

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO IN THE REGION OF TULSA

By JAMES H. GARDNER

More than one hundred years ago the neighborhood of the junction of the Cimarron and Arkansas rivers became of some importance and exercised a degree of influence on the history of the surrounding country. Several Osage trails crossed the Arkansas River on which these Indians traveled both on their war expeditions and when engaged in their more peaceful pursuits of hunting.

Soon after the enactment of what was known as the Indian Removal Bill in 1830, and shortly before the execution of the Creek Treaty in 1832, Lieut. James L. Dawson of the Seventh Infantry at Fort Gibson was sent in command of a number of troops to accompany Rev. Isaac McCoy on a tour of inspection of the Indian country lying west of Fort Gibson. Dawson was charged with the duty of examining the country along the Arkansas River as far as the Cimarron and south to the Canadian and reporting to his superiors the appearance of the country and its suitability as a home for the Creek Indians about to be emigrated from the East. After their return to Fort Gibson Dawson made an interesting report bearing date of November 2, 1831, which is set out in full herewith.

A year later Washington Irving accompanied a party from Fort Gibson up the north side of the Arkansas River over much the same route as that traversed by Lieut. Dawson. His description of the country seen by him is set out in his classic *A Tour on the Prairies*. Irving's party passed the site of the future Tulsa and crossed the Arkansas River just above the mouth of the Cimarron.

Less than two years later the government launched an ambitious program to make friends with the Indians in middle and western Oklahoma in order to prepare the country for the coming of the emigrant Indians from the East. Gen. Henry Leavenworth was given the command of the southwestern frontier and established his headquarters at Fort Gibson. One of the first steps taken by him was to establish

outposts to the west of the fort and with this in view he directed Lieut. Dawson to inspect the country in the vicinity of the mouth of the Cimarron and then to proceed with his command south to the mouth of Little River on the Canadian. His examination was intended to provide the data for the establishment of a post at or near the mouth of the Cimarron and another at the mouth of Little River. The plans of Gen. Arbuckle resulted in three advanced posts, one called Camp Arbuckle on the Arkansas River, one, Camp Canadian or Camp Holmes at the mouth of Little River and one at the mouth of the Washita River called Camp Washita. After Lieut. Dawson had made his examination of the country he made a written report to Gen. Leavenworth dated at Fort Gibson on June 20, 1834. This report is also set out herewith.

Maj. George Birch was directed by Gen. Arbuckle to proceed from Fort Gibson with his command of two companies to the vicinity near the mouth of the Cimarron recommended by Lieut. Dawson and establish a post there. While they were erecting permanent quarters for the command a steamboat named the *William Parsons*, of one hundred sixteen tons, started up the Arkansas in June with a cargo of provisions for this new post, the first boat to ascend the river higher than the mouth of the Verdigris. Before they reached their destination, however, a fall in the river alarmed the captain and compelled him to turn about and return down stream. It was necessary therefore to carry the provisions to the new post by land. This new garrison was named Camp Arbuckle complimentary to Gen. Matthew Arbuckle who had been displaced by Gen. Leavenworth. This post was officially abandoned November 11, 1834, but at that time a block house had been erected, ground cleared and certain defensive works were inaugurated. As these remained standing for many years, although unoccupied save by occasional trading parties en-route to and from Santa Fe, it became known in that region as old Fort Arbuckle.

The following account by Mr. James H. Gardner of Tulsa explains the steps taken by him and his associates which have resulted in locating definitely not only the site and remains of Camp Arbuckle but the route traveled by the several military parties passing the neighborhood, the crossing place of

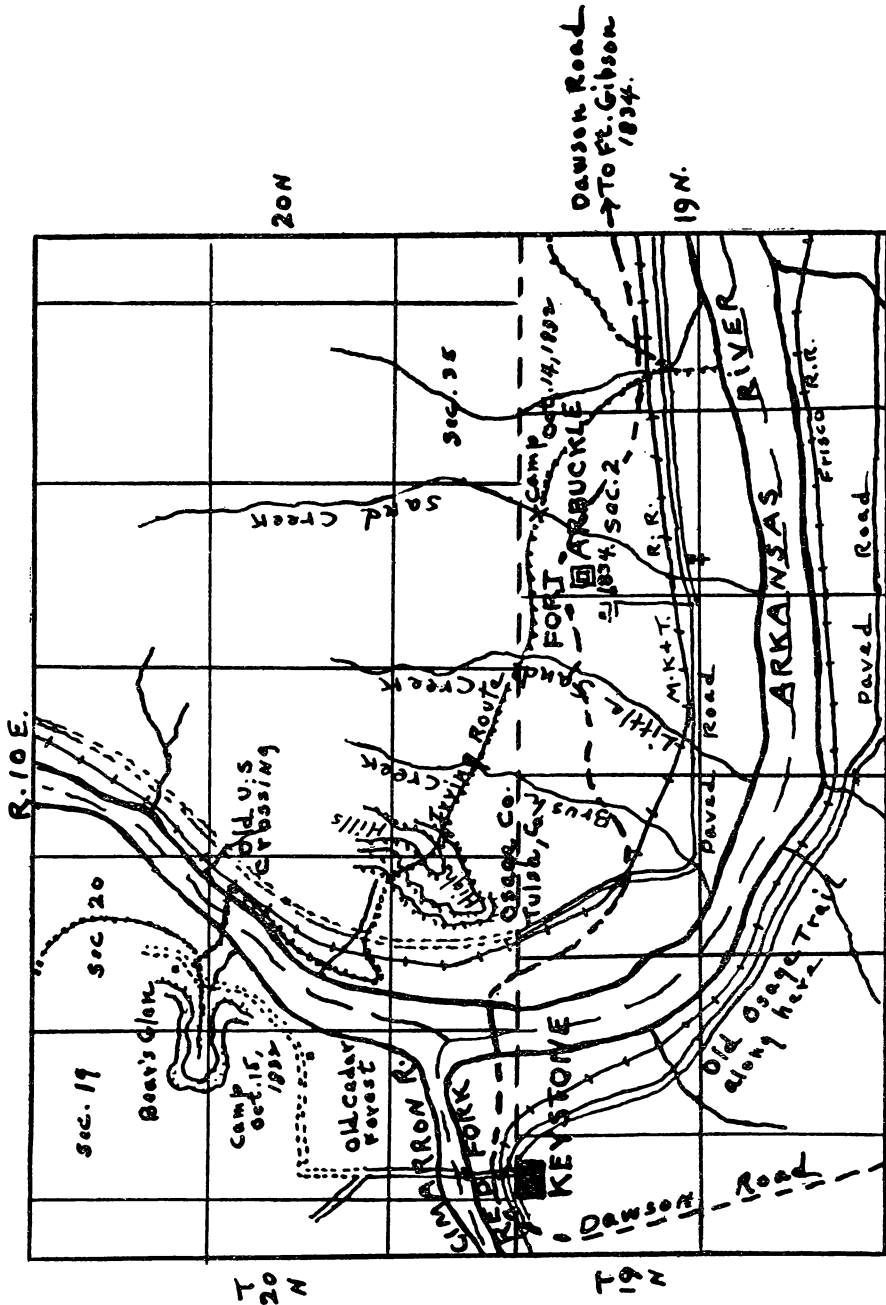
the party accompanied by Washington Irving and the site of their first camp on the west side of the river vividly described by him and Latrobe.

By his writings and personal accounts, Mr. Grant Foreman has interested us in the fact that there are historic features in the vicinity of Tulsa that have not been located either in the literature of the country or by those interested in the subject. In an effort to make amends for this neglect a few of us have engaged in the necessary study and investigation that has resulted in locating these sites beyond a question of a doubt. The result of their work is preserved in the accompanying maps which give the location of these places. It is to be hoped that these maps and the information therein contained may lead to the accumulation of more data on the location of old points of interest in this area and the state generally.

The outstanding location determined and here placed of record is the fixed position of old Fort Arbuckle established in 1834 near the mouth of the Cimarron River. Another is what Latrobe in 1832 called "The Bear's Glen", in the same general district. This latter is the point described in some detail by Washington Irving in his *Tour on the Prairies* in 1832. Latrobe mentions it in his *The Rambler in North America*,¹ he having been in the Irving party on the prairie tour.

On February 26, of this year, Messrs. Frank Billingslea, C. R. Gilmore, N. J. Gubser and myself, all of Tulsa, and Messrs. Ola Rogers and J. C. Pitts, both of Cleveland, Oklahoma, met in Keystone, Oklahoma, for the purpose of trying to locate the site of Fort Arbuckle and the "wild, rocky dell" of Irving and Latrobe. We were not successful that day in locating the site of the old fort but we were successful in identifying the dell and in finding that it was well pictured by Irving in both location and description. This camp site where the party remained over night on October 15, 1832, is at the point shown in detail on the smaller map, namely at southwest corner of section 20, township 20 north, range 10 east, in the southeast corner of Pawnee County on land belonging to a Mr. Pierce. Judge C. C. Herndon of Tulsa remarked when this place was later shown him on the ground, that any

¹*The Rambler in North America*, Charles Joseph Latrobe, New York, 1835.



Historical points near the mouth of the Red Fork (Cimarron) of the James H. Gardner, 1933.

To Little River 1834.

judge would pronounce it the spot because in the first place it is "where" Irving said it is and secondly it is "what" he said it is.

It seems that on the whole route of the *Tour on the Prairies*, this dell, or Bear's Glen, is the only spot where one may exactly locate a camping spot of that pioneer party of explorers. It is a short boxed canyon bordered by high ledges of sandstone that narrow and meet about a quarter of a mile above the entrance at a point where a wet-weather spring issues from amongst the rocks. Irving made the mistake of calling the rock "limestone" instead of sandstone. There is no limestone in that area. Irving's writings show that he was not familiar with the different types of rocks. But he states that the party crossed the Arkansas River at a point one mile and a quarter above the mouth of the Red Fork (Cimarron) and then proceeded half a mile across the bottoms to where they entered this wild, rocky dell suitable for a bandit's retreat. He thus described its location by metes and bounds when his story is read with care. This is a picturesque place and was a home for bears in 1832. Latrobe states that the guides, when returning to the glen to bring up lost horses, shot two bears in this place that the party had just left a few hours before; for that reason he termed it the "Bear's Glen." Photographs taken in and about the glen illuminate the picture drawn by Irving and Latrobe. In its lower portion, there is a widened, flat area suitable to accommodate the party of eighty who remained there for their night's camp; they were near drinking water and protected from the fall winds by this walled-in canyon. This glen is from fifty to one hundred feet in relief and is shown in detail on the Hominy Quadrangle of the U. S. Topographic Map. If one will read *Tour on the Prairies* in its description of the crossing of the Arkansas and the camp that night, with these maps for reference the interest of the story will be much enhanced.

On our exploratory trip that day, February 26, 1933, Mr. C. R. Gilmore learned by a separate trip that a Creek Indian named Lincoln Postoak who lives near the town of Red Fork knew about the location of Old Fort Arbuckle. Lincoln is about seventy years of age and his father was a Creek emigrant from Alabama. He informed Gilmore that

the site of the old fort had been pointed out to him by his father when he was a boy and that he had been shown where the flag-pole stood. At a subsequent date, when Mr. Foreman was in Tulsa, Mr. Billingslea, Mr. Gilmore and myself drove him out to interview Mr. Postoak. His story about his father's "town" and his experience in emigrating from the homeland, etc., impressed Mr. Foreman for reliability. Then later Mr. Gilmore, Mr. Billingslea and myself took Mr. Lincoln Postoak on a trip of exploration whereby we found the location as he had described it and plenty of evidence to substantiate it. The land-line position of it is southwest quarter of northwest quarter of section 2, township 19 north, range 10 east, on lands of Bud Anderson, in the western portion of Tulsa County. Reference made to the map.

At the location of old Fort Arbuckle (or Camp Arbuckle) are to be found remnants of the old stone chimneys of what appears to have been a stockade with four or more separate buildings from 50 to 100 feet apart and arranged in somewhat of a quadrangle. Practically one hundred years having elapsed since its construction in 1834, and with the land around it having been in cultivation, all the old timbers have long since rotted, burned or been hauled away. The stone chimney piles are from three to five feet high and from six to fifteen feet across. Some of the loose foundation stones have been gathered up in farming the land and piled up at the chimney sites and possibly as separate piles to make up the half dozen or so of such piles. Some of these sandstone rocks show dressing for masonry and are red-colored from fire. The fort was placed on a flat-topped ridge of alluvial soil from which good drainage was obtained and a splendid view may be had of the purlieu of the fort site. This sandy soil is part of the old high terrace of the ancestral Arkansas River and no stone is to be found in that immediate locality except rocks which have been hauled in by wagons. The nearest outcrops from which the stone was obtained are a mile or more north where the hard sandstone rocks of the Pennsylvanian formation lie in profuse amount along the exposed ledges, at a higher level. A good many tons of this building material were hauled in to this site, indicating that the builders at the time of its construction expected it to be a stockade of some permanency. However, its

fate was otherwise, as hereinafter related in the appended story of Mr. Foreman.

At the site of this old fort, our exploring party picked up shards of chinaware, pieces of glass, broken fragments of earthenware, old hand-made, square nails, fragments of charcoal and bone, with one specimen that seems to be a part of a bear's claw. Both Mr. Anderson and his neighbor Mr. Hane have stated that old minnie-balls have been found around there and at one time somebody found at least one old Spanish coin at the site. Photographs are herewith included of the old fort site.

It is probable that after the abandonment of the old fort the buildings were used for a time as a trading post. Some old maps show what was known as "Camp Cedar" near the mouth of the Cimarron and it may have been a successor of Camp Arbuckle. But when Capt. J. L. Dawson wrote his report on the construction of a wagon-road from Fort Gibson to and beyond this locality to Little River in June, 1834 (copy of which report the writer has in his possession through the compliments of Mr. Foreman who secured it in Washington) he refers to the fact that the point of land bounded by the north side of the Red Fork (Cimarron) River and the west side of the Arkansas River, contained a splendid forest of cedar trees suitable for building timber. Since the exact date of Camp Cedar is not known nor much of what it signified, it is at least suggestive that this place may have been a point for the cutting of cedar trees and known as the cedar camp. There is a natural crossing of the Arkansas River at the point where the Irving party crossed it, a mile and a quarter above the mouth of the Cimarron. At a considerably later date, this point became known as "The old U. S. crossing" and was used as a wagon ford in lower water as late as the opening of the Cherokee Strip in 1893. This part of Pawnee County, near its junction with Osage and Tulsa Counties, is the southeast portion of the Cherokee outlet. Original settlers in this vicinity used this fording point up until thirty five years ago. It is probable that a covered sandstone ledge under the river makes a natural shallowness in the water flow at that point; the gradient of the river increases considerably from that point down to the mouth of the Cimarron.

The old road from Fort Gibson, above mentioned, con-

structed by Capt. J. L. Dawson under the direction of Brevet Major Birch, is shown on the accompanying map as taken from an old sketch in the files of the U. S. War Department and obtained by Mr. Foreman. This road was marked by conical mounds of earth from four to seven feet in diameter at intervals along its course and it is possible that some signs of these piles may yet remain in evidence when a careful search is made. If readers of this paper should know of such, it would be a pleasure to have them report the fact in order that vestiges of this old road may be located. By comparing the route on the pioneer map in relation to drainage with the modern map given alongside, the approximate position of the road can be determined. It passed close by Coweta, Oneta, Broken Arrow, Tulsa and Sand Springs; and south of Keystone, it followed the divide for eight miles or so between the drainage of the Cimarron and the Arkansas rivers. A road shown on the Hominy topographic sheet follows this same ridge route and may have been fixed by the original marked survey.

In November, 1831, three years before the above mentioned road was constructed, this same J. L. Dawson, then a first lieutenant in the Seventh Infantry, made a trip from Fort Gibson to the mouth of the Red Fork (Cimarron) and back to Fort Gibson. He was at that time making a report on the soils, timber, village sites, etc., in looking forward to the removal of the Indian tribes. Mr. Foreman has supplied the writer with a copy of Dawson's report on that trip made to Gen. Alexander Macomb. He gives his course by metes and bounds and the route is shown on the accompanying map. It is a very interesting description of the country traversed. In fact both this report and the one made in connection with the road survey are worthy of reproducing in full.

The northwestern extension of the routes of the Irving party in 1832 and the previously inferred route of Nathan Boone in 1843 both originating at Fort Gibson and roughly following in the southeast segment the route where the Dawson road was later constructed, are shown on the pioneer map herewith included.

The Osage Indian population located along the central drainage of the Verdigris River and eastward to the Neosho (Grand) River had established some prominent hunting and

war trails that coursed to the south and southwest. One of these trails that Dawson termed the Big Osage War Trail ran from the Claremore country south by west past Broken Arrow and crossed the Arkansas apparently between Jenks and Bixby, then took a southward course along Snake Creek where it bore southwestward again toward the head of the Washita by the mouth of Little River. By reference to the Dawson reconnaissance report in 1831, it will be noted that he followed it for four miles in what is now the Broken Arrow vicinity (probably with the course of Hainey Creek), then crossed it again on his return course at a point between Mounds and Haskell. Then in its southwest extension he refers to it again in his report on the road survey in 1834, where it traversed the north drainage of the Canadian. There he called it "the Big Osage War and Hunting Trail." Note in Dawson's report of 1831 that where he crossed this Osage travel route along the south side of the Arkansas in the vicinity of Snake Creek, he says "On this day's route we crossed the Osage War Trails, 5 in number abreast of each other, bearing south towards the Canadian." Some vestiges of this trail may still be evident in prairie lands which have never been broken by cultivation.

Another prominent Osage trail passed southwestward from the Claremore country near by where Tulsa is located and followed the north side of the Arkansas to a point where it crossed the river at the mouth of Euchee Creek, one mile west of what is now Sand Springs. Lincoln Postoak knew this trail when he was a young man and at one time ran a ferry there nearby. After crossing to the south side of the Arkansas, the trail ran westward to and beyond the mouth of the Red Fork (Cimarron) as mentioned by Dawson. But Postoak says a branch led southward past the head of Rock Creek. In its northeast trend from the crossing point of the river, it followed up Euchee Creek and took a course through the southeast corner of Osage County and apparently passed between the present site of Tulsa and the bald hill located in section 17, township 20 north, range 12 east.

The bald hill above mentioned has apparently never been timbered and was a pioneer land-mark. It rises 200 feet above the valleys of Flat Rock and Harlow creeks and is at the head of these two drainage streams. It still contains a pile of rocks at its crest which has apparently been there since the

Osages first marked it over 100 years ago. Latrobe states that the route of their journey in 1832 passed south of this hill and Irving referred to it in the *Tour on the Prairies*; it was in reference to this hill that the Indian guide Beatte stated that the mouth of the Red Fork was in seeing distance to the west. This bald hill is shown on the pioneer map herewith; and on the modern map for reference alongside the pioneer map, I have taken the liberty of naming this topographic feature after Beatte, the guide, and labelled it "Beatte's Knob."

Another Osage trail led westward, crossed the Arkansas apparently in the vicinity of Cleveland, Oklahoma, and followed up Cedar Creek. Nathan Boone's diary on his journey in 1843 refers to it and states that they followed it for some distance. While Boone's party contained close observers of rocks, plants, etc., the route is not closely tied into topographic features in the particular area here discussed and his distances from point to point do not check out closely. He apparently crossed the Arkansas at a point well above the mouth of the Cimarron. But after his party crossed the river on an Osage trail his diary² states that they followed the Osage trail from seven-thirty in the morning until two in the afternoon up the same creek. Where this part of the course was, remains an unsolved mystery for the story does not seem to fit the drainage pattern of the Cleveland district. Possibly the party followed the trail along near Cedar Creek and then confused that creek with the head drainage of another water course. Boone's diary refers to Boone in the third person and it is believed that either Lieut. Richard Anderson or Lieut. Abraham R. Johnson, both of whom were graduates of West Point, wrote the diary and supplied the scientific observations on the geology and botany of the region traversed. It was probably Johnson who had been out of the academy for eight years whereas Anderson was graduated the year previous, in 1842. Whoever it was that made the geologic observations by giving the dip of the formations and the fossil life contained, was unusually keen for his day and time. But the journey was likely made too rapidly for accurate observation in detail on the local topography along the route; therefore, it is not pos-

²Boone's *Diary* is part of the record of the Adjutant General's office, Old Files Division, and was published by Louis Pelzer in his *Marches of the Dragoons in the Mississippi Valley*. It is also to be seen in the *Chronicles of Oklahoma*.

sible to follow the route except in a general way on a map of small scale.

Recd Topo. Bureau Dec. 31, 1831

Meman

of Lt. Dawson 7. Infy. accompanied
by a map of route pursued by a de-
tachmt. under cmd. Rev. Mr. Mc-
Coy through the Creek settlement.
Arkansas. Recd. Jan. 11, 1832.

Cantonment Gibson
2d November 1831.

Sir.

I have the honor to report that in pursuance of my instructions of the 20th. ulto., I proceeded with the detachment of eight mounted men, assigned to my Command, through the Creek Settlements on the N side of the Arkansas River, a distance of 12 miles N by W, to Mr. John Davis', at which point I was joined by the Revd. Mr. McCoy, who reached there shortly afterwards from Union Mission, accompanied by two Indians and a white man. The Country through which I passed on this day's route, stretches along the exterior margins of the Arkansas River bottom & is fertile & well adapted to the wants of an Indian population just commencing an agricultural mode of life. There are a number of small streams running into the Arkansas about this point, which are well supported by good bottom and upland and are very well timbered.

The Prairie which borders on the River and creek bottoms, is also very fertile and is cultivated by a considerable portion of the Creek settlers. Davis is situated at the western extremity of what is called "Bruner's Town", the middle settlement of the Creeks on the Arkansas. Mr. McCoy having joined, the whole party moved on about W 9 miles, to the margin of the Arkansas at Hardridges, through pretty good upland well timbered, and second rate prairie, passing the upper Creek Town, and reach-

ing the lower end of a fine Tract of alluvial land, called the "Big Bottom."

We found an Encampment of Delawares here, among whom was a woman & child, who had about eight days before escaped from the Pawnees on the Canadian. She related that the party to which she had belonged, consisted of 2 men, 2 women and a child—that they were encamped on the north fork of Canadian, and were attacked by a large body of Pawnees, just before sunset, who killed the whole party but herself & child, with Bows & arrows.

She it appears, was off from the Camp with her child, a short distance, when she first saw the Pawnees advancing, and was afraid to warn the Indians in Camp of their danger by halloaing to them, least she should discover herself. She accordingly secreted herself behind an old log with her child, from which she could see the massacre which immediately took place.

She remained in her hiding place until it was dark, and then struck her course for the Arkansas, barefooted, with nothing to eat and having a little Boy 2 years old, to bear on her back. She reached Mr. Hardridge's in six days from the Canadian, from which it is presumed that the attack was made on the Delawares about 50 miles, above the mouth of the N. fork of Canadian.

From Hardridge's, we continued our route NW 12 miles, through the "Big Bottom"—thence W 2 miles over poor upland and encamped on a small creek running into the Arkansas from the north. The tract of alluvial land referred to above, is about one mile wide and 12 miles long—It has been heretofore said to be 40 miles long. The greater portion of it is remarkably fertile—It is well timbered, and will probably in a short time be the finest settlement in the whole Creek Country. At the upper end of this Tract there is a very eligible Scite for an Indian Village, immediately bordering on the River, and as it is between the two largest bottoms on the Arkansas, it will most probably be appropriated for

that purpose. From Hardridges to this point, the course of the Arkansas, is very different from what it has been heretofore represented on the maps—The error has been corrected on the map accompanying this report. Continuing our route WNW, through well timbered upland 7 miles, we crossed a large creek running into the Arkansas, with clear water, good bottom land & timber—thence on the same course 5 miles over poor upland & Prairie, crossing a second small creek—thence SW 4 miles, through second rate Prairie, on the Osage hunting trail, to the Arkansas river. At this point we found the Arkansas bottoms, narrow & sandy, and the absence of large Timber render them unfit for settlement. We met a party of five Creeks at the river, hunting a fording place, on their way towards the Deep fork of Canadian. From thence we proceeded W 5 miles, over sandy, barren Ridges and encamped on the Edge of the river bottom which here consisted of sandy Prairie, with small groves of indifferent Timber. On this day's route, we found several fine springs of water, which burst out of the base of the Ridges skirting the alluvial formation—

On the following day, we pursued our route W N W, along the exterior margin of the River bottoms, (which we found of good quality in certain spots, but most generally sandy) a distance of 10 miles and encamped at the Western extremity of a fine Tract of River bottom 3 miles long & one mile wide, where we met a party of Osages & Cherokees. From Davis' to this point, we remarked a Singular deficiency of Stone or mineral of any description. In the small rivulets on the barren Ridges we found occasionally a very small quantity of flinty gravel. Continuing our route N W 4 miles over poor Prairie & Ridges, we struck the Osage Trail leading out to the Red & Salt forks of Arkansas, where Clermont's band of Osages, had gone on their fall hunt for Buffaloe. We followed this Trail through the Ark's bottom on a west Course 6 miles to the Osage ford and after crossing the river, continued on S W 2

miles and encamped on the Edge of the bottom. The Arkansas where we crossed it is about 450 yards wide from bank to bank, very nearly as wide as I have found it at any point below.

The Tract of river bottom through which we passed today is probably 8 miles long & a mile wide, very rich & well timbered—affording sufficient space for a large and dense settlement of Agriculturalists.

The soil on the right bank of the river where we forded, though not first rate, would nevertheless be very Suitable for Cultivation, if there was a Sufficiency of timber to Support farming operations—Owing however to the great deficiency of timber Suitable for building or making enclosures, about $\frac{3}{4}$ ' of a large portion of the good land on the right bank of the Arkansas is rendered comparatively speaking, useless for agricultural purposes. In the Section of Country traversed on this days route, we found some slate Stone, but chiefly silicious sand stone, scattered over the upland in large masses. Pursuing our route on the Osage Trail on the south side of the Arkansas west 7 miles, thence N W 3 miles, we struck the mouth of the Red fork of Arkansas. The face of the Country here undergoes a great change. The ridges are very lofty, covered with silicious sand stone, and pretty much destitute of timber, or of any kind of growth, except scrubby oak bushes, altogether presenting to the eye an Iron bound, rugged waste of country, unfitted for the residence of a civilized being. This I have been informed is the general character of the region bordering on the Red fork, until it reaches the Grand prairie on a S W. course. The Red fork of Arkansas is a noble stream and discharges a vast volume of water into the Arkansas, of which it is probably the largest tributary with the exception of the Canadian. It is 300 yards wide at its mouth, its water very red, and too brackish for ordinary use. As far as I could see or learn from others, its bottoms are small and of indifferent quality.

The region about the mouth of Red fork abounds

with red cedar, a growth which there shows itself in great excellence. From the mouth of the Red fork to the great Bend of the Arkansas the course of the latter river diverges very considerably from its general course, bearing pretty much N W & S E. Having reached this point, estimated to be about 120 miles by water or 70 miles by land (direct) from Cant. Gibson, Mr. McCoy determined on returning between the Arkansas & Canadian rivers, believing it somewhat hazardous to venture an exploration of the Canadian country in advance of the Osages, Creeks & Cherokees, who had not yet reached the Canadian on their hunting expeditions. He urged that it was a point of importance that he should pass through the country unmolested in any way by the Pawnees in order that the opponents to Indian emigration in Congress and among the people, might not have the loss of his horse, or a slight injury done to his party, to urge against the measure, with the view of showing that the Indians would find no security in their new homes. This in conjunction with the probability of his services being required in showing the Wyandots the country on the head of the Neosho, induced him to make a retrograde movement eastwardly.

We accordingly departed from the mouth of the Red fork, and struck a south course 7 miles through a barren region to a branch of Red fork; thence S E 20 miles through rocky prairie & poor wooded hills to the ridge dividing the waters of Arkansas and the Deep fork of Canadian, and encamped on the head of a small branch of the Arkansas. From thence we pursued our route 8 miles S. E. over wooded hills—thence E 5 miles to the Prairie bordering on the Arkansas—thence 12 miles E through 2d rate Prairie and encamped on a large creek running into the Arkansas, having rich wide bottom & excellent timber. On this days route we crossed the Osage war Trails, 5 in number abreast of each other, bearing south towards the Canadian. From this point we continued our course E 7 miles over barren wooded hills, and

thence E 16 miles over poor Prairie, crossing 2 fine creeks and encamped on a third about 40 yards wide, with wide rich bottom and good timber. Thence E 5 miles over 2d rate Prairie, where I parted from Mr. McCoy who proceeded to Union Mission. Continuing on a course about E 20 miles I struck about a mile south of the Frozen rock on the Arkansas, below the mouth of the Neosho, and from thence proceeded to Cant. Gibson N E 4 miles, where I arrived on the 31st. ultimo—

On a general view of the Creek Country traversed by me, it does not appear capable of sustaining a dense population. On the north side of Arkansas the good land is almost exclusively confined to the river & creek bottoms—I speak now of the country bordering on the Arkansas, and not of Verdigris region. I saw no first rate upland, except that in & about the MacIntosh settlements, where the main body of the Creeks reside, and occasionally a small quantity of Prairie.

The Prairie is generally speaking of an inferior quality, yet there is a great deal of it available, if there was timber for farming purposes at hand, but such is not the case. It has been generally believed that all the Arkansas bottoms above this, were rich & suited for cultivation; This is not so—all that is of good quality or available on the N. side of the Arkansas up to the Red fork, has been noticed or nearly all of it.

The 2d. rate bottom is Prairie, which is almost totally unsupported by the necessary timber for farming purposes. From the report of Indian Hunters, the bottoms on the south side of the Arkansas, in the Cherokee Country, are generally of inferior quality, narrow and sandy. A few of them are very good & will admit of dense settlements, but as a body of rich land they cannot be relied on. The timber of the alluvial lands consists of cotton wood, white, black & red oak, hackberry, walnut, ash, mulberry, hickory, pecan & c.

On the upland little is seen but post oak, black

oak & black jack & hickory of diminutive size.

There are several fine large creeks which empty into the Arkansas from the south side, which render that side of nearly equal value with the N. side. The Prairie on the margin of the river on its right bank is of indifferent quality and no portion of it of any size, is supplied with timber necessary for the uses of an agriculturalist—Estimating the whole Creek Nation at 20,000 souls, there is I believe in the country proposed to be given them, ample land for their support of good quality and well timbered, yet when we take into view, the probable increase of their population in the course of the next 50 years, which will be greatly multiplied by the change in their mode of life and the advantages of civilization, I should conceive they stood in need of the lands on the Arkansas and its waters on the S. side from this point to the upper extremity of their western limit, in addition to what it is already proposed to cede them. I have marked my encampments alphabetically, and I have traced what I believe to be the correct course of the Arkansas in red ink—I have also given the Red fork its proper position, agreeably to the most correct observations I could make with the aid of a pocket compass—

I am sir

very respectfully

yr abt servant

J. L. Dawson,

1st. Lt. 7 Inf.

Comd. Detachment

To

Maj. Genl. Alexr. Macomb

Coms. Army of U. S.

Washington City

A.G.O.—O.R.D.

Hdq. A. to Brig. Gen. Leavenworth

From J. L. Dawson

June 20, 1834. Enclosure to letter Fort Gibson

to Gen. Macomb dated Sept. 2, 1834 20th June 1834

Sir.

I have the honor to report, that agreeably to

your instruction, I have Completed the Military Road leading from this Post to the Mouth of Redfork of Arkansas River, and from thence to the mouth of Little River of the Canadian.

The location of the Road, will be seen by a reference to the Map herewith transmitted. After leaving the Creek Settlements about 12 miles west of this post, it follows chiefly the Ridge dividing the Waters of the Arkansas and Verdgris Rivers, and affords from its general level and equality of Surface an easy passage for every description of land transportation needed between the two points. The Route of the Road is designated by Conical mounds of Earth, from 4 to 7 feet in diameter, which with the occasional aid of Stakes and blazed Trees in the wooded portions, will for years to come, very plainly indicate the line of the Road, even though the intercourse between the two Posts should be insufficient to preserve a beaten track. The general Course of the Road from Fort Gibson to Redfork is WNW and the distance, following the meanderings of the Road 75 Miles. There are about 30 miles of open timbered and mountain land; The remaining 45 Consist of Prairie and Small Skirts of Woodland, bordering on the Small Streams, which intersect the line of the Road. The Several Varieties of Country on the Route, will be found noted at Stated intervals on the Map. There are but two Streams on the Route from Fort Gibson to Redfork, of Sufficient Size to arrest the progress of Troops or Supplies at high Water, for a longer period than a day or two, and the Sources of all of them might on an emergency be turned, by diverging from the Road 3 or 4 Miles. There are Several favorable points on this Section of the Road, for Indian Settlements, which would be Serviceable as Stopping points for Expresses, and they will no doubt be immediately occupied by the Creeks. At the Crossing of the Arkansas at Redfork, there is on the North Side of the River, a fine large body of bottom land, embracing about 6 Square Miles, from which when Settled as it doubtless soon will be, the New

Post at Redfork, Can draw its Supplies of necessary articles of Convenience and Comfort, forage etc; as well as Timber and Material necessary for building and repairing. The point of land between Arkansas and Redfork furnishes a vast Supply of fine Cedar, easy of access and invaluable as building material.

The Arkansas River at Redfork is about a half mile in width, when bank full, but not more than 250 yards wide and very shallow at low Water, when it is fordable for wagons and Horses. The Redfork is 300 Yards wide at its mouth when bank full—In the Summer Season its bed is nearly dry. In the rainy Season it furnishes a vast body of Water, being the 2d largest tributary of the Arkansas at this Season, it is navigable for keels a distance of at least 100 miles, where a temporary Stockade might be erected for the protection of supplies forwarded from Redfork, for the use of Troops ordered into the Grand Prairie to act against the Pawnees. At high water the Arkansas may be ascended in Steamers as far as Redfork, and by Keels at ordinary Stages of Water. The facility as well as Certainty of Supply however, for Redfork and Little River, by means of Water Carriage, will depend altogether on the activity and vigilance of the Agents Concerned; By being always prepared at the usual period of high water, no failure could possibly take place, but a slight relaxation of vigilance or activity, might render those posts entirely dependant for Supplies, on land Carriage for a whole Year.

From the mouth of Redfork, the Road bears off S. Eastwardly, along the Ridge dividing the Waters of Arkansas and Redfork, passing through high barren Prairie region of Sand Stone and Black Jack Ridge, in which a large branch of the Arkansas takes its rise. Thence it continues about the Same Course through the Cross Timbers and Skirts of Prairie until within 3 miles of a branch of the N. fork of the Canadian River, where it strikes the Big Osage War and hunting Trail, leading to the heads of Blue Waters and Washita by the mouth of Little River.

After it Strikes the Osage War Trail it bears a little S Westwardly, through a level Country, chiefly Prairie to Mouth of Little River, intersecting the direct route from Fort Gibson to that point, about 4 Miles from the New Post at the main Canadian River. The Deep fork of the Canadian River, is the most difficult Stream on the whole line of Road from Redfork to main Canadian, as it overflows its banks from the Source to its Mouth, a mean distance of half a mile, and its banks are Steep and bottom more or less boggy.

At the N. fork of Canadian there is a fine rocky ford which renders that Stream passable at all times, excepting the high Stages of Water. The distance from Redfork to Mouth of Little River is $88\frac{1}{2}$ Miles following the windings of the Road and the general Course of the Road S. 10E by the magnetic point. allowing 9 deg. of Variation, the Mouth of Little River may be laid down 19 deg. east of a line running due South from Red fork. On all the maps which I have seen it is laid down Some 20 or 30 deg. *west* of a due South line from Redfork. From the mouth of Little River to the Grand Prairie, it is probably 60 miles, and the intermediate Country is very thickly covered by the Cross Timbers, into which the Pawnees are known never to venture. This point is therefore well calculated for a large Depot of Provisions and Stores, which can be easily transported there in the spring Season in light Keel Boats, and Securely protected by a Small body of Troops. The outer Edge of the Cross Timbers, about 60 miles west on the Canadian, would probably be a more eligible position for a permanent Garrison intended to hold the Pawnees in Check, but the uncertainty of the navigation above Little River and consequent difficulty of supply, would in a great degree Counterbalance the advantage of greater proximity; a Small Stockade might be constructed on the Canadian at the Edge of the Grand Prairie as an auxiliory to the Post at Little river, into which by means of small Boats at favorable Seasons Supplies might be thrown

for the use of Troops acting against the Pawnees in the Grand Prairie, which could be maintained or abandoned as circumstances required.

Where circumstances were unfavorable for transporting Supplies by water they would have to be transported with the Troops, which by crossing the main Canadian at the post of Little River, would find an open excellent route into the Prairie, by following the Canadian on the South Side of that River at a distance of 6 or 8 miles from it, on a Western direction. A direct route however through the *Cross Timbers* between the Post at Little river and the advanced Stockade on the Edge of the Prairie would be decidedly most advantageous.

The Scite for a Small Garrison at Little River is very elegeible, being high and dry, free from marsh or low wet ground and contiguous to a fine Spring of pure Water, which with a little labor, might be rendered available for Common use at the Garrison, by the Aid of wooden conductors, or it may be found expedient to build the work immediately contiguous to the Spring.

I am Sir with respect

Your Obt. Servt.

J. L. Dawson

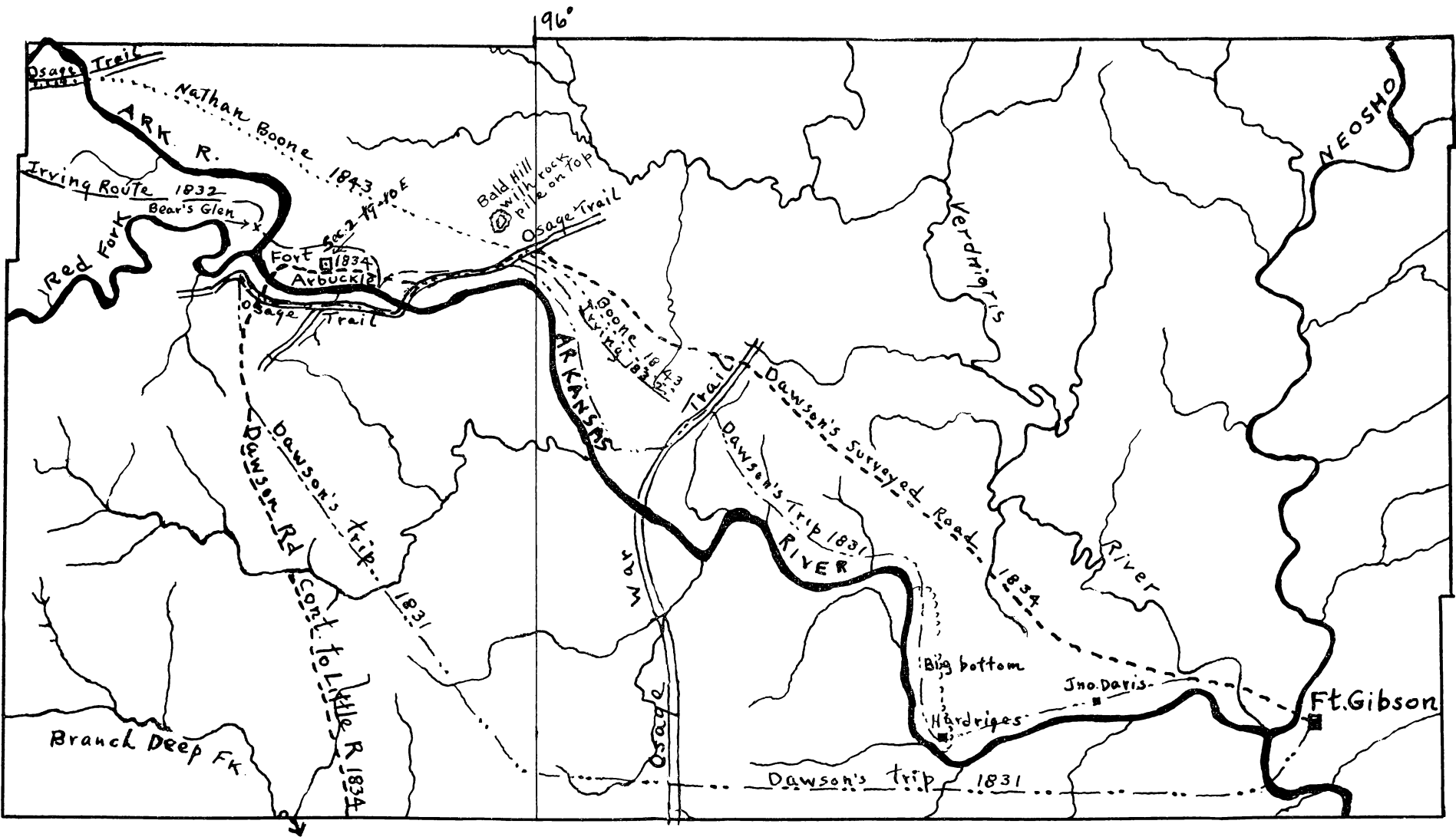
Capt. 7 Inf.

To

Brigr. Genl. H. Leavenworth

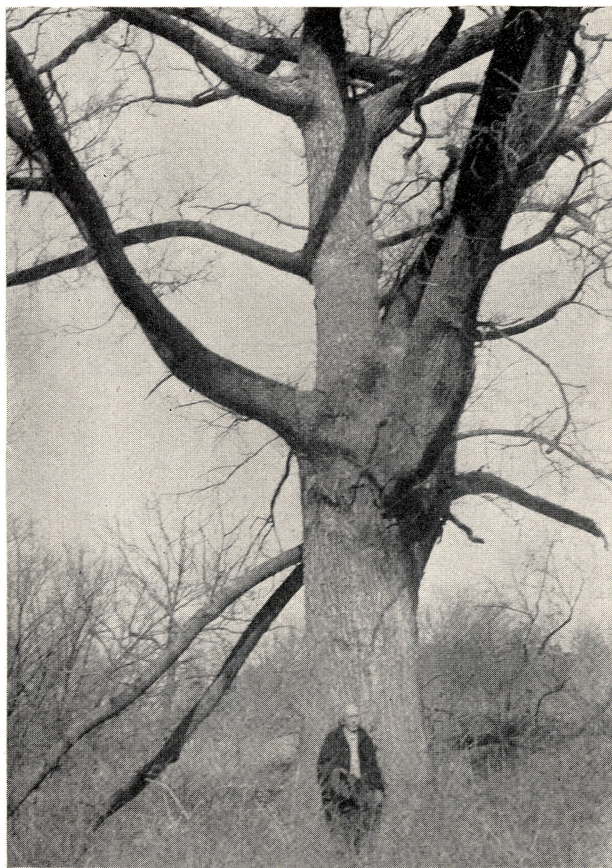
Comr. S W W Dept.

Mo. Washita





View showing location of wet-weather spring at head of Bear's Glen S. E. Cor. Sec. 19, T. 20 N. R. 10 E. Irving said: "I sat on a rock that over hung the spring at the upper part of the dell, and amused myself by watching the changing scene before me." Chapter XIII, Oct. 16, A.M. 1832—*A Tour on the Prairies*.



An old denizen of the former forests; still growing near the point where Irving camped in Bear's Glen. This tree is probably considerably more than 200 years old.



Old Chimney base at Camp Arbutle one of several chimney remnants on the quadrangle. SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 2, T 19 N. R. 10 E.



Looking up Bear's Glen from near the mouth. Left to right: C. R. Gilmore, Frank Billington, Ola Rogers, N. J. Gubser and Mr. Pitts.



In Bear's Glen. J. H. Gardner counting rings on a cedar stump. This tree was 90 years old in 1832 when the Irving party camped in there.