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3D SERIES.

FORT DES MOINES, NO. 2.

The following article was prepared for these pages at the War Department, Washington, D. C. The post was known in our early days as "A United States Frontier Fort located at the forks of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers, at the present site of the city of DES MOINES, IOWA. Latitude 41.32. Longitude 16.37 W. Washington." This article quotes quite freely from contemporary official letters, and gives a clear and well-outlined history of the old military post. Few, if any, of the men to whom it refers are now living. The frontispiece of the present number is a map of the post, which we have caused to be engraved from a drawing also furnished by the War Department.—EDITOR OF THE ANNALS.

The preliminary agitation and reconnoissances incident to the location of a military post at this point, commenced as early as 1835, or soon after the time when Lieut. Col. Kearny* with a detachment of the Dragoon regiment was sent up from St. Louis, to establish and garrison a point at the mouth of the river. In the summer of that year, Col. Kearny, at the head of a considerable expedition, followed up the valley, between the Des Moines and Skunk, under instructions from the War Department to halt at the mouth of the Raccoon and select a site suitable for a military post.

His report on his return, which is embodied in the sketch of Fort Des Moines No. 1, was unfavorable to the establishing of a post in that vicinity, for reasons which in a military sense were perhaps conclusive.† In this view of the case, however, the War Department declined to join, and Col. George Croghan,‡ Inspector General of the Army, who was about to visit the frontier, was instructed to look into the matter carefully and report as to the expediency of break-

*See note page 369, Vol. III, 3d Series, ANNALS OF IOWA.

†Pp. 356-7, ANNALS OF IOWA, Vol. III, 3d Series.

‡See note, page 357, Vol. III, 3d Series, ANNALS OF IOWA.

ing up Fort Armstrong at the mouth of Rock River and transferring its garrison to a suitable site up the Des Moines.

Col. Croghan's report in the case was more diplomatic than logical. Doubting the expediency in any event, of establishing a post in that vicinity, he suggests, should it be decided to build, that five or six companies of infantry be ordered to assist in the erection of the necessary buildings, though "In all probability it will not be occupied beyond a few years." He had learned with much regret that a bill had been introduced in Congress for the laying out of a road from old Fort Des Moines to Fort Leavenworth. He remarks:

There is now, altogether too much traveling between the several forts for the quiet of the frontier, and good roads will only increase the evil by opening the whole territory to the ravenous appetites of lawless vagabonds and more greedy land speculators. Already has this description of persons begun to talk about the fine lands on the Ioway and Des Moines, and perhaps before two years are gone by they will be crying aloud for a new territory on that side of the Mississippi. First will come a memorial to Congress from Missouri, to extend her northern line until it shall strike the Missouri River; and then, a new territory having been created, an urgent effort will be made to have the Indians sent to the south side of the Missouri. From the changes that I have witnessed since my first visit to that section of country, and from my perfect acquaintance with the character of those frontier men, and of the immigrants who are daily adding to their number, I hazard nothing in predicting that in a very few years we will positively need and perhaps may garrison but the two posts of St. Peters and Council Bluffs, upon the whole frontier.

Col. Croghan's fears as to the advance of quasi-civilization west of the Mississippi were singularly prophetic, for almost precisely the course of procedure outlined in his report of January 25, 1836, was developed within the following two years. So rapid was the westward march of emigration in this direction, that before the Government could fix upon a point sufficiently advanced whereat to build a post for the protection of the Iowa settlements, the settlements had themselves pushed forward until most of the country east of Ft. Leavenworth had been seized by speculators, and much was already under cultivation. The section immediately surrounding the junction of the Raccoon and the Des Moines

had so far escaped the invasion. It was, as will be seen by reference to the report of Col. Kearny before mentioned, a part of the Sac and Fox reservation, especially prized by those tribes on account of the abundance of game that frequented its resorts. These tribes, in every other respect friendly and peaceable, resisted with fury and warlike demonstrations all encroachments upon their domain. The strongest objection advanced by Col. Kearny to the establishment of a military post at the Raccoon fork, was the protest of the Indians that the soldiers would drive off the little game that was left them. For these reasons the six or seven years following the visit of Kearny were years of comparative quiet to the Sacs and Foxes, who freely roamed the country along the Des Moines, from its mouth to its upper fork, where the so-called "Neutral Ground" separated them from their relentless enemies, the Sioux.

Still, it was only by reason of the stubborn determination of the Government to protect these tribes in their treaty rights, that this section was so long left comparatively undisturbed. Settlements swarmed about the boundaries on every side, Congress was being flooded with petitions to open the lands to settlement, and every possible pressure was being made upon the authorities at Washington to remove the Indians and occupy their territory. In 1841, the encroachments on the Indian domain had become so frequent and determined that it became apparent to the Government that provision must be made to recognize the inexorable demands of civilization, which had crowded the red man from the shores of the Atlantic to beyond the Mississippi within half a century, and which was destined to continue its onward march until restrained alone by the waters of the Pacific.

Negotiations were accordingly opened with the chiefs of the tribes, and on the 11th October, 1842, purchase of the reservation was finally effected.

Still, so reluctant were they to leave the lands that were attached to them by the traditions of centuries, that it was

stipulated that they might remain yet another three years, and that in the meantime no white man should be allowed to settle on their reservation. To protect them in this stipulation, and to enable the government to carry out its part of the treaty, it was decided by Gen. Winfield Scott to locate a detachment of troops directly on the reservation, within a few miles of the agency buildings, then on the Des Moines, a short distance below the Raccoon fork, at the site of what was then the town of Fairfield, Iowa.

The selection of this particular site was the result of a visit to the spot by Captain James Allen, of the Dragoons regiment, whose company had for several years been stationed between Leavenworth and Gibson, and who was familiar with the locality. In a letter to the War Department, dated Fort Sandford, Iowa, December 30, 1842, in referring to the expediency of protecting the Indians in their treaty rights by stationing troops within their reservation, he says:

I went up, as you know, last month as high as the mouth of the Raccoon River, and had in view at the time to look out a suitable point for the stationing of troops for the time required. And I did select, with a view to recommend it, the point made by the junction of the Raccoon with the Des Moines.

My reasons for selecting that point are these: The soil is rich; and wood, stone, water and grass are all at hand. It will be high enough up the river to protect these Indians against the Sioux, and is in the heart of the best part of their new country, where the greatest effort will be made by the squatters to get in. It is about equidistant from the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, and offers a good route to both, the direct route to the Missouri passing around the heads of many ugly branches of Grand River. It will be 25 miles within the new line, about the right distance from the settlements, and above all of the Indian villages and trading houses (all of the Sacs have determined to make their villages on a larger prairie bottom that commences about two miles below, and the traders have selected their sites there also). It will also be about the head of keel-boat navigation on the Des Moines. I think it better than any point farther up, because it will be harder to get supplies higher up, and no point or post that may be established on this river need be kept up more than three years, or until these Indians shall leave. A post for the northern boundary of future Iowa will go far above the sources of the Des Moines.

Now, as to the process of establishing this post. I do not seek the job; but I am willing to undertake it, if my suggestions for that purpose shall be approved. I would build but common log cabins, or huts, for both men

and officers, giving them good floors, windows and doors, stables, very common, but close and roomy, Pickets, Block-houses and such like, not at all. The buildings to be placed in relations of comfort, convenience and good taste; and of defense, so far as the same may comply with the first rule.

Ten mechanics, and five laborers, and four yoke of oxen, and tools and implements, and the small material, ought to be furnished by the Qr. Master's Dept. All to be ready to go up and begin early in the spring. Pine lumber for the most necessary parts of the buildings ought to be sent up in keel-boats, in the spring rise of the river. Provisions, and corn, &c., may be sent up at the same time.

With such means and the force of my company, I could make a good and comfortable establishment at the mouth of the Raccoon during the next summer, and, in the meantime, give to the Indians all necessary protection. One of their agents has told me that the Am. Fur Company would probably send up a steamboat to the Raccoon on the spring rise. If they do, it will be a good time to send up army supplies.

I could easily have corn raised for me in that country if I could now contract for it, and permit a person to open a farm there. Such is the desire of people to get a footing in the country that I believe that now I could hire corn to be raised there, next summer, for 25 cts. per bushel. I could get lumber on as good terms, by allowing some one to build a mill. In short, there will be no difficulty in establishing and maintaining a post there if notice of such a design shall be given in time. But I hope that it will not be required of my company that they shall build this new post without the assistance of the hired labor that I have suggested. I have not the necessary mechanics for the purpose; and if I had, it would be requiring too much of them. It is not competent for dragoons to build their quarters and stables, and get their wood and do their duty as soldiers.

I have but little to add to what is contained in the foregoing extract of my letter to the colonel. The new post will be so purely temporary that this character of it ought to be kept in view in its construction. According to the plan and method that I have recommended, this post may be built and established, for one company of dragoons, for about twenty-five hundred dollars.

If a company of infantry could also be sent to this new post, it would be well, although it would increase somewhat the expense of its establishment. Of the propriety of such an arrangement, the Department will best judge.

But I will respectfully urge upon the Department the necessity for a speedy decision on the subject of this new post, that if it is to be established early measures may be taken to secure the timely transportation of the necessary materials and supplies. The rise of the Des Moines will occur in March.

In regard to the point recommended for the new post, I may remark, that I have seen much of the territory of Ioway, and particularly of the valley of the Des Moines, having, in addition to my observations from there to the mouth of Raccoon, crossed the territory with my company last Sum-

mer, on a direct route from Ft. Leavenworth to Ft. Atkinson, crossing the Des Moines above Raccoon, and from all that I have seen and learned I would recommend the point that I have designated as the most suitable for the post in question.

All of this is predicated on the supposition that the late treaty with the Sac and Fox Indians will be approved and ratified; but this treaty is so very favorable and advantageous to the United States that I feel no apprehensions for its fate.

Capt. Allen's company of dragoons at that time was stationed at Fort Sandford on the Des Moines, at a point sixty-five miles west from Fort Madison, twenty-five north of the Missouri boundary, and about four miles west of the Sac and Fox Agency (his nearest postoffice being at Fairfield, now the county seat of Jefferson county), or as near as may be at what is now the site of the town of Ottumwa, in Wapello county, where it remained during the winter of 1842-3. The Captain's recommendations had met the approval of Gen. Scott and the War Department, and Col. Kearny—then commanding the 3d District at St. Louis—was directed to cause the post to be established. It was not, however, until the following spring, during which the treaty had hung fire in the Senate for so long a time that fears were entertained that it would not be ratified, that it was fully determined to move the troops from the Agency to the Raccoon fork.

By Orders No. 6, dated Headquarters 3d Military Department, Jefferson Barracks, February 20th, 1843, it was ordered that—

A temporary post will be established at as early a period as the weather will permit, on the River Des Moines, at or near the junction of the Raccoon, for the protection of the Sac and Fox Indians, and the interests of the Government on that frontier.

The troops designated for the garrison of the new post are Captain Allen's company of the 1st Dragoons, at present stationed near the Sac and Fox Agency, and a company of the 1st Infantry now stationed at Fort Crawford, to be selected by the Lieutenant-Colonel commanding the regiment.

The site of the post will be determined upon by Captain Allen; and he will also have charge of the erection of the requisite buildings for the accommodation of the command; which will be constructed with as strict a regard to economy as may be consistent with the health of the troops, and conformably to the instructions forwarded from this office, or such order as he may hereafter receive from proper authority.

Captain Allen left Sandford with a small detachment of dragoons on the 29th of April, for the new station, whither a steamboat with supplies had been dispatched from St. Louis, arriving in time to receive and land them. Leaving his men to guard the stores, he returned to the Agency to bring up the balance of his company from whence, on the 10th of May, he dispatched a report of his movements to the War Department. He writes:

I have located the post on the point I selected for it last fall, the point made by the junction of the Raccoon with the Des Moines. . . . I have delayed taking up my horses or removing my whole company because of the lateness of the Spring and the consequent scarcity of grass. It is too expensive now to take up full rations of corn, and, the Des Moines river being low, I could not induce the steamboat that took up the corn and quartermaster's stores to make another trip at reasonable rates. I am using a small keel-boat and wagons, all public, for transportation of corn and some other stores, and will move with my company on the 18th instant. Fairfield, Ioway Territory, will be my first convenient postoffice, until another shall be established in the new territory just vacated by the Indians.

It may possibly be an item of historical interest to the good people of the Capital of what is now one of the largest and most prosperous states of the Union, to learn how nearly their city escaped the burden of a ridiculous name, and to what fortuitous incident is due the one that now attaches to it.

"I have named the new post," writes Captain Allen at this time, "*Fort Raccoon*, to which I respectfully ask the sanction of the Secretary of War. . . . I have recommended this name because the place has already a great notoriety under such designation for a great distance around it, as *Raccoon River*, *Raccoon Forks*, *Raccoon*, *The Raccoon*, &c., &c., by all of which it is known as perhaps the most conspicuous point in this territory, and no other name will so well designate the position of the new post." It is not surprising that this suggestion did not strike the authorities at Washington with the same force as it did the more practical mind of its worthy commandant. "*Fort Iowa* would be a very good name," endorses Adjutant General Jones on the papers, which

he submits to General Scott, "but *Raccoon* would be shocking; at least in very bad taste." It is probable that General Scott agreed with this view of the case, for a few days later, he informs Captain Allen that the word *Raccoon* is not considered a proper designation for a military post and that until otherwise directed he will call the post "*Fort Des Moines.*"

Captain Allen does not give up his point without a struggle. "I am afraid," he writes later, "that the latter designation for the post will divert much of our mails and supplies to the late post of this name on the Mississippi, the recollection of which is yet in the minds of many of the postmasters and public carriers. I know that at Fort Atkinson, last year, most of my letters and papers came to me by the way of the old post of that name in Wisconsin, and with great delay. I will therefore respectfully suggest and recommend that some name be given to this post to which this inconvenience may not attach."

If Captain Allen had limited the communication to that subject alone, it is quite probable that his latter objection would have been sustained, and some new name have been given to his post. But unfortunately for him, if providential to the fort, he raised a point in that letter regarding the right of the post to "double rations," which at the time was a matter of contest between the War and Treasury Departments, with the result that his letter was buried in some forgotten pigeon hole about the desk of the Commanding General, from which it was not extracted until nearly two years afterwards. By that date the lapse of time had carried with it the main objection of Captain Allen, and the name of Des Moines had so long attached to the fort that equal objection would have forbidden a change. To this trifling circumstance, the mislaying of a document, the present capital city of Iowa undoubtedly owes its name.

On the afternoon of the 20th of May, Capt. Allen with his company of dragoons, four officers and 48 men, landed at the new site and went into camp, where they were joined on

the 21st by Capt. J. R. B. Gardenier's* company F, of the 1st infantry, two officers and 44 men. The landing was made at the point where the Court avenue bridge now stands, the camp being laid out along the west bank of the Des Moines, at the edge of the belt of timber that extended along the river front, on about the present line of Second street. First Lieut. John H. King,† of the 1st Infantry (who subsequently reached high rank in the army and was retired as Colonel of the 9th Infantry), was appointed Adjutant of the post, and Second Lieutenant C. F. Ruff,‡ of the Dragoons, Quartermaster and Commissary. Capt. Allen being in command of the post, the command of his company devolved upon 1st Lieut. William N. Grier, who was retired forty years later as Colonel of the 3d Cavalry; that of the infantry company being under the charge of its Captain, J. R. B. Gardenier, who died in 1850, while still in command of this company. These, with Dr. John S. Griffin, the surgeon of the post, constituted the first roster of Fort Des Moines.

The command immediately fell to work erecting quarters and laying out its gardens, building first a temporary wharf

*John R. B. Gardenier entered the U. S. Military Academy as a cadet from New York, July 1, 1823, in the same class with Jefferson Davis. He graduated No. 30, in a class of 33. He began his service as a Brevet Second Lieutenant in the 1st U. S. Infantry, 1823, and was promoted to Second Lieutenant in 1828. He served at Fort Crawford, Wis., Galena, Ill., Dubuque, and Fort Des Moines, No. 1, and elsewhere in the West, and also participated in the Mexican war. He reached a Captaincy and died at Dardanelle Springs, Ark., June 29, 1850, aged 42.

†This brilliant soldier was born in Michigan, about 1818, and appointed from civil life to a Second Lieutenancy in 1837. He came to Fort Des Moines with the command and was appointed Adjutant of the post under Capt. Allen. He afterward served many years on the frontier and in the Mexican war. During the civil war he rose to the rank of Major-General of volunteers, and at its close was commissioned Colonel of the 9th regular infantry. He participated in the battles of Shiloh, Corinth, Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, Resaca, Kenesaw Mountain and in the campaign before Atlanta. He was retired in 1882 and died at Washington, D. C., April 7, 1888.

‡Charles F. Ruff was appointed cadet in the U. S. Military Academy in 1834, graduating in 1838. He was appointed Second Lieutenant in the 1st Dragoons the same year, serving in the army until 1846, when he resigned and settled as a lawyer at Liberty, Mo. Returning to the service in 1846, he served in the Mexican war, participating in the battles of Contreras, Molino del Rey (where he was wounded), Chapultepec and the assault and capture of the city of Mexico. He rose to the rank of Major of the Mounted Rifles and Lieutenant-Colonel of the 3d Cavalry. He served during the war of the Rebellion until 1864, when he was retired for disability, with the brevets of Colonel and Brigadier-General for faithful and meritorious service. He died at Philadelphia, October 1, 1885.

at the "point" so often mentioned by Capt. Allen, at the convergence of the two streams. The first building erected was the public store-house, at a point some fifty yards from the north bank of the Raccoon. This was first completed, followed by the hospital, at the northern boundary of the camp, about three hundred yards from the west bank of the Des Moines, which was first occupied about the 20th of June. The company quarters built of logs, one story in height, with puncheon floors, and capable of comfortably quartering ten men each, were next commenced at the northwest of the store-house; and still further to the west the stables for the dragoons, behind which were the corrals, and beyond, following down the north bank of the Raccoon, the company gardens. In the fall, the quarters for the officers were begun, to the right of the store-house along the west bank of the Des Moines, and another garden laid out, across the Raccoon, in the angle formed by the south bank of the latter and west bank of the Des Moines.

The commanding officer's quarters stood on the site now occupied by the Des Moines and Fort Dodge railway station, and the front of the officers' quarters along the line of Second street near the track of the Keokuk and Des Moines railroad. One of the first acts of the Council of Administration was the selection of Mr. Robert A. Kinzie as post trader, who immediately proceeded to erect his store and dwelling at a point to the northwest of the flagstaff, where now stands the Sherman block, at the corner of Third street and Court avenue. Permits to cultivate patches of land in the vicinity of the post, in order that they might purvey for the garrison, were granted Benj. B. Bryant, John Sturtevant and Alexander Turner. J. M. Thrift, a discharged soldier, was given a room in the quarters to open a tailor's shop, and Charles Weatherford to build a blacksmith shop. These people, together with Dr. T. K. Brooks, James Drake and J. B. Scott, all attaches of the garrison, formed the first colony of Fort Des Moines.

By the time the winter of 1843-4 had fairly set in, all the buildings were under roof, and the command, abandoning their tents, moved in and made themselves as comfortable as the circumstances of their isolated position would permit. The contractor for supplying the post with forage and beef, Mr. J. B. Scott, of Fairfield, had erected, and that winter occupied, the largest and most comfortable house on the reservation. By the terms of his contract, dated April 18, 1843, it was agreed by the United States that "the said J. B. Scott shall be permitted to open and cultivate a farm in the Indian country, to embrace at least one section of land of 640 acres, the said farm to be selected by the said Scott, at any place not nearer than one mile of the said military post, from any single body of land not appropriated to the purposes of the said military post, or for the Indian villages, or the licensed trading houses in the country: the said Scott to enjoy the use and the benefit of the said farm until the time that the Indians shall have left the country, agreeably to their late treaty with the United States, to remove south of the Missouri River; provided, that the said Scott shall from time to time faithfully execute all his agreements of this contract; and provided further, that he shall not violate any law of the United States regulating trade and intercourse in the Indian country nor any proper regulation of the said military post or order of the commanding officer."

Under this agreement Mr. Scott had selected a section of land on the opposite or east bank of the Des Moines; the center of his western boundary line being opposite the ferry, and his residence, built at the northwestern corner of his farm, directly opposite the site of the officers' quarters at the fort. Adjoining Scott's farm to the north, a half section had been assigned to the Messrs. George Washington and Washington George Ewing, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, who had been granted trading permits. The log house built by the Ewing brothers, was the first dwelling house raised on the east bank. Adjoining the southern boundary of the Scott farm was a thick growth

of timber, some two miles in width, at the eastern edge of which was the residence and farm of the Phelps brothers, who were trading with the Indians under a permit from their agent, Mr. John Beach. Next to the Phelps farm was the residence and buildings of the Indian agent, the latter being about four miles in a direct east line from the flagstaff of the fort. These parties were all occupying their premises during the first winter at the new post. With the opening of spring, their numbers were largely increased by white settlers, who hoped to pre-empt lands in advance of the treaty, and their importunities and frequent overt acts caused no little annoyance to Capt. Allen and his officers, as none of them were permitted to settle on the purchase. They, however, hovered about the vicinity, eking out a precarious living in various ways, to await the expiration of the three years. The necessity of watching these vagabond speculators, and at the same time endeavoring to restrain the restless instincts of his more particular charges, the Sacs and Foxes, afforded the commandant of the fort sufficient employment for his meager force.

The settlements all about them had the consequent result of tempting the Indians to depredations and trespasses, and when restrained from these acts to war upon their neighbors, the Sioux. In February, 1844, upon the requisition of the Governor of the territory, Capt. Allen left the fort with an officer and 29 men to find a party of these trespassing Indians and remove them back to the reservations. He accomplished this task without much trouble, returning to the fort within a few weeks, but was called upon to repeat the work at intervals during the whole period of his occupancy. These tribes do not appear at any time to have been other than mischievous, no serious offense being laid to their charge.

During this season Lieut. King left the post on an extended leave of absence and was succeeded in the Adjutancy by Brevet Second Lieut. Joseph H. Potter,* and later by

*Joseph Haydn Potter was a cadet from New Hampshire, entering the U. S. Mili-

First Lieut. Robert S. Granger,* both of whom a few years later were brevetted for distinguished services in the war with Mexico, and subsequently reached the highest grade in their profession. As the time drew near for the termination of the treaty, the duties of the garrison increased. Hundreds of settlers were "squatting" along the boundaries ready to pounce upon the lands the moment they were abandoned by the Indians, and their frequent incursions over the line, which were usually accompanied by the shooting of one or more of the Indians, followed by acts of reprisal, required all the good judgment and discretion of the commandant to maintain peace. Nor was this the least difficult of his duties. It became evident, as the time drew nearer that so strong was the disinclination of the tribes to leave their country, that many of them would not go until removed by force. So trying was the situation, during the summer of 1845, that Capt. Allen

tary Academy in 1839. He graduated in 1843, No. 22 in a class of 39. U. S. Grant graduated No. 21 in the same class. Second Lieutenant Potter served on the frontier in Iowa, Missouri and Texas, until 1846, when he went to Mexico with the 7th Infantry, and was severely wounded at Monterey. After the Mexican War he came back to serve again on the frontier, in Missouri, Arkansas, Indian Territory and New Mexico. He was "captured by Texas insurgents at San Augustine Springs, July 27, 1861, and not exchanged until August 27, 1862." He served in the Civil War from 1862 until 1866, participating in the battles of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, in the last of which he was wounded and captured. He was soon paroled and exchanged a few months later. He remained in the army, actively employed in many places—sometimes on the frontier—until October 12, 1886, when he was retired from the service at the age of 64. Passing through all the grades from the old days when he was a Second Lieutenant at Fort Des Moines, Iowa, he attained the rank of Brigadier-General in the regular army. He died at Columbus, Ohio, December 1, 1892.

*Robert Seaman Granger, a cadet from Ohio in 1833, graduated from the U. S. Military Academy in 1838, and was at once promoted to a Second Lieutenant. His first service was in the Florida War. He was promoted to First Lieutenant in 1839 and sent to the western frontier, serving in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Missouri. While in Iowa he was at Fort Des Moines, No. 2, in 1845, and in Dubuque in 1846 and '47. He served in the Mexican War 1847 and '48, but mostly in garrison duty. He became a Captain in 1847. Returning from the Mexican War, he served at frontier posts in the southwest until the outbreak of the Civil War. The Confederates captured him in Texas, April 27, 1861, but he was soon afterwards paroled. In September of that year he was promoted to Major of the 5th regular infantry. In 1862 he was made a Brigadier-General of volunteers, from which time until the end of the war he was continuously in very active service, participating in many skirmishes and important battles. He became a Brevet Major-General of volunteers in 1865, and in 1871 Colonel of the 21st regular infantry. He was retired January 1, 1873, at his own request, after thirty years of continuous active service. He died at Washington, D. C., April 25, 1894.

and his dragoons were almost constantly in the field, being aided in this patrol of the district by Capt. Sumner's* company from Fort Atkinson.

On the 29th of August, 1845, he writes the Department in regard to the situation, and in strong disapproval of the assumed intention of the Government to abandon the post at the expiration of the treaty:

I think the post ought not to be abandoned, he says, until after the Indians shall have left the country and gone to their new home south of the Missouri River. This they will not do before the time mentioned in their late treaty—12th Oct., 1845—and I fear that many of them will not go until they shall be forced to do so.

If, then, they are to be removed by troops, this garrison will be the most convenient for the purpose. Moreover, after the 12th of October, it will be too late to remove the public stores to another post without expense and inconvenience; and the contract for forage and other supplies being let for the winter, and much of them delivered, the Government must experience loss and inconvenience on this account, by leaving them or by exposing them to sudden sale.

On the whole I will recommend that this post be kept up at its present strength until next spring, and that it be abandoned as early in the spring as practicable.

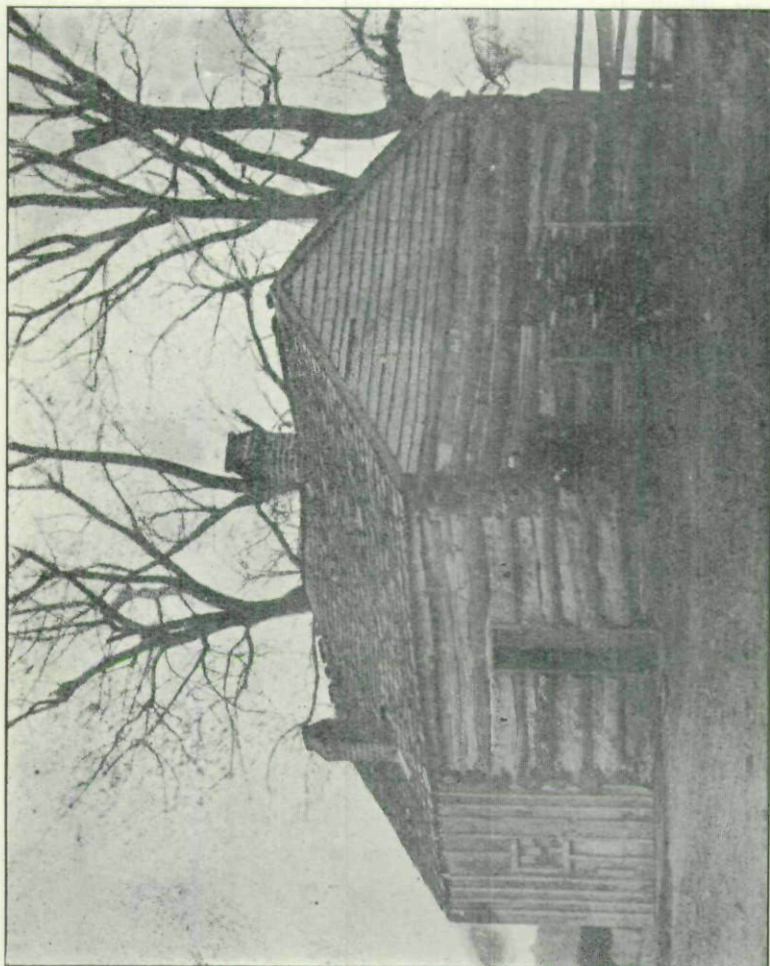
In this recommendation the Department Commander, Gen. Brooke, did not join.

I have had a conversation with Colonel Kearny, he writes on the 9th of September, and he advises that the post be broken up after the departure of the Indians, and that the Indians be compelled to remove by the 12th proximo, as immediately after the 12th a great number of white persons will enter the country, for the purpose of squatting, and that much disturbance and difficulty may be expected between them and the Indians if they are suffered to remain.

Besides this, if an Indian be not made to comply with a contract once made, he is always looking after indulgences, which in the end lead to delays extremely difficult ever to obviate. I am informed by letter received in this city from Mr. Beach, the agent, that the Sacs and Foxes are now making preparations and are willing to comply with the treaty. Notwithstanding all this apparent readiness, I am well convinced that like all other emigrating tribes some will scatter on the march and many will endeavor to remain at their old homes.

Notwithstanding this, however, the views of Capt. Allen obtained at the War Department, and it was determined to

*See note, page 369, Vol. III, 3d Series, ANNALS OF IOWA.



The residence of Lieut. William N. Grier. First house erected in Fort Des Moines, Iowa.

keep up the post during the winter. On September 22, 1845, Company I, 1st infantry, left the post for Jefferson Barracks, leaving the garrison with 52 men.

At the termination of the treaty, October 12, 1845, the most of the Sacs and Foxes left the country without resistance, and removed to lands set apart for them south of the Missouri, though many remained and continued by their presence to create no considerable disturbance. On January 1, 1846, Capt. Allen reports that there are from 180 to 200 Sacs and Foxes yet remaining in the territory, but believes that they will all remove quietly to their new homes, south of the Missouri, before their next annual payment.

The first act of the authorities, after the land came into the possession of the United States, was to set aside a military reservation of one mile square, of which the flagstaff of the fort was the center. Of this area, one hundred and sixty acres, with all the buildings thereon, were ceded to Polk county, January 17, 1846.

The order for the abandonment of the post is dated St. Louis, February 23, 1846. It reads:

First Lieut. Grier,* Commanding Allen's Company, 1st Dragoons, will, as early as practicable, take up his line of march from Fort Des Moines for Fort Leavenworth escorting all the Fox Indians, who have not left the Territory of Iowa, in accordance with their treaty stipulations of October,

*William N. Grier entered the U. S. Military Academy in 1831, graduating in 1835. He served in the regular army 30 years. Until the Civil War his service was for the most part on the frontier, though he was assistant instructor of infantry and cavalry tactics at West Point in 1840 and 1841, and a participant in the Mexican War. He was at several points in Iowa from 1843 to '46, mainly at Fort Des Moines, No. 2. He fought the Apaches in 1849 and was once wounded. He served in New Mexico from 1849 to 1856, when he marched to California, whence he was soon ordered north to Oregon. He went to Fort Walla Walla in 1857, where he remained until 1861, during which time he participated in many skirmishes and battles with the Spokane and other hostile Indians. At the commencement of the Civil War he was promoted to Major of the 2d regular Cavalry and was acting assistant inspector-general of the Army of the Potomac, 1861-62. He took part in many battles, and was wounded at Williamsburg May 5, 1865. He was stationed at Davenport, Iowa, as superintendent of volunteer recruiting service for this State, from March, 1863, to June 12, 1865. March 13, 1865, he was brevetted Brigadier-General in the regular army and promoted to Colonel of the 3d Cavalry. He served with his regiment at Fort Union, N. M., from July 12, 1868, to May, 1870. His last command was at Camp Halleck, Nev., Dec. 15, 1870, at which date this gallant officer was retired from active service. He died at Napa City, Cal., July 8, 1885.

1842, to their permanent homes, as designated by the President of the United States.

Lieut. Grier will leave at Fort Des Moines one steady non-commissioned officer and two privates, for the purpose of taking care of all the public buildings, Quartermaster's and Subsistence Stores, Ordnance and Ordnance Stores, and all other public property, until instructions are received from the War Department for their final disposition.

Allen's Company of Dragoons will, after having executed the above duty, form a part of the permanent garrison of Fort Leavenworth.

Immediately upon the receipt of this order at the fort, Lieut. Grier, in the absence of Capt. Allen, began his arrangements for its evacuation. Lieut. Noble* with 20 men was sent up the Des Moines in search of a party of Indians known to be there, while another party marched to the Skunk River to bring over two lodges of Foxes that were said to be there. By March 7 all the Indians had been brought in.

They were found, writes Lieut. Grier, about 30 miles above this post on the Des Moines and Raccoon rivers, assembled (as they pretended to tell me) for the purpose of moving over to join their chief Pow-a-shick. However, information derived from a better source, and their total want of means and preparation, go to convince me that they did not intend to move until compelled to do so. Their intention was to move higher up on the Des Moines or Raccoon river, and by scattering they doubtless supposed they could keep out of the way of the Dragoons. They number about one hundred and ten. I found them in rather miserable condition for a journey.

Mr. Scott, one of their traders, supplied them with provisions, but was unwilling to furnish transportation, and I directed the A. A. Qr. Master to do so. Yesterday morning (the 8th inst.) Lieut. Noble, with a command of twenty-five Dragoons, conducted the Indians on their route to Fort Leavenworth. I expect to overtake them in three days. I am not aware that there are any of the Foxes left in this territory. If there are, they must certainly be so few in number as to give no further trouble to the whites.

The public property has been packed up and placed in store, in charge of a non-commissioned officer and two privates.

At noon, March 10, 1846, Lieut. Grier, with the balance of Co. I, marched out of the town, and Fort Des Moines as a military post ceased to exist. After conducting the com-

*Patrick Noble, an appointee from South Carolina, entered the U. S. Military Academy in 1838 and graduated in 1842. He served in Texas, Kansas, Iowa and the Indian Territory. He was also in the Mexican War. His service at Ft. Des Moines, No. 2, was in the years 1845-46. His death, at the early age of 27, occurred at Abbeville, South Carolina, December 27, 1848.

mand to Fort Leavenworth, Lieut. Grier returned to Des Moines, by way of St. Louis, in order to direct the sale of the public property, which occurred on the 1st day of May. By this time the vicinity of the fort had become a considerable settlement, as well as the county seat of the new county of Polk, that had been organized by the Legislature during its session of that winter. The first survey of the new town was made on the 8th day of July, 1846, the first entry on the 12th May, 1848; in 1853, the town of Fort Des Moines was incorporated, and a year later by act of the Legislature it was designated as the Capital of the new State of Iowa.

Capt. James Allen, the commandant of the fort from its first occupation to within a few weeks of its abandonment, was a native of Ohio, born in 1806, and at the age of 19 appointed to the Military Academy from the State of Indiana. He graduated July 1st, 1829, and, appointed as Second Lieutenant in the 5th Infantry, joined his regiment at Fort Brady, where he served until the 4th of March, 1833, when he was transferred to the new Dragoon regiment as a Second Lieutenant. From this time until his death, his services on the frontier were continuous and of the highest value to the Government. Joining his regiment at Fort Dearborn, he remained on staff duty until his promotion as First Lieutenant May 31, 1835, when he was assigned to certain engineer duties in connection with the reconnoissance of the Indian country. He served during the next decade at Forts Leavenworth, Gibson, Atkinson and Sandford, from whence he marched to the establishment of Des Moines. On the abandonment of that work, he was appointed Lieutenant Colonel and Commander of the Mormon Battalion of Missouri Volunteers for the Mexican War, and was enroute to New Mexico with his command, when he died suddenly near Fort Leavenworth, August 23, 1846, at the early age of 40.

The career of Fort Des Moines had upon the whole been uneventful. Like hundreds of its associates it was the initial factor in the progress of that grand movement, which within

less than a century had civilized a continent. At the time of its establishment it was the extreme outpost on the northern frontier, in the midst of a region that was comparatively unexplored. Around it as a nucleus, slowly, but surely, had gathered a colony of sturdy, determined pioneers, who, rushing in as the soldiers marched out, occupied the soil and metamorphosed the camp into a thriving city. The first child born at the settlement, a son of Lieut. Grier, in 1845, was also the first to die within its limits, and at its funeral was preached the first sermon by the first minister, the Rev. Mr. Rathbun. The same year a Methodist Church was organized, and a log school house erected, so that when the flag was lowered for the last time, and the garrison marched out, it left behind a thriving community complete in all its parts. The Fort had fulfilled its mission.

NOTE.—The manuscript of the foregoing article has been read and carefully considered by Hon. Messrs. P. M. Casady and Barlow Granger, early settlers at Des Moines. They suggest only these corrections: that the flagstaff was located south of Market and east of 2d street, and that the public well was in the latter street, a short distance from the flagstaff. "The town of Ft. Des Moines came into existence in 1851." The act making Ft. Des Moines the future capital of the State was passed in January, 1855.

THE BILL introduced by Mr. A. A. Wilson of Jefferson to prevent intoxicating liquor being distributed at vendues, was killed in the House the other day by a vote of 10 to 10. We are sorry for this. Such a bill ought to pass, and we believe public sentiment requires it. We have seen men grow so rich at some auctions, in consequence of the liquor that was freely given them, as to bid eight times more for an article than it was actually worth. Under such circumstances men are led to bid for things they do not want, and in one instance we have known a man who was obliged to sacrifice his farm to liquidate unnecessary debts contracted in this way. We hope the motion will be reconsidered.—*Burlington Hawk-Eye, Dec. 17, 1840.*

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