

rived September 15, 1847, at Table creek, on the Missouri river.

September 23 Lieut. D. P. Woodbury, engineer corps, with an escort of five officers and seventy-eight men left for Grand Island on the Platte river.

October 23, escort returned from Grand Island; March 12, 1847, Lieut. Colonel Powell relinquished command and left for Grand Island.

April 28, detachment eighteen officers and 375 men left for Grand Island; arrived June 1.

30.

Hd. Qrs. Squadron Mounted Riflemen, }
Fort Childs, Indian Territory, }
November 1, 1848. }

Sir:—I have the honor to report that in obedience to orders No. 4, of the Sixth military department, of October 2, 1848 (referring to orders of a previous date from the headquarters of the army) I left Fort Leavenworth on October 15, in command of companies I and G of regiment of Mounted Riflemen, to relieve the volunteer garrison at Fort Childs, Platte river, and arrived at this post on October 28; marching about 280 miles and in most inclement weather.

I found on my arrival here that Lieut. Colonel Powell, Missouri volunteers previously in command of this post, had left for Fort Leavenworth on or about October 9, leaving as a garrison for this place, one first lieutenant and eighteen privates. These under my instructions I immediately ordered to report at Fort Leavenworth, for which post they left on October 30. Our situation at this post will be for this winter one of extreme hardship and I fear much suffering. We have our shelters yet to erect both for men and horses and the weather already exceedingly cold, has every indication of heavy snow with severe cold, and the material of which this post is to be constructed (sod and sundried brick) can not be procured or worked in the snow. In consequence of the scarcity of forage at this post, I have considered it best to send back to Fort Leavenworth a portion of our horses, reserving seventy-three (about sufficient to mount four-fifths of each company) and the larger portion of these I fear must perish in this northern latitude and exposed prairies without shelter. I have placed my entire command with the exception of a sufficient guard, upon duty constructing shelters, under the direction of First Lieut. Woodbury, engineer corps.

I regret that the extraordinary conduct of Lieut. Colonel Powell in ordering or permitting Assistant Surgeon Joseph Walker, U. S. A., to accompany him to Fort Leavenworth, has left us entirely without medical attendance and never did troops need a medical officer more than this garrison composed entirely of raw recruits. I have accordingly directed the assistant quartermaster to endeavor to employ a suitable

person but have not the slightest suspicion that any person can be found, for the compensation allowed by regulation (\$40 per month) to come at this most inclement season of the year, this distance (220 miles beyond the frontiers of Missouri); I trust therefore the department will see urgent necessity of prompt action and that the secretary of war will direct a medical officer to repair to this post immediately.

Dr. Walker's presence with Colonel Powell could not have been necessary as a medical officer, inasmuch as the strength of Colonel Powell's escort was, as I am informed, only four men, including the medical officer of his own volunteer battalion. In connection with the departure of Lieut. Colonel Powell I report also that he carried off with him all books, papers, orders or instructions relative or belonging to this post, copies of which last I suggest may be forwarded to me. Two days previous to leaving Fort Leavenworth I addressed the headquarters of this department, relative to the destitute condition of the troops of this squadron, in woolen clothing. And I now repeat to the department, that the enlisted men of this command are absolutely suffering for good and sufficient clothing. At Fort Leavenworth previous to leaving, I made every effort to procure wool overalls, but there was not a pair of any arm of the service at that post. I trust that this will receive the consideration of the department, as I fear, in consequence of the illness of General Kearney (commanding this military department) there may be some delay which our condition here does not admit of. I send an express with the muster rolls to Fort Leavenworth and shall send again to that post about December 1; after that period and until May 1, 1849, I shall send to Linden, Atchison county, Missouri. All communications for this garrison should accordingly be directed to the postoffice at Linden.

I am informed by the assistant quartermaster at this post, that under the directions of Lieut. Colonel Powell, he has in his employ an express rider, an experienced mountain trapper and trader at \$50 (or \$55 for the winter) per month. Whatever may be thought of the necessity of employing this man during the summer months, it is very certain now that in a garrison of inexperienced recruits, it will be altogether impracticable, if not totally impossible, to obtain a mail at this post during the winter, by means of any soldier of the command. Accordingly, by my approval, the man is retained in the previous employment, until this reference for the sanction of the secretary of war can be replied to, or until the opening of safe travel in the spring. I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your Obedt Servt.,
C. F. RUFF,
Capt. Mounted Riflemen Comdg.
General R. Jones,
Adjutant General, U. S. A.,
Washington, D. C.

31.

Hd'q'rs Squadron Mounted Riflemen, }
Fort Childs, Oregon route, }
February 26, 1849. }

Sir: I have the honor to recall to your consideration the necessity of definite instructions regarding the movements and distribution of the troops on the Platte river under my command; it will be remembered that by orders from the war department of September 20, 1848, I was assigned to the command of the troops on the Platte river with instructions to relieve the battalion of Missouri volunteers at the posts on that river and its vicinity. As previously reported I found a small detachment (18 men) of the volunteer battalion at this post. Fort Kearney, the other post indicated, had been previously entirely abandoned and the public property (building materials) there placed in charge of a citizen in the employ of the assistant quartermaster; on my arrival here I found the winter too far advanced to send a detachment to Fort Kearney, there to construct winter quarters, storehouses, etc., unless the necessity had been imperative and apparent, which was not the case. The point now upon which I desire instructions and information is whether Fort Kearney, as originally intended, is to be the depot of supplies and transportation for this post and others on the route, or whether Fort Kearney is to be abandoned (as in my opinion it should be) and Fort Leavenworth, which is now and must continue the depot for New Mexico and California should be considered the depot for this route also; information upon this point is necessary, to enable me to determine of the necessity of occupying Fort Kearney as soon in the spring as troops can march. The only possible good to be derived from occupying Fort Kearney is the obtaining the better road and direct route to this post and others on the Oregon route; a military garrison is not necessary there for the protection of the frontiers of Missouri, this post being for that purpose, far more effectual with a garrison of mounted troops. The expense of erecting quarters and buildings is a consideration which will unquestionably have much weight with the secretary of war. If, on the other hand, Fort Leavenworth is to be the depot for this route, a survey of a practicable road should at once be directed either from this post to Fort Leavenworth or from Fort Leavenworth to this post; the present traveled route is totally impracticable for heavily loaded wagons, in consequence the supplies intended for this post will probably be transported by the Missouri river to Fort Kearney before the proper survey can be made, unless that survey be ordered forthwith and at the same time directions for the district quartermaster at St. Louis not to ship to a point higher than Fort Leavenworth. It is proper to add that Fort Kearney is