilities.<sup>33</sup> Preceding him was Nathaniel Philbrook, sub-agent to the Osages,<sup>34</sup> who held numerous conferences with the several tribes and induced them to meet for the "Great Talk" to be held at Fort Smith, July 30.<sup>35</sup> The conference which was attended by one hundred fifty Osages and a large number of Cherokees resulted in another written treaty, signed August 9.<sup>36</sup> It provided for a declaration of peace between the tribes and the return of seventeen of the long held prisoners who had been with the Cherokees since 1817. By the end of the year the prisoners had been duly delivered at Fort Smith, and the tribes departed, apparently on good terms.<sup>37</sup>

Governor Miller, with headquarters at Fort Smith, spent a large part of his time for two years among the tribes on the Arkansas and

<sup>32</sup> Arbuckle to Gadsden, January 3, 1822; same to same, March 4, 1822; same to same, March 26, 1822, cited by Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 131.

<sup>33</sup> Miller to Calhoun, May, 1822, cited by Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 133.

<sup>34</sup> Lyon to Calhoun, February 24, 1822, ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Miller to Calhoun, July 15, 1822, ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, Retired Classified Files, Folio Drawer, manuscript copy of treaty, ibid., 138.

<sup>37</sup> Missouri Intelligencer, December 24, 1822, cited by Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 147.

and Verdigris Rivers counseling with them and endeavoring to make a lasting peace. But again the vicarious procedure of a treaty failed to bring contentment.

Not long did the skeptics have to wait for an overt act because an Osage attack on a hunting party of their enemies, January 1, 1823,<sup>38</sup> and the retaliation by the Cherokees in August<sup>39</sup> terminated months of arduous efforts. To the disturbed scene this promptly brought Colonel Arbuckle in company with some Cherokee chiefs. Straight to Clermont's town, the Osages' rendezvous, they proceeded where, in September, conciliatory overtures were proffered as a basis for adjustment of differences.<sup>40</sup>

To most citizens these sporadic forays of tribal strife were quite unsavory and warranted governmental intervention; but when white travelers or settlers were molested, whether for good or insufficient reasons, there arose a hue and cry for condign punishment. Such was the case several times in the summer and fall of this year, and of the many, one particular case merits an explanation. A party

---

<sup>38</sup> Arbuckle to Calhoun, January 12, 1823, cited by Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 147.

<sup>39</sup> Arkansas Gazette, September 16, 1823, ibid., 148.

<sup>40</sup> Union Mission Journal, ibid., 150.

of hunters, possessed with good intentions, of course, and with "no pent up antipathy" to satisfy fresh from Arkansas Post was attacked. On November 17, 1823, a band of two hundred Osage warriors headed by Mad Buffalo, returning from a raid on their southern neighbors, the Caddo Indians, effected a surprise raid on the camp of the white hunters, killing several and making off with most of their equipment.<sup>41</sup> So provocative and insolent were these actions that Colonel Arbuckle sent Major Alexander Cummings to the Osage villages to demand the surrender of the murderers. Clermont in response promised to call his people together for a decision.<sup>42</sup> When several weeks had passed and Clermont had not communicated any action to the fort, Colonel Arbuckle, who had formulated his own policies of dealing with the situation, advised his superior officer that he believed the Osages would surrender the guilty leaders without resort to arms if they believed the military were able and determined to march against them.<sup>43</sup> Located as they were, far from the villages, it was difficult to know the truth about such happenings or to exert the necessary control. He then made recommendations as to the moving of the garrison. Upon receipt of this information, General Winfield Scott on March 8, 1824, ordered Colonel Arbuckle to remove his five companies from Fort Smith, take a position at the mouth of the Verdigris River and there in the very heart of the Osage country to construct a new fort.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Arbuckle to Gaines, February 1, 1824, ibid., 189.

<sup>42</sup> Cummings to Arbuckle, December 22, 1823, ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Arbuckle to Gaines, February 1, 1824, ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Scott to Adjutant General, March 8, 1824, ibid., 193.

CHAPTER III  
THE SECOND FORT

On April 9, 1824, Colonel Arbuckle with his five companies abandoned Fort Smith, leaving eight or ten men under the assistant commissary, Lieutenant Bonneville, in temporary charge of the buildings. Part of the troops went by land with the wagons and the rest by water with the military stores in their two keel boats.<sup>1</sup>

The Choctaw Treaty of 1825, which fixed the western boundary of Arkansas as beginning one hundred paces east of Fort Smith and running from there due south to the Red River, threw the fortification into Choctaw country for a number of years.<sup>2</sup> Soon after the execution of this treaty Major William J. McClelland was appointed agent of the Western Choctaws and was directed to establish an agency at the western limits of the state.<sup>3</sup> In the spring of 1826 he arrived in Fort Smith with a blacksmith and an interpreter, to occupy some of the old buildings. The agency was to be located here temporarily while buildings were being erected at Skullyville fifteen miles above Fort Smith. He found the post in a dilapidated condition, the troops having carried floors, doors and windows with them to their new fortifications at Fort Gibson.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Arbuckle to Adjutant General, April 7, 1824, cited by Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 195.

<sup>2</sup> Kappler, Ind. Treaties, II, 212.

<sup>3</sup> Secretary of War to Governor Izard, July 1, 1825, cited by Foreman, Indians and Pioneers, 302.

<sup>4</sup> Izard to Secretary of War, April 15, 1826, ibid., 302-3.

A few years later the introduction of whiskey to emigrant Indians by way of the Arkansas River became so flagrant that it threatened the peace, health and welfare of the arriving tribes to such an extent that the Choctaw agent, Captain Frances W. Armstrong in Little Rock appealed to the government for help in controlling this traffic. As a result Captain John Stuart and his Company C, composed of fifty-two men, were ordered from Fort Gibson to take their station at the abandoned Fort Smith where it was thought they would be able to intercept intruders and shipments of liquor up the river.<sup>5</sup> The company reached Fort Smith on March 22, 1833 and found quarters in some of the buildings of the old post. To make sure that their efforts had not been in vain all boats employed in transporting merchandise or other stores west of Fort Smith were ordered to touch at the landing of the post for inspection of their cargoes.<sup>6</sup>

But the lust for spoils was not so easily satisfied as Captain Stuart soon found himself outwitted by the whiskey sellers. Every movement of the soldiers was under constant observation and not infrequently their actual instructions were posted for public perusal which served as advance information for illicit traders. Finally it was decided to move the troops a few miles up the river where they

---

<sup>5</sup> Cited by Grant Foreman, Advancing the Frontier, 1830-1860, 29. Hereafter cited as Foreman, Advancing the Frontier.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 30.

would be in a better position to catch the violators.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, on June 16, 1834, the troops were removed to Swallow Rock, or Harrold's Bluff, on the south bank of the Arkansas River, some ten miles from Fort Smith and five miles from the Choctaw Agency. Adjutant General Jones named the place Fort Coffee.<sup>8</sup> This was to be the point of debarkation for the Choctaw emigrants coming up the Arkansas River by boat.<sup>9</sup>

That there was a continuous effort by the settlers of the area during this time to re-establish the post at Fort Smith is shown by various memorials and correspondence on the subject. At the time the state legislature memorialized the President to have the Seventh Infantry returned to Fort Smith on grounds that Choctaw hunting parties were crossing the line into Arkansas and depredating on the live stock of the whites, Francis W. Armstrong, Choctaw agent, reported that the mover of the memorial admitted to him that the purpose of the agitation was to get the soldiers back in Arkansas so that the money spent might be paid out among the whites rather than in Indian Territory, and so that Captain John Rogers could sell his land to the government for the post.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Welsh to Lovell, February 28, 1834, cited by Foreman, Advancing the Frontier, 30-1.

<sup>8</sup> Am. State Papers, "Mil. Aff.", VII, 976.

<sup>9</sup> Grant Foreman, Pioneer Days in the Early Southwest, 274. Hereafter cited as Foreman, Pioneer Days.

<sup>10</sup> July, 1834, ibid., 42.

In a letter written by Major Arbuckle, commanding the Seventh Infantry at Fort Gibson, to Major General Alexander Macomb, General-in-Chief at Washington, D. C. on June 6, 1833, he recommended ". . . that a strong work is required at Fort Smith or in that vicinity to give security to the frontier of Arkansas Territory."<sup>11</sup>

This was a view contrary to the one presented by Commissioners Whistler and Stuart who seemingly believed, from their statements, that there was no real need, that the movement was a political one on the part of the citizens.<sup>12</sup> Concerning this Colonel Arbuckle said in the same letter:

The present site of Fort Smith is too contracted as the lands are held by an individual (Captain John Rogers) within a few paces of it, . . . much to the annoyance of the garrison; and unless the government should think proper to purchase a suitable quantity of lands around Fort Smith, I would recommend the removal of the garrison from that position.<sup>13</sup>

The effort to induce the government to abandon Fort Gibson and remove the troops to Arkansas Territory was continued. A memorial sent by the General Assembly of the Territory to the President and communicated by him to the House of Representatives on January 13, 1834, stated:

. . . that the troops at Cantonment Gibson are of little or no utility to the citizens of the Territory, situated as they are within the confines of an Indian Country. Should the citizens on or along the western line of the Territory be invaded by a savage foe, all communications between them

---

<sup>11</sup> Am. State Papers, "Mil. Aff.", VII, 984.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 978-80.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 984-5.



and the troops at the Cantonment could be intercepted and before the troops could afford them any assistance their property would be plundered and their houses desolated. In the establishment of the garrison the government believed that they were affording full and ample security to the property and lives of the frontier people and that it would aid in preserving peace among the Indian tribes . . . .

Your memorialists believe that old Fort Smith is the most eligible site . . . . Let the question be settled that the main objects of the government could be effected as well by a removal of the troops as by their continuation where they now are . . . .

Fort Smith is the highest point of safe navigation on the Arkansas. At times of low water the public stores are transported from thence to the garrison (at Fort Gibson) with much trouble and great expense.<sup>14</sup>

The Cherokee agent, Stokes, discounted all of these efforts, saying that the people who were trying to excite disturbances, clamoring for the building of forts on the frontier and abandoning those in Indian Territory, ought to come out with the plain truth. He contended that the Cherokees and Creeks raised corn and cattle in sufficient quantities to supply Fort Gibson, and they furnished hay and wood besides many other articles for the post. The Indians could sell their products more cheaply, not having the additional cost of transportation and this was a drawback upon the profits of the Arkansas people, constituting one of their causes for alarm. The Secretary of War, Poinsett, in a letter asserted:

Give Arkansas the whole control of Indian affairs—remove every just and independent agent; build them forts and fix garrisons within the state; appoint all your agents from Arkansas and perhaps you will hear no more about Indian hostilities from them.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 242-3.

<sup>15</sup> June 5, 1838, cited by Foreman, Advancing the Frontier, 54-5.

Much correspondence was carried on with officers of the army relative to the posts and military forces required for the protection of the Western Frontier. In a letter to the President of the Senate,<sup>16</sup> replying to his inquiry as to whether or not a site had been selected on or near the western frontier of Arkansas, as had been provided by a late Act of Congress, Secretary of War, J. R. Poinsett, said that it had been found inadvisable to abandon Fort Gibson since Fort Smith could not

. . . at the same time . . . afford adequate protection to the citizens of Arkansas . . . prevent internal dissention among the different Indian tribes of that region and between each other and to secure them from the intrusions of white persons and in the enjoyment of the rights solemnly guaranteed to them in the treaties now in force between them and the United States.<sup>17</sup>

So far no site had been selected but Poinsett mentioned two possibilities, the one at Fort Smith and the other at the mouth of Lee's Creek. He enclosed in this communication a letter from Lieutenant Colonel Whistler and Captain John Stuart, both of the Seventh Infantry, located at Fort Coffee, relating to the selection of a site.<sup>18</sup>

Three places were described by these army officers: Massard Bluff, twelve miles from the line with both Fort Smith and Van Buren between it and Indian Territory, was rated an excellent military site, but was ruled out because it was too low on the Arkansas River and

---

<sup>16</sup> Dated February 20, 1838.

<sup>17</sup> Am. State Papers, "Mil. Aff.", VII, 956.

<sup>18</sup> Dated December 15, 1837.

too far from the line;<sup>19</sup> the Lee's Creek location, on the north side of the Arkansas five miles below Fort Smith, was on a bluff four hundred feet high with an excellent view of the surrounding country.<sup>20</sup> However, there were disadvantages to this latter place: the rise from the river was extremely precipitous; the timber so stunted as to be of little use for building, making it necessary to haul timber across the creek for a mile; the nearest road was half mile away; the bluff contained no limestone; there was no water available, and the price asked for the four hundred sixteen acres was fifty thousand dollars which was considered exorbitant (even at that time).<sup>21</sup> With reference to the third place they wrote:

The site of Fort Smith is on the south side of the Arkansas river, and about three hundred yards below the Poteau. It is on a rising piece of ground, about two hundred yards from the Arkansas river and about fifty yards east of the Choctaw line and entirely within the state of Arkansas.

The communication further stated that this available site was sufficiently large and commanded a good view of the river, and that there were the necessary timber and stone for building within easy distance. As to acquiring it the letter stated:

The land that Captain Rogers offers in his first proposition to sell to the United States communicates with the 16th section of the township at about the distance of three-fourths of a mile from the site, which section has on it an abundant supply of good timber, and the land belongs to the government of the United States, having been reserved for school purposes . . . .

---

<sup>19</sup> Am. State Papers, "Mil. Aff.," 980.

<sup>20</sup> Now known as Mount Vista.

<sup>21</sup> Am. State Papers, "Mil. Aff.," 981.

Including one hundred yards of space, mentioned in Captain 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 . . . Captain Rogers' first proposition . . . is intended to mean that portion of land which he offers to sell for a sum of fifteen thousand dollars.<sup>22</sup>

Not all concerned army officers were so wholeheartedly in favor of the Rogers' proposition, as may be seen by a letter written by Major Arbuckle from Fort Gibson December 29, 1837, to his superior officer in Washington, D. C.:

Sir: I have the honor to report for the information of the government, that it has been hinted to me that Captain John Rogers, the proprietor of the land at Fort Smith has proceeded to Washington City of late. If he has done so I am of the opinion it is with the object of inducing the government to purchase only a portion of the land he holds at that place for a military establishment, and to retain the balance for a town or village. On this subject I have only to remark that no part of the limited quantity of land held by Captain Rogers of Fort Smith (being, as I understand, about seven hundred acres) can be retained by him, if Fort Smith is selected for a military establishment, without great prejudice to the public interest. Independent of the land being wanted (as Captain Rogers only owns about four or five hundred yards on the Arkansas river) a town or village so near a military establishment would be a great inconvenience and nuisance.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 982-5.

<sup>23</sup> The speculation over the price of Rogers' land led him to write to Whistler and Stuart in September, 1837. A report was being circulated that an exorbitant price would be asked in the event that the government wished to occupy the land, and Rogers feared it might prevent their making an offer. In the letter he gave an exact description of the section of eight hundred thirty-six acres ". . . which land or any part of it . . . I now tender through you to the government for . . . a fair and reasonable price." Rogers went on to say that he intended laying off a town, preparatory to a sale of lots, and wished to give the government the opportunity to secure the site before the lots were offered for sale. To what extent this letter influenced the Whistler-Stuart report, and whether Arbuckle knew of its existence is not now known. Ibid., 983-5.

Opposition to the establishment of a permanent military post within the borders of the state of Arkansas was to no avail. In 1838 the War Department issued orders for such a garrison and appointed three commissioners, Major W. G. Belknap, Captain B. S. E. Bonneville<sup>24</sup> and Captain R. C. Gatlin, to select one of the three sites previously reported on by Whistler and Stuart.<sup>25</sup> The Rogers land was selected and his proposition accepted by the three. The Arkansas Gazette, May 23, 1838, told of the sale as follows:

Captain John Rogers passed up last week on his return from Washington, where we understand from him he effected the sale to the Government of a portion of his tract of land at Fort Smith, as a site for a permanent military post on our western frontier. He sells 296 acres, having a front of 100 yards on the south side of the Arkansas River, immediately below the Choctaw line and running back for quantity, for the sum of \$15,000 . . . . It is the intention of the government, we understand, to construct strong works at this point and Capt. Charles Thomas has been selected to superintend their erection.<sup>26</sup>

On July, 1838, Captain Bonneville was directed to take his company from Fort Gibson to Fort Smith and repair the buildings for receipt of government stores. Simultaneously Captain Stuart was ordered to abandon Fort Coffee and remove all military, hospital, and other supplies to Fort Smith.<sup>27</sup>

Captain Thomas, arriving the last of July, 1838, to begin work on the new fortifications, found the wilderness pushed farther west

<sup>24</sup> Captain Bonneville is reputed to have had much influence on the selection of the site. He was a close personal friend of Captain Rogers.

<sup>25</sup> Dallas T. Herndon, Centennial History of Arkansas, I, 848. Hereafter cited as Herndon, Centennial Hist.

<sup>26</sup> Cited by Herndon, Centennial Hist., I, 849-50.

<sup>27</sup> Cited by Foreman, Pioneer Days, 274-5.

NOV 27 1942<sup>33</sup>

than had his predecessors, Majors William Bradford and Stephen Long. In the twenty-one years since the first fort was built a good sized frontier village had grown up with several mercantile establishments and a number of dwelling houses.<sup>28</sup> Even with the expanded town and the thriving industry, many deficiencies were still in evidence because it was necessary for the new commandant to bring with him forty mechanics and laborers and the necessary machinery to set up a saw mill.<sup>29</sup> Captain W. G. Belknap was then ordered with two companies of his regiment to Fort Smith where he set up temporary quarters on the land now owned and occupied by the Roman Catholic Church. These quarters were at first called Camp Thomas then Camp Belknap, and were occupied by the troops until the buildings of the new fort were ready in 1842.<sup>30</sup>

The elaborate plan of the new fort embraced a quadrangle four hundred fifty by six hundred feet, walled with stone, inside of which were barracks, officers' quarters and the magazine. The ground work of the walls was in the shape of an irregular quadrangle, with a cannon bastion at each angle of the wall. Starting on the high ground

---

<sup>28</sup> William James Weaver, Reminiscences of W. J. Weaver, unpublished manuscript in the Carnegie Library, Fort Smith, Arkansas. Hereafter cited as Weaver, Reminiscences. (W. J. Weaver was born in Philadelphia in 1818. He came to Fort Smith in 1833 and was a resident of the city until his death in 1906).

<sup>29</sup> Herndon, Centennial Hist. I, 851.

<sup>30</sup> These buildings remained intact for a number of years and one was used by Zachary Taylor as a residence while he was in command in this area. His headquarters were located here also. He never occupied the officers' quarters in the garrison. Robert J. Mohler, Fort Smith, Arkansas, Ill.

at the eastern bank of the Poteau and encircling the fort was a series of outposts consisting of earthworks with connecting trenches and rifle pits.<sup>31</sup>

The bluff of La Belle Point, site of the first fortification, was chosen as a stone quarry, and this bold and picturesque rocky front disappeared to reappear in the large blocks used in the walls and foundations of the buildings of the new garrison. A fine steam saw mill stood in the gulch just north of the present United States cemetery. All of the pine logs were rafted down in high water from the mountain regions of the upper sources of the Poteau River.<sup>32</sup>

On April 10, 1841, Major Arbuckle assumed command on the frontier. Because of his ill health, which he attributed to the location, and because of the dilapidated condition of the buildings at Fort Gibson, he established his headquarters at Fort Smith. He was soon superseded by General Zachary Taylor as Commander of the Western Department of the United States Army, who held this position until 1845 when he left Fort Smith for the Mexican War.<sup>33</sup>

The work on the fort progressed slowly, and although one hundred twenty thousand dollars had been spent by 1842 the Arkansas legislature

<sup>31</sup> Said to be adopted from plans of Seigneur de Vauban, great French military engineer. Herndon, Centennial Hist. I, 851.

<sup>32</sup> Weaver worked for two months in this stone quarry, content with his wages of forty dollars a month and a soldier's ration of pork and beans. He also furnished logs of walnut and ash from across the Arkansas River. Many of the logs were four feet through the stump. Weaver, Reminiscences, 5-6.

<sup>33</sup> Taylor to Hitchcock, July 28, 1841, cited by Foreman, Advancing the Frontier, 69.

sent a memorial to Congress urging completion of the post so that it would be an adequate protection to the western frontier.<sup>34</sup> While the local interest in protection was paramount and the motives quite unbiased the plan for building such elaborate and expensive fortifications to withstand highly improbable attacks from the Indians appeared ridiculous to the soldiers and workmen of the fort. On one occasion they had quite a good laugh when one man, seeing a small crowd of Indians peacefully strolling around watching the construction of the walls, suddenly shouted: "Boys, look out! Here comes the enemy."<sup>35</sup>

With his knowledge of Indians and their methods of warfare Taylor saw that the government was wasting money on such extensive fortifications, and at his advice the Vauban plans were abandoned with only the south and part of the east wall completed. Three of the cannon bastions were used for foundations of buildings: the one on the southwest corner was a one-story powder magazine; on the west was constructed the quartermasters' department, and on the point nearest the river was built the commissary depot (the only original building of the fort still standing). There were four barracks, large two-story brick buildings, with the two on the west for officers and their families and those on the east for as many as four companies

---

<sup>34</sup> Herndon, Centennial Hist., I, 851.

<sup>35</sup> Weaver, Reminiscences, 6.



of soldiers. In addition to these there were a guard house and the hospital in a frame building standing outside the west wall.<sup>36</sup>

Apparently Taylor's recommendations bore some weight for the Quartermaster General recommended building operations be suspended on the fort. This was done shortly thereafter by executive order, but work was resumed for a short period in 1841.<sup>37</sup> It was not until 1843 that work on the fortification ceased altogether.<sup>38</sup>

Major Ethan Allen Hitchcock, on a mission for the government concerning Indian affairs, observed the new fort under construction in the fall of 1841 and described it:

. . . of masonry in the form of a pentagon, its sides bisected and the point advanced a short distance. . . . The walls are about 7 feet high and four feet thick. It is some 200 or 300 yards from the river, not on the highest ground, which is some 150 yards east and overlooks the wall . . . . The wall is to be 14 feet high.<sup>39</sup>

Thus Fort Smith, in this unfinished stage, took its place as one of a chain of forts established on the western frontier to keep the Indians from waging wars among themselves and from committing hostile acts against the white settlers. Starting from south to north these posts were suggested in the plan formulated in 1838: Fort Jessup—twenty-five miles southwest of Natchitoches, on the road to Texas;

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>38</sup> Weaver, Reminiscences, 9.

<sup>39</sup> Grant Foreman, A Traveler in Indian Territory, 14.

Fort Towson--near the confluence of the Kiamichi and Red Rivers, in the Choctaw Nation; three hundred twenty-five miles from Ft. Jessup and fifty miles from the Arkansas boundary; Fort Smith--on the Arkansas River partly in Arkansas and partly in Indian Territory; Fort Gibson--sixty miles northwest of Fort Smith on the Arkansas River, two hundred seven miles from Fort Towson; Fort Wayne--on the Illinois River in the Cherokee Nation not far from the western boundary of Arkansas; sixty miles from Fort Gibson; Fort Leavenworth--on the right bank of the Missouri River, two hundred eighty-six miles from Fort Smith; Fort Snelling--at the junction of the St. Peters and Mississippi Rivers, two hundred twelve miles from Fort Leavenworth, and Fort Crawford--three hundred miles below Fort Snelling on the Mississippi River, five miles from the mouth of the Wisconsin River.<sup>40</sup>

While this cordon of forts was finally approved in the spring of 1840, the execution of the project was a problem of major proportion. Everyone on the frontier knew that even when these scattered out posts became a reality, insecurity of almost all varieties would still be prevalent. In addition, the folk of the southwest were cognizant after the spring of 1837, that the days were numbered before a casus belli occurred that would bring on the conflict between the United States and the Mexican Republic. If this prophesy became a reality

---

<sup>40</sup> Report of Secretary of War to President, December 1, 1841 in Executive Documents, 27th Congress, 2nd sess., Document No. 2, 58-94.

Fort Smith could prove a rendezvous for troops enroute to the battle fronts.

Life on the frontier in general, and in the southwest in particular, steeled itself during the course of the next three years for whatever missions might lie in the offing. The army posts and the regulation of Indian affairs were augmented to cope with any exigencies. Well were these anticipations rewarded for before long news was circulated that troops were to be sent to the border. Just as expected Fort Smith did occupy a strategic position; fairly well stocked and manned, and above all the headquarters for one of the ranking officers, it was one of the first to receive a call. From this post General Zachary Taylor marched with his regulars first to Fort Jessup, Louisiana, proceeding from there on to the Rio Grande.

General Arbuckle was left in command with a few companies of volunteers called for duty along the western borders of Arkansas. After the war, several companies were brought back to Fort Smith and later discharged.<sup>41</sup>

Little is recorded of military life in the garrison after the Mexican War until the fever of the gold rush reached this western outpost. That there was such excitement is evident from an article appearing in a Fort Smith paper at the time:

Ho, for California. A company is now forming in this place for California, which will start about April, next. There are already 15 or 20 names of heads of families living in this place or vicinity enrolled. Persons wishing to attach themselves to this company will have the opportunity of doing so by applying to either J. Kammady, Captain John Dillard or John F. Wheeler. Every able bodied male emigrant will be required to furnish himself

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 12.

with a good rifle and plenty of ammunition. Also rations for the journey, consisting of 180 pounds of flour, 100 pounds of bacon, and transportation of same to be drawn by horses, mules or oxen. No wagon is to have more than 2,000 pounds. The whole party is to rendezvous at Fort Smith by April 1, 1849 and to choose their officers and make all necessary arrangements for the tramp.<sup>42</sup>

This company left Fort Smith April 11, 1849, commanded by Captain John Dillard and composed of over five hundred people. A few days before this a company slightly smaller had left under the command of Captain R. B. Marcy.

During the years 1849-1850 many companies organized in the eastern part of the United States used Fort Smith as a supply center, it being the last opportunity to obtain equipment for crossing the plains. All possible aid was given the emigrants by the officers and soldiers of the garrison.<sup>43</sup>

The trade of all of Indian Territory was controlled by Fort Smith for many years. The garrison, though small, retained its importance because it was the chief depot for supplies for the Territory and the western forts.<sup>44</sup> Two or three steamboats docked each day, and the drivers of many mule teams made the town their headquarters. The soldiers were kept busy with frontier duty, which included sending scouting parties into Indian Territory and providing escorts for

---

<sup>42</sup> The Fort Smith Herald, September 6, 1848.

<sup>43</sup> Weaver, Reminiscences, 14.

<sup>44</sup> Goodspeed Publishing Company, History of Benton, Washington, Carroll, Madison, Franklin and Sebastian Counties, 858. Hereafter cited as Goodspeed, Hist. of Benton Co. et. al.

all supply trains to outlying forts. Large quantities of army supplies were kept in the storehouse, necessitating many commissary employees. The garrison maintained a blacksmith shop which was always busy. Tailors were constantly employed in repairing officers' and soldiers' uniforms.<sup>45</sup>

In many respects it was a most unusual city and post. Located as it was, some four to six hundred miles distant from any other metropoli, it had the distinction of being not only the real outpost of civilization in the southwest but likewise it was the cynosure of a pageantry and a life that were foreign to its location. To this point, from time to time, journeyed the social elite from some of the largest cities and wealthiest families, who brought with them, or in their entourage, "that accouterment" that would have made them the center of attraction at the most exclusive ball or social gathering in Washington, New York, or Boston.<sup>46</sup>

On May 3, 1858, an Overland Mail exploring party, sent out by John Butterfield, reached Fort Smith. They had come from El Paso and reported the roads to be good and the water plentiful in most places.<sup>47</sup> On the night of September 18 the first coaches from Saint Louis and from Memphis reached the town, both arriving at practically the same time. This put the people in touch with the outside world, and at

---

<sup>45</sup> Weaver, Reminiscences, 15.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>47</sup> Clipping from the Fort Smith Times, May 5, 1858.

the same time was the harbinger of the early approach of the thirty-fifth parallel railroad.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., September 22, 1858.

## CHAPTER IV

## FORT SMITH DURING AND AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

The year of 1860 passed with little excitement along the frontier of Indian Territory until it became certain that Abraham Lincoln had won the presidential election. Then men began to wonder, to question what the future might bring to a city inhabited by southerners but with a United States garrison in its midst. The night of April 23, 1861, brought an answer to their questions when the steamers Frederick Motrebe and the Tahlequah arrived at Van Buren from Little Rock carrying three hundred state troops under Colonel Solon Borland, eight pieces of artillery and sufficient munitions to take over the post. They were joined in Van Buren by a local company and another commanded by Captain Perkins. These two proceeded by land to Fort Smith while Colonel Borland, waiting until night, went on by boat. Captain Sturgis, post Commander, learned of the approach from the spies he had stationed along the river, and mustering his two companies of cavalry, he retired by way of Texas Road, leaving the fort in command of Major Gatlin, Fifth Infantry, who happened to be at the post on a visit. He made this report to Colonel L. Thomas, Adjutant General of the United States Army, Washington, D. C.:

Fort Smith, Ark., April 24, 1861.

Colonel:

I have the honor to report that a body of troops of the state of Arkansas under the command of Colonel S. Borland, entered and took possession of the post of Fort Smith last night, Captain

Sturgis of the first cavalry having evacuated it a few hours previous. Being on a visit to the post at that time, I was made a prisoner of war by the authority of his excellency, the governor of the State, but permitted to go at large upon giving my promise not to fight against the state of Arkansas or the Southern Confederacy during the pending difficulties between the latter and the United States unless exchanged . . . .<sup>1</sup>

The following report was written by Captain Sturgis to Captain S. Williams, Assistant Adjutant General, Headquarters Department of the West, Saint Louis, Missouri:

Camp on Walnut Creek, Kansas, May 21, 1861

Sirs:

I avail myself of the first opportunity which has occurred since leaving Fort Smith, to inform you that I evacuated that post at 9 o'clock p. m. on the 23rd ultimo and marched with my command for Fort Washita where we arrived on the 20th ultimo and reported for duty to Colonel W. H. Emory, First Cavalry. All of the available transportation at the post amounting to some twenty wagons and teams, were taken along. The ordnance sergeant, hospital steward, Chief bugler, sick, and laundresses were left at the post to be shipped to Jefferson Barracks by Captain A. Montgomery, A. Q. M.

The Causes which induced me to evacuate the post I presume are known to the department. After supplies were cut off by the state of Arkansas the post would be untenable. We could have occupied it in any case but a few days more. One hour after we left, two boats arrived with three hundred men and ten pieces of artillery. To have contended against this force with two companies of cavalry and that too, the entire population was ready to go to arms against us, would have resulted in our being taken prisoners and loss to the government of all, arms, horses, means of transportation etc., at the post.<sup>2</sup>

Early on the morning of April 24, another boat, The Lion, arrived with a body of State Troops. Others soon followed, and by night Fort Smith was occupied by several hundred soldiers in armed opposition

---

<sup>1</sup> The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series 1, I, 650. Hereafter cited as The War of the Rebellion.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 650-1.



to the United States Government.<sup>3</sup>

Fort Smith became the center of Confederate activities for the western part of the state during the early years of the war. In July of 1861 several additional companies of volunteers, some infantry, some cavalry, came to the garrison, although many of these troops later left Fort Smith for more active service, life at the post being, on the whole, much too peaceful.<sup>4</sup>

The period which elapsed between 1861 to 1865 presents the dimmest page in Fort Smith's history. There are very few records of these years, and several reasons may be given for this apparently singular omission: the newspapers were suspended for lack of print paper in early 1862, thus leaving no printed record of current events; then of the people who lived here at that time, the juveniles were too young to receive a lasting impression of what was going on, while the elderly population had passed away before the southern era of history writing began. Although the majority of the people of the town were southerners, there were a number of citizens who held fast to the Union and kept Fort Smith in a constant state of excitement.<sup>5</sup>

Fort Smith was held by the Confederate and State forces from April, 1861, to September 3, 1863, at which time General Blunt of

---

<sup>3</sup> Goodspeed, Hist. of Benton Co. et al., 740.

<sup>4</sup> Clipping from Fort Smith Times and Herald, July 22, 1861.

<sup>5</sup> Weaver, Reminiscences, 16.

the Union forces took charge. The Confederate Commander, W. L. Cabell, having but a small force garrisoned at the post, offered no resistance except at a point several miles up the Poteau River, from which he was forced to retreat. The following report was made by General Blunt:

Headquarters, Army of the Frontier,  
Fort Smith, Ark., Sept. 11, 1863.

Major General John Schofield,  
Commanding Department of Missouri.  
General:

I have the honor to report that the entire Indian Territory and Western Arkansas are in my possession and under my control . . . . The most obnoxious rebels have abandoned their homes here and gone to Texas. Those that remain express great satisfaction at occupation of the country by Federal troops. Union men who had been driven to the mountains to save their lives are coming in daily by the scores and enlisting in various regiments. In my opinion, Western Arkansas can be easily reclaimed . . . .<sup>6</sup>

There were no pitched battles in or around Fort Smith, but a few skirmishes occurred soon after the Federalists took over. On October 28, 1863, Brigadier General William Steele wrote to his superior officer concerning a proposed attack on the garrison. He estimated the Federal forces in and around Fort Smith at two thousand two hundred troops, all well armed and equipped. All were white troops except one negro regiment. Most of the men had seen service, and since they had more and better artillery than Steele's men, he thought it unwise to attack. He also suggested that since the

---

<sup>6</sup> War of the Rebellion, Series 1, X<sup>A</sup>II, Part 2, 525.

Federal troops expected a fight, the psychological effect on them would be bad if no battle were forthcoming.<sup>7</sup>

Records of only two of the skirmishes near the garrison have been kept. On July 27, 1864, a force of fifteen hundred to two thousand rebels under General Gano, all mounted, attacked an outpost at Massard Prairie seven miles out from the post. The force there was composed of two hundred men of the Sixth Kansas Cavalry under Captain Medford, established for the purpose of grazing the stock of the garrison. Gano's forces moved up in two columns, one driving in the pickets, the other flanking them. They soon overpowered Medford, took him and one hundred fifteen men prisoners, and retired before reinforcements could be brought up.<sup>8</sup>

The Federalists had no fears for Fort Smith and Fort Gibson but were constantly alarmed lest the supply trains between Fort Smith and Fort Scott be captured and the fords between Fort Smith and Fort Gibson fall into the hands of the Confederates. Parties putting up hay and grazing stock must also be guarded. General Thayer, then in command, reported that he was prevented from moving out for attack because of a lack of cavalry and artillery horses.<sup>9</sup>

The second recorded skirmish was actually a continuation of the attack at Massard Prairie. At sunrise on July 31 the Confederates

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 1048.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Series 1, XLI, Part 1, 23-24.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 24.

took up the line of March, proceeding along the main road from Massard to Nigger Hill. The pickets were routed and their dinners eaten by Gano's men. The artillery on Nigger Hill and cavalry reinforcements from the post forced the Confederates to retreat about dark, burning the camp and stores of the enemy as they went.

This demonstration in front of Fort Smith drove the whole Union population of Sebastian County within the town, thus increasing the enemies' embarrassment on account of food, and satisfying Cooper, Confederate Commander of the Indian Brigade brought up to help Gano, that the enemy was weaker and more demoralized than he had anticipated. He expressed the belief that a vigorous attack by the entire Confederate forces of the area, even though attended by heavy loss of life, would have resulted in the capture of the fort. But the moment had passed, his men and horses were weary and much weakened by the expiration of enlistment, and he considered it best to fall back to the vicinity of their depot in Indian Territory for rest, reorganization and recruiting the Indian Brigade.<sup>10</sup>

The Confederates continued to harass and attack supply trains, hay camps and grazing parties around Fort Smith and Fort Gibson for the duration of the war, and many supplies intended for Union soldiers found their way into Confederate Camps.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 31-36.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 707.

On August 24, 1863, General Cooper marched on Fort Smith, and all the men of the town were forced to march out to the trenches where they were put to work throwing up additional fortifications. Many of the men had sons and other relatives in the attacking forces. The Federalists drove back General Cooper in a very short time.<sup>12</sup>

On October 7, 1864, Major General Maxey, in command of Confederate forces in this area, told his superior officer that he believed Fort Smith could be taken since large numbers of the federal troops were engaged in escort duty with supply trains and guarding fords, hay camps, and grazing parties, but no evidence of such an attempt has been found.<sup>13</sup>

Rumors and counter rumors continued to find their way into circulation regarding the impregnability and the penetrability of the post of Fort Smith. This, indeed, was the case during the closing months of the Civil War. But with the arrival of the news of the capitulation of General Robert E. Lee, conditions speedily returned to those that would be associated with an outpost located in a sparsely populated, semi-forgotten and not too much interested district. In fact it is not until September, 1871, when orders arrive from the War Department to remove the troops from this garrison that activities reminiscent of days of old are once again the order of the day. The

---

<sup>12</sup> Article by Rt. Rev. Lucey in the Arkansas Gazette, May 24, 1904.

<sup>13</sup> War of the Rebellion, op. cit., 780-1.

military reservation had been transferred to the custody of the Department of Interior for disposition in accordance with terms of an Act of Congress approved February 24, 1871, an act providing that the lands be sold at public auction to the highest bidder for not less than the appraised value nor one dollar twenty-five cents an acre. By an executive order dated May 22, 1871, the part of the reservation that was occupied by the national cemetery was reserved from sale and restored to the custody of the War Department.<sup>14</sup>

Several years after this, Federal Judge Isaac C. Parker and Congressman John H. Rogers conceived the idea that the government might be persuaded to give the reservation to the city for the public schools. A bill to this effect was introduced in Congress, passed, and approved by the President on May 14, 1884.<sup>15</sup> The property

---

<sup>14</sup> Inclosures sent by Secretary of War to the Senate Committee on Public Lands inquiring as to the status of the late military reservation of Fort Smith. This committee was considering a bill to donate the land to the city of Fort Smith. A recommendation was made that the bill not be passed since it would not apply to all other military reservations adjoining cities and towns. Senate, Miscellaneous Documents: No. 536, 45th Cong., 2d sess.

The question as to why these lands had not been offered at public auction as provided by Congress was brought up in the committee hearings. The report was made that the appraised value of the land had been so high that none of it had been sold. Senate Reports: No. 706, 45th Cong., 3rd sess.

<sup>15</sup> Congressional Record. 48th Cong., XV, Part 1, 32, 59, 656; Part 4, 3944, 3948, 4147.

included one hundred whole or fractional blocks, out of which the government reserved one whole block for a federal building, one for a city park, and four for grounds surrounding the federal jail.<sup>16</sup>

By an Act of Congress February 26, 1897, the walls were removed from that part of the reservation included in the four blocks surrounding the federal jail to permit the extension of streets. All of the land except that upon which the jail stood was surveyed, divided into lots, and sold at public auction, the proceeds reverting to the United States Treasury. The city was authorized to remove the walls and the stone building at the north corner and dispose of the material for its own use. The land for the streets was donated to the city.<sup>17</sup> From the sale of the property donated by the government the public schools of the city have had the benefit of about one million dollars.<sup>18</sup>

Time and progress have seen one after another of the old landmarks of the past disappear, leaving only the old ivy-clad stone building used as a commissary, and still designated as such, standing near the banks of the Arkansas River. But interwoven into the

---

<sup>16</sup> Congressional Record, op. cit., Part 4, 3945.

<sup>17</sup> U. S. Stat. at Large, XXIX, 596-7.

<sup>18</sup> The statement was made in an editorial in the Arkansas Gazette, May 29, 1909, that Fort Smith was the only city in the United States which had an endowment for its public schools. No further verification has been found.

history of that section of the great American Southwest which has become the state of Arkansas, runs the story of the frontier post on the Arkansas River. Although instrumental in bringing about the settlement of both the Middle and the Far West, contributing its forces in the War with Mexico, playing a dual role in the Civil War, the period of Reconstruction saw the days of usefulness of the garrison pass. The bright thread of military life was severed, but the pattern remained only to be resurrected when another great national emergency confronted the people. The year 1941 saw a large military establishment under construction outside the city for the training of some twenty thousand men for the defense of our nation. Again Fort Smith takes up the thread of service--again she becomes an outlying post of civilization.



## APPENDIX

Commanders of the Post at Fort Smith<sup>1</sup>

Maj. Wm. Bradford,	Rifle Regiment	Nov. 1817 to Feb. 1822
Col. Matthew Arbuckle,	7th Infantry	Feb. 1822 to March 1822
Maj. A. R. Wooley,	" "	March 1822 to June 1822
Col. Mathew Arbuckle,	" "	June 1822 to Jan. 1823
Capt. Wm. Davenport,	" "	Jan. 1823 to May 1823
Col. Matthew Arbuckle,	" "	May 1823 to April 1824
(Troops withdrawn from Post April, 1824; re-occupied March 22, 1822.)		
Capt. John Stuart,	7th Infantry	March 1833 to June 1834
(Troops withdrawn June 16, 1834; re-occupied July 27, 1838)		
Capt. B. L. E. Bonneville,	7th Infantry	July 1838 to Oct. 1838
Capt. W. G. Belknap,	3rd Infantry	Oct. 1838 to Sept. 1840
Capt. W. W. Lear,	4th Infantry	Sept. 1840 to Sept. 1842
Capt. Wm. Hoffman,	6th Infantry	Sept. 1842 to May 1842
Capt. J. D. Searight,	" "	May 1843 to Nov. 1843
Capt. Wm. Hoffman,	" "	Nov. 1843 to Aug. 1845
Maj. B. L. E. Bonneville,	" "	Aug. 1845 to Dec. 1845
Capt. Wm. Hoffman,	" "	Dec. 1845 to Jan. 1846
Maj. B. L. E. Bonneville,	" "	Jan. 1846 to July 1846
Capt. E. B. Alexander, A. Q. M.		July 1846 to Oct. 1846
Lieut. J. W. B. Gardiner,	1st Dragoons	Oct. 1846 to May 1847
Lieut. F. F. Flint,	6th Infantry	May 1847 to Nov. 1848
Capt. C. C. Sibley,	5th Infantry	Nov. 1848 to July 1850
(Troops withdrawn July 2, 1850; re-occupied March 1, 1851.)		
Capt. C. C. Sibley,	5th Infantry	March 1851 to June 1851
Capt. R. C. Gatlin,	7th Infantry	June 1851 to May 1852
Col. Henry Wilson,	" "	May 1852 to Oct. 1852
Maj. Geo. Andrews,	" "	Oct. 1852 to May 1853
Col. Henry Wilson,	" "	May 1853 to July 1853
Capt. H. I. Hunt,	2nd Artillery	July 1853 to Aug. 1853
Capt. T. H. Holmes,	7th Infantry	Aug. 1853 to Oct. 1853
Lieut. Franklin Gardner,	" "	Oct. 1853 to Nov. 1853
Col. Henry Wilson,	" "	Nov. 1853 to May 1855
Lieut. J. H. Potter,	" "	May 5, 1855 to Oct. 22, 1855
Capt. S. G. French,	A. Q. M.	May 1855 to Dec. 1855
Capt. R. C. Gatlin,	7th Infantry	Dec. 1855 to Jan. 1856
Maj. Isaac Linde,	" "	Jan. 1856 to Mar. 1856
Capt. R. C. Gatlin,	" "	Mar. 1856 to Dec. 1856

<sup>1</sup> Robert J. Mohler, Fort Smith, Arkansas, 42-4.

Maj. Isaac Linde,	7th Infantry	Dec. 1856 to June 1857
Capt. R. C. Gatlin,	" "	June 1857 to Aug. 1857
Capt. LaFayette McLaws,	" "	Aug. 1857 to Sept. 1857
Capt. S. G. Simmons,	" "	Sept. 1857 to Feb. 1858
Lieut. E. J. Brooks,	" "	Feb. 1858 to Mar. 1858
Capt. D. D. Sackett,	1st Cavalry	Mar. 1858 to June 1859
Capt. W. W. Burns,	Comm'y Sut	June 1859 to July 1859
Capt. E. W. Crittenden,	1st Cavalry	July 1859 to Sept. 1869
Capt. S. D. Sturges,	" "	Sept. 1859 to Apr. 1861

(U. S. Troops withdrawn April 23, 1861, re-occupied Sept. 1, 1863.)

Col. W. W. Cloud,	1st Kan. Cavalry	Sept. 1863 to Dec. 1863
Col. John Edwards,	18th Iowa Infantry	Dec. 1863 to Nov. 1864
Lieut. Col. A. W. Bishop,	1st Ark. Cavalry	Mar. 1864 to May 1864
Col. W. R. Judson,	6th Kan. Cavalry	May 1864 to June 1865
Lieut. Col. J. B. Wheeler,	12th Kan. Inf.	Jan. 1865 to Feb. 1865
Brig. Gen. Cyrus Bussey,	U. S. Volunteers	Feb. 1865 to Sept. 1865
Col. M. M. Trumbull,	9th Iowa Cavalry	Sept. 1865 to Feb. 1866
Col. Paul Harwood,	57th U.S.C.T.	Feb. 1866 to May 1866
Capt. R. W. Barnard,	19th U.S. Inf.	May 1866 to Sept. 1866
Capt. S. S. Culberson,	" " " "	Sept. 1866 to Nov. 1866
Capt. W. J. Lyster,	" " " "	Nov. 1866 to Jan. 1867
Capt. J. B. Mulligan,	" " " "	Jan. 1867 to Feb. 1867
Col. D. F. Jones,	" " " "	Feb. 1867 to Oct. 1867
Lieut. Col. P. Lugenbeel,	" " " "	Oct. 1867 to Apr. 1869
Capt. John J. Upham,	6th U. S. Inf.	April 1869 to June 1869
Capt. Montgomery Bryant,	" " " "	June 1869 to Nov. 1870
Lst. Lieut. F. W. Thibaut,	" " " "	Nov. 1870 to Jan. 1871
Capt. Montgomery Bryant,	" " " "	July 1871 to Sept. 1871

United States troops were finally withdrawn September, 1871, and the military reservation was relinquished to the Interior Department for disposition, under act of Congress, approved February 14th 1871, by War Department letter of March 24th, 1871.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Primary Sources

Manuscripts:

Weaver, William James, Reminiscences of W. J. Weaver. Unpublished manuscript in the Carnegie Library, Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Government Publications:

American State Papers, edited by Walter Lowrie et al. 28 vols. Washington, D. C.: Gales and Seaton, 1833-1861.

Executive Documents, Twenty-seventh Congress, second session, Documents 2 and 188.

Kappler, Charles J., ed., Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties. Fifty-eighth Congress, second session, II, Senate Document 319, Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1904.

Richardson, James Daniel, ed., A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897. 11 vols. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1896-1900.

Senate Miscellaneous Documents, Forty-fifth Congress, second session, Senate Document 536.

The Statutes At Large of the United States, 1789-1873. 17 vols. Boston: Little and Brown (later Little, Brown and Company), 1845-1873.

The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. 70 vols. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901.

Journals:

Coues, Elliott, The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike. 3 vols. New York: Harper, Lathrop Company, 1898.

Foreman, Grant, ed., A Traveler in Indian Territory: The Journal of Ethan Allen Hitchcock. Cedar Rapids: The Torch Press, 1930.

Thwaites, Reuben Gold, ed., Early Western Travels 1748-1846, XIII, (Muttall's Travels into the Arkansa /sic/ Territory, 1819). Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1905.

#### Secondary Sources

##### Newspapers:

Arkansas Gazette (Little Rock), May 29, 1904; May 29, 1909.

Fort Smith Times, May 5, 1858.

Fort Smith Times and Herald, July 22, 1861.

##### Books:

Buchanan, James Shannon, and Edward Everett Dale, A History of Oklahoma. Evanston: Row, Peterson and Company, /c. 1924/.

Foreman, Grant, Advancing the Frontier, 1830-1860. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1933.

\_\_\_\_\_, Indians & Pioneers, The Story of the American Southwest before 1830. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930.

\_\_\_\_\_, Pioneer Days in the Early Southwest. Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1926.

Herndon, Dallas, ed., A Centennial History of Arkansas. 3 vols. Chicago, Little Rock: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1922.

History of Benton, Washington, Carroll, Madison, Franklin and Sebastian Counties. Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1889.

Mohler, Robert J., Fort Smith, Arkansas. Fort Smith: Thrash-Lick Printing Company, 1898.

Thoburn, Joseph, and Muriel Wright, Oklahoma, A History of the State and its People. 4 vols. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1929.

Thwaites, Reuben Gold, The American Nation: A History, VII, (France in America 1497-1763). New York: Harper and Brothers, 1905.

Periodicals:

Abel, Anne Heloise, "The History of Events Resulting in Indian Consolidation West of the Mississippi River," Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1906, I, 235-438.

Foreman, Grant, "The Centennial of Fort Gibson". Chronicles of Oklahoma, II, 119-128 (June, 1924). Oklahoma Historical Society.

\_\_\_\_\_, "The Three Forks", Chronicles of Oklahoma, II, 37-47, (June, 1924). Oklahoma Historical Society.

Niles Weekly Register, XX, 246-248 (June 20, 1821).

Typist: Robertellen Garrett