

tucky, appointed from Missouri in 1812, rose to be colonel, resigned from the service in 1853 and died in 1857.

The War of 1846.

Their report having been made and filed, the matter slumbered for eight years, during which time the site of Nebraska City was visited only by occasional Indian hunting-parties or fur-traders from St. Louis, passing up or down the river. But in 1846, under pressure of imminent war with Great Britain on the north-west coast and Mexico on the south, there was great activity at Washington, and on the 6th of March, by command of Major General Scott, Adjutant General R. Jones issued an order for the establishment of a new military post on the Missouri river, near the mouth of Table creek, "as soon as the season for operations will permit." The site to be selected by Colonel Kearney, of the First Dragoons, then stationed at St. Louis, the dragoons being quartered at Jefferson Barracks, ten miles below the then city.

Colonel Kearney did not hesitate in his choice, electing at once the spot which he had once before picked out for a similar purpose: and his opinion being sought as to the necessary garrison, he said that as the post would be in a dangerous Indian country, and most probably the starting-point from the Missouri River of the Oregon emigration, he thought it would be a permanent one; and recommended that it should be garrisoned with at least two companies of dragoons and two of infantry, and four companies of mounted riflemen in case the contemplated regiment of that branch were authorized. He has just learned that all the timber lands in the vicinity of Table Creek are claimed by squatters, who are trading in whiskey with the Indians.

The Dragoons.

We next hear from him at Fort Leavenworth, whence on the 12th of May he despatched Lieutenant A. J. Smith by land, with thirty dragoons of Captain Moore's company, for the new post, taking twenty government horses.

I do not know when "dragoons" were dropped from the organization of the United States army; they had them in the Mexican war, and did not have them, that I know of, in the war of the rebellion. The origin of them seems to have been this: President Andrew Jackson proposed the enlistment of six companies so designated, in 1833, to retain the services of a large number of volunteers, who had been enrolled as "mounted rangers" along the frontier at the time of the Black Hawk war, and whose term of service had expired; the bill, as it came from congress, provided "that a regiment of dragoons, consisting of ten companies, of 71 men each

should be organized and stationed upon the western frontier." Orders to this effect were issued in March, 1833, and the headquarters of the regiment were established, for that time, at Jefferson Barracks.

Occupation.

On the 15th of May, 1846, Colonel Kearney, accompanied by Brigadier-General Geo. M. Brooke and Major Clifton Wharton, embarked from Fort Leavenworth for Table creek, on the steamer *Amaranth*, with company A, 1st Infantry, under 1st Lieut. W. E. Prince, and Company C, 1st Dragoons, under Capt. B. D. Moore; five officers, besides the three first named, and sixty-four men. Major Wharton wrote the Adjutant-General, during this trip, reporting that the nearest post-offices would be "either Munsiker's Ferry, or High Bridge Creek, Atchison county, Missouri," and suggesting Fort Nebraska or Fort Macomb as a name for the new establishment. On arriving, Colonel Kearney says "the ground for the buildings was laid off; the plan of them decided upon; all necessary arrangements made, and orders given." I suppose we must say that this, the first improvement of Nebraska City, was the work of General Brooke, since he was present; he being general commanding the Third Military Department, with headquarters at St. Louis. Colonel Kearney and General Brooke then departed down the river, leaving Major Wharton in command; and on Colonel Kearney's arrival at Fort Leavenworth, he received orders to organize for the Santa Fe expedition, and therefore sent at once for Captain Moore and his dragoons; and the first report from the new post (dated Headquarters Camp Kearney, near the junction of Table Creek and the Missouri) gives notice of their departure, on the morning of May 30th.

The Block-house.

"Camp Kearney" was thus left insufficiently manned. The garrison received a visit presently from the Otoes. "The subjects treated of in the interviews with them pertained to matters of general interest," says Lieut. Prince, rather vaguely, writing of it twelve years later; Major Wharton gives a more definite hint as to their transactions, reporting to St. Louis that "I have not a single horse for duty, nor to follow a trespassing party of Otoes." Major Wharton was thirsting for the Mexican wars, and presently disappeared from Table Creek. Lieut. Prince remained, and he it was, according to his own recorded statement, who erected the blockhouse, between June 4 and July 19, 1846. On the latter date he and his men also marched for Fort Leavenworth, and what became of them further I do not know. Their former companions, the dragoons, accompanied General Kearney (he received his com-

mission on the road) to Santa Fe and California. The blockhouse and a quantity of logs and lumber were left in charge of William Ridgway English, no doubt one of the squatters spoken of by Colonel Kearney, and things were again quiet for a time.

Oregon.

The twenty-ninth congress passed an act, approved May 19, 1846, "for establishing military stations on the route to Oregon." This was necessary for the protection of the Oregon and California emigration, which was now assuming vast proportions; it may also have had force as a move in the game with Great Britain, now nearing its end, for the possession of the Oregon territory. By June, 1847, the War department had decided that "these stations for the present will be limited to two, the first near Grand Island where the road to California encounters the Platte River, and the second at or near Fort Laramie." The intermediate station at Grand Island was, I believe, an absolutely new establishment. The other "fort" was of course hitherto merely a trading-post; Sublette & Campbell built in 1834 a stockade on Laramie River (named from one La Ramie, a *voyageur* killed on its headwaters) which was called Fort John and perhaps Fort William for a few years, when the name Fort Laramie displaced it; and this name the notable military post which the government was now about to erect at the same point, inherited.

The Second Occupation.

These two stations the department decided to garrison with mounted volunteers, and a requisition was accordingly made upon the state of Missouri for one battalion, or five companies. The volunteers were promptly forthcoming, but it seems they experienced a deadlock in the election of their officers; by the time this important matter was arranged, it was too late for them to get very far on their way before winter set in. The emigration which they were to protect was, at any rate, over for the season, and it was held that no good end would be served by attempting to fit them up, even at Grand Island, for that winter; Adjutant-General Jones therefore directed Major Wharton, now a colonel and still stationed at Fort Leavenworth, to cause them to proceed to Table Creek and winter them there, taking advantage of the block-house that had been built there the year before and the extra lumber that had been cut. This order was not received until after the command had been started for the west, with a year's supply of provisions and ammunition; but they were overhauled, and marched into Nebraska City, supposedly over the prairie, by some back way. After they were there, a doubt of the wisdom of the arrangement sprang up at Washington, fostered by some in-