

GENERAL WILLIAM GOLDSMITH BELKNAP,

Commandant at Fort Gibson, Fort Washita and Fort Smith

By Carolyn Thomas Foreman

Newburgh, New York, was the birthplace of William Goldsmith Belknap who served his country in three wars, was twice wounded and three times brevetted for gallantry, distinguished conduct, and faithful service in the United States Army.

His parents were Samuel and Mary Goldsmith Belknap; he was born September 7, 1794, appointed to the army from his native state as a third lieutenant in the Twenty-third Infantry, April 5, 1813. In October he was promoted to second lieutenant. While serving as a first lieutenant of his regiment in the Battle of Fort Erie, Canada, he was wounded August 15, 1814; in the sortie from Fort Erie on September 17, 1814, he received a second wound. He was in garrison at Sackett's Harbor, New York, from 1815 to 1817 and during the following year served at Greenbush [East Albany] in the same state. This was followed by a period as assistant instructor of infantry tactics at the Military Academy at West Point from December 5, 1818, to April 4, 1819.¹

Issuance of 6,623 rations valued at \$1,015.97 to Lieutenant Belknap at Greenbush, New York, during July, August and September, 1819, fixed his presence there with troops or recruits.²

His service was described by Belknap in a letter written at Madison Barracks, New York, January 14, 1821, to Major General Jacob Brown, Commander in Chief of the Army, in Washington City relative to brevet rank:

I ". . . joined the 23 Regt. on the Niagara frontier, a few days previous to the capture of Fort George, & and was employed in active service, from that period, until the close of the campaign of 1814, during which time, I was engaged with the enemy at Stony Creek, at Lacole [Lacolle, Quebec], at Bridgewater, and at the attack on & sortie from Fort Erie. . . .

"On the day previous to the attack, I was detailed for, & placed in command of Picquet guard No. 4, which was posted 3 or 400 yards in advance of Towson's [Nathan Towson] Battery, near the bank of the lake;" [Belknap sent out a "Patrole" which returned without seeing the enemy.] "The corporal of which reported to me . . . the centinel [*sic*] posted on the Lake shore had . . . thought he had heard the rowing of boats on the Lake . . . I marched my Guard to the waters edge, . . . in a few moments . . . one of my centinels fired, he having received instructions from me not to leave his post on pain of instant death unless driven from it by the enemy, reloaded & fired a second time. . . compelled to fall back and join the guard, which I immediately ordered to level their pieces . . . I delayed firing till the enemy consisting of 1,000 or 2,000 men in column, approached to within 10 or 15 yards of my position . . . [I] ordered guard to fire, Capt. Towson opened his Artillery, & as my only way of retreat was directly in front of his Battery, in was only through my Picquet the enemy could be assailed, & one of my men

¹ E. M. Rutenber, *History of the County of Orange with a History of the Town and City of Newburgh*, 1875, p. 360; Adjutant General's Office, Old Files, Record Section, Officers Division, 442, Military History of William G. Belknap.

² *American State Papers*, "Military Affairs," vol. 2, p. 74.

was killed by his first fire . . . Thus in pursuing my retreat between the fire of friends, & the bayonet of the enemy, I disputed every inch of ground, until I arrived within a few yards of our works, when I was challenged from within."

Owing to the confusion of the battle, Belknap was mistaken for the enemy. The watchword was "Defend" which the American troops mistook for "A Friend," the answer the enemy would have made.

Belknap, owing to this mistake, was detained until the enemy approached, when he was bayoneted while defending his position. Gen. Eleiazar Wheelock Ripley said: "The manner in which Lieut. Belknap . . . retired with his picquet guard . . . excited my particular commendation . . . [he] received a severe wound . . ." In fact he was twice wounded. Enclosed with this letter in the files of the War Department is a statement to the Hon. John C. Calhoun, Secretary of War, from Gen. Jacob Brown reciting: "Lt. Belknap was uniformly faithful to his duties and gallant in face of the enemy."

Lieutenant Belknap was transferred to the Third Infantry June 1, 1821; he was on frontier duty at Fort Howard, Wisconsin, part of that year and in 1822, after he became a captain on the first of February. The two following years he was on recruiting duty and appears to have been in Wisconsin several years.

Adjutant General Roger Jones, on March 7, 1827, ordered the establishment of a new fort near the mouth of the Little Platte River. Four companies of the Third Infantry, under the immediate command of Captain Belknap left Jefferson Barracks in keel boats on April 17. Col. Henry Leavenworth, who had preceded the force, selected a position on the western bank of the Missouri about thirty miles above the mouth of the Kansas.³ He notified the War Department of the advantage of being on the same side of the Missouri as the road to Santa Fe and said there was no other place that answered the purposes within the prescribed distance of the Little Platte.

When the troops arrived tents were pitched but soon replaced by huts built of logs and slabs of bark; south of the camp a rough stone wall was constructed as protection in case of Indian attacks. The post was named Cantonment Leavenworth in honor of the senior officer present. Post returns of the garrison show that companies B, D, E, and H of the Third Infantry were on duty, with fourteen officers and 174 enlisted men.

One of the officers who accompanied the Third Infantry was First Lieutenant Samuel U. Hunt, who took with him his three motherless sons; the eldest, who was then eight years old, became Gen. Henry J. Hunt who distinguished himself in the Civil War. The trip by keel boat made a vivid impression on the lad, who re-

³ Elvid Hunt, *History of Fort Leavenworth 1827-1927*, Fort Leavenworth, 1926, pp. 16, 18; *Missouri Republican* (St. Louis), April 19, 1827, p. 2, col. 1; Henry Putney Beers, *The Western Military Frontier, 1815-1846*, Philadelphia, 1935, p. 95.

called that the summer of 1827 was so sickly that nearly half of the garrison died. He was sent to Liberty, Clay County, Missouri, to school and he recalled that the daughters of Captain Belknap also attended school there, from which he inferred that Mrs. Belknap was at Leavenworth. He distinctly remembered Belknap was in command of the post at one time.⁴

Owing to the low state of health in the post Captain Belknap, probably at the suggestion of the surgeon, issued orders forbidding the purchase or eating of watermelons by officers or soldiers. "In those days commanding officers did command and enforce their orders, too, in a way that will now be resisted as 'tyrannical' and more's the pity. My father who was somewhat independent and given to practical jokes, clapped a 'watermelon' on a sort of stake, put up in front of his tent. Captain Belknap looked upon it as a sort of insubordination and was proceeding to active measures for punishing contempt of authority when he found the charges would not lie . . . it turned out that the 'watermelon' was a green pumpkin, and the indictment would have failed. It wound up in a good laugh all around, and the really kind hearted Captain Belknap enjoyed the joke as much as any of the rest."⁵

During 1829, Belknap was at Cantonment Leavenworth, Jefferson Barracks and on regimental recruiting service in New York City up to December 13, 1831, when he became commander of the Central Depot of Recruits at Bedloes Island, New York Harbor, until June, 1834.⁶

Belknap's wife, Ann Clark Belknap (daughter of Joseph Clark of Newburgh), gave birth to a son September 22, 1829, at Newburgh, New York. He was given the name of William Worth Belknap.⁷

On February 1, 1832, Belknap received a brevet as major for ten years faithful service in one grade.⁸ He was stationed on the frontier at Fort Jesup, Louisiana, until April 1, 1835. In August of that year Lieut. J. F. Izard of the Dragoons was sent to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, to take charge of 130 recruits from that state and

⁴ Hunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 280-81. The daughters of Captain and Mrs. Belknap were named Anna Mary and Clara (Ruttenber, *op. cit.*, p. 360).

⁵ Hunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 282-83.

⁶ Adjutant General's Office, Old Files, Officers' Division, 442, Belknap.

⁷ This son, who made a brilliant record in the Civil War, was appointed on October 13, 1869, Secretary of War by President Grant. He held this office until March 7, 1876, when he was charged with official corruption. He resigned his position but was impeached and tried before the Senate for receiving a bribe of \$24,450 for appointing John S. Evans post trader at Fort Sill; he was acquitted on the technical ground of want of jurisdiction as he had previously resigned (*Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, New York, 1888, vol. 1, p. 224; *Dictionary of American Biography*, New York, 1929, vol. 2, p. 174). One authority gave the name of Caleb P. March as the man involved in this matter. A second son of Captain and Mrs. Belknap, named Frederick Augustus, died in infancy (Ruttenber, *op. cit.*, p. 360).

⁸ Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, Washington, 1903, vol. 1, p. 207.

New York. These men sailed from New York to New Orleans; there they boarded the steamboat *Arkansas*, which arrived at Little Rock January 5, 1836. The recruits were in charge of Brevet Major Belknap, Lieutenant Izard and Lieut. Levi M. Nute.⁹

Gen. Henry Leavenworth died July 21, 1834 at Camp Smith, on the famous Dragoon expedition from Fort Gibson to the western Indians, and early in 1836 Major Belknap was detailed to accompany the remains of the General to Delhi, New York. When he returned west he was first stationed at Fort Jesup; next at Camp Sabine, in the same state, where he remained in command of two companies of the Third Infantry and two of the Sixth until January 28, 1837.¹⁰

Secretary of War Poinsett, early in 1837, decided that it might be necessary to establish posts along the Sabine River; he employed George G. Meade, who had resigned from the army the previous year, to examine the stream with a view to the transportation of supplies for troops who would be stationed at the garrison. Meade reported: "1st, That vessels drawing seven feet water can ascend to the head of the Pass; 2dly, Vessels of five feet draught can cross the lake; and 3dly, Vessels of four feet draught can cross into the river, and ascend it any distance in case of removal of the rafts."¹¹

Belknap was now engaged in important service on the South-western frontier, which was in a state of alarm and apprehension from anticipated aggression by the Mexicans. Reports of threatened hostilities and invasions and attempts to involve the Indians were coming into forts Gibson, Towson and Jesup. A proposed plan for defense of the frontier included the establishment of a fort at the mouth of the Sabine River. With this objective, Belknap was ordered to take troops from Fort Jesup to this point. This movement required the building of boats in which to carry his command down the Sabine.

With this in view Belknap established his force on the river about fifteen miles below Gaines' Ferry; here they spent the summer building boats which they launched and loaded with men and equipment, and started the descent of the river on September 23.

During high water the obstructions to navigation in the Sabine were trifling and easily removed until "The Raft" was reached. "This is, or was, about 150 miles from the sea, and was composed of several masses of trees, interlaced and piled on each other, covered with grass and annual plants." This obstruction extended about half a mile and three weeks labor were sufficient for its removal. Below this for a hundred miles the river was broad and deep, fol-

⁹ Grant Foreman, *Advancing the Frontier*, Norman, 1933, p. 50; *Army and Navy Chronicle*, February 4, 1836, p. 70.

¹⁰ AGO, OFD, Officers Division; *Army and Navy Chronicle*, November 3, 1836, p. 282.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, December 14, 1837, p. 383.

lowed by narrows for ten miles before the stream divided into two branches. After a week's work the boats passed through, and notwithstanding all of the hard labor and exposure to which the force had been subjected only one man was lost.

Major Belknap's report to Maj. Gen. Alexander S. Macomb was very brief: "Sabine River, Nov. 1, 1837. General: I have the honor to inform you that I have descended the Sabine river with my command about two hundred miles, and have thus far rendered the navigation suitable for steamboats. The principal obstruction, the raft, I was so fortunate as to succeed in removing." In this connection the Washington *Globe* spoke of Belknap as "this zealous, active, and intelligent officer" who had performed an important service.¹² This work was particularly praiseworthy, as it was accomplished without aid of machinery according to War Department orders.

The expense of this operation had been estimated by an officer commissioned for the purpose at \$30,000 but Major Belknap carried out the work for only \$1,200; this line of communication opened to Camp Sabine not only avoided the land carriage of fifty miles by Natchitoches but cut the costs of transportation by one half. The benefit to the inhabitants of that part of the country was incalculable.

Capt. Isaac Wright of the steamboat *Velocipede* wrote Major Belknap from Sabine Pass, March 23, 1838:

"From your report of the navigation of the Sabine River, I have been induced to make the trial with the steamboat *Velocipede*, of 143 tons burden . . . drawing 5 feet water; and I am happy to inform you that I have succeeded in ascending and descending to and from the town of Sabine, a distance of about 300 miles, without the least injury to my boat.

"Your success has been beyond the expectations of the oldest inhabitants on the river, and your labor has enhanced the value of all lands adjacent to the river at least 200 per cent."

In May, 1838, the *New Orleans Commercial Bulletin* reported that since the trip reported in March by Captain Wright he had gone up the river in the same vessel as far as Hamilton, Texas, a distance of 400 miles from the mouth of the river; this voyage was made at the lowest stage of the water and was completely satisfactory.^{12a}

Belknap was next appointed a commissioner to establish a line of forts on the Arkansas frontier and reported for duty.¹³ In 1837 Congress had directed the secretary of war to build a new post at Fort Smith: to this end 300 acres of land were bought of John Rogers. When Belknap arrived there in October, 1838, from Fort Jesup with two companies of the Third, traveling by way of Little Rock, he took up temporary quarters on land now known as Fitz-

¹² *Ibid.*; December 28, 1837, p. 406.

^{12a} *Ibid.*, May 3, 1838, p. 282; May 31, 1838, p. 351.

¹³ AGO, OFD; *Army and Navy Chronicle*, August 2, 1838, p. 76, from *New Orleans Commercial Bulletin*.

gerald Addition to the city of Fort Smith. The old post at Belle Point was to be demolished and new log houses were built for officers and men at Camp Belknap; these buildings were fitted with home-made furniture and the commanding officer, Major Belknap, fared the same as his men. He had succeeded Capt. B. L. E. Bonneville on October 24, 1838.¹⁴

Maj. Charles Thomas of the Quartermaster's Corps, in a report of his work at Fort Smith, complained that Major Belknap refused to furnish him with men from his command; Belknap claimed that he needed the soldiers for work on the road he was building from the cantonment to the Arkansas River. Thomas said there were forty enlisted men engaged in work on the road which was less than a mile in length. "Major Belknap has been here upwards of a year . . . he has been (with the exception of the short period part of his men were cutting the road to Towson) building an open & defenceless cantonment near this place."¹⁵

In the summer of 1838, Major Belknap, Capt. B. L. E. Bonneville and Capt. Campbell Graham of the Topographical Engineers, were appointed by the secretary of war as commissioners to lay out a military road from Fort Smith to Red River. This road was to follow a different route from the one constructed by Capt. John Stuart from Fort Smith to Horse Prairie on Red River in 1832.¹⁶

This road leading south would be important for military purposes since troops could be moved expeditiously in case of Indian trouble; it would also serve the hundreds of people who were emigrating from Illinois and Missouri to Texas.

By the last of August Belknap and Bonneville had made all arrangements for the survey of the road from Fort Smith directly south within the boundary of Arkansas to Red River. "From the known character of the officers employed in this duty, the citizens of our western frontier have an assurance that the duty assigned them, will be performed with correctness and despatch."¹⁷

From Fort Smith, September 5, 1838, Major Belknap wrote to Col. Trueman Cross, Acting Quarter Master General of the Army at Washington that Captain Bonneville had left the party that morning "without my assent or knowledge and as I have been informed, has gone to head quarters of his regiment at Fort Gibson." As Captain Graham was on leave of absence there was nothing for Belknap to do but return to his regiment at Fort Smith.

¹⁴ *Publications of the Arkansas Historical Association* (Fayetteville), "Some Historic Landmarks in Arkansas," by Miss Clara B. Eno, vol. 3, p. 360; Josiah H. Shinn, A. M., *The History of Arkansas*, Richmond, Va., 1905, p. 127.

¹⁵ Quartermaster General, Hall of Records, Fort Myer, Va., Book 24, No. 170. Maj. Charles Thomas, Washington, January 8, 1843. Report of his operations at Fort Smith from 1838 to the time he was relieved in October, 1840.

¹⁶ *Arkansas Gazette*, August 1, 1838; *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, "Captain Bonneville's Report" by Grant Foreman, September, 1932, p. 327; *ibid.*, "Report of Captain John Stuart," by Carolyn Thomas Foreman, September, 1927, pp. 333-47.

¹⁷ *Army and Navy Chronicle*, August 30, 1838, p. 143, from *Little Rock Gazette*.

He reported that the commissioners had examined two different routes across the country to Fort Towson and Fort Jesup "from which places I will make a detailed report . . . and transmit therewith a map of the country drawn by Lt. Sherwood of the 7th Inft. . . from which I am induced to believe the route for a road and sites for military post may be determined without any further expense or trouble."¹⁸

The Army and Navy Chronicle, October 18, 1838 related that the two commissioners had explored two or three routes, one of which was favored by Belknap, while Bonneville preferred the other. The third commissioner being absent because of illness it was feared that neither road would be selected. The *Little Rock Gazette* deplored the delay and recommended that a new commission be appointed at once so the road could be completed, as it was of the utmost importance to the western frontier.

After Bonneville's departure Belknap made a further exploration and selected a route for the road which left Arkansas at Fort Smith; it ran west of and parallel with the boundary line about forty miles, when it diverged west and southwest to avoid the Kiamichi Mountains. The road was to run along their base a considerable distance, pass Fort Towson, and terminate at Red River near the post. The distance was 132 miles and the expense of building the road, if the work was done by the troops, would not exceed \$10,000. A considerable part of the route was already passable for wagons; there was plenty of water and good range for foraging the teams.¹⁹

According to army records, Major Belknap was to begin the road to Fort Towson in March.²⁰ He was assisted by Capt. E. B. Alexander, quartermaster, Lieut. Henry Price, Fourth Infantry, and Lieut. Thomas B. Glenn, Third Infantry.²¹ In July the road was said to be partly completed. Capt. Joseph Bonnell of the Eighth Infantry, who traversed it with a detachment of recruits for Fort Towson, testified to its great value.²² He left Fort Smith April 24 and arrived at Fort Towson May 3, which was thought to be good time. Major Belknap had the road completed as far as the crossing of the Poteau, a distance of about forty-five miles. The dividing ridge of mountains Bonnell found "tolerably severe; the ascent is very steep and one mile and a half in length. I was obliged to put fourteen oxen in the teams to get them up to the top." The next two days were across prairies. When they arrived at Brashears on the Kiamichi the detachment crossed the river and encamped near the Kiamichi Mountains; Bonnell reported very bad going for the

¹⁸ Office Quartermaster General, Letters Received, Book 19, 1838-39, 108.

¹⁹ *Army and Navy Chronicle*, November 22, 1838, p. 331, col. 1.

²⁰ Quartermaster General, Hall of Records, Record Book 19, no. 144, Capt. E. B. Alexander, Fort Smith, Feby. 11, 1839, to Stanton.

²¹ *Batesville (Arkansas) News*, July 18, 1839.

²² *New York Observer*, July 13, 1839, p. 111, col. 5.

next day owing to the condition of the road and steep hills. The crossing of the "Seven Devils" or "Seven Brothers" hills was difficult, but in spite of the hills Captain Bonnell thought supplies could be transported over this road to Fort Towson more easily than by way of Natchitoches.²³

A letter signed 'A Traveller,' addressed to the editor of the *Arkansas Gazette*, August 6, 1839, recommended Belknap's road very highly. He said good water could be obtained during the whole year; the difficulty of crossing the divide between the Arkansas and Red River had been overcome by a gradual road and he considered the work reflected the highest credit on the officer superintending construction of it.²⁴

A letter dated Fort Towson, September 19, 1839, stated that persons traveling from Fort Smith to Towson who wished to make regular stands where plenty of corn and fodder were to be found, would do well to stop at "John McKenney's 38 miles. Capt. Bohanan's 40 miles. Edmund McKenney's 37 miles" and on to Towson 20 miles.²⁵

Major Belknap, with companies D, E, and K of the Third Infantry, left Fort Jesup on December 14, 1839, and arrived at Fort Smith on the Twenty-eighth on his way to Fort Gibson.²⁶

In the spring of 1840 three companies of the Third Infantry that had been stationed at Fort Gibson were ordered to Fort Smith to join the companies there under Major Belknap who was still commandant of that post.

With the arrival of the Five Civilized Tribes in Indian Territory Fort Gibson became an important post because of controversies between the Eastern Indians and the indigenous red men. Owing to the extremely unhealthy situation of the fort it was thought a better location could be found; on June 24, 1840, a board of officers made up of Col. Alexander Cummings of the Fourth Infantry, Major Belknap and Assistant Surgeon Henry Hegner Steiner recommended a hill northeast of the garrison for the site, but it was several years before any move was made.²⁷

Major Belknap, with companies B, F, H and K of his regiment, left Fort Smith September 25, 1840, aboard the steamboat *Cherokee* bound for New Orleans and Florida. By a sudden falling of the Arkansas the boat grounded a few miles above Lewisburg: ten days were spent in strenuous efforts to get the boat afloat but they finally abandoned her for the steamboat *Elizabeth* with two keel boats in tow.

The river was so low that the entire passage was a "continued series of snagging and grounding, the soldiers and their officers

²³ *Army and Navy Chronicle*, July 4, 1839, p. 10, cols. 1, 2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, October 3, 1839, p. 232.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, November 7, 1839, p. 303, copied from *Little Rock Gazette*, October 9.

²⁶ AGO, F-281, Fort Smith, Belle Point, A. Ter.

²⁷ Beers, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

jumping overboard, and actually lifting the boat along." The force consisted of about 200 rank and file. The officers were Major Belknap, Lieut. T. B. Glen, Capt. O. Wheeler, Lieutenants W. H. Gordon, D. T. Chandler and J. Currier. Surgeon E. H. Abadie accompanied the troops as far as New Orleans, where they arrived October 17.²⁸

The ship *Harbinger*, due to leave New Orleans November 23, carried Belknap and four companies of the Third, together with a delegation of Seminole chiefs who were returning to Florida after making an examination of the land which the government wished them to take in exchange for their land in Florida. The ship arrived at Fort Brooke, Tampa, November 3, 1840.²⁹

Major Belknap's record in the war department states that he was performing special field duty in Florida to March 13, 1841; he was engaged in superintending the emigration of the Seminoles to the west to July 13 of that year, after which he was granted a leave of absence until October 1, 1841.

The first of November, 1841, Major Belknap received orders to proceed to the Carlosahatchee River in Florida to assume command of the troops in that quarter; he was to establish depots in anticipation of a combined land and water movement upon the Big Cypress Swamp.³⁰

From Tampa, November 15, 1841, Belknap sent a "talk" signed by Alligator and four other Indians.³¹ With the "talk" Belknap enclosed the following communication: "I shall probably send up the St. John's in search of Halleck-Tustenuggee, a party combined of the elements of peace and war. There is difficulty in finding men who can be made to comprehend that there is more true patriotism, sense, and decency, in ridding our country of this incubus in a quiet way, than in cutting down a solitary Indian, who may have been guilty of the indecency of defending his own country in his own way . . ."

Bodies of soldiers had penetrated every quarter of the Everglades, where they found fields and villages abandoned, but not an Indian nor a trace of him had been seen. Major Belknap's movements within the swamp served to confirm the impression of previous parties that the Seminoles had fled to the coast. Hostile movements of Creeks on the northern frontier of Florida necessitated the presence of Col. William Jenkins Worth, which left Major Belknap

²⁸ *Army and Navy Chronicle*, April 30, 1840, p. 287; *ibid.*, October 29, 1840, p. 281; *ibid.*, November 12, 1840, p. 314.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, November 19, 1840, p. 361; November 26, 1840; Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal*, Norman, 1932, p. 374.

³⁰ John T. Sprague, *The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War*, New York, 1848, p. 348.

³¹ Alligator, a distinguished chief of the Seminoles, was associated with Wild Cat in many matters pertaining to their tribe. He was one of the Seminoles who returned to Florida in 1841 from Indian Territory to try to induce more emigrants to move west.

in entire charge of the hunt for the Seminoles. George A. McCall, in a letter to his father dated "Camp -- 20 miles within the Great Cypress, December 14, 1841," related that they had marched from Carlosahatchee on the third instant, with eleven companies of the Fourth, Sixth, Eighth regiments of Infantry and two companies of Dragoons, carrying provisions for fifteen days. Colonel Worth accompanied the expedition almost thirty miles to the edge of the Big Cypress Swamp, where he turned over the command to Major Belknap.³²

These troops marched to the Big Cypress, a swamp extending across the Florida peninsula for seventy-five miles. There were 800 men in Belknap's force who made seven scouts during the campaign of fifty-two days.³³ "He displayed that vigilance and energy which has distinguished him throughout" the entire campaign. The country was searched in every direction but not a soul was discovered. The command was fired upon by a concealed body of Indians and two soldiers were killed.

Belknap reported from Depot No. 1 in the Big Cypress on December 23, 1841:

"Yesterday the force under my command arrived at Fort Keais for a seven days' scout in the swamps of the severest character of any we had yet encountered in this service. ³⁴

"On the 16th instant we took the field, with the view of finding the enemy . . . We marched on that day to the Prophet's town; thence, on the 17th, twelve miles S. S. W. course, Holatoochee having discovered trails several days old in that direction. On the morning of the 18th, the trails deviated northwardly, at a point distant about five miles from the head of the Fakahatchee, which lies south of the Prophet's town . . . the trails were ingeniously dispersed to the width of several miles; then, afterwards, they would come together; then disperse again in devious tracks, all admirably calculated to frustrate pursuit . . . on the 19th, we struck W.S.W., marching ten miles . . . *six* of which were more than knee deep in water and mud, through the 'Ockholoacouchee' . . . That night we encamped in open pine woods. . ."³⁵

On the following day a new trail was discovered coming from the north and precautions were taken so that the Indians would not learn it had been located; one of the flankers, having lost himself, stupidly fired his musket three times which alarmed the Indians who were encamped only three miles to the west. While detained two hours looking for the man the troops were attacked by fifty Seminoles; two of the advance guard were killed, but when the soldiers charged the red men fled and soon disappeared. As the rations were exhausted the force was compelled to return to headquarters to refit. ³⁶

³² George A. McCall, *Letters From the Frontier*, Philadelphia, 1868, p. 320.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 397.

³⁴ Sprague, *op. cit.*, p. 354.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 354-55.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 355-56.

Having been in the field three months orders were issued for abandonment of further pursuit in the Big Cypress Swamp. On January 31, 1842, Belknap was given his promotion as a full major after having been a brevet major for ten years; he was assigned to the Eighth Infantry and with one company of that regiment and other troops marched north from Camp Simmons to Lake Istopogo where it was thought the Indians had secreted themselves. A combined movement was made upon the Wahoo Swamp, the Withlacoochee River, The Cove, Lake Panee Sufekee and the Charla Popka Lakes; the swamps and hammocks were penetrated from every quarter under the direction of Major Belknap but not a sign of Indians was discovered.

The boat detachment under Major Belknap, composed of companies J and K of the Eighth Infantry, was ordered "after entering and thoroughly examining Parrasuffkee lake, to descend the Withlacoochee as low as Camp Izard, thence pass the boats into the waters of Charla-a-popka."³⁷

Colonel Worth realized he was much indebted to the zealous support and exertions of Major Belknap and in recommending officers for brevets he said:

"Major W. G. Belknap, 8th infantry, eminently distinguished in the war of 1812 - - - no man of his grade more so, and envied by many higher; repeatedly wounded, never rewarded. Confessedly, at the assault of Fort Erie, by management of his picket, gave the army time to get under arms, and perhaps saved it. His whole career since has been one of intelligent usefulness, and constant exhibition of capacity for *any command*. In this territory [he] has been very successful in getting in hostiles, and met them in battle: recommended for brevet of Lieutenant-colonel, to date from December 20, 1841."³⁸

McCall wrote a thrilling description of the march into the Big Cypress Swamp which extended diagonally across Florida from northeast to southwest, with an average width of thirty miles.

" . . . we were marching through water from six inches to three feet deep . . . Three times we passed entirely through or across its widest parts. On the seventh scout, no more than two hundred men . . . could be mustered for duty; fevers, diarrhoeas, and swollen feet and ankles - - - the latter attributed by the surgeons to constant marching in the water - - - having laid up in the hospital three-fourths of the command."³⁹

It was not until March 15, 1842, that Belknap received his brevet as lieutenant colonel "for general good conduct in the war against the Florida Indians and for securing by military operations and negotiations a great number of prisoners."⁴⁰

Colonel Belknap's service in Florida ended September 12, 1845; this was followed by duty in the military occupation of Texas in command of his regiment from September 26, 1845, to April 8, 1846.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 455-56, 461.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 462, 554, 555.

³⁹ Major General George A. McCall, *Letters From the Frontier*, Philadelphia, 1868, p. 397.

⁴⁰ Heitman, *op. cit.*, p. vol. I, p. 207.

In May, 1846, General Taylor ordered his force to take up a position on the left bank of the Rio Grande. "On the left were the artillery battalion . . . a troop of light artillery, and the 8th infantry . . . This brigade was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Belknap."⁴¹

Palo Alto, "the first pitched battle of the Mexican War" was fought on the soil of Texas, May 8, 1846. At Palo Alto pond, the enemy was seen less than a mile distant across a bare prairie, occupying a front of almost a mile and a half. General Taylor "immediately had his command formed in column of attack . . . yoke oxen plodded along the road in the center of the line, pulling Lieutenant William H. Churchill's two eight-pounders and flanked on the left by Brevet Lieutenant Colonel William G. Belknap's First Brigade composed of the Eighth Infantry, Duncan's battery and Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Child's artillerymen.

" . . . The Mexican copper cannon balls rarely reached Taylor's blue-uniformed troops except on the rebound, and it was almost as easy for the trim foot soldiers of Belknap, Garland, and McIntosh to jump and sidestep the round shot as to keep high-collared jackets in place or bell-crowned forage caps securely on their heads. . . "⁴²

The battle of Resaca de la Palma was fought and quickly won by Taylor's army on May 9, 1846. The large number of casualties on the American side were exceeded in the enemy force. The wounded Mexicans are said to have preferred being cared for by the American surgeons instead of their own; praises of the medical staff were general among the American officers.

From Camp Matamoras, June 10, 1846, Colonel Belknap reported to Capt. W. W. S. Bliss, Assistant Adjutant General:

"Sir, in reporting the operations of the first brigade on the eighth and ninth of May . . . a proper reference to the services of the medical staff was inadvertently omitted. I beg leave, therefore, to offer this supplementary statement. It is due to Surgeon [Joseph Jefferson Burr] Wright and Assistant Surgeons Porter, [David Camden] DeLeon and Madison to say that their professional aid was required early in the action of the eighth instant, and that the number of wounded soon called for their unceasing attention. I am happy to bear testimony that the devotion of these officers to the wounded under their care was conspicuous during the day and through the entire night . . . Their efforts to alleviate pain and suffering were as benevolent as they were untiring, serving with equal kindness and zeal our army and the large number of the enemy's wounded that fell into our hands."⁴³

The old saying that a prophet is not without honor save in his own country did not apply in Newburgh, New York, where the citizens called a meeting at the Orange Hotel, June 27, 1846, to manifest their sense of Colonel Belknap's "noble bearing by some public testimonial." Resolution passed stated:

⁴¹ *Cherokee Advocate*, Tahlequah, C. N., April 9, 1846, p. 2, col. 3; Fayette Robinson, *An Account of the Organization of the Army of the United States*, Philadelphia, 1848, vol. 2, p. 36.

⁴² Holman Hamilton, *Zachary Taylor Soldier of the Republic*, Indianapolis and New York, 1941, pp. 181, 183, 185.

⁴³ L. D. Ingersoll, *A History of the War Department of the United States*, Washington, D. C., 1880, pp. 229-30.

"Whereas, Lieutenant Colonel William G. Belknap when a youth entered service of our country from his native town, as an officer in the war of 1812, through which he served with distinction. . . and now learning . . . of his true and noble bearing on the 8th and 9th of May last . . . gratifying to Newburgh, and just such as they would expect from Colonel Belknap, who as Lieutenant in 1814, so retired with his picquet guard before the enemy's column, as to excite the warmest commendation of General Ripley.

"Resolved that he be presented with the thanks of the citizens of Newburgh [and that they] present him with a sword." 44

This presentation sword cost \$350 and bore the inscription on the blade: "Fort Erie, August 15, 1814; Palo Alto, May 8, 1846; Resaca de la Palma, May 9, 1846." The scabbard was inscribed: "Presented by citizens of Newburgh, his native place, to Col. Wm. G. Belknap, U. S. A." 45

The Colonel was with the First Brigade, Army of Occupation in Mexico to May 28, 1846; from Monterrey, Mexico, September 15 1846, he acknowledged receipt of his commission of brevet colonel. 46

From Camargo, October 26, 1846, McCall wrote:

"My old and valued friend, Colonel Belknap, arrived here from Monterey yesterday, on business for General Taylor, and returns tomorrow. I shall accompany him for the purpose of seeing the country and studying the battlegrounds." 47

McCall, at Monterrey, Mexico, November 24, 1846, described the magnificent scenery in that country:

". . . the most wonderful phenomenon in the natural scenery of this romantic land is witnessed among the mountains beyond Marin at sunrise. Of this grand spectacle, Colonel Belknap had spoken on the way; and he made a point of reaching, by a forced march, a certain camping-ground, where grass and water . . . were to be found. This camp-ground was ten miles from a position he wished to reach before sunrise the next morning, in order to see the effect of the *first* shaft of light cast above the horizon by the great luminary.

". . . we mounted our horses at half past three A. M., leaving the escort to get their breakfast. . . we urged our horses over rough mountains and through murky vales. Until we reached a slight elevation . . . we drew up and turned . . . to the east, just five minutes before the glorious sun made his appearance . . . Colonel ([Belknap] skilfully turned my attention to this point (a gateway between the mountains) for he had only told me of a grand sight to be witnessed here at sunrise . . . But when the sun had fully risen, the Colonel called me to turn and look to the rear. I was struck dumb with admiration . . . I was called from the rapture of delight with which I was filled, by the Colonel calling out, 'Study it well; it lasts only eight minutes.'" 48

Belknap was Acting Inspector General of the Army of Occupation under General Taylor up to July 16, 1847; he participated in the battles of Monterrey on September 21 and Buena Vista February 22-23, 1847. He evidently made a brilliant record as he was brevetted colonel on May 9, 1846, for gallant and distinguished ser-

44 Samuel W. Eager, Esq., *History of Orange County, Newburgh, 1846-47*, p. 196; Ruttenber, *op. cit.*, p. 360.

45 Eager, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

46 AGO OFD, Record Section, Officers, Div. 442.

47 McCall, *op. cit.*, p. 466.

48 *Ibid.*, pp. 468-70.

vice at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma; on February 23, 1847, he was brevetted brigadier general for gallant and meritorious conduct at the battle of Buena Vista where Taylor's force fought against General Santa Anna.⁴⁹ From a camp near Monterrey on October 9, 1846, General Taylor reported the valuable and efficient service of Belknap and other officers.⁵⁰

The recently married Susan Shelby Magoffin of Kentucky wrote in her diary at Mier, Mexico, September 8, 1847:

"Such a place this is! The seat of so many country-mens wrongs, the most miserable imaginable; . . . Last night a band of robbers entered, shot down a sentinel, rode through the plaza, hitched up and drove off five wagons loaded with merchandise belonging to a Frenchman. . . . A runner comes in this evening from the party of forty dragoons sent in pursuit of them by Col. Belknap saying that they have come upon the thieves, some hundred in number *dividing out the spoils and only twelve or fifteen miles from town*, have had a fight, killed fifteen of the enemy, retaken the goods with all the Mexican equipage, guns, blankets, saddles, &c., and all without any loss on our side; they are returning to town. . . . Col. Belknap, the commanding officer here has been very kind to send us dinner and supper, for the sleeping we must ourselves provide."⁵¹

Brigadier General D. E. Twiggs reported from the Department of Vera Cruz, February 29, 1848, the arrival there six days before of Colonel Belknap and the Fifth Infantry to which he had been assigned on his promotion to lieutenant colonel September 26, 1847. He was evidently on his way back to the United States as he soon arrived at Fort Smith aboard the *J. B. Porter*, en route to Fort Gibson, where he was to take command in place of Lieut. Col. Dixon S. Miles.⁵²

Through Adjutant Pinckney Lugenbeel, General Belknap, on January 29, 1849, addressed a letter to the Rev. Daniel McMannus, Post Chaplain, Fort Gibson, C. N., in which he said:

"The General Commanding directs me to say that he deems it inexpedient to take up a collection for Charitable (*sic*) or other purposes in the Post Chapel.

"The troops being compelled to attend church, should be protected from a semi-compulsory contribution. All such persons as may be willing to contribute, can very easily do so at your quarters.

"The General also directs me to say, that the service, including the sermon, must in no case, exceed one hour in duration."⁵³

An interesting item appearing in the newspaper stated that Bishop Freeman had preferred charges against General Belknap,

⁴⁹ Heitman, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 207.

⁵⁰ *Report Secretary of War, 1846*, p. 89.

⁵¹ Stella M. Drumm (ed.) *Down the Santa Fe Trail. The diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin, 1846-47*, New Haven, 1926, pp. 259-60. "Mier, situated on the Alcantro, and famous for having been the place where the Texans capitulated to Gen. Ampudia" (John T. Hughes, *Doniphan's Expedition*, Cincinnati, 1849, p. 373).

⁵² *Fort Smith Herald*, December 20, 1848, p. 2, col. 1; Grant Foreman, *Advancing the Frontier*, Norman, 1933, p. 70.

⁵³ Letter from Major General E. T. Conley, The Adjutant General, Washington, D. C., January 19, 1938.

commandant at Fort Gibson, for "irreligious conduct, in not permitting the chaplain at that post to preach longer than an hour."⁵⁴

General Belknap may have wished himself back in Mexico where he fought real battles instead of the petty annoyances to which he was subjected as commandant at Fort Gibson. On April 25, 1850, he wrote to Lieutenant F. F. Flint, acting assistant adjutant general at Fort Smith as follows:

"Your letter of the 18th inst. enclosing one from the Adj. Genl of the Army of March 26: one from a U. S. Senator from the state of Arkansas and two slips taken from the Van Buren Intelligencer were received last evening. It is alleged that 'I interfered with the rights of a citizen of Arkansas, while in the Indian country—with respect to the purchase of a negro girl &c.'—and I am directed by the Commanding General to make such a statement of the facts and circumstances in relation to the subject matter of the complaint, as will enable the War Department in a reply to Mr. Borland to exhibit the whole matter in its true light and bearing."⁵⁵

"The person alluded to, in the letter from the Adj. Genl., Jno. M. Smith, commonly called 'Goggle Eyed Smith' is notoriously a professional gambler. He came to my quarters accompanied by a Cherokee of the name of Chisholm and enquired for a negro woman, a servant in my family, belonging to a Mrs. Schrimsher of the Cherokee Nation and desired to see her. I asked him to walk through the room to the place in which she was employed—pointed her out to him—left him and returned to the house without making any remark whatever.

"In the course of the same day, I was informed that Smith was a professional gambler of notoriously infamous character—on the day following, he came to my office & said he understood I wished to see him—I told him that I wished him to leave the Indian country—He claimed to be a Cherokee citizen, and stated that he had business in the country and wished to remain several days for the purpose of arranging it. I gave him the time he desired—and told him also that he could not be permitted to come into the Indian country without a passport.

"I enclosed herewith papers Numbered 1. 2. 3 & 4—relating to Smith and his character—Thus much for Jno. M. alias Goggle eyed Smith and his publication in the Van Buren Intelligencer.

"In reference to the editorial 'slip' from the same paper, I will say, that I have understood, and my information came from a reliable source, that the Editor, G. W. Clark, some years since, resided at this Post, as an employee in the Indian Department—that his house was the common & constant resort of gamblers—this same man Smith frequently, if not constantly with them—(Hence, perhaps the sympathy manifested by the one for the other)—that Clark was ordered from the Post by the then Commandant Col. R. B. Mason 1st Dragoons, and that the guard received orders to confine him in the guard house if he again came on the military reserve.

"It appears somewhat novel to me, to be called upon officially to defend myself against the attacks of a scurrilous & irresponsible press, however 'extensively

⁵⁴ *New York Tribune*, June 15, 1849, p. 4, col. 4, from the *Van Buren Intelligencer*. A search of records on file in the office of the Adjutant General failed to locate any charges preferred against General Belknap. George Washington Freeman was born in Sandwich, Massachusetts, June 13, 1789; he took priest's orders in the Episcopal Church and was consecrated Bishop of Arkansas in 1844. He died at Little Rock, April 29, 1858 (*Universal Pronouncing Dictionary of Biography*, Philadelphia, 1888, p. 1042).

⁵⁵ Solon Borland, a native of Virginia, educated in North Carolina, studied medicine and located in Little Rock, Arkansas. He was appointed senator from that state to fill a vacancy caused by the resignation of Ambrose H. Sevier; was subsequently elected to fill Sevier's unexpired term. He served from April 24, 1848, to April 3, 1853.

circulated,' and with the exception of the case of Major Genl Scott while commanding the Army of Mexico, it is believed to be the only one on the record of our Military History."⁵⁶

Early in May, 1850, Gen. Matthew Arbuckle because of ill health was compelled to relinquish his post; he turned over command of the Seventh Military Department to General Belknap and left for Hot Springs hoping to benefit his health.⁵⁷

General Belknap commanded his regiment and the garrison of Fort Gibson from December 14, 1848, to May 7, 1850; he was commander of the Seventh Military Department and the post to July 17, 1850, and commander of the post and his regiment to May 15, 1851.⁵⁸ For the commencement exercises at the Cherokee Female Seminary at Tahlequah, Colonel Belknap sent the military band from Fort Gibson to play stirring airs, and during the evening while the pupils promenaded about the grounds the musicians discoursed sweet harmony, much to the delight of the students and visitors.⁵⁹

The United States made a treaty in 1845 with the Creek and Seminole Indians and in 1848 the attorney general decided that Negro slaves belonging to the red men should be restored to the masters they had before the intervention of General Jesup. Plans were made by General Arbuckle, then commanding Fort Smith, to have the slaves turned over to their Seminole owners at Fort Gibson on December 22, 1848; instructions were given General Belknap to arrange for the delivery, which was delayed until January 2, 1849, because extremely cold weather made it impossible for the southern Indians to reach the garrison.⁶⁰

An interesting letter written by a prominent Cherokee to John Drew, one of the delegates to Washington from that nation, gives an idea of some of the duties of General Belknap at Fort Gibson. This letter, dated May 7, 1850, from Bayou Menard, is in bad condition, but enough is legible to show the activity of the army officer in trying to suppress the sale of liquor to the Indians.

"... Belknap, and the whiskey smugglers have theirins yet. He put the Capt. and Clerk of a [Steam] Boat in the Guardhouse this morning and [confiscated] eight or ten Barrels of whiskey, and then went into the bar and turned out all of the good wines &c into the river, and now and then gets after a white man and chases him until he takes to the Bush. Such is the daily labor of the Genl."⁶¹

⁵⁶ AGO, OFD, 254 62 Arbuckle. Recd. Apl. 29, 50.

⁵⁷ AGO, OFD, A 87 Fort Smith, May 6, 1850; Grant Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes*, Norman, 1934, p. 135.

⁵⁸ AGO, OFD, Record Section, Officers Division, 442.

⁵⁹ Althea Bass, *A Cherokee Daughter of Mount Holyoke*, Muscatine, Iowa, 1937, p. 15.

⁶⁰ Office Indian Affairs, Jones to commissioner Indian affairs, January 30, 1849, Seminole File J 143; Grant Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes*, Norman, 1934, p. 257.

⁶¹ Lewis Riley to Capt. Jno. Drew. Riley had served as solicitor from Canadian District in 1841, 1842, and as councillor from the same district in 1845. The above letter is in the manuscript collection of Grant Foreman.

Upon the death of Cherokee Agent William Butler on September 24, 1850, General Belknap acted as agent until the appointment of Dr. Butler's son to fill the office. When the Cherokee Council convened October 9, 1850, Chief John Ross delivered his message before a gathering of persons which included General and Mrs. Belknap and a party of officers from Fort Gibson. These distinguished guests were presented to the Council.⁶²

No document authorizing General Belknap to act as Cherokee agent has been located in the National Archives at Washington but there are on file two letters to the commissioners of Indian affairs from the officer. The first, dated November 19, 1850, concerned General Belknap's opposition to licensing white traders to conduct business in the Cherokee Nation; the second letter, written four days later, concerned the claims of a Mrs. Margaret Root. These letters were signed "Brigadier General and Acting Cherokee Agent." George Butler relieved Belknap as agent on December 8, 1850.⁶³

On November 11, 1850, Senator George W. Clarke of Crawford County introduced a resolution in the Arkansas Legislature to the effect that General Belknap at Fort Gibson "has perpetrated unlawful tyranny and unjustifiable outrages upon citizens of Arkansas;" he wished congress to define the right of citizens in the Indian country beyond the limits of a state. These complaints against Belknap grew out of his attempts to regulate horse racing at Fort Gibson, as they had such a demoralizing effect upon the community.⁶⁴

In the spring of 1851, General Belknap was ordered to examine the route between Fort Smith and Donna Ana, Texas, for the purpose of establishing a military post to protect California emigrants and settlers moving to Texas against the wild plains Indians. Five companies of the Fifth Infantry marched from Fort Smith, one from Fort Gibson and one from Fort Towson to Fort Washita; at that point they were organized for the march to the Brazos. The command was accompanied by Capt. R. B. Marcy, who had explored this route in 1849.

Equipment for the march was assembled at Fort Washita. Ten well-broken range horses were to be taken, as they could live on the grass; three or four ox teams, fourteen wagons and eight mule teams. Each officer was directed to take a pocket compass and a thirty gallon cask was carried in each wagon. Beef cattle were to be driven by the soldiers. The party was accompanied by Black

⁶² Grant Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes*, pp. 391, 405; *Fort Smith Herald*, October 12, 1850, p. 2, col. 1.

⁶³ Sincere thanks are due Mr. P. M. Hamer, Chief of the Division of Reference of the National Archives, Washington, D. C., for information used in this biography. Mrs. Anita S. Tilden, Librarian of the Office of Indian Affairs, has been most kind in assisting the author and thanks are hereby expressed.

⁶⁴ *Cherokee Advocate* (Tablequah, C. N.), November 26, 1850, p. 2, col. 1; also p. 2, col. 5, an article copied from *Arkansas Banner* (Little Rock).

Beaver, the celebrated Delaware Indian, and several other guides. Arms were ordered taken from Fort Gibson and a piece of artillery from Fort Washita. The command carried thirty pounds of canister, thirty pounds of grapeshot, cartridges and six round shot.⁶⁵

The expedition crossed Red River at Preston and continued on a southwest course to the headwaters of the Brazos River. Ten miles below the crossing of that river by the Donna Ana road a site for a fort was selected on June 14, 1851, by General Belknap; this post was subsequently named for the general.⁶⁶ General Belknap died November 10, 1851, on his way from the Brazos to Fort Washita. He was ill and was being conveyed in an ambulance, accompanied by a few friends.

"The corporal in charge stated that whilst the team was moving slowly onward he heard a groan, when he immediately ran to the Gen— and lo! The vital spark had fled. . . He has left a most interesting family to mourn his loss."⁶⁷

Major Holmes of the Seventh Infantry, commandant at Fort Washita, notified Col. Henry Wilson at Fort Smith of General Belknap's death. His body was taken to Fort Washita by a sergeant and a member of the band and interred November 11 at that post.⁶⁸ Surgeon I. B. Wells reported to the Surgeon General of the Army, December 9, 1851, that General Belknap died from typhoid dysentery "in a wagon, being on his way to join his family at Fort Gibson, having left the Brazos on Surgeon's certificate of Disability."⁶⁹

In the old cemetery at Fort Washita, Oklahoma, is a heavy limestone slab, sinking into the empty grave, which bears the inscription: "Brigadier General William G. Belknap, U. S. A., Died Nov. 11, 1851."⁷⁰

From the War Department, Washington, August 6, 1872, Secretary of War William W. Belknap wrote to Quartermaster General M. C. Meigs: "I have reason to believe that the remains of Officers and Soldiers, and their families are buried in the Cemeteries at the abandoned posts of Forts Arbuckle and Washita.

⁶⁵ AGO, ORD Fort Smith, Letter Book 23, pp. 39, 42, 44-6; *ibid.*, Letter Book 87, Headquarters 7th Mil Dept. Fort Smith, April 19, 1851; Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes*, pp. 138-39; *ibid.*, *Adventure on Red River*, Norman, 1937, pp. viii.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. x; Grant Foreman, *Marcy and the Gold Seekers*, Norman, 1939, p. 384, n. 5.

⁶⁷ Rodney Glisan, *Journal of Army Life*, San Francisco, 1874, pp. 87-8.

⁶⁸ AGO, OFD. 520 B 51.

⁶⁹ AGO, OFD. 520 B 550 1851.

⁷⁰ *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, "A Visit to Old Fort Washita" by W. B. Morrison, Ph. D., June, 1927, p. 178. When Mrs. Belknap left Fort Gibson she sold her fine piano to Mr. and Mrs. William P. Ross. It is now the property of Mrs. Ross's granddaughter, Mrs. Marjorie Ross Upton (Mrs. H. B. Upton), who has loaned it to the museum of the Northeastern State College at Tahlequah, Oklahoma (authority Mrs. Albert Withers, Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, June 18, 1941). Sincere thanks are due Miss Edna L. Jacobson, Head, Manuscripts and History Section, New York State Library, Albany, for information concerning the Belknap family.

"I intend to send Major Mack in October next, to Fort Washita to superintend the removal and accompany the remains of my father Gen'l Belknap, to the Cemetery in Keokuk, Iowa, where I have a lot.

"I would be pleased to have you make arrangements for the removal, at about that time, of the remains of such other soldiers and their families as may be found at these two posts, to the National Cemetery at Fort Gibson, I. T."

On October 10, 1872, Quartermaster James Belger telegraphed from Fort Gibson to Maj. O. A. Mack, Washington, D. C. that he would send Superintendent Thomas to Fort Washita for the remains of General Belknap as he knew the locality of the grave. Seven days later William Thomas, Superintendent of the National Cemetery, reported to Col. James Belger:

"I have the honor to make the following statement as to the location and condition of the grave where the late Gen'l was disinterred. (*sic*) I make this statement so there will be no cause for friends or relatives to doubt that it is the identical body. The grave was in an old cemetery about five hundred yards north from the old garrison of Fort Washita, I. T. The grave was marked with a large limestone slab with the following inscription. Brigadier General William G. Belknap died Nov. 10th 1851. This stone was laid upon a brick wall or vault and under the brick work and about 18 inches from the surface of the ground was covered with two large flat stones which projected about two feet on each side of the grave laid in cement the coffin was all decayed. . . . Disinterred Oct 15th 1872 by me. . ."

Colonel Mack transferred the remains of General Belknap to Keokuk, Iowa, where they were reinterred in Oakland Cemetery in Lot 14, Block 19, title of which was in W. W. Belknap. The inscription on the stone over his grave reads: "Wm. G. Belknap, Brigadier General, U. S. ARMY., Died near Preston, Tex., 11-10-51, Age 57 yrs." ⁷¹

⁷¹ This information from the sexton of the city owned cemetery was furnished the writer by Mr. Carl L. Mundy, City Clerk of Keokuk, Iowa. Thanks are tendered Mr. Mundy for his kindness in securing the facts. Acknowledgement is made to Miss Sarah Corwin, Librarian, Newburgh Free Library, Newburgh, New York, for research she made for the writer regarding General Belknap.