

FORT GIBSON, I.T., (1824-57, 1863-90)

Fort Gibson, situated in the Cherokee Nation on the Neosho or Grand River two and one-half miles from its confluence with the Arkansas, was established April 21, 1824, by Col. Matthew Arbucke, 7th Infantry. Orders No. 84, War Department, November 30, 1824, announced Cantonment Gibson as one of the posts recently established on the western frontier. Subjugation of the Cherokee and Osage Indians was one of the primary reasons for the establishment of Fort Gibson. Until 1839 the post was used extensively as a staging point for the Cherokee Indians on their way to the Cherokee Nation. Fort Gibson was also strategically located with regard to the main routes of travel and commerce serving a tremendous geographical area. On July 1, 1837, the Acting Secretary of War directed that a new site for Fort Gibson be selected on the great western military road then being laid out, and sufficiently close to the Arkansas River as to command its navigation. As late as 1866 the main travel from Texas to Kansas, Missouri, and Fort Smith, Arkansas, passed in sight of Fort Gibson. The post was abandoned and in compliance with Special Orders No. 114, War Department, August 6, 1857, the reservation was turned over to the Cherokee Nation. It was reoccupied on April 5, 1863, by troops of the Indian Brigade, a volunteer organization. During 1865 Fort Gibson was headquarters of the District of South Kansas. Volunteer troops garrisoned Fort Gibson until February 18, 1866, when they were relieved by a detachment of the 19th Infantry. Company H, 6th Infantry, abandoned Fort Gibson on September 22, 1890, in compliance with General Orders No. 88, War Department. In compliance with instructions from Headquarters, Department of Missouri, dated March 19, 1897, Troop B, 1st Cavalry, proceeded to Fort Gibson where a temporary camp was established April 6, 1897, to maintain order and protect the Disbursing Agent at the Cherokee Freedmen Payment. This camp appears to have been discontinued in November, 1897. Another temporary camp was located at Fort Gibson from April to November, 1901, probably for the same purpose.

Records. 1825-90. 12 ft.

The records are very incomplete and many series are fragmentary even for the periods indicated. Included are copies of letters sent, 1837-57 and 1865-90; letters received, 1864-90; registers of letters received, 1867-90; copies of endorsements and memoranda, 1865-79; letters received and sent relating to ordnance matters, 1830-57; orders, 1825, 1842-57, and 1865-90; records relating to Indian affairs, 1844-51 (largely relating to Negro slaves owned by Indians); register of births, deaths, and marriages, 1872-83 and 1889-90; descriptive list of recruits, 1884-90; guard reports, 1840-43, 1846, and 1855-56 (including one volume of guard reports of Fort Wayne, C.N.); records of the recruiting officer, 1882-89; and records of the post quartermaster, including copies of letters sent, 1869-70, 1876-77, and 1879-90, and register of letters received, 1886-90.