

FORT ATKINSON, IOWA.

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
WASHINGTON, August 28, 1899.

Mr. Charles Aldrich, Historical Department of Iowa, Des Moines, Iowa:

SIR:—In reply to your letter of the 16th instant, I have the honor to enclose a brief sketch of the establishment, occupation and abandonment of old Fort Atkinson, located on Turkey River in about latitude 42.10 and longitude 15.02 in what is now Winneshiek county, Iowa, compiled from records of this office. A plan together with a sketch of the old post as it appeared in 1842, made by Lieut. A. W. Reynolds, 1st Infantry, is sent you this date under another cover.

Very respectfully,

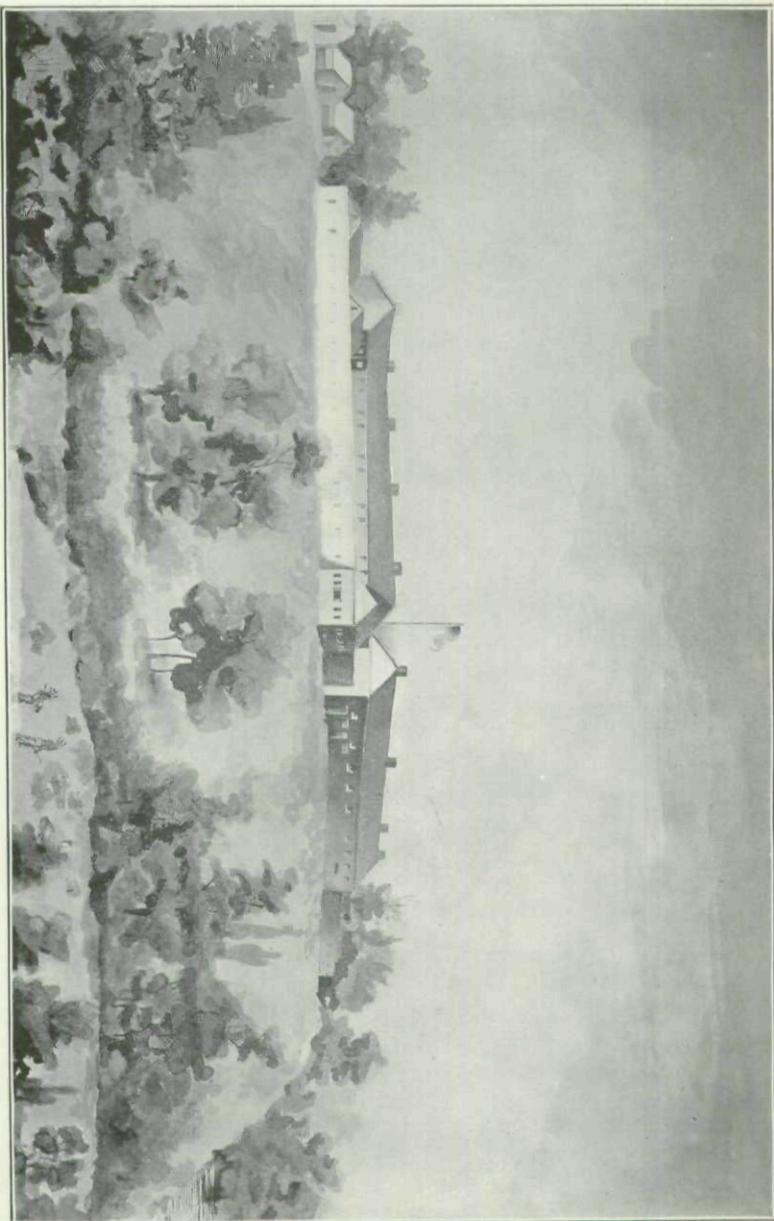
WM. H. CARTER,
Assistant Adjutant General.

In the spring of 1840 it being deemed expedient to remove the Winnebago Indians to a site on the Turkey River which had been reserved for them the army was directed to superintend the migration. Brigadier General Henry Atkinson, then in command of the First Department, Western Division of the Army, in correspondence addressed to the Adjutant General of the Army outlines the measures taken to peaceably effect this movement.

HEADQUARTERS FIRST DEPARTMENT, WESTERN DIVISION OF THE ARMY,
FORT CRAWFORD, 3d May, 1840.

SIR:—I have the honor to report for the information of the General-in-Chief and the Honorable the Secretary of War, the result of my operations here, since the date of my official letter of the 25th ultimo.

The last two days have been employed in counciling with a full deputation of the bands of the Winnebagoes residing on this river, joined by a small number of Chiefs from the bands of the Portage of Wisconsin. The result is a peaceable movement of the bands of this river, to the neutral ground west of the river; all but one band have already emigrated, who will go without difficulty. With regard to the Portage Bands, the small deputation from them, who attended the recent council here, promise to commence to emigrate in three weeks from this time. I have some doubts of their sincerity, and Yellow Thunder and Little Soldier, the principal chiefs in that quarter having refused to attend the council, we may yet have a good deal of trouble to enforce their removal, none, however, I am of opinion, that cannot be overcome without bloodshed, which shall not be resorted to unless they commence hostilities. The presence of the 8th Regiment and 300 men of the 5th Regiment among them will doubtless prevent an occurrence so desperate and futile in its results.



FORT ATKINSON, WINNEBAGO COUNTY, IOWA.
This cut was reproduced from an original drawing on file in the office of the Adjutant General of the Army,
War Department, Washington, D. C.

Having now arranged everything with the Indians here, and as to locating the garrison west, on the neutral ground for their protection, I shall proceed in ten days or a fortnight to Fort Winnebago with the disposable force here, when I expect the 8th will have arrived, and proceed at once to removing all the Winnebago Bands in that quarter.

The letter of the Honorable the Secretary of War of 7th ultimo, accompanied by a copy of a communication from the Honorable Mr. Doty to him, has been received—also a copy of a letter from the General-in-Chief to Colonel Worth relative to his movement with his Regiment to Winnebago.

With great respect, Sir, I have the honor to be your most obedient servant.

(Signed) H. ATKINSON,

Brigadier General U. S. Army.

BRIGADIER GENERAL R. JONES,

Adjutant General U. S. Army, Washington.

In order to protect these Indians, in their new home, from the incursions of their neighbors, among whom were the Sac and Fox tribes, as well as from intrusions of the whites, and in turn to prevent them from trespassing beyond the limits of the reservation, a detachment of the 5th Infantry (Company F) under command of Captain Isaac Lynde left Fort Crawford, with a complement of eighty-two officers and enlisted men, and went into camp, May 31, 1840, at a point on the Turkey River, about three-fourths of a mile from the mouth of Spring Creek, Latitude $42^{\circ} 10' N.$ and Longitude $15^{\circ} 2' W.$ of Washington, in what is now Winnesaukee county. The camp was named "Camp Atkinson" in honor of the Department Commander. Barracks and quarters sufficient to accommodate one company were erected and in March of the following year the Secretary of War ordered that the station be known as Fort Atkinson in honor of Brigadier General Henry Atkinson, U. S. Army.

With the advent of the year of 1841 well developed rumors of the warlike attitude of a portion of the Sac and Fox Indians who it was believed intended sending out a party against the peaceable Winnebagoes caused Governor Dodge of Wisconsin, in a letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, dated Madison, Wisconsin Territory, January 23, 1841, to strongly urge, in addition to the present garri-

son at that time, the stationing of a mounted force at Fort Atkinson to protect the Winnebagoes and to turn back to their proper locality any marauding bands.

EXTRACT FROM GOVERNOR DODGE'S LETTER.

In compliance with the instructions of your Department the Agency and School have been removed to the new site on Turkey River with about seven hundred of the Indians of the Winnebago Nation. These Indians, it is confidently expected, will not return, unless another blow should be struck by the Sacs and Foxes. Such an event may not be looked for this winter, but it is the opinion of Mr. Lowry that it may certainly be calculated upon in the ensuing spring unless a mounted force should be stationed at Camp Atkinson.

Information was received by Mr. Lowry through Governor Lucas, obtained from a portion of the Sacs and Foxes not unfriendly to the Winnebagoes, that a war party was to have set out against the latter in November last. A very extraordinary snow storm is believed to have prevented this attack. The war party is now on Red Cedar (fifty miles west of Camp Atkinson); a large body of Sioux are also in that vicinity, and scouts of the former have been fired at by the latter but as yet no blood has been shed. The difficulty of keeping the Winnebagoes at their new homes, under these circumstances, and without an adequate force for their protection, must be readily seen.

This letter was referred to the War Department where it was in turn referred to General Atkinson with instructions to use every effort to prevent any collision between the Indians. General Atkinson responded to these instructions in a letter from Jefferson Barracks, dated March 1, 1841, as follows:

SIR:—I have the honor to report, that I have received your letter of instructions of the 15th ultimo, accompanied by an extract of a letter from Governor Dodge of the 23d of January, in reference to establishing a mounted force at Fort Atkinson for the protection of the Winnebago Indians. It is impossible to station a mounted force at that point before the middle of May, as there are no barracks, quarters or stables for their accommodation, nor forage for their horses. I will, however, order the troop at Fort Crawford to make excursions through the country of Turkey and Cedar Rivers, till the season opens to enable it to go under tents, at which time, the grass will be grown sufficiently to subsist the horses.

No time should be lost by the Quartermaster's Department in proceeding to erect quarters, barracks and stables for the troop at the post on Turkey River, or, they will not be ready for their accommodation by the

coming of the next winter. I request, therefore, that orders to that effect may be given without delay.

With great respect, Sir, Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) H. ATKINSON,

BRIGADIER GENERAL JONES,

Brigadier General U. S. Army.

Adjutant General U. S. Army, Washington.

On the 24th of June following Company B of the 1st Dragoons arrived at the Fort and took up their station and from that time until 1847 the Fort was a two company post. On September 11 Captain Lynde's company was relieved by Company K of the 1st Infantry, Captain J. J. Abercrombie.

In the year following, at various times, on the requisition of Governor Chambers of Iowa Territory, detachments and patrols were sent out from this fort to remove squatters and other intruders from the lands of the Sac and Fox Indians and to prevent their return. On August 7 Company I, 1st Dragoons, under Command of Captain James Allen, arrived at the Fort from whence they proceeded to the Sac and Fox Agency where they established Fort Sanford.

From this time until its abandonment Fort Atkinson was successively garrisoned by the following organizations:

Company B, 1st Infantry, Captain Sidney Burbank; Company A, 1st Infantry, Captain Osborne Cross; Company E, 1st Infantry, Captain A. S. Miller; Company A, 1st Iowa Volunteer Infantry, Captain James M. Morgan; Company A, 1st Iowa Volunteer Dragoons, Captain John Parker; a detachment of Wisconsin Volunteers, Dodge Guards, under command of Lieutenant Benjamin Fox; (here was an interim of several months during which the Fort was not garrisoned) and from September 25, 1848, until the time of its abandonment by Company C, 6th Infantry, Captain F. L. Alexander.

On February 24th, 1849, the post was finally abandoned and turned over to the Secretary of the Interior for disposition January 10, 1851. In the letter of the Secretary of War to the Secretary of the Interior the reservation is described as containing 1,920 acres, and consisting of sections 8 and 17 and the east half of sections 7 and 18 in township

96 north of range 9 west of the 5th principal meridian. This land was finally disposed of under the provisions of the acts of Congress of July 30, 1856, and June 7, 1860.

So interwoven with national events are the names of officers who at various times served at Fort Atkinson, that to attempt to give, with any degree of completeness or particularity, a history of their lives and services would be to detail the story of our western frontier, its extension and the attendant efforts of a comparatively small and well scattered army to properly maintain peace and order, of the Mexican War, with its arduous campaigns and brilliant successes, and of that later and more terrific struggle, the War of the Rebellion, wherein many of these officers won fame and distinction.

Of the officers who served at this post, six, viz.: Captain John J. Abercrombie and Lieutenants Schuyler Hamilton, John H. King and Joseph B. Plummer, of the 1st Infantry, and Captain E. V. Sumner and Lieutenant Alfred Pleasonton, of the 1st Dragoons, attained the rank of general officers in the United States army in the Civil War.

Assistant Surgeon William S. King was retired as an Assistant Surgeon General. Captain Osborne Cross of the 1st Infantry was transferred to the Quartermaster's Department and became Assistant Quartermaster General with the rank of Colonel. Captain Sidney Burbank of the 1st Infantry commanded his regiment, 2d U. S. Infantry, during the War of the Rebellion and was breveted for gallantry.

Lieutenants Simon B. Buckner and Henry Heth of the 6th, and Abraham Buford and Alexander W. Reynolds of the 1st Infantry, resigned their commissions at the outbreak of the Civil War and became general officers in the Confederate service. Assistant Surgeon Charles H. Smith served in the medical department of the Confederate army.

ORDERS NO. 9.

HEADQUARTERS 6TH MILITARY DEPARTMENT,
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, FEBRUARY 10th, 1849.

In pursuance of General Orders No. 3, of the 23d ultimo, for the abandonment of Fort Atkinson, the Company of the 6th Infantry stationed

there will be withdrawn to Fort Crawford, and will form a part of the garrison of that post.

The public stores at Fort Atkinson will be removed or sold, as may be found expedient under the circumstances.

By order of Bvt. Major General Twiggs:

D. C. BUELL,
Asst. Adjt. Gen.

GENERAL ORDERS, } WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
NO. 19. } WASHINGTON, March 30, 1849.

II. *Fort Atkinson* being no longer required for military purposes, the garrison has already been withdrawn.

Fort Crawford, being also no longer required, the commanding officer of the 6th Department has been authorized to withdraw the companies composing the garrison, and to assign them to such stations on the frontiers as he may judge expedient. The quarters and other public property pertaining to the Post will be disposed of by the responsible departments of the Staff.

BY ORDER:

R. JONES,
Adjt. Genl.

THE DES MOINES RIVER IN 1721.

The Moingona issues from the midst of an immense meadow which swarms with buffalos and other wild beasts. Its course from north to west is said to be two hundred and fifty leagues in length. It rises from a lake, and is said to form a second, at the distance of fifty leagues from the first. Turning to the left from the second lake we enter into Blue river, so called from its bottom which is an earth of that color; it discharges into St. Peter's. Going up the Moingona, we find great plenty of pit coal; one hundred and fifty leagues from its mouth there is a very large cape, which causes a turn in the river, where its waters are red and stinking. It is said that great quantities of mineral stones and some antimony have been found upon this cape.—*Charlevoix, Kaskaskia, Oct. 20, 1721.*

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