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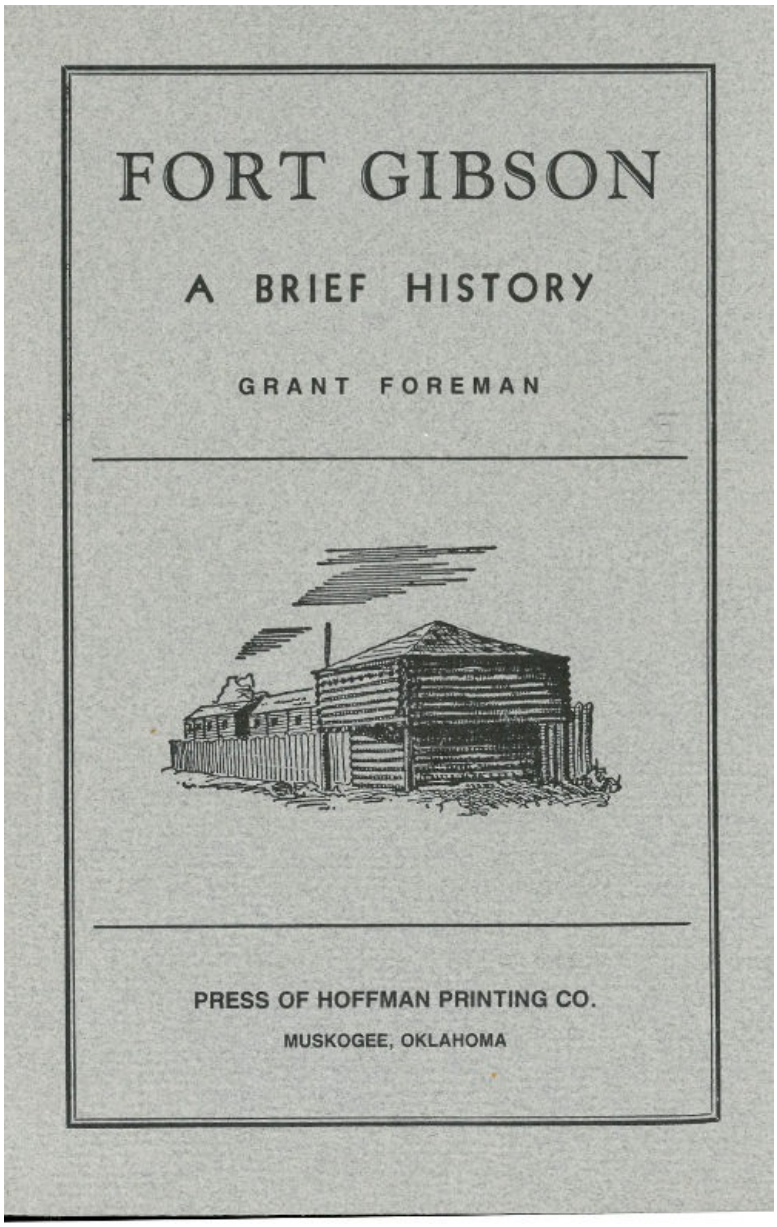

FORT GIBSON

A BRIEF HISTORY

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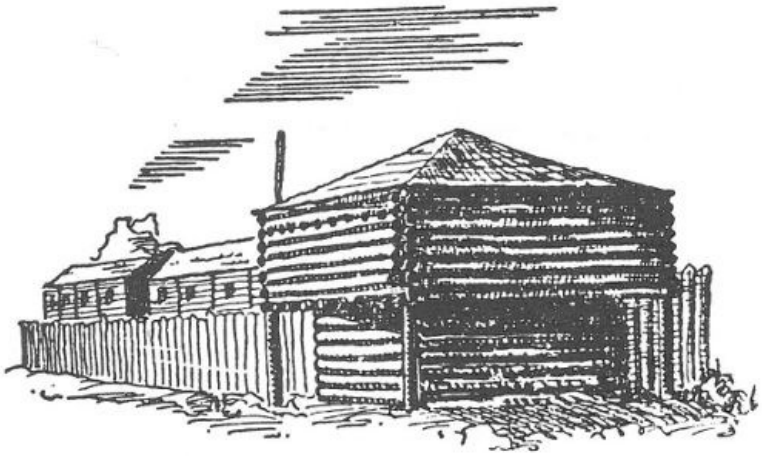

To the Friends whose assistance has made possible the restoration now in evidence in Fort Gibson

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INDIAN REMOVAL (Out of Print)
ADVANCING THE FRONTIER 1830-1860
THE FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES
INDIANS AND PIONEERS
FORT GIBSON
DOWN THE TEXAS ROAD
ADVENTURE ON RED RIVER (Editor)
MARCY AND THE GOLD SEEKERS
A TRAVELER IN INDIAN TERRITORY (Editor: Privately Printed)
SEQUOYAH
A PATHFINDER IN THE SOUTHWEST (Editor)
A HISTORY OF OKLAHOMA
MUSKOGEE: THE BIOGRAPHY OF AN OKLAHOMA TOWN
PIONEER DAYS IN THE EARLY SOUTHWEST (Editor: Cleveland, Ohio)
INDIAN JUSTICE (Editor: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma)

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Fort Gibson was not only the oldest and most celebrated military establishment in the annals of Oklahoma but in its early days it was the farthest west outpost of the United States, and in many respects continued for years to be one of the most important on that frontier. It was one of the chain of forts reaching from the northern to the southern boundaries of the nation, which included Fort Snelling, Fort Leavenworth, Fort Gibson, Fort Towson, and Fort Jesup, at times there were as many soldiers stationed at Fort Gibson as in all the other forts together. It was constructed in a wilderness frequented by bears, wolves, and panthers, while the neighboring prairies were the feeding grounds of wild horses, buffalo and deer. The nearby streams were rich in beaver, and furs were shipped by trappers and traders to eastern markets.

This fort actually owed its establishment to the indomitable spirit of the Osage Indians who ranged the surrounding country and claimed exclusive right to the game in that locality; consequently they challenged the hunters from eastern Indian tribes, notably the Cherokees, and were constantly engaging in savage battles with them. This situation resulted in the establishment, in 1817, of a garrison at Belle Point, subsequently called Fort Smith, which it was hoped would be able to abate the warlike activities of the Osages. As it was not able to achieve the desired results, the garrison was abandoned and the troops were directed to find a new location at the mouth of the Verdigris River, where they would be near the towns of the Osages and better able to watch and control their movements.

When Colonel Matthew Arbuckle came up the Arkansas River with his command of the Seventh Infantry, he found the best boat landing on the Verdigris River, and adjacent territory for three miles above its mouth, occupied by a considerable settlement of white traders and trappers, the earliest trading settlement within the limits of Oklahoma. Most conspicuous among the settlers was Colonel A. P. Chouteau, a graduate of West Point of the class of 1806, who resigned from the army the next year to engage in Indian trade. From 1815 to the time of his

death in 1838 he was identified with the Indian Territory and performed valuable service for the government in the negotiation of important treaties with the Indians, with whom he had more influence than any other man of his time. He was long a familiar and welcome figure at Fort Gibson. His judgment commanded greater respect of army officers, commissioners and Washington officials than that of any other man on the frontier; he was frequently consulted and his services solicited for the settlement of important problems relating to the Indians.

In connection with his Indian trade at the Three Forks, Chouteau's establishment was integrated with the facilities of river navigation. He employed a large number of men for assorting and packing for shipment the peltries purchased from the Indians; he also maintained a little shipyard on the bank of the river where he made the boats in which, with the help of a rough and hardy class of river men, he shipped his peltries to New Orleans and St. Louis. As the settlement of traders and trappers would have made it troublesome to establish a garrison on the site, Arbuckle decided to find a location for his fort a short distance up the nearby Grand River, which discharged its waters into the Arkansas about half a mile from the mouth of the Verdigris.

It was on the twenty-first day of April 1824, that two long flatboats were to be seen ascending Grand River, manned by bearded young men in the uniform of the United States Army. As they worked the boats up the river they scanned the shore for a landing place, and about three miles from the river's mouth they were successful in discovering a wide ledge of shelving rock on the east bank, which made a natural boat landing. They tied up their boats at this ledge, and unloaded axes, adzes, froes, saws, food supplies, tents, baggage, and a miscellaneous assortment of camp equipment. On the bank they met other uniformed young men, unshaved and long of hair, who had come by land to the place from Fort Smith with their horses and oxen. They were, in all, 122 officers and privates of companies B, C, G, and K of the Seventh Infantry. [5]

The river bottom land near their landing place was low and fertile, and covered by an immense canebrake, great forest trees, and a jungle of vines and undergrowth. The soldiers were soon engaged in clearing sufficient space in which to set up their tents. Then began the weeks and months of labor necessary to remove the cane, vines, and brambles from an area large enough for an army post; the ring of the ax and the crash of the huge falling trees were heard, and roaring fires consumed the prodigality of nature. Logs were fashioned by axes and cross-cut saws into lengths and shapes suitable to form the walls of houses; other logs were split into puncheons for floors, or rived into clapboards to roof the structures to be built.

By the early part of 1826 a number of log houses had been completed, providing quarters for the soldiers, quartermaster, sergeants, surgeon, and a hospital, guard room, matron's room and storeroom. These buildings were constructed on four sides of a square and, with the upright logs or pickets surrounding them, constituted the stockade, so arranged for protection against possible attack by the Indians. This stockade has long since fallen into decay; but on the site another has been constructed from the original plans, as nearly like the old one as possible, where it is now to be seen.

Fort Gibson maintained communication with the outside world by means of transportation on the Arkansas River over which, at first, the keelboat brought men and supplies to the fort from remote distances, and down which furs and peltries were shipped by the traders living in the neighborhood. Later, steamboats that supplanted the keelboats came up to the fort with military supplies and merchandise for the sutler at the post and for merchants in that vicinity. During 1833, seventeen steamboats were tied up to the boat landing from time to time through the season. Under the railroad bridge which now spans the river at this spot may be seen one of the rings anchored in the rock to which the boats were secured many years ago. The fort was also reached by the famous thoroughfare known as the Texas Road, which came through southwestern Missouri, southeastern Kansas, and following the course of Grand River passed Fort Gibson and continued on to Texas. For many years an amazing number of emigrants, freighters, and traders going to or returning from the then unknown country beyond Red River passed over this road. [6]

In 1831, the whole of the Seventh Infantry was ordered to Fort Gibson and the officers reported the interior of the stockade much overcrowded by the host of officers and men, laundresses and servants. The year 1832 was a notable one in the history of Fort Gibson. A commission had been created by Congress for the purpose of locating in the Indian Territory the Indians about to be removed from the East. It was necessary for the commission to make its headquarters at Fort Gibson, and negotiate treaties with the wild Indians which were to prepare them for the impending changes in their neighbors. The commissioners were Montford Stokes, until then governor of North Carolina, Henry L. Ellsworth, of Hartford, Connecticut, and Rev. John Schermerhorn. They were afforded protection by the Ranger company of Captain Jesse Bean, who arrived at the post in October, 1832, and was then ordered to the West on an exploring tour. Mr. Ellsworth arrived at Fort Gibson that same month, accompanied by Washington Irving and some friends whom he had met on Lake Erie and had invited to accompany him to Fort Gibson. They came down the Texas Road past the Creek agency at Three Forks, just below the site of Okay, and arrived at the bank of Grand River, across which Irving noted the neatly whitewashed blockhouses and palisades of Fort Gibson. Someone halooed across the river, and a scow, which served as ferryboat, was brought over; the travelers entered the boat, which was poled by soldiers across the stream; as it was tied up to the landing the visitors stepped ashore and walked up the bank 150 yards to the gate of the garrison. A sergeant's guard admitted them, and as they entered the fort their attention was attracted to a number of men pilloried in stocks and riding the wooden horse. Startled at this spectacle, Irving made a note of it in his journal.

On their arrival at Fort Gibson, Washington Irving and Commissioner Ellsworth and their friends, on learning that Captain Bean's company was somewhere up the Arkansas River, after spending two nights in Colonel Arbuckle's quarters in the fort, started out to overtake the Rangers and share in their adventures. They were gone a month on this trip, and from his experiences on that expedition Irving wrote his famous book, **A Tour on the Prairies**. The company returned to Fort Gibson on the ninth of November, and the next day Irving departed down the Arkansas River by steamboat for New Orleans and Washington. [7]

The inhabitants of the fort were awakened each morning as the bugler sounded reveille at daybreak to rouse a

sleeping garrison; later the crash of the morning gun echoed and re-echoed among the neighboring hills and rumbled across the more distant prairies, startling deer and bear in their sheltered beds. The flag was run to the top of the staff to catch the first rays of the rising sun. After an early breakfast the soldiers went about their routine duties; details worked in the garrison garden among the vegetables; oxen, horses, and mules were fed, watered, and cared for; recruits were put through their drills by the sharp commands of officers, and the bugle sounded at intervals throughout the day, carrying its lively messages over the surrounding valleys and hills.

The end of the day of toil or boredom, as the case might be, was announced by the drums sounding retreat, followed by the evening gun and the ceremony of lowering the flag at sunset. The roll of the drum and the shrill notes of the fife sounded tatoo at nine o'clock and warned stragglers to cease their amours and other diversions and return to their quarters within the palisades before the great gates should close and shut them out; taps then sounded, and Fort Gibson was again stilled in darkness. This routine repeated day after day, month after month, and year after year, made life at the post a dull experience. It was an isolated station in the western wilderness, far from civilization and white settlements of consequence. The officers and men, exiled, as they termed it, to this remote garrison, wearied of its limited possibilities for entertainment. Trifling incidents varied the dull routine of their lives, and episodes that mattered were of absorbing interest.

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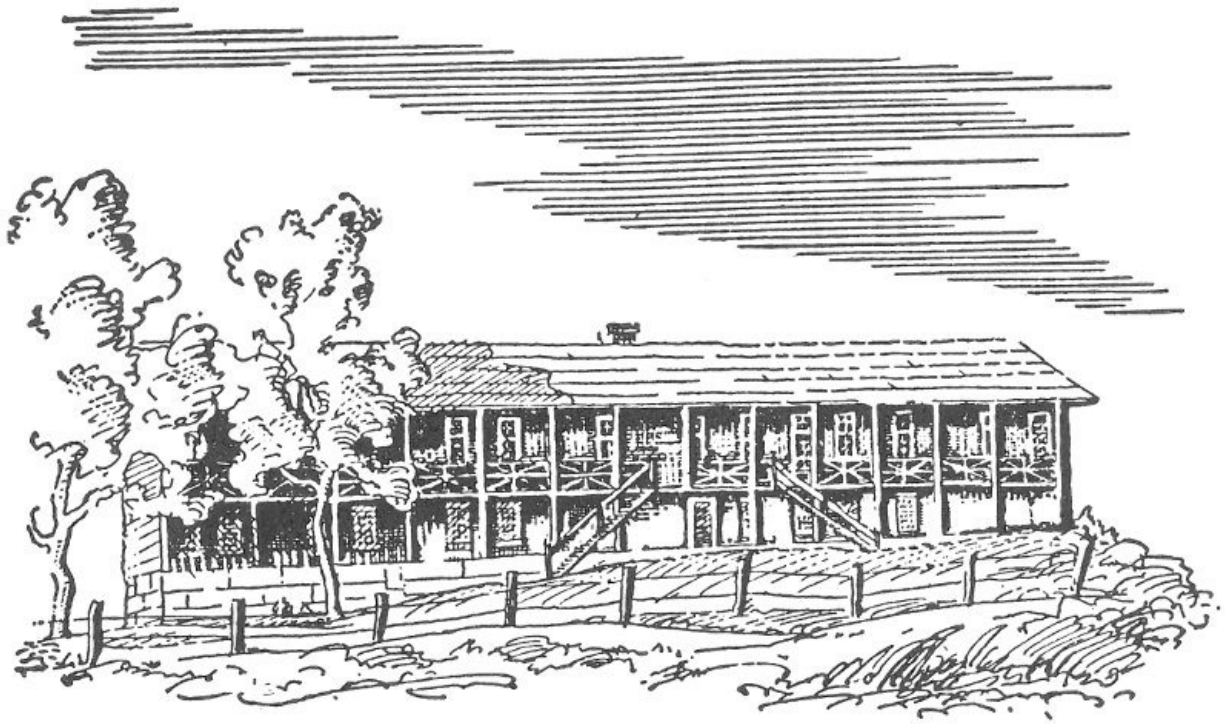

BARRACKS OF FORT GIBSON

Some cheerful diversions were available, however; there was good fishing in the river a few yards from the post, and thousands of prairie chickens and other game afforded zestful hunting. A billiard room furnished entertainment. Plays were written and presented in the "theater," the building used on occasions for Indian councils and religious services. 9

A course was laid out and every year there were exciting horse races for high stakes with entries from all divisions of the fort's population—officers, traders, and Indians. Indian ponies, that hardly had time to rest up from running buffalo, were entered against the horses of the post. And there were crooked race horse owners who came up the river to the fort for the sole purpose of making what money they could by their peculiar methods. This situation became so demoralizing that Colonel Loomis issued an order barring these people from the reservation. When other things palled—and when they did not—there was always the gossip of the post, rumors and confirmation of promotions, expeditions, and details; the departure of a command on a commission that would at least give the men a change of scene; the rare arrival of the paymaster, with fifty to one hundred thousand dollars in the custody of his military escort; the frequent arrival of steamboats when the rivers were high; and when they were not, visitors and supplies coming by keelboats, wagons, or pack trains.

The hoarse resonance of a steam whistle in the distance told a jaded garrison that a steamboat on the Arkansas River was approaching the fort. Presently the boom of the signal gun on board announced that she had passed the bars three miles below and had safely entered the Grand River. There was always a crowd at the landing place to see her as she came into view down the stream. As the jangle of her bell or the exhaust of her engines heralded her arrival, the multitude was increased by people who were anxious to share in the excitement when she was tied up to the shelving rock that made a natural dock.

For there were passengers to come ashore—friends to greet, who were returning from leave with news from the outside world, messages, and newspapers, and strangers to inspect—young officers from West Point, older officers trained by service in other posts who had come to a new assignment, recruits to fill gaps in the ranks. There were civilians, too, merchants from the neighborhood who had been east exchanging furs and skins for fresh supplies of merchandise; sutlers who brought stores to sell to the officers and soldiers, and bonnets, 10

dresses, and finery for the ladies of the post. And there were wives and children come to unite long-separated families, and young ladies who planned to visit and bring a measure of gaiety to the garrison. Mail bags promised letters from distant relatives and friends. Deck hands and soldiers unloaded boxes and crates of merchandise. It was a busy and noisy scene. Officers went aboard to enjoy the hospitality of the captain and to sample the liquors on his boat.

Young ladies came from the East to visit relatives at the post and they frequently married officers whom they met there, or had previously known. In the 1830's and 1840's, when Fort Gibson received many young officers recently out of West Point, such romances were common.

Propinquity and the charm of the Cherokee maidens accounted for many unions between them and the soldiers and officers at the post. Fort Gibson was the center of society and gaiety for a large section of the country that included the Cherokee Nation. The young women of that tribe were much sought by the officers and were welcome guests at the parties given at the post, where many romances budded and bloomed during the seventy years the old fort existed. The result was that in that part of Oklahoma which formerly constituted the Cherokee Nation, many families descended from unions between the soldiers and Indians. Frequently, when their terms of enlistment expired, soldiers remained in the neighborhood, married Indian girls, reared Indian families, and become prosperous from the land holdings these alliances brought them.

For want of diversions of greater interest, numbers of soldiers at Fort Gibson sought such excitement as they could find in the doggeries maintained by mixed-blood Cherokee Indians on tribal lands just off the reservation, where drinking and gambling were indulged in. Violations of the rule forbidding a soldier to remain outside the garrison after retreat had sounded were frequent, and iron bars were employed on the windows in the outer walls of the houses to enforce the regulations. These precautionary measures, said an observer, gave the barracks the appearance of a dilapidated Arkansas jail: the enclosure, he said, was made to hold five companies of troops—officers and men, laundresses and servants herded together in a climate where the temperature ranged in summer from eighty to one hundred degrees. These remarks truly painted a picture that explained much of the resistance to discipline and violation of regulations. [11]

As an instance of punishment, an offender was sentenced to "stand on the head of a barrel with an empty bottle in each hand, in front of the dragoon guardhouse every alternate two hours from reveille until retreat for eight days with a board around his neck marked 'Whiskey Seller,' to carry a pack on his back weighing fifty pounds every alternate two hours for eight days, from reveille until retreat; to work at hard labor in charge of the guard for fourteen days, and to have seven days of his pay stopped." Another culprit was sentenced "to be drummed around the garrison immediately in the rear of Corporal Charles Kelloun of H Company, First Dragoons, carrying a keg in his arms, to have a plank hanging on his back marked 'Whiskey Runner,' and to serve fifteen days at hard labor in charge of the guard, making good all time lost by sickness."

Drunkenness and desertion were the most persistent and difficult violations with which officers had to deal. The courts martial varied the punishments inflicted upon offenders as far as their imagination would permit. One culprit was sentenced to the custody of the guard for thirty days "and during that period to walk in front of the guardhouse with a pack of stones weighing fifty pounds upon his back from eight o'clock A. M. to one P. M., and from two o'clock P. M. to retreat." Another, in the winter was condemned "to be immersed for ten consecutive mornings in the river, fifteen minutes before breakfast roll call." Another's sentence was to have his "hands tied to a post above his head from reveille to guard mount, five days at hard labor, and to forfeit one dollar per day and his portion of sugar and coffee." Forfeiture of sugar, coffee, and whiskey was a cruel measure often resorted to. Sentence to the stocks was employed, and frequently the garrison displayed the ghastly spectacle of a dozen men with hands and heads projected through these cruel devices which compelled them to stand and gave them no support. It was charged that in some cases culprits had died under this punishment. In October 1833, two privates of the First Dragoons convicted of desertion were sentenced to be branded with the letter "D" on the right thigh, to have their heads shaved, and be drummed out of the service of the United States with strong halters around their necks. [12]

In the early 1850's a traveler coming from the Northwest left an interesting picture of Fort Gibson: The Verdigris River forded, "another ride of an hour or more brought us to the Neosho (Grand River); this forded, we ride into Fort Gibson. This is a pretty place. There is the fort itself, with its blockhouses, the palisades with their heavy wooden gates, the stables on a hill nearby, the quarters of the dragoons in a former day and their look-out, the campus outside the fort, a plot of ground elevated above the river, having on two sides the houses of the officers, the chapel and schoolhouse, the government store, and all newly whitewashed. In this enclosure was a little burying ground, carefully protected and tastefully adorned with trees and shrubs. We pass out into the Cherokee country by a large gate, near which is a store having one entrance from the fort, and another from the Indian country. Around this door a great number of horses were tied while their riders were within, some with articles to barter for goods, others endeavoring to purchase by giving a lien on the annuity which will come next year, which annuity may be sold or gambled away to several other parties, all of whom will be at the council to claim it when it at length arrives."

Fort Gibson was still a young fort when it was discovered that the green logs of which the houses were built were rapidly decaying and constant repairs were required to make them habitable. It was a sickly place and the great number of deaths which occurred there gave it the name of the charnel house of the army. From the time of its founding to December 8, 1835, eleven and a half years, 561 privates and 9 officers had died at the post. During the years 1834 and 1835 the deaths numbered 293 privates and 6 officers. In the summertime, in order to avoid the miasmic breezes carrying disease from the surrounding swamps and canebrakes, detachments of troops were ordered to camp on the hill above, or seven miles east on Bayou Manard at a place known as Clark's Springs, where at one time the Cherokee agency, and later the home known as the McLain place, were situated. [13]

Probably no fort in the West exerted a greater influence for the civilization of the surrounding country than did Fort Gibson, and this became the purpose of its maintenance for many years. With the appointment of the Stokes Indian Commission in 1832, efforts were made to bring representatives of the wild tribes to Fort Gibson for the purpose of making treaties with them and impressing them with the sovereignty of the United States; it was hoped that they would conform their conduct accordingly and become friends of the whites and of the Indian immigrants from the East who were to be the new owners of the Indian Territory. Ellsworth's efforts in 1832, when Irving accompanied him, failed to accomplish this result. In 1833 another expedition set out from Fort Gibson commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James Many. In his command were two select companies of the Seventh Infantry and three companies of Rangers commanded by captains Bean, Ford, and Boone, the latter Nathan Boone, son of the famous Daniel. They went as far as the country on the Washita, Blue, and Red rivers, but returned empty-handed after suffering tremendous hardships.

The third effort to make contact with these Western Indians was successfully carried out in 1834, by what became known as the famous Dragoon Expedition. General Henry Leavenworth arrived at Fort Gibson April 28 of that year and assumed command of the post, which he held until June 12 when he departed in command of the expedition. This expedition included also Colonel Henry Dodge, Colonel Stephen Watts Kearney, and Major R. B. Mason. Jefferson Davis, a lieutenant a few years out of West Point, was in command of one company. This train of five hundred mounted troops, a large number of white-covered baggage wagons, and seventy head of beeves made an imposing procession. It was accompanied by eleven Osage, eight Cherokee, six Delaware, and seven Seneca Indians who went along to serve as guides, hunters, interpreters, and as representatives of their respective nations. They crossed the Arkansas River below the mouth of Grand River, passed over the prairies near the site of the future Muskogee, traveled southwest to the mouth of the Washita River, then northwest, where they visited the site of a Comanche village at the western end of the Wichita Mountains. [14]

This was a disastrous expedition which resulted in the deaths of nearly 150 men from disease and the effects of excessive hot weather and poor water upon the unseasoned and undisciplined soldiers lately recruited from private life in the North and East. Included among the casualties of this expedition was that of General Leavenworth, who died July 21 near the Washita River.

However, they did succeed in bringing back to Fort Gibson representatives of the Kiowa, Wichita, and Waco tribes, and after their return invitations were extended to all the Indians within reach to attend a grand council at the post—Choctaws, Cherokees, Creeks, Senecas, Osages, Delawares, and others. Here, on September 2, 1834, began one of the most interesting and important Indian councils ever held in the country. On this occasion every effort was made to impress the wild Indians who had never made a treaty with the United States and make them understand the changed political condition of the country. There were 150 Indians participating in the council, and with their numerous women and children, tepees and tents, they made one of the most picturesque scenes ever witnessed at any army post.

Governor Stokes and the army officers who attended did not have authority at this time to enter into a treaty, but, with the potent influence of Colonel A. P. Chouteau, who participated in the council, the commissioners secured an agreement with the wild Indians to meet in treaty council the following year. And so the plans which were launched and carried out at Fort Gibson resulted in a treaty council begun August 24, 1835, at Fort Mason on the Canadian River near the present Purcell, Oklahoma, where was negotiated the first treaty ever entered into by a number of these western tribes. [15]

In 1837 members of the Kiowa, Apache, and Tawakoni tribes were induced to send representatives to Fort Gibson, where on May 26 another important treaty, the first with these Indians, was negotiated. These treaties gave assurance of peace on the part of the Indians and guarantees of safe passage for the traders over the Santa Fe route.

After the return of the Dragoon Expedition there were a number of resignations of young officers who were thoroughly tired of frontier service. An amusing incident growing out of the tension between them resulted in a charge of insubordination against Lieutenant Jefferson Davis by Major R. B. Mason, followed by a court martial of the young officer at Fort Gibson. The court found him guilty but attached no criminality to the facts, and the judgment was that he be acquitted. While the records and decision were being considered by General E. P. Gaines, commander of the Southwestern Military Department at Memphis, Tennessee, Lieutenant Davis resigned from the army and went to Kentucky, where he met and married Sarah Knox, the daughter of General Zachary Taylor, whom he had wooed when he was serving under her father at Fort Crawford on the upper Mississippi River.

This statement, based on the life of Davis written by his widow, and other authentic accounts, disposes of the romantic but wholly fictitious yarn that Davis and his bride eloped from Fort Gibson; equally apocryphal is a house nearby that formerly was pointed out by the credulous as the "Jeff Davis house," since during the period of scarcely more than a year that young Lieutenant Davis served there, he and the other members of the Dragoons did not live in a house but were quartered in tents half a mile from the fort.

At Fort Gibson were planned and launched other important military expeditions among the wild Indians to the west that made possible the negotiation of numerous essential treaties with these tribes. A number of picturesque Indian councils were held at the fort, with representatives of many tribes from large areas of the West and Southwest participating. These councils and negotiations exerted a profound influence over the country, and Fort Gibson became known far and wide as the source of important information concerning this remote country. The early newspapers of the East consequently carried a Fort Gibson date line more often than that of any other place west of the Mississippi. [16]

This ancient fort performed a multitude of other services in connection with the civilization of this western country. Through the years numerous military escorts were provided for the protection of parties engaged in

exploring meandering streams and surveying boundaries of the lands occupied by different Indian tribes, pursuant to treaties made from time to time. In the effort to prevent the introduction of whiskey into the Indian country, detachments frequently were sent out from the fort to seize shipments of that contraband or arrest and remove across the line whiskey peddlers who were engaged in this unlawful activity; others were employed either on land or in boats in patrolling the Arkansas River for the same purpose.

The commandant at the fort was frequently called upon by the authorities in Washington to aid parents or other relatives living in Texas in the rescue of children captured in raids by Kiowa and Comanche Indians. Emissaries were sent out to bring their captive children to the fort, where a ransom was effected and the children turned over to grateful relatives.

From several points of view Fort Gibson enjoyed a unique association with the growth of the army. In 1832 a call was made for six companies of mounted troops known as Rangers for service in the Black Hawk War in Illinois. Before the companies had all been recruited the orders were changed, and the Rangers were directed to proceed to Fort Gibson to aid in preparing that country for the reception of the tribes about to be emigrated from the East. The company commanded by Captain Jesse Bean was the first to reach the fort, and they went on the scouting tour, already mentioned, that was accompanied by Washington Irving.

The next year it was decided to discontinue the Ranger organization and merge the six companies with the regiment of Dragoons authorized that year by Congress. Major Henry Dodge headed this regiment, Major Stephen Watts Kearney was lieutenant colonel, and Captain Richard B. Mason was appointed major. Five companies were recruited and concentrated at Jefferson Barracks. After a proud send-off by the citizens of St. Louis, they departed for Fort Gibson where they arrived on December 17, 1834. They were not quartered in the fort but had their own reservation on land about half a mile south of it, and for a time lived in tents. This regiment began its distinguished service by the tragic expedition of that year which left so many of its members in unmarked graves along the route, and in the little cemeteries around the fort. They were accompanied by George Catlin, the artist, who not only painted many portraits of the Indians he saw, but wrote an interesting account of the experiences of the regiment. 17

One company of this regiment did not go on this celebrated expedition because it was engaged, under Captain Clifton Wharton, in escorting a company of traders on the Santa Fe Trail as far as the Spanish boundary. In the summer of 1836 three troops of the Dragoon regiment, with six companies of the Seventh Infantry, marched from Fort Gibson to Nachitoches to aid the Texans in resisting what was thought to be an impending attack by a large force of Mexicans. The peril did not materialize and the troops returned to Fort Gibson after an arduous campaign of several months involving a march of a month each way. During their absence, and due to an exaggerated alarm of war with Mexico; several hundred men in Arkansas were mustered in as volunteers and remained in camp at Fort Gibson for months.

Again, in 1837, a company under Captain Eustace Trenor escorted Colonel A. P. Chouteau to his trading house near the present Purcell, Oklahoma, where he called the wild Indians to a conference in an effort to counteract the machinations of the emissaries from Mexico and Texas who were trying to enlist them in their respective controversies.

And in 1839 a detachment of Dragoons commanded by Lieutenant James M. Bowman escorted the famous trading expedition headed by Dr. Josiah Gregg to the limits of the United States on the way to Santa Fe and Chihuahua. Captain Nathan Boone headed a command of Dragoons that left Fort Gibson May 14, 1843, and followed an interesting route over the Santa Fe Trail and through the country west of this post in order to afford protection to traders from Texas. The Dragoons continued to police the West until this service was interrupted by the Mexican War, in which it distinguished itself in several important battles. 18

Frequent reports came to Fort Gibson of the hostilities of the Plains Indians against the people of Texas, along with rumors that the Mexicans were aiding and abetting them. Requests were made for the authorities at Fort Gibson to aid in making peace with these Indians on both sides of the Red River. The Secretary of War directed this to be done and in March, 1843, Cherokee Agent Pierce Butler left the post, and with an escort attended a council on Tawakoni Creek in Texas, where, however, nothing definite was accomplished. Another effort was made in the fall when Butler was accompanied by eighty men commanded by Colonel Harney. Again the Indians were elusive and non-committal. The next summer in 1844, another effort was made when Captain Nathan Boone, with a company of the First Dragoons, left the post September 25 and went to the rendezvous in Texas; but the Indians had left when Boone arrived and he returned to Fort Gibson unsuccessful, after an absence of six weeks. A fourth attempt was made when in January, 1846, Governor Butler departed from Fort Gibson with a large company of civilian hunters and adventurers and representatives of the Creek, Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Seminole tribes. Butler was finally successful, and on May 15, 1846, at Council Springs, Texas, negotiated a treaty of peace with the Comanche, Anadarko, Caddo, Wichita, Waco, and other western tribes that brought a sense of security to the frontier settlers of Texas.

Officers and men went from Fort Gibson to take their places in the war with Mexico; the veteran commander Colonel Gustavus Loomis was the last high ranking officer to leave, when he departed in February, 1848, for his post in Mexico City. After that many war veterans who had seen service in Mexico became part of the military establishment at Fort Gibson.

Captain Braxton Bragg, who was to become a celebrated commander in the Confederate Army, arrived at Fort Gibson from St. Louis on October 31, 1853, at the head of Company C of the Third Artillery and assumed command of the post, which he retained until June 20 of the following year. 19

Indian hostilities were harassing a large extent of the surrounding country and Colonel Pitcairn Morrison was ordered out from Fort Gibson with three companies of the Seventh Infantry, numbering 235 officers and men.

They left in June and went out over the Santa Fe Trail in Kansas to Fort Mann and Bent's Fort, where Morrison held councils with the chiefs of the Kiowa, Comanche, Arapaho, Apache, and Cheyenne Indians. He then returned and arrived at Fort Gibson October 15. And so the policing of the western country from Fort Gibson went on and on.

Soon after Morrison's return, the post entertained the Second Cavalry just created by Congress, which was on its way to Fort Belknap, its station in Texas, to police that country against the Indians. They left Jefferson Barracks near St. Louis October 27, 1855, and a month later arrived at Fort Gibson, where they remained a few days to shoe their horses and give them a much needed rest. This regiment was commanded by Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston; other officers of the regiment were Colonel E. V. Sumner, Colonel J. E. Johnston, Colonel W. H. Emory, Delos B. Sackett, J. E. B. Stuart, and other men who became known to history. Colonel Robert E. Lee was second in command of the regiment, George H. Thomas was a major, Edmund Kirby Smith was a captain, and John B. Hood a lieutenant.

After the Mexican War the First Dragoons continued as regulators of the wild Indians throughout the West. On August 3, 1861, its designation was changed to the First United States Cavalry, and it served with distinction during the Civil War. For the next seventy-one years this veteran organization maintained its fine traditions. Less than two years ago, after a hundred years of service in the saddle, this organization ceased to exist as a mounted regiment and was removed by gas power from Marfa, Texas to Fort Knox, Kentucky.

Fort Gibson was a haven of refuge for many classes of people. When the emigration of the Creeks began in 1828 the first arrivals settled on the Verdigris and Arkansas rivers near the fort to enjoy the protection it afforded against the wild Indians occupying their lands to the west. [20]

In 1836 the remainder of the Creek Indians were forcibly removed from their homes in Alabama. After appalling suffering and many deaths on the way, their conductor brought them to Fort Gibson. Ten thousand of them, cold, destitute, and broken spirited, were encamped through the winter around the fort where they were given food enough to sustain life until spring, when they could be removed to the land intended for them. Later, when the Seminole Indians were brought as prisoners from their old home in Florida, they were landed from the boats at Fort Gibson. Several thousand of them were established in camps in this locality where rations were issued to them; some of them remained several years before they could be induced to remove to the lands intended for them. At one time a few hundred Seminole Negroes were located at the same place. They had surrendered to General Jesup in Florida, and claimed that they had been promised emancipation in return for their surrender. Some of the wealthier Seminoles claimed them as slaves, and they were retained in the custody of the garrison while their status was being investigated and determined by the authorities in Washington. They were employed in 1845 and 1846 in the construction of the stone buildings at the fort.

Some of the Creek immigrants who had ventured to locate on their lands in the more remote part of their country near the present site of Holdenville, in 1843 became involved with a band of Wichita Indians, four of whom were killed by the Creeks. A call for help was sent in to the settlements and a general alarm spread over the Creek country. The Creeks became panic stricken, and women and children came flocking into Fort Gibson. The Creek agent and some of the traders on the Verdigris also rushed to the post for protection. Captain Boone was sent with his company to the mouth of Little River and returned a week later with the report that the alarm was unfounded.

Fort Gibson was employed also as a base for the establishment of other garrisons; thus in 1833 Fort Smith was temporarily re-established by a detachment of the Seventh Infantry from Fort Gibson commanded by Captain John Stuart. Two years later this detachment was again removed up the river thirteen miles to make Fort Coffee, to which point a road was constructed from Fort Gibson. In 1838 they were removed from Fort Coffee to create, near the Arkansas line, an establishment called Fort Wayne, another subsidiary to Fort Gibson. In the summer of 1834, under the direction of General Leavenworth, Camp Arbuckle at the mouth of the Cimarron River and Fort Holmes at the mouth of Little River were established, and the necessary buildings erected by detachments of the Seventh Infantry sent out from Fort Gibson. [21]

In the spring of 1841 a detachment from Fort Gibson commanded by Captain B. D. Moore was dispatched to select a location for a fort on the Washita River; it was visited the next year by General Zachary Taylor who approved the site for the fort, which he named Fort Washita.

Details from Fort Gibson were engaged also in the construction of a number of important roads; thus in 1826 Captain Pierce M. Butler and Lieutenant James L. Dawson surveyed a military road from Fort Gibson to Fort Smith, the first planned road construction within the limits of the present Oklahoma. Other details built the road from the post to the site of Camp Arbuckle at the mouth of the Cimarron, and another to the mouth of the Washita River.

The unhealthful location of Fort Gibson and the appalling death rate there resulted in ceaseless agitation for the abandonment of the old log fort and the removal of the garrison to a more healthful situation. The people of Arkansas had never given up hope that the garrison might be returned to them. When they were admitted into the Union in 1836 they had sufficient influence to secure the passage of a bill by Congress providing for the removal of the post to that new state. A commission of army officers was appointed to select a new site but they definitely reported against the wisdom of changing the location of the fort which, they said, was greatly needed where it was; but they said that if it were to be removed, the site selected should be at Fort Coffee, still within the limits of the Indian Territory, about thirteen miles up the Arkansas River from Fort Smith. As this did not meet the wishes of the people of Arkansas the matter was dropped. [22]

It was necessary to make constant repairs on the decaying buildings; in 1843 a sawmill was set up at the post for cutting lumber with which to do this work, and a contract was let to Thomas Rogers for the delivery there of

2,000 pine logs which he was to cut on the Spavinaw and float down Grand River.

An order was made the next summer requiring all troops to appear on all parades and drills in white trousers, and in white jackets on all drills. First fatigue call was to be at 5:30 in the morning and guard mount an hour and a half later.

Continued agitation for the construction of more substantial quarters for the garrison resulted in an appropriation by Congress, and on July 17, 1845, General Thomas S. Jesup, quartermaster of the army, arrived at Fort Gibson to direct the construction of new buildings of stone on the hill above, and on the slope between it and the old log fort. Work on the new structures was soon started and by March 1846, a barracks for two companies had progressed above the second floor and timbers for both floors and piazzas were laid.

When the work had reached this stage it was stopped by the burning of the saw mill at the fort with the loss of mill, lumber, and tools. By 1855, the only building completed was the commissary, which is to be seen across the present street from the barracks. The walls of the partially constructed barracks stood for more than ten years, and still marked the unfinished plans of the army when the post was abandoned. The other structures of the fort at that time were principally log barracks, although a substantial number of those originally standing had been destroyed by a disastrous fire in December 1854.

The Cherokee people had been agitating for several years for the removal of Fort Gibson from their country in order that they might enjoy the use of the boat landing which was claimed to be the only good landing place giving access to the interior of the Cherokee Nation. Their argument was strengthened by the fact that, as the frontier had advanced, newer forts had supplanted Fort Gibson in usefulness and strategic location. [23]

The Cherokees were finally successful; the order to abandon the fort was issued June 8, 1857, and within the month was substantially executed. The fort and reservation were turned over to the Cherokee Nation, and the Cherokee Council, on November 6, 1857, passed an act creating the town of Kee-too-wah upon what had been the military reservation, and provided for the sale to Cherokee citizens of lots therein.

The Civil War brought further changes to the old fort. For a time in possession of the Confederate Army, it was afterwards regained by the Union side and on April 5, 1863, the whole hill was reoccupied by three Cherokee regiments, four companies of Kansas cavalry, and Hopkins' Battery of Volunteers, an aggregate of 3,150 men, with four field pieces and two mountain howitzers.

A main works embraced fifteen to twenty acres with angles and facings; from this extended a line of earthworks about a quarter of a mile in length, the whole defense being considered strong enough to resist a force of 20,000 men. To this work was, for a time, given the name of Fort Blunt, in compliment to Major General James G. Blunt, then commanding the district of the frontier.

General Blunt had made a forced march from Kansas to Fort Gibson and on the night of July 16, 1863, crossed the Arkansas River, proceeded down the Texas Road, and the next morning attacked the Confederate command under General Douglas H. Cooper at Honey Springs, near the site of the present Oktaha, south of Muskogee. By this engagement, the most important battle in the Indian Territory during the war, the Union forces succeeded in preventing a union of Cooper's forces with those of General William L. Cabell, coming from Fort Smith, and the probable recapture of Fort Gibson by the Confederates.

After this battle the strength of Fort Gibson was increased until on July 31 it aggregated 5,204, and on August 31 there were 6,014 troops at the garrison, with eighteen field pieces. Being the most important fortified point in the Territory, it served as headquarters for the military operations in this region during the remainder of the Civil War and played a conspicuous part in strengthening the hands of the loyal elements among the tribes. The name of Blunt was officially attached to the post until December 31, 1863, when it was dropped in favor of the old name, Fort Gibson. [24]

After the Union forces took possession of the fort it was surrounded by several thousand destitute Indian and Negro refugees who remained there for protection and for the food that was issued to them in small quantities. The multitude of people thus congregated presented a problem to the commandant. Some of them put in small crops under the protection of the guns of the fort; they would have gone farther away to their homes but for the fear that they would be raided by predatory bands from both sides, ranging over the country.

A detachment of regular troops from the first battalion of the Tenth United States Infantry in command of Major James M. Mulligan, on February 17, 1866, relieved the Sixty-second Illinois Volunteers then constituting the garrison. The post remained garrisoned under the name of Fort Gibson by four companies of the Sixth Infantry until September 30, 1871; it was then vacated by the command under General W. B. Hazen and broken up as a military post; there was left only a guard composed of a small detachment of the Sixth Infantry for the quartermaster's department, which temporarily occupied the post as a depot for such transportation and other facilities as were necessary to enable paymasters and other officers to communicate with Fort Sill.

Beginning with that of 1811, nearly all the classes of the United States Military Academy at West Point were represented among the more than one hundred graduates who were stationed at Fort Gibson from time to time prior to the Civil War. Every class after 1819 had from three to ten graduates who served in later years at that famous post. Many graduates were sent from West Point direct to Fort Gibson to get their first taste of army life and frontier experience. Eight of the class of 1842 came for their frontier service to this fort from whence they were engaged in protecting the Santa Fe traders. [25]

Except for short intervals, General Arbuckle commanded at Fort Gibson for 17 years until 1841 when, because of the dilapidated condition of the buildings there, he removed his department headquarters (but not the garrison), to Fort Smith. Soon afterward the command was given to General Zachary Taylor. When Taylor departed for

service in Mexico, Arbuckle was returned to the command of Fort Gibson and remained there through the years of trouble and turmoil of his Indian neighbors of the Cherokee Nation, with whom he was more or less involved.

Fort Gibson was garrisoned by detachments of the Seventh Infantry from its inception in 1824 to February 7, 1839, when the troops left for service in Florida and were replaced by the Fourth Infantry that had arrived the day before, after a long, weary march from that remote Seminole battleground. For a time three companies of the Third Infantry served at the fort until the spring of 1840. The next year General Arbuckle was relieved of his command and it was transferred for a time to Colonel Alexander Cummings of the Fourth Infantry.

In 1843 the post was garrisoned by three troops of Dragoons and four companies of the Sixth Infantry under the command of Colonel William Davenport. Another well-known officer who was in command of the post in 1850 was General W. G. Belknap of the Fifth Infantry. Belknap and Arbuckle died in 1851.

The conclusion of the Civil War returned Fort Gibson to the unimportant status to which it was reduced by its abandonment in 1857. For years, however, the large number of substantial buildings of the post were found useful from time to time. It was reoccupied in July, 1872, by two companies of the Tenth Cavalry under Colonel Benjamin H. Grierson who was sent there to cope with the lawless element attracted by the movement of the railroad camps engaged in building the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad from the Kansas line to the Red River.

After the brief stay of the Tenth Cavalry a company of the Sixth Cavalry and a detachment of the Fifth Infantry were assigned to the post to help police the country, with Lieutenant Thomas M. Woodruff of the Fifth Infantry in command. They were mainly occupied in aiding the Cherokee agent in resisting the encroachment of intruding white men unlawfully seeking to settle in the Cherokee Nation. In order to maintain communication with the outside world a telegraph line was constructed to the fort from the railroad at Gibson Station. Men engaged in cutting poles for the line were crossing the Grand River on a ferry flatboat on April 20, 1874, when in the middle of the river, by awkward handling of the front guy rope, the boat was allowed to swing broadside to the current; this caused it to fill with water and sink. As a result six soldiers of the Fifth Infantry and the Sixth Cavalry and one civilian drowned. [26]

Later, in 1879, a detachment of the Twenty-second Infantry under the command of Major A. S. Hough was stationed at the post endeavoring to aid the civilian authorities in suppressing a gang of forty or fifty thieves and desperadoes that had been plundering and terrorizing the country, particularly in the Chickasaw Nation and on the Potawatomi reservation. To this duty Hough had been ordered by General Sheridan.

During the Creek trouble of 1883, called the Green Peach War, part of the Twentieth Infantry was stationed at Fort Gibson and detachments were sent out to Muskogee, Eufaula, and Okmulgee to police the country. One detachment went to the Sac and Fox agency and captured several hundred Creeks who were brought to Fort Gibson where they were detained for a time and given protection from the hostile faction. The Adjutant General on August 22, 1890, issued a final order for the abandonment of the fort, directing the withdrawal of the troops and disposition of the public property there. In 1899, when the little disturbance greatly exaggerated by the name of the “Snake Uprising” caused some discussion, a company of the Ninth Infantry was for a short time stationed at the old post.

For a number of years the Cherokee agency was conducted at Fort Gibson, first by Montford Stokes, former governor of North Carolina, and by his successor, Pierce M. Butler, former governor of South Carolina, who left Fort Gibson to return to his home and organize the Palmetto Regiment which he was commanding in the Mexican War when he was killed August 20, 1847, at Churubusco. [27]

Even after the removal of the agency the old fort was the scene of amazing activities during some of the payments to the Cherokees, notably the payment of 1852 and that of 1894. These were festive occasions when there were nearly as many white men as Indians, come to take what advantage they might from the large amount of currency in circulation. Many of them were creditors of the Indians who had come to collect their dues; others were vendors of every conceivable sort of merchandise calculated to tempt the Indians to part with their suddenly acquired wealth. The payment of over a million dollars in 1894 was made in the old barracks building. The money was piled on a table in front of the clerks, while a dozen armed Indians stood guard on either side, and the Indians came up as their names were called and received their shares.

Among the many interesting visitors to Fort Gibson was the picturesque Sam Houston, who came in 1829 and established himself about three miles northwest of the post at a place which he called Wigwam Neosho. Here he was in close touch with the fort, the Creek agency, and the trading post on the Verdigris River an equal distance to the northwest, where he carried on his intrigues with the Indians, and drank and played poker with the army officers and traders. There he lived and enjoyed the solace of his pretty Cherokee companion, Diana Rogers, until 1832 when he left for his adventures in Texas. It may have been in a measure the recollection of Houston and his companionship that later influenced the movement of troops from Fort Gibson for the relief of beleaguered Texans.

One officer of outstanding interest who served at Fort Gibson was the Frenchman, B. L. E. Bonneville of the Seventh Infantry. In 1824, while he was a lieutenant, he secured a leave of absence and as secretary accompanied General Lafayette to France after his triumphal tour of the United States. Eight years later he secured another leave and made a protracted expedition in the Rocky Mountains. He kept voluminous notes of his experiences, which were purchased by Washington Irving who made them into the fascinating book, **The Adventures of Captain Bonneville**. [28]

In 1888 Colonel J. J. Coppinger of the Eighteenth Infantry was in command at Fort Gibson, and in March made an inventory of the buildings at the post together with a general description of them. He reported seven stone

buildings and ten frame, nearly all large, substantial buildings which ranged in condition from fair to good.

These buildings fell into private ownership and most of them were razed for the material that was in them. Four of the stone buildings are standing. The barracks was originally 23 by 154 feet in size, containing ten rooms for the accommodation of two companies of Infantry. The north half of this building was torn down and the material used in the construction of a house.

The Oklahoma Historical Society purchased the remaining south half of the barracks building, the stone ammunition building, and the great brick oven, together with the land on which they stand. Considerable money was expended in the restoration of these buildings, and the barracks building is now occupied by a custodian and his family who will show the place to visitors. The most picturesque exhibit at Fort Gibson is the reconstructed log stockade built on the site of the first log fort. This work was directed by a commission created by the State of Oklahoma.

The best-preserved relic of the old fort is the commanding officer's residence, facing what was the parade ground of the fort. Colonel William Babcock Hazen came to command the fort in January 1871. He brought there his bride who, as his widow, was later to become the wife of the Spanish-American hero, Admiral George Dewey. Lieutenant Colonel John Joseph Coppinger, commandant of the fort, occupied the building in 1886 with his family. James G. Blaine, father of Mrs. Coppinger, visited his daughter in this residence and was confined there at one time by illness. The cornerstone of the building bears the inscription: "Erected A. D. 1867, A. S. Kimball, Capt. A. Q. M. U. S." 29

The story of Fort Gibson is an epic of the prairies; a tale of the winning of the great Southwest; an account of the conquest of the fleet warriors of the plains; a narrative of the security of trade and contact with old Santa Fe and California. Fort Gibson saw the beginning and the end of the keelboat and the whole career of the river steamboat.

Unknown to the present generation, the old fort and the few relics of that venerable establishment that have escaped the hand of the vandal should still have a claim on our consideration. Around them cluster associations with the past and reminders of early attempts at the civilization of this western country. The activities of this frontier post, the toil and hardship, sickness and death endured there, the picturesqueness of its population, the pageantry of its activities and functions—all these are calculated to stir the imagination of the beholder and stimulate in him an interest in the fascinating history of this country.

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APPENDIX I
National Cemetery

There were several small cemeteries around Fort Gibson in which the dead were buried from the earliest days of the fort. The number of interments was increased to such an extent during the Civil War that more space was required, and in 1869 the National Cemetery was established on land that was originally part of the military reservation of Fort Gibson. After the abandonment of the fort, the reservation was transferred to the Department of the Interior on February 11, 1891, a parcel of seven acres being reserved for cemeterial purposes.

On August 6, 1872, William W. Belknap, Secretary of War, gave instructions to have the remains of his father, General William Goldsmith Belknap, removed from Fort Washita, where they were interred in 1851, to the cemetery at Keokuk, Iowa, the home of the Secretary. At the same time he directed the quartermaster general to arrange for the removal of the remains of other soldiers and their families found at Fort Washita, Fort Towson and Fort Arbuckle, to the National Cemetery at Fort Gibson. Bids were advertised for, and a contract was let to P. J. Byrne of Fort Gibson, who succeeded in removing the remains of forty-six persons in 1872; only two of them, however, were definitely known to be soldiers. Owing to the careless manner in which the men who served at these remote posts had been buried, and the fact that fires had been permitted to run through the cemeteries and burn off all wooden headboards, and the difficulty of finding other marks of identification in the graves, or indeed, of finding the remains and the boxes containing them in such condition that they could be removed at all, instructions were given to abandon further removal. However, information was later acquired of forty-six additional graves at Fort Washita: fifty-four at Fort Arbuckle, and eighteen at Big Sandy Creek on the Fort Smith and Fort Arbuckle road. Efforts were then renewed, and another contractor undertook to remove the remains to the Fort Gibson National Cemetery but this effort proved abortive also.

In 1873 it was reported to the office of the Adjutant General at Washington that the bodies of one hundred and twenty-five soldiers killed in the Battle of the Washita were buried on that battlefield. This again stimulated interest in the subject of removal, and the visitor will see in the Officers' Circle in the National Cemetery the grave of Major Joel H. Elliott of the Seventh Infantry, killed on November 27, 1868, at the Battle of the Washita. 31

The removal of remains from all these burial places was attended with much difficulty because of the lack of identifying marks. It was impossible to determine whether they were removing soldiers or civilians, and the whole undertaking was attended with much confusion. It appeared that during the Civil War a large number of Confederates died and were buried near Fort Washita. The correspondence relating to the subject would indicate that removal of the dead from this cemetery was limited to those known to have been in the service of the Union Army, and the Confederate dead were probably not disturbed.

The result was summarized in a report of December 31, 1893, which accounted for graves in the National Cemetery at Fort Gibson, of 231 known to be soldiers and 2,212 whose identity and service were unknown. Of the

comparatively few who are identified by inscriptions on monuments, the greatest number are to be seen within what is known as the Officers' Circle. Among these is Flora, the young Cherokee wife of Lieutenant Daniel H. Rucker, who died at Fort Gibson June 26, 1845. Her husband survived her to become in later years Quartermaster General of the United States Army. John Decatur, brother of Stephen Decatur, died on November 12, 1832, while a sutler at Fort Gibson. Lieutenant John W. Murray of the West Point Class of 1830, of the Seventh Infantry, was killed on February 14, 1831, by being thrown from his horse. Murray's classmate, Lieutenant James West, died at Fort Gibson on September 28, 1834.

On May 27, 1831, Lieutenant Frederick Thomas of the Seventh Infantry, a West Point graduate of 1825, was drowned in the Arkansas River. His classmate, Lieutenant Benjamin W. Kinsman, also of the Seventh Infantry, died May 14, 1832. Lieutenant Thomas C. Brockway, a graduate of West Point of the class of 1828, died at Fort Gibson, September 28, 1831. Among those removed from Fort Towson were West Point graduates of the class of 1826, Lieutenants Charles L. C. Minor and Alexander G. Baldwin, both of the Fifth Infantry, who died at Fort Towson in 1833 and 1835 respectively, and Lieutenant James H. Taylor of the Third Infantry, who was drowned near Fort Towson in the Cositot River, in 1835. Also in the Officers' Circle is the monument of Captain Billy Bowlegs, the celebrated Seminole warrior, who served in the Union Army and died during the Civil War, and who is buried in another part of the cemetery.

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General John Nicks (also buried in this cemetery) acquired his title from the appointment, by the Governor of Arkansas Territory, as commanding general of the Arkansas militia. He was later sutler at Fort Gibson, where he died December 31, 1831. He was survived by his widow, Sallie Nicks, who continued to "sutle" at the post. Sallie was a popular young widow whose charms were enhanced by the fact that the estate left by the General was valued at $20,000. When Washington Irving visited the post in 1832, he recorded in his notebook that several of the officers at the post paid court to her, and the quartermaster serenaded her so often and so vigorously that he disturbed the sleep of others, and made himself a good deal of a nuisance in the post. According to Irving, General William Clark and Colonel Arbuckle were both fascinated by the young widow, and a civilian named Lewis paid such ardent court that all of the officers united against him.

Sutlers were licensed to do business in the post, and there was considerable rivalry for the privilege, as the profits were tempting. At one time Sam Houston was an aspirant for the position of sutler at Fort Gibson. During his absence in the East on a political mission, he heard that General Nicks was to be removed from his post as sutler, and on his way back to Fort Gibson he wrote a letter to the Secretary of War, making application for the post. Houston was returning with a keelboat load of supplies for Wigwam Neosho, his little store northwest of Fort Gibson. They included nine barrels of whiskey, brandy, gin, rum, wine and other goods with which he meant to stock the sutler's store he intended to take over if Nick's removal should pave the way for his appointment. However, after arriving at Fort Gibson and learning of the gossip said to have emanated from Washington concerning him, he indignantly withdrew his application with an excoriating letter to the Secretary of War, obviously written while he was drunk.

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To one who wonders what care the soldiers at Fort Gibson took of their personal appearance, a long inventory of merchandise in the sutler's store at Fort Gibson in 1845 will be illuminating. The following is about one-sixth of the total list. It was submitted to the commandant for the purpose of establishing the prices at which these articles might be sold to the soldiers:

Cigars, shaving boxes, round shaving soap, transparent soap, flotant soap, chrystalline wash balls, whisker pomatum, spontaneous compound, oleophane, bear's oil, philocome, fancy soap, perfume boxes, fancy cologne water, round cologne water, farina cologne water, prevost cologne water, red and white powder, sweeping brush, clamp brush, horse brush, shoe brush, counter brush, hat brush, hair brush, wall brush, cloth brush, shaving brush, teeth brush, ivory brush, nail brush, violin strings, razor strops, mirrors, shirt butts, cotton purses, silk purses, pencil cases, whalebone, suspenders, snuff boxes, necklaces, fishing lines, guard chains, flasks, thimbles, court plaisters, hooks and eyes, silk guards, pocket combs, English combs, dressing combs.

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APPENDIX II

List of officers who commanded at Fort Gibson, with beginning date of service; graduates of United States Military Academy, West Point, are indicated by year of graduation following name. Names of temporary commanding officers are indented.

	From	To
Colonel Matthew Arbuckle, 7th Infantry	Apr. 1824	Feb. 6, 1839
Major Alex Cummings, 7th Infantry	Apr. 24, 1825	Aug. 1825
Lieutenant Colonel James B. Many, 7th Infantry	Aug. 1825	Sept. 6, 1825
Captain John Philbrick, 7th Infantry	Sept. 1825	Oct. 1825
Captain Benjamin L. E. Bonneville, 7th Infantry, 1815	Apr. 1828	May 1828
Captain N. G. Wilkinson, 7th Infantry	Feb. 6, 1829	Apr. 20, 1829
Captain N. G. Wilkinson, 7th Infantry	Mar. 26, 1830	Apr. 23, 1830
Captain N. G. Wilkinson, 7th Infantry	Oct. 14,1830	Nov. 1830
Lieutenant Colonel J. B. Many, 7th Infantry	Feb. 1, 1832	July 7, 1832
Lieutenant Colonel J. B. Many, 7th Infantry	May 15, 1834	Sept. 30, 1834
Major Sullivan Burbank, 7th Infantry	Oct. 1, 1834	Nov. 4, 1834
Lieutenant Colonel William Whistler, 7th Infantry	Aug. 6, 1835	Sept. 10, 1835
Lieutenant Colonel William Whistler, 7th Infantry	Apr. 20, 1836	May 5, 1836

Lieutenant Colonel William Whistler, 7th Infantry	May 11, 1837	Sept. 13, 1837
Major C. Wharton, 1st Dragoons	Sept. 14, 1837	Oct. 23, 1837
Major J. S. McIntosh, 7th Infantry	June 15, 1838	Aug. 1838
Captain E. S. Hawkins, 7th Infantry 1820	Aug. 1838	Sept. 1838
Major J. S. McIntosh, 7th Infantry	Sept. 1838	Jan. 28, 1839
Lieutenant Colonel William Whistler, 7th Infantry	Jan. 29, 1839	Feb. 6, 1839
Major Bennett Riley, 4th Infantry	Feb. 7, 1839	Apr. 1839
Colonel Enos Cutler, 4th Infantry	Apr. 1839	Jan. 1840
Major B. Riley, 4th Infantry	June 21, 1839	Jan. 17, 1840
Colonel & Brevet Brigadier General M. Arbuckle, 7th Infantry	Jan. 18, 1840	Feb. 4, 1840
Colonel Alexander Cummings, 4th Infantry	Jan. 1840	Aug. 1841
Major Clifton Wharton, 1st Dragoons	Feb. 6, 1840	Feb. 16, 1840
Lieutenant Colonel Riley, 2nd Infantry	Feb. 17, 1840	Feb. 24, 1840
Major C. Wharton	Feb. 25, 1840	Mar. 3, 1840
Colonel & Brevet Brigadier General Arbuckle	Apr. 10, 1841	May 7, 1841
Lieutenant Colonel J. Garland, 4th Infantry	May 27, 1841	June 19, 1841
Lieutenant Colonel R. B. Mason, 1st Dragoons	June 20, 1841	Aug. 1841
Lieutenant Colonel R. B. Mason, 1st Dragoons	Aug. 1841	Apr. 28, 1842
Colonel S. W. Kearney, 1st Dragoons	Apr. 29, 1842	July 3, 1842
Lieutenant Colonel R. B. Mason, 1st Dragoons	July 4, 1842	Oct. 7, 1842
Captain Jacob Brown, 6th Infantry	Oct. 8, 1842	Jan. 16, 1843
Major Clifton Wharton, 1st Dragoons	Jan. 17, 1843	Jan. 31, 1843
Colonel William Davenport, 6th Infantry	Feb. 1, 1843	Sept. 17, 1843
Lieutenant Colonel R. B. Mason, 1st Dragoons	Sept. 18, 1843	Dec. 17, 1843
Captain W. S. Ketchum, 6th Infantry	Sept. 20, 1843	Sept. 26, 1843
Captain N. Boone, 1st Dragoons	Sept. 27, 1843	Dec. 17, 1843
Lieutenant Colonel Gustavus Loomis, 6th Infantry, 1811	Dec. 18, 1843	June 19, 1844
Lieutenant Colonel R. B. Mason, 1st Dragoons	June 20, 1844	Feb. 27, 1846
Captain Nathan Boone, 1st Dragoons	May 30, 1845	Aug. 13, 1845
Captain Albemarle Cady, 6th Infantry, 1829	Feb. 26, 1846	Mar. 27, 1846
Lieutenant Colonel Gustavus Loomis, 6th Infantry, 1811	Mar. 28, 1846	Feb. 24, 1848
Captain A. Cady, 1829	Apr. 30, 1846	May 26, 1846
Major B. L. E. Bonneville, 6th Infantry	Feb. 26, 1848	Nov. 4, 1848
Captain E. Steen, 1st Dragoons	June 16, 1848	July 25, 1848
Captain William S. Ketchum, 6th Infantry	July 26, 1848	Nov. 4, 1848
Major Dixon S. Miles, 5th Infantry, 1824	Nov. 5, 1848	Dec. 18, 1848
Captain C. L. Stevenson, 5th Infantry, 1838	Dec. 1, 1848	Dec. 18, 1848
Lieutenant Colonel & Brevet Brigadier General William G. Belknap, 5th Infantry	Dec. 19, 1848	May 14, 1851
Captain Isaac Lynde, 5th Infantry, 1827	Dec. 8, 1849	Jan. 6, 1850
Captain Isaac Lynde, 5th Infantry, 1827	Feb. 22, 1850	Mar. 17, 1850
Captain Isaac Lynde, 5th Infantry, 1827	May 12, 1850	June 8, 1850
Captain William Chapman, 5th Infantry, 1831	June 9, 1850	July 16, 1850
Major Henry Bainbridge, 7th Infantry, 1821	May 15, 1851	July 26, 1851
Captain Henry Little, 7th Infantry	July 5, 1851	July 26, 1851
Major George Andrews, 7th infantry	July 27, 1851	Oct. 5, 1852
Captain Henry Little, 7th Infantry	Oct. 6, 1852	Oct. 30, 1853
Captain Charles H. Humber, 7th Infantry, 1840	Jan. 15, 1853	July 27, 1853
Captain Braxton Bragg, 3rd Artillery, 1837	Oct. 31, 1853	Dec. 1, 1853
Lieutenant Colonel Pitcairn Morrison, 7th Infantry	Dec. 2, 1853	May 7, 1855
Colonel Henry Wilson, 7th Infantry	May 8, 1855	June 22, 1857
Captain Henry Little, 7th Infantry	Feb. 16, 1856	Apr. 2, 1856
Lieutenant Colonel P. Morrison, 7th Infantry	Apr. 3, 1856	June 21, 1856
Captain Henry Little, 7th Infantry	May 21, 1857	June 22, 1857
Lieutenant W. L. Cabell, 7th Infantry, A. Q. M., 1850	June 23, 1857	Sept. 1857
Colonel William A. Phillips, 3rd Indian Home Guards	Apr. 14, 1863	June 1863
Major General James G. Blunt, Volunteers	July 1863	
Colonel Wm. A. Phillips, 3rd Indian Home Guards	Nov. 1863	July 1864
Colonel Stephen H. Wattles, Hq. Indian Brigade	Aug. 1864	
Colonel James M. Williams, Frontier Div. (Hq. 2d Brig.) 7th Army Corps	Sept. 1864	
Colonel Wattles	Sept. 1864	Nov. 1864
Colonel Phillips	Dec. 1864	Mar. 1865
Major General James G. Blunt	May 1865	
Brevet Brigadier General John Ritchie, 3rd Indian Home Guards	May 11, 1865	June 15, 1865
Major General Blunt	May 11, 1865	June 15, 1865
Colonel John A. Garrett, 40th Iowa Volunteers	June 15, 1865	Aug. 3, 1865
Lieutenant Colonel Lewis C. True, 62nd Illinois Volunteers	Aug. 4, 1865	Nov. 1865
Captain E. M. Jordan, 62nd Illinois Volunteers	Nov. 1865	Dec. 1865

Lieutenant Colonel Lewis C. True, 62nd Illinois Volunteers	Jan. 1866	Feb. 17, 1866
Captain James B. Mulligan, 18th Infantry	Feb. 18, 1866	Mar. 1, 1866
Major Pinkney, Lugenbeel, 18th Infantry, 1840	Mar. 1, 1866	May 1867
Captain Robert Ayres, 19th Infantry	May 1867	June 19, 1867
Captain M. Bryant, 6th Infantry	June 20, 1867	Nov. 3, 1867
Colonel DeL. Floyd-Jones, 6th Infantry, 1846	Nov. 4, 1867	May 1868
Captain M. Bryant, 6th Infantry	Jan. 20, 1868	May 1, 1868
Captain M. Bryant, 6th Infantry	May 1868	Feb. 26, 1869
Colonel DeL. Floyd-Jones, 6th Infantry, 1846	Feb. 27, 1869	Apr. 1869
Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Huston, Jr., 6th Infantry, 1848	Apr. 24, 1869	Jan. 29, 1871
Captain Jeremiah P. Schindel, 6th Infantry	Aug. 8, 1869	Sept. 25, 1869
Captain Jeremiah P. Schindel, 6th Infantry	Oct. 27, 1869	Nov. 20, 1869
Lieutenant Jacob F. Munson, 6th Infantry	Aug. 22, 1870	Sept. 4, 1870
Colonel William B. Hazen, 6th Infantry, 1855	Jan. 30, 1871	Sept. 30, 1871
Captain Jeremiah P Schindel	July 26, 1871	Aug. 29, 1871
Captain William W. Sanders, 6th Infantry	Aug. 30, 1871	Sept. 3, 1871
Post re-established G. O. 1, Headquarters, Fort Gibson, July 31, 1872.		
Colonel Benjamin H. Grierson, 10th Cavalry	July 31, 1872	Jan. 5, 1873
Captain Gaines Lawson, 25th Infantry	Oct. 29, 1872	Nov. 11, 1872
Captain Gaines Lawson, 25th Infantry	Jan. 5, 1873	Feb. 23, 1873
Lieutenant Colonel J. W. Davidson, 10th Cavalry, 1845	Feb. 24, 1873	Apr. 20, 1873
Captain John J. Upham, 6th Cavalry, 1859	Apr. 21, 1873	Sept. 6, 1873
Captain Andrew S. Bennett, 5th Infantry	June 30, 1873	July 5, 1873
Lieutenant Colonel Thomas H. Neill, 6th Cavalry, 1847	Sept. 7, 1873	Aug. 6, 1874
Lieutenant Thomas M. Woodruff, 5th Infantry, 1871	Aug. 7, 1874	Sept. 7, 1875
Major J. J. Upham, 5th Cavalry	Sept. 8, 1875	June 6, 1876
Lieutenant Edward L. Randall, 5th Infantry	June 7, 1876	July 14, 1876
Captain Edmond Butler, 5th Infantry	July 15,1876	Aug. 6, 1876
Lieutenant George McDermott, 5th Infantry	Aug. 7, 1876	Oct. 18, 1876
Lieutenant Lewis Smith, 3rd Artillery	Oct. 19, 1876	Dec. 26, 1876
Captain R. I. Eskridge, 23rd Infantry	Dec. 27, 1876	June 14, 1877
Captain Caleb Rodney Layton, 16th Infantry	June 15, 1877	May 18, 1879
Major A. L. Hough, 22d Infantry	May 19, 1879	Oct. 3, 1879
Captain C. J. Dickey, 22d Infantry	July 29, 1879	Aug. 5, 1879
Second Lieutenant John G. Ballance, 22d Infantry, 1875	Oct. 4, 1879	Jan. 31, 1880
Second Lieutenant John Newton, 16th Infantry	Feb. 1, 1880	Mar. 5, 1880
Captain Hugh A. Theaker, 16th Infantry	Mar. 6, 1880	Mar. 28, 1880
Second Lieutenant W. A. Nichols, 23rd Infantry	Oct. 1880	Nov. 13, 1880
Major R. H. Offley, 19th Infantry	Nov. 14, 1880	Nov. 1, 1881
Lieutenant Thomas M. Winie, 19th Infantry	Apr. 25, 1881	May 10, 1881
Lieutenant John G. Leete, 19th Infantry	Sept. 26, 1881	Oct. 16, 1881
Lieutenant A. H. M. Taylor, 19th Infantry	Nov. 2, 1881	Nov. 12, 1881
Captain J. C Bates, 20th Infantry	Nov. 13, 1881	May 14, 1885
Captain A. A. Harbach, 20th Infantry	July 9, 1882	Oct. 31, 1882
Second Lieutenant J. A. Ivans, 20th Infantry	Mar. 21, 1883	May 11, 1883
Captain Patrick Cusack, 9th Cavalry	Sept. 29, 1883	Oct. 19, 1883
Captain A. A. Harbach	Mar. 22, 1884	Apr. 14, 1884
Captain William S. McCaskey, 20th Infantry	July 26, 1884	Aug. 4, 1884
Captain Harbach	Aug. 5, 1884	Oct. 5, 1884
Captain Harbach	Jan. 31, 1885	Mar. 2, 1885
Captain Harbach	Apr. 30, 1885	May 8, 1885
Lieutenant W. H. W. James, 24th Infantry, 1872	May 14, 1885	June 13, 1885
Captain Birney B. Keeler, 18th Infantry	June 14, 1885	Sept. 15, 1885
Captain Carroll H. Potter, 18th Infantry, 1857	Sept. 16, 1885	Oct. 1, 1886
Lieutenant Colonel John J. Coppinger, 18th Infantry	Oct. 2, 1886	July 17, 1888
Captain Henry H. Adams, 18th Infantry	June 8, 1888	July 17, 1888
Captain Henry H. Adams, 18th Infantry	July 17, 1888	Dec. 9, 1888
Captain Carroll H. Potter, 18th Infantry 1857	Dec. 10, 1888	Sept. 5, 1889
Captain H. H. Adams	Sept 6, 1889	Oct. 2, 1889
Captain Jeremiah P. Schindel, 6th Infantry	Oct. 1, 1889	Sept. 22, 1890

Post finally abandoned September 22, 1890.

Camp at Fort Gibson

	From	To

Captain Jacob G. Galbraith, 1st Cavalry, 1877	Apr. 6, 1897	July 18, 1897
Major Albert G. Forse, 1st Cavalry, 1865	July 19, 1897	Oct. 19, 1897
Captain Herbert E. Tutherly, 1st Cavalry, 1872	Oct. 20, 1897	Nov. 1897

“This command is now, October 31, in tents on the old parade ground at Fort Gibson, the old buildings being uninhabitable.”

Camp at Fort Gibson

	From	To
Captain T. Q. Donaldson, Jr., 8th Cavalry, 1887	Apr. 7, 1901	Sept. 20, 1901
Squadron Adjutant A. G. Lott, 3rd Cavalry, 1892	Sept. 21, 1901	Nov. 19, 1901

Transcriber’s Notes

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