

THE ORIGINAL MILITARY POST ROAD BETWEEN FORT LEAVENWORTH AND FORT SCOTT

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THE MILITARY Post road was a direct implementation of United States Indian policy. Apartheid, the European solution to the displaced American Indian, started with the first stockade at Jamestown. With the exception of the French fur trader, neither the European nor the Indian cultures were able successfully to amalgamate or to coexist. The British tried containing the Europeans with the proclamation of 1763 which forbade European settlement beyond the Allegheny mountains. Settlers continued moving west of the mountains. The United States reasoned that there were fewer Indians and that it would be easier to contain them. The new government began the removal of Indians to reservations in 1789. Efforts to limit the territory open for settlement failed.

Pres. Thomas Jefferson learned that Spain planned to cede the Louisiana territory back to France. He was concerned not only with maintaining open trade on the Mississippi, but hoped to provide a buffer zone with the Indians. The U.S. minister to France, Robert Livingston, approached the French minister Talleyrand with an offer to purchase the port of New Orleans. Shocked to discover a very bearish market, he and James Monroe soon purchased the whole of Louisiana territory for a total of \$15,000,000 in money and claims. Although the size of the country had doubled, much of the land was considered worthless for farming, but it would be a good area in which to place the Indians.

The continuing problem was "solved" during Jackson's first administration. Congress passed the Indian removal act of 1830 and the different Indian tribes were forcibly removed west of the Mississippi. The Seminole tribe fought to near extinction, while other tribes, such as the New York Indians, managed to stay in the East. The government's total disregard for Indian rights is shown by grouping the Cayuga, Oneida, Seneca, Mohawk, Onondaga, Iroquois, and Mohegan as the "New York Indi-

ans." They lost their tribal identity and were granted land under the name of a state.¹ Ironically, that state had been named for an English duke.

Saint Louis and Saint Genevieve had been settled in the early 16th century and the development out from the Mississippi river was well underway before this area became the property of the United States. Missouri applied for statehood in 1818 and entered the Union on August 10, 1821, as a slaveholding state. Missouri was a close neighbor to the Indian tribes. Too close a neighbor it appears, for by 1834, petitions demanding protection began to reach the senate. Arkansas became a state in 1836 and this sealed off one of the Missouri's borders, but incidents continued along the other two sides. The citizens of Bates county were particularly incensed over the problems generated by violations of the nonintercourse act. M.G. Wilson, of Bates county, wrote the senate:

A Mr. Jarreau [Michael Gireau], a trader for the American Fur Company, who lives some fifteen or twenty miles from the line, has an Osage squaw for a wife, though not married to her, and lives sixty or seventy miles from any place of civil or military law. He has divers French around him, who sell liquor to the Indians; they come in and remain six or eight days; then they are starved almost to death, and, of course, must fall on the first cow or hog they may meet with.

He further described the very poor job of the dragoons in protecting the people and, while professing not to object to the fact that the Indians were placed on their border, he did make it very clear that "Such conduct as this, you are well apprized, the citizens of Missouri will not suffer. . . ."

Congress began to investigate the situation. John Dougherty, Indian agent, was asked how many troops would be needed to protect the territory:

1. "Field Survey Notes Bourbon County," in office of the county engineer, Fort Scott, n. d., p. 148.

2. *House Doc. No. 276* (serial 328), 25th Cong., 2d Sess., p. 12. The name is correctly spelled Gireau. The post was located less than five miles from the state line, on the Marais des Cygnes river.

I am of the opinion that six thousand troops are necessary to give the protection you allude to. The State of Missouri is, as you well know, one of the frontier states; two sides of it are unprotected, except by a small force at Fort Leavenworth. The Government are still sending out tribes of red-skins, and locating them on her frontier border; this is well enough, provided the Government will give the necessary protection. The tribes who emigrate to this country do so contrary to their own free will, and are, at heart, the bitter enemies of the white man.³

On July 2, 1836, Pres. Andrew Jackson signed the bill providing for the defense of the Western frontier. By September, 1837, the plan to build a military road along the frontier and to establish a cordon of posts had been discussed with the people along the border. The purpose of the road was to provide for a protective patrol. C.P. Kingsbury summed up the problem as he saw it:

The dragoons should be constantly kept patrolling along this road, to enforce the non-intercourse law, and prevent the introduction of spirituous liquors into the Indian country. There is but little doubt that most of our Indian wars have been occasioned by outlawed white people, who have fled to the frontiers, located themselves among the Indians, and married Indian wives. They introduce whiskey into the Indian country, and sell it to the Indians at an enormous price. The Indians get drunk, commence quarrelling, and in this state of excitement, commit acts of depredation, which, in many cases, lead to war.⁴

The road and posts authorized by congress had not been started by March, 1838. Congress asked the War Department to explain.⁵ Sec. J.R. Poinsett's letter to James K. Polk, the speaker of the house, indicated that they were having trouble getting enough commissioners as the officers had other duties. Col. S.W. Kearny had refused to move until he received a topographical engineer. Gen. Alexander Macomb sent two engineers to Jefferson Barracks, Mo., and placed Kearny's commanding officer, Gen. Henry Atkinson, in charge. General Atkinson, no neophyte in military buck passing, fired a letter off to General Macomb declining the honor for reasons of health, but covered himself by saying, "If it is intended that I should only organize the commission, and give instructions to the other members for the performance of the duty, I will undertake to do so cheerfully."⁶

General Atkinson supervised the project, while Col. Kearny, Maj. T.F. Smith, and Capt.



Col. Stephen W. Kearny (1794-1848), with the dragoons at Fort Leavenworth in the late 1830's, assisted with the survey of the military road in 1837. Photograph reproduced from *Winning the Southwest* by Glenn D. Bradley (Chicago, A.C. McClurg & Co., 1912).

Nathan Boone experienced the "fatigue and exposure," along with Charles Dimmock, the engineer. They began their survey on the middle section from Fort Coffee on the Arkansas river, September 27, 1837, and blazing timber and placing mile markers along the route, reached Fort Leavenworth on October 8.⁷ The proposed road and the posts to be established on it were funded for \$100,000 and the entire road system, of which the Fort Leavenworth-Fort Scott section was the middle part, would cover nearly a thousand miles from the upper Mississippi, between Saint Peter's and the Des Moines rivers, to the Red river in the south.⁸

As early as 1834 officers had been ordered to keep a journal of the topography and military resources along the frontier. This information was available to the commissioners. They could also utilize existing Indian trails in some

3. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

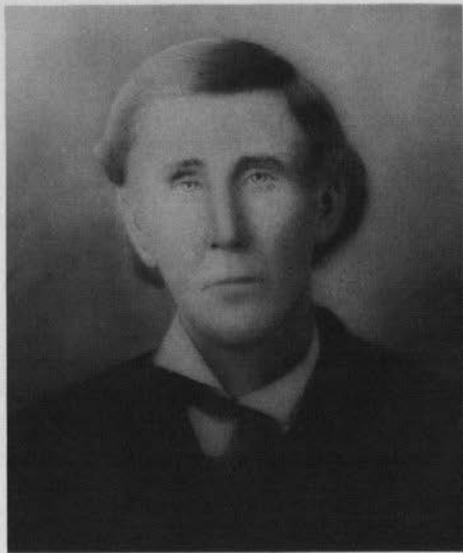
4. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

5. *House Doc. No. 278* (serial 328), 25th Cong., 2d Sess., p. 1.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

7. *House Doc. No. 311* (serial 329), 25th Cong., 2d Sess., pp. 36-37.

8. *Laws of the United State of America*, v. 9 (Washington, 1839), p. 444.



Moses Grinter (1809-1878), Wyandotte county's first permanent white resident, in 1831 established a ferry and later built a trading post near the present town of Muncie on the Kansas river.

sections.⁹ Throughout the correspondence it was clear that the road should be built first and then a site for a post chosen somewhere along the road. Consistently, the crossing at the Marais des Cygnes was the intended site for the new fort. Dimmock marked it on his blueprint.¹⁰ The commissioners also included it in their report. Col. Jos. G. Totten, Bvt. Col. S. Thayer, Col. T. Cross, and Lt. Col. G. Talcott specifically budgeted \$50,000 for "quarters and other accommodations for 200 men at the post at Marais de Cygne, including defences."¹¹

It is doubtful that the rum-running of Gireau had anything to do with the selection of this site for a fort. Trading Post and Potosi, both in present Linn county, and Grinter crossing, in Wyandotte county were the only settlements along the route marked by Dimmock and they may have had some bearing. It is more likely

that Trading Post was selected because the Marais des Cygnes was navigable at that time. Later, a steamboat would prove the point.¹² Subsequent events, during the 1850's, would prove the wisdom of this site but it was not the location finally selected. Fort Scott was placed 28 miles further south on the Marmaton river.

With the survey complete, a disagreement over how the road would be built developed. In January, 1837, Colonel Kearny had written asking if the work was to be done by soldiers or hired labor. The army was not disposed towards doing the work. He pointed out that labor could be hired for ". . . 75 cents (each) per day, and found."¹³ It would be more expensive to hire civilian labor, since a private earned a little over 23 cents a day. T. Cross, the acting quartermaster general, looked at the matter in a unique way. He felt that the Indians would be agitated by the invitation of ". . . large numbers of laborers, placed under no wholesome restraint, to enter the Indian country for that purpose. It would certainly lead to many collisions between the Indians and the whites, and to numerous violations of those laws, if nothing worse."¹⁴ Cross's observation went unheeded and the road was let out to contract on October 15, 1838.

The firm of Aaron Overton and Daniel Morgan Boon received the contract for construction and completion of the 72-mile section of the Western Military road between Fort Leavenworth and the Marais des Cygnes.¹⁵ Contracts for the section from the Marais des Cygnes to the Marmaton were given to A. Overton and Lewis Jones for \$287.50 a mile.¹⁶ Local labor was hired, where possible. Citizens later described the road as ". . . a fine one."¹⁷

No map of the Fort Leavenworth-Fort Scott segment of the road as it was built exists. Dimmock merely regarded his blueprint survey "an experimental one."¹⁸ His blueprint did not show miles and, drawn with a straight edge, had a fine disregard for elevations and the Missouri boundary. North was indicated

9. John Hall, "Historic Linn—Romantic, Mysterious, and Tragic Trading Post" (circa August 19, 1914), in manuscript division, Kansas State Historical Society.

10. Charles Dimmock, "Survey for a Military Road Along the Western Borders of the States of Arkansas and Missouri," in manuscript division, Kansas State Historical Society.

11. *House Doc. No. 161* (serial 366), 26th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 9.

12. Hall, "Historic Linn."

13. *House Doc. No. 278* (serial 328), p. 15.

14. *House Doc. No. 357* (serial 330), 25th Cong., 2d Sess., p. 4.

15. *House Doc. No. 94* (serial 346), 25th Cong., 3d Sess., p. 57.

16. *House Doc., No. 89* (serial 35), 26th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 41.

17. Hall, "Historic Linn."

18. *House Doc. No. 278* (serial 328), p. 7.



The ferry built by Moses Grinter, the first to be operated on the Kansas river, was a link in the military post road. During the 1830's and 1840's travelers on foot, horseback, and in covered wagons crossed for 50¢ per person and \$2 per wagon. Grinter operated the ferry until the 1870's.

with a fancy little design but never labeled. The principal sites Dimmock marked were rivers and the settlement of Potosi. He noted that the Marmaton, Little Osage, Cotton Wood [Mine creek], Marais des Cygnes, Blue, and Kansas rivers would be crossed and that of these only the Kansas and the Marais des Cygnes would need ferries. The Kansas already had a ferry, marked as the Grinter ferry. On this blueprint Dimmock also marked the south fork of the Big Blue as "not fordable," which may account for the change in the route at this point in Johnson county.¹⁹ He did not mention either Sugar creek or Muddy creek, tributaries of the Marais des Cygnes.

Certainly map makers of the period had no genuine knowledge of the exact route. Whitman and Searl's map of 1856, the earliest known map showing the road, had the route lying entirely within the borders of Kansas

territory.²⁰ Later authors used this route as correct and it has been commonly accepted that the road did not enter Missouri.

Most maps from 1857 on, used the government land survey maps as a stated basis for their accuracy. The government surveys were made during the Kansas territorial period and at a time when the road was the major route in eastern Kansas. Maps of the sections were drawn from field notes and were certified as accurate by a surveyor general. The surveyor general's office was located at different times at Leavenworth or Lecompton in Kansas territory and Nebraska City, in Nebraska territory. These plat books formed the basis of all later legal descriptions of land. While they were undoubtedly quite accurate, the county boundary between Lykins (Miami) and Linn counties was not clear to the surveyors and the same section shows up in both county plat

19. Dimmock, "Survey for a Military Road," sections P. S. T., and U.

20. E.B. Whitman and A.D. Searl, *Map of Eastern Kansas 1856* (Boston, J.P. Jewett and Co., 1856).

books. Also techniques varied greatly, one man drawing in the road completely and another indicating the road with a couple of small lines or a note. Some of the surveyors marked the miles on the Missouri border and others marked just the townships.

None of the maps based on the surveys claim to have consulted the records of Missouri. Halsall's map of 1857, locates the break into Bates county, Missouri, at the Linn-Lykins juncture.²¹ Gunn and Berthoud's maps of 1859 also show this but none of these maps indicate the four-mile stretch into Cass county, Missouri, along the Johnson county border.²² However, C.P. Wiggin compiled a map, dated 1857, from United States surveys which showed the road going into Missouri.²³

By consulting the records of both states and eyewitness accounts, the modern researcher can follow the route almost as surely as a First Dragoon could travel it 130 years ago. The road from Fort Leavenworth followed the curve of the Missouri river and the miles were measured from the flag pole on the parade grounds. Two Mile, Five Mile, and Nine Mile creeks helped the soldier count the miles. Where a natural land form did not exist, a mound marker was raised.²⁴ Through what was to become Wyandotte county, the road followed the Missouri to the eastward turn and then dropped down to Grinter's ferry, 22 miles southeast of Fort Leavenworth.²⁵

Moses Grinter had established his ferry on the north bank of the Kansas river in January, 1831, and it was the only dry way to cross the Kansas. This monopoly may have accounted for his rates: 50 cents per person and \$2.00 per wagon. (Day labor was earning 75 cents, and a private 23 cents a day.) Grinter did offer special rates at times, for he once took a large group of Indians, four wagons and baggage across for \$38.75 and he gave a group rate of \$9.25 for five wagons.²⁶ When his first cabin and ferry washed away in the flood of 1844, he rebuilt the cabin on the knoll overlooking the ferry. In

1847 he could afford to build, at this site, a charming Southern-type farm house which is now on 78th street in Muncie.

The road entered present Johnson county in section 3 of township 12, and continuing southeast, intersected the Santa Fe trail in section 29.²⁷ The Santa Fe trail and the Harmony road, which went to a mission on the Big Osage, in Missouri, were the only "roads" of any length existing in Indian territory and far western Missouri at the time the military road was built.²⁸ The military road entered township 13 to the west side of section 9 and touched the Missouri border in section 15. The route from there continued in an irregular fashion down the border to township 14, section 34, at which point it crossed the boundary into the state of Missouri. Cass county records show that it entered south of Belton, on present Holmes road, at a place locally known as Jaudon.²⁹ The road probably continued for the next four miles on the Missouri side, although it does not appear again in the Cass county records.

As a much older state, Missouri, has more primitive surveys for this early period. What was called a "Plat Book" at this time consisted of squares marked with the names of the "patent holder" or the person who owned the land. They did not necessarily live there. The squares are of different sizes to represent different acreages but do not show land forms, roads, or a grid of any type. Records of any consequence, drawn to scale and showing land forms, date from the 1870's. During the Civil War, General Ewing issued his disastrous order No. 11, which vacated the counties of Jackson, Cass, and Bates. Cass county records were removed to Pleasant Hill from Harrisonville under attack conditions. Bates county, which had a strong antiunion sentiment among the elected officials, "lost" many of its records, though the plat book of patent holders did survive.

Johnson county records show the military road returning in township 15, section 22, and angling west to leave Johnson county about three fourths of a mile from the boundary.³⁰

21. John Halsall, *Sectional Map of the Territory of Kansas* (St. Louis, John Halsall, 1857).

22. O.B. Gunn, *Gunn's New Map of Kansas and the Gold Mines* (Pittsburgh, Wm. Schuchman, 1859).

23. C.P. Wiggin, *Sectional Map of Kansas Territory* (Pittsburgh, Wm. Schuchman & Bro., 1857).

24. Percival G. Lowe, *Five Years a Dragoon* (Kansas City, Mo., Franklin Hudson Publishing Co., 1906), p. 21.

25. Elvid Hunt, *History of Fort Leavenworth* (Fort Leavenworth, General Service Schools Press, 1926), p. 72.

26. Harry E. Hanson, *A Historical Outline of Grinter Place From 1825-1878* (No impr.).

27. "Johnson County Plat Book" (1861), in recorder of deeds' office, Olathe.

28. John Francis McDermott, *The Western Journals of Washington Irving* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1944), pp. 90-94.

29. "Cass County Gov. Field Notes and Plat Book," in recorder of deeds' office, Harrisonville, Mo.

30. "Johnson County Plat Book."

The road follows a relatively straight course, a little less than a mile west of the border through township 16 of present Miami county.³¹ On this section it has been labeled, "Road from Westport to Little Santa Fe." The first part of section 17, between the 35th and 39th mile posts, has no markings. The terrain offers no obstacles at this point and a road marked, "Old Road," starts abruptly at the top of section 27, of township 17, nearly a mile inside Kansas. It is unlikely that the road recrossed the line. Cass county, Missouri, records make no mention of it. Township 18, does not have any marking to indicate a road, and township 19, does not show the road until it is located leaving at an angle for Missouri on the section line between the 14th and 15th sections, and eight and a quarter miles down from the last established point.

At the time of the survey, 1857, Miami county was Lykins county, named for David Lykins, a Baptist missionary to the Wea.³² The Lykins survey was done by two men, who obviously held different philosophies about marking roads. One surveyor drew in the road, although mislabeled, and the other only marked points of entry. A study of the terrain, would indicate a route very close to the border, on high rolling plains would be the most likely. A route any further west than a mile would be in juxtaposition to Sugar creek and the steep hills which provide a watershed to the Sugar.

The road did cross into Missouri at Township 19, section 14, between mile posts 49 and 50. The only confirming information in Bates county, Missouri, is an entry in a road survey book which used the old post road as a survey point for a "new" road going from Butler to Blooming Grove.³³ Blooming Grove was a name given Gireau's Trading Post by John Austin Hall in 1857 when he applied for a post office. The name did not endure and today it is again Trading Post. Along this two-and-a-half-mile route into Bates county, an Indian trading post called West Point was opened in 1848. Hall described Bates county, at the time of the Marais des Cygnes Massacre, 1858:

Nearly all the western border of that state was wild land, particularly that portion east of Linn County, Kansas. The land was nearly all patented to private parties, only a very few of them had settled on them [farms]. The land is beautiful prairie with numerous creeks tending to the southeast.³⁴

This wild land was soon crossed, and the road returned to the Kansas side of the boundary in township 19, section 26, halfway between mile posts 51 and 52. It continued southwest diagonal across Linn county, following the valley between the hills north of Trading Post. Early travelers and those who settled the valley were taken with the many strangely shaped hills of this area. Only the large hill to the north of the Trading Post, Timbered Mound, had trees. The rest were covered with grass to the crest. Mrs. Miriam Colt, who traveled the road in 1856, described the area of Gireau's Trading Post:

Have been traveling along the Missouri border, but now we turn into Kansas Territory. A broad green sea of prairie is spread out before us, and in the distance large mounds stretch themselves along the horizon; some in the forms of cones, others roof shape—not a tree or shrub shade their summits or sides, but the bright rays of the morning sun illumine their whole surface.³⁵

Across this valley the road turned south at Trading Post. A 20-foot strip across the Trading Post Cemetery, bearing southwest of the martyrs monument, still shows how the road entered the post. It did not cross the Marais des Cygnes at this point, but went down the east bank of the river to cross in township 20, section 8, just south of where Sugar creek joins the Marais des Cygnes. There was a ferry there in 1856 when Mrs. Colt crossed ". . . more than a yard deep of muddy water." When their wagon nearly tipped over she so forgot herself that she jumped astride a horse to escape.

At township 21 the military road, as shown on the survey maps, swung to the west to avoid Muddy creek, going five and a half miles west of the state line. This wide detour, the only one of its size along the entire route, may have been made after the May-June floods of 1844.³⁶ The flood which destroyed Grinter's ferry also destroyed a bridge of 275 feet over "Sugar Creek."³⁷ The route as traced in 1856 did not cross Big Sugar creek and circled Muddy creek

31. "Miami County Gov. survey and Township Plat Book" (1857), in recorder of deeds' office, Paola.

32. A.T. Andreas and W.G. Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas* (Chicago, 1883), p. 875.

33. "Bates County Road Plat Book" (1870), in recorder of deeds' office, Butler, Mo., item 30.

34. Hall, "Historic Linn."

35. Miriam Davis Colt, *Went to Kansas* (Watertown, L. Ingalls & Co., 1862), p. 40.

36. "Linn County Plat Book" (1856), in office of the county engineer, Mound City.

37. *Sen. Doc. No. 1* (serial 449), 28th Cong., 2d Sess., p. 147.

(at one time known as Little Sugar creek). Post returns from Fort Scott show, "Brvt. 2nd Lt. Edmund B. Holoway, 4th Infantry" was on "D.S. [detached service] since 17th August 1844 with a detachment, repairing military road leading to Fort Leavenworth, Post Order No. 61, August 16th, 1844."³⁸ Holloway returned on September 13. This was the only time in the 11 years that the road served as a military highway that it was repaired. Mrs. Colt does not mention any bridges or any fording of either Sugar or Muddy creeks. The road did return in township 22, section 4, to maintain a nearly straight line, two and a half miles from the Missouri boundary. The road forded Mine creek near Potosi. The creek is still forded near this point today, though cement makes it a much easier crossing.

Just north of the county line of present Bourbon county the military road crossed the boundary of the New York Indian lands, and continued almost straight south through Bourbon county, between a distance of two and a half miles to a mile and a quarter from the state line. The Little Osage was forded, with difficulty, nearly four miles east of Fulton, just south of Barnesville Cemetery. The road increased in distance from the state line to ford the Marmaton, west of the fort between the present bridge and U.S. Highway 69.³⁹ Today the banks are steep in this area but riffles still break the water. Dimmock marked the crossing as fordable. Certainly, this close to the fort (about three city blocks) a bridge or ferry could have been maintained. During the period of Civil War reactivation, a substantial bridge was erected east of the fort. The road used at that time, 1862, was not the original post road but one built in 1859. The stone work and metal superstructure of this bridge still stands.

Capt. Thomas Sword inspected the road in 1840 and reported it "nearly finished."⁴⁰ Colonel Kearny and five companies, 250 men, journeyed to Fort Wayne on the Arkansas-Oklahoma border in October and November of 1839.⁴¹ They were the first of many to use the road.

Fort Wayne had never been considered a

38. "Fort Scott Post Returns," records of the adjutant general's office, Record Group No. 94, National Archives, Washington.

39. "Field Survey Notes Bourbon County," p. 348.

40. Francis Paul Prucha, ed., *Army Life on the Western Frontier* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), p. 86.

41. Louise Barry, *The Beginning of the West* (Topeka, Kansas State Historical Society, 1972), p. 385.

healthful location. It was also much too far south to garrison a patrol for the Missouri border. Gen. Zachary Taylor appointed Capt. B.D. Moor or Moon and Dr. J.R. Motte to select a site for a new post between Fort Wayne and Spring river.⁴² Fort Wayne was to be abandoned.

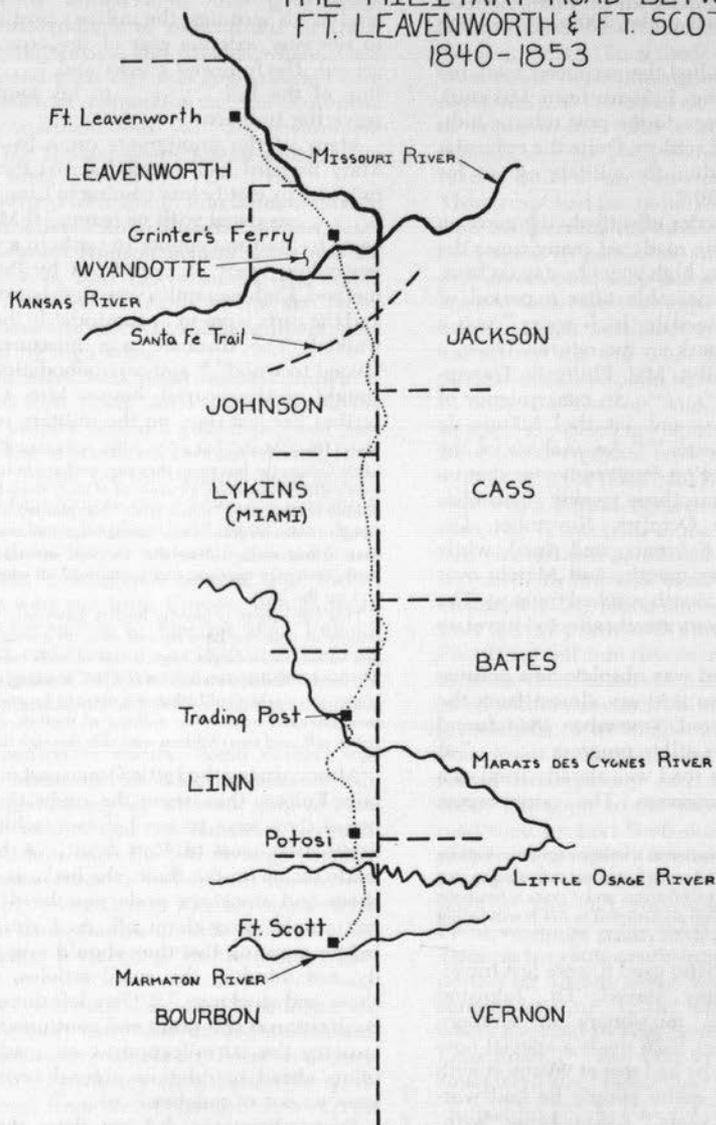
Captain Moon tried to buy land at Spring river from a half Cherokee, John Rogers. Rogers wanted more than they were willing to pay so the commission continued north to the next river. Bluffs overlooking the Marmaton river crossing provided a clear view of the surrounding plains and here there was no problem of purchase. The land belonged to the "New York Indians." The commission arrived on April 9, 1842, and returned to Fort Wayne leaving Sgt. John Hamilton to begin work on the new post. The garrison of Fort Wayne abandoned that post on May 21, 1842, over a year after the military road had been in operation. They marched to the new site on the Marmaton and "Companies 'A' and 'C' of the 1st Dragoons marched to and occupied the New Site (Camp Scott) selected on Marmaton River, 2 miles west of Little Osage Post office, on the 30th of May, 1842."⁴³ "Occupied" was a very good description. The land had been given to the Indians from the state of New York for as long as the rivers ran and the grass was green or as long as the government agreed to the treaty. Later the Indians were paid—much later.⁴⁴ Captain Moon lost his position as post commander to a temporary major, Bvt. Maj. B. Graham at the same time, October 23, 1842, that Camp Scott became Fort Scott. The post was always designated Missouri, never Indian territory. A permanent major was the highest ranking officer to command the post and at one time, when 1st Lt. (Bvt. Maj.) Alexander Morrow was ill, the assistant surgeon was the commander of the post until Fort Leavenworth could send out a brevet major. The size of the garrison varied greatly during the Mexican War. Men and equipment were channeled

42. Louise Barry, "The Fort Leavenworth-Fort Gibson Military Road and the Founding of Fort Scott," *The Kansas Historical Quarterly*, v. 11 (May, 1942), p. 126. Barry gives the name as B.D. Moore. "Fort Scott Post Returns" list the name, as written by others as: Moor, Moores, Moors, and Moon. Where the name was written by Captain Moon, it is a very clear, legible Moon. However, a style of penmanship still used in the Northeast, forms an "r" just as the letter "m" is commonly written.

43. "Fort Scott Post Returns," May, 1842.

44. Ralph Richards, *The Forts of Fort Scott* (Kansas City, Lowell Press, 1976), p. 42. The "New York Indians" were finally paid in 1898—56 years later.

THE MILITARY ROAD BETWEEN
FT. LEAVENWORTH & FT. SCOTT
1840-1853



SCALE: 1 INCH = 14.3 MILES

No map of the Fort Leavenworth-Fort Scott segment of the military road as it was built exists. Map makers of the period had incomplete knowledge of the exact route and maps like the one by Whitman and Searl in 1856 were inaccurate. But the modern researcher by consulting records of both Kansas and Missouri and eyewitness accounts can reconstruct the route as has been done here.

down the Santa Fe to New Mexico and down the military road to Texas. The usual strength of the fort remained under 200 men and less than 10 officers.

These men patrolled the perimeter road, occasionally removing Indians from Missouri, but never in 11 years do the post returns indicate the removal of settlers. Quite the opposite; the fort was providing the military escorts for immigrants by 1850.⁴⁵

To patrol the border effectively the garrison needed to be on the road; yet many times the men were forced by high water to stay on base. The road was impassable after a period of heavy rain. "Detained by high water," was a most common remark on the returns. Once, a new commander, Bvt. Maj. Philip R. Thompson, was delayed ". . . in consequence of the fire at Kansas, and [at the] Marais de Cygnes by high water."⁴⁶ An analysis of the orders received at Fort Scott indicates that on an average less than three weekly dispatches were received in October, November, December, January, February, and April; while during the summer months and March, over three dispatches a month reached the post. The weather and the rivers greatly affected travel on the road.

The military road was obsolete as a perimeter patrol of Indian territory almost from the time it was completed. November, 1844, found the ". . . works still in progress . . ." at Fort Scott, but the road was already used as a highway for immigrants. The same report stated:

This road is highly important as a military communication; and, being the only direct route from the northwestern part of Missouri and Iowa to Arkansas and Texas, it has been much travelled, and those accustomed to use it will be put to great inconvenience by its present condition.⁴⁷

Not all of those who used it were just traveling through. Many stayed. Dr. Johnston Lykins, a Baptist missionary in southern Lykins county from 1826 made a special note in his journal, that he had met at Westport with the first group of white people he had worshipped with in 10 years.⁴⁸ Lykins came "with-

out trail" and throughout his journal never mentioned a road. For the last two years covered in his writings, the military post road lay to the very extreme east of the area that he served. He followed creeks and ". . . the line of the hill . . ." in his journeys to serve the Indians.

Many of the immigrants came by ox cart. Mary Barnard had traveled across the prairie twice by ox cart before coming to Linn county, ". . . as usual with ox teams."⁴⁹ Mrs. Colt came to Bourbon county to settle in a vegetarian colony west of Fort Scott by that same method. Eighteen miles was an exhausting day and the carts were so uncomfortable that many walked. The distance was measured from "wood to wood"⁵⁰ and accommodations were sought at the nearest house. Mrs. Colt describes her last days on the military road:

May 11th—"Made" but a few miles yesterday. Forged the Little Osage; the last river, they say, we have to ford; it was a very difficult one too, on account of such steep banks and muddy bottom. Our "noble lords" complained of the great weight of the wagons. They were obliged to attach all the oxen to one wagon, draw that through and up the steep bank, then take another, and so on until all were through and up the bank.

That our wagon is heavily loaded, have only to make a minute of what we have stowed away in it—eight trunks, one valise, three carpet bags, a box of soda crackers, 200 lbs. flour, 100 lbs. corn meal, a few lbs. of sugar, rice, dried apple, one washtub of little trees, utensils for cooking, and two provision boxes—say nothing of mother, a good fat sister, self, and two children who ride through the rivers.⁵¹

After crossing the Little Osage east of what is now Fulton, they spent the night at the last house they were to see before reaching their destination west of Fort Scott. "A bed was made for us on the floor; she bade us put our shoes and stockings under our heads, or the rats would carry them off. And we thought before morning that they should take us bodily, not minding the small articles, such as shoes and stockings."⁵² They left the road and civilization at this point and continued ". . . crossing the 20 mile prairie, no roads—keep pilots ahead to pilot us around ravines and keep us out of gulches. . . ."

Such adventures did not deter the immigrants from coming and by the 1850's the per-

45. "Fort Scott Post Returns," April, 1850.

46. *Ibid.*, June, 1849.

47. *Sen. Doc. No. 1* (serial 449), p. 147.

48. Johnston Lykins, "Journal, 1826-1842," June 25, 1842, in manuscript division, Kansas State Historical Society. Johnston Lykins was a missionary to the Indians before David Lykins came to the area. Johnston never mentions David in his "Journal" but they are believed to have been brothers.

49. Mary A. Shattuck, "My Early Life and Travels," *From Pioneering to the Present* (Pleasanton, Linn County Publishing Co., n. d.), p. 125.

50. Colt, *Went to Kansas*, p. 40.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

imeter road was no longer on the perimeter but well inside settled land. The government moved the Indians to reservations in Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona where rivers that ran and grass that was green did not constitute such a temptation to the European settler. Apartheid was still the government policy. The Indians would just be contained in another place.

Order No. 9 went out to Fort Scott on March 30, 1853. They were to abandon the fort, leaving a Sergeant Hudson behind until June 25, and march to Fort Leavenworth. The colors were struck first on April 9, but the rivers would have the last word. The soldiers were detained by high water.⁵³

The Military Post Road became known as the "Old Post Road" after 1853. During the next six years it served a greater purpose than the War Department had ever envisioned, for it was the funnel for immigration into eastern Kansas. Immigrants came from the surrounding states, New England, and many came from the Southern border states of Kentucky and Tennessee. Immigrants coming into Indian territory were not from Europe, though thousands were sailing to America from Ireland, England, and Germany in 1830 and the years preceding the Civil War. The census of 1855, listed a population of 8,601 residents in Kansas territory.⁵⁴

This census to certify "legal voters" was brought about by the Kansas-Nebraska bill. Sen. Stephen Douglas, with the help of Pres. Franklin Pierce, and the Southern congressmen, had ramrodded the bill through in 1854. The Kansas-Nebraska bill created the two territories of Nebraska and Kansas, repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820, and provided for "squatter sovereignty" on the issue of slavery.

Acts of violence were common along the road. Westport and West Point, in Missouri, and Leavenworth and Fort Scott in Kansas, were strong Proslavery areas. Linn county, located across from West Point and north of Fort Scott, suffered greatly until Free Staters gained control in 1858. The post road provided a roadway for Free Staters coming into the territory to settle but it also provided ready access

and a route of retreat for the terrorists. Charles Hamilton and his men came north out of Fort Scott to kill five men just off the road, north of Trading Post.⁵⁵ They fled across the line to West Point. James Montgomery, credited with being the first "Jayhawker," gathered an army of approximately 200 Free Staters and patrolled the road. John Brown came down the road to build a fort close to the massacre site. Things reached the point where the dragoons, who had become the cavalry, were called out once again to patrol the post road. This time they came not to keep peace between the Indians and settlers, but to stop the civil war on the border. Much publicity generated from the undeclared war and while fewer than 55 people lost their lives, the terrorist methods used by both "Bushwacker" and "Jayhawker" made Kansans go armed to the fields.⁵⁶ Every settlement had a vigilante type militia.

The Old Post Road had become a territorial road when Kansas became a territory. A new road, No. 7, was built to the west in 1859. The next year citizens petitioned the senate for mail service in the towns of Mound City, Paola, and Olathe, that lay along the new route between Fort Leavenworth and Fort Scott.⁵⁷ The Old Post Road fell into disuse more because of its location than because of the new route. Located within three miles of the state line for the greater part of its length, Free Staters feared West Point in Missouri and Proslavery people feared Linn county and Montgomery after 1858. The route to the west was the military road used by Fort Scott during the Civil War proper. A telegraph line was run along this road and it is sometimes called the "telegraph road."⁵⁸ The Old Post Road, south of West Point, was the route used by Gen. Sterling Price on his route south from the raid at Westport. The Union army followed, and even camped at ". . . the Marais des Cygnes, where the road to Fort Scott deflects from the Line Road."⁵⁹ The Old Post Road was still considered the "direct road" to Fort Scott.

55. Hall, "Historic Linn," Emma W. Morse, letter to George J. Martin, June 18, 1907.

56. Nyle H. Miller, *Kansas: A Students' Guide to Localized History* (New York, Teachers College Columbia University, 1965), p. 9.

57. *Territorial Paper of the United States Senate, Kansas*, National Archives Microfilm M721, Record Group 46, Roll 16.

58. Richard Josiah Hinton, *Rebel Invasion of Missouri and Kansas and the Campaign of the Army of the Border Against General Sterling Price in October and November, 1864* (Chicago, Church & Goodman, 1865), p. 205.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 186.

53. "Fort Scott Post Returns," April, 1852.

54. Leverett W. Spring, *Kansas, the Prelude to the War for the Union* (Boston, Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1885), p. 43.

The Wyandotte constitution was debated in the senate in 1860, though Kansas did not become a state until January 29, 1861. The voting returns sent to the senate, along with the constitution, indicate how well the road had served to populate eastern Kansas. All of Kansas counties adjacent to the road were organized and the voting population cast an overwhelming majority in favor of the Free-State constitution. Linn county had only six votes cast against the constitution. Lykins sent no returns.⁶⁰ The Wyandotte constitution provided that five percent of the sale of public lands was to go to the state of Kansas to be used for roads.

The Old Post Road was abandoned as the through route to Kansas City and north, but parts of it survived locally into the 1870's.⁶¹

60. *Territorial Paper of the United States Senate, Kansas.*

61. William Shattuck, "Military and Farm Journal 1864-1885," in the files of Mary Mendenhall Frisbie.

Gradually the road was nibbled away, parts going into new roads, other sections going into fields until even the route became unknown.

State Representative F.A. Jewell tried in 1917, to have the legislature mark the route.⁶² People were more interested in new highways funded by the Federal Aid to Roads act of 1916, and the bill was not passed. U.S. Highway 69 was built to serve the descendants of those early settlers and the Old Post Road disappeared into that special oblivion reserved for functional things that no longer function, only to be remembered because it did serve a unique and important purpose to eastern Kansas.

62. *House Journal, Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the State of Kansas* (Topeka, Kansas State Printing Plant, 1917), pp. 236, 360.