

FEDERAL FORTS ESTABLISHED IN TEXAS

1845-1861

A THESIS

Approved:

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Committee

Approved:

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Chairman, Graduate Council

FEDERAL FORTS ESTABLISHED IN TEXAS

1845-1861

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of  
Sam Houston State Teachers College  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
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MASTER OF ARTS

By

Mance E. Park, B. S.

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## CHAPTER I

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

When Texas was annexed to the United States in 1845, the Federal Government assumed the grave responsibility of protecting the people of the newly formed state against both foreign and domestic enemies. The circumstances which made this guarantee of protection such a serious problem were shaped by conditions which had developed during the period 1819 to 1845. A brief survey of the relations between the United States and Texas during this quarter of a century, therefore, will tend to clarify defense problems and policies of both state and Federal government.

The United States gave up claim to Texas in 1819 by the Adams-d'Onis Treaty which set the boundary between Spain and the United States at the Sabine River. This agreement left Texas in the hands of Spain, and gave validity to the Spanish land grants which were made within the limits of the vast territory. Two years later Moses Austin, pioneer and miner from the once Spanish-owned Missouri Territory, arranged to leave for Texas, with the hope of securing permission to bring Anglo-American colonists into the territory west of the Sabine River. Austin received a grant from the Spanish Government, but his plans were interrupted by death. His son, Stephen F. Austin, lost no time in carrying out his

father's dream. In December, 1821, the first colonists landed in Texas. The Austin grant was a signal for others to apply for permission to bring settlers to "the land of promise." Between 1821 and 1830 the Mexican Government had made twenty-nine contracts with various empresarios, who had brought 10,091 families into Texas. Austin's colony alone by 1831 boasted a population of 5,665. A majority of these colonists formerly had resided in the United States, and like Austin, with the hope of material gain, had sought a new life in the wild expanse.

Prior to 1821, the Spanish had faced problems of dealing with intruders or filibusters as they were sometimes called. Adventurers, such as Philip Nolan, Peter Ellis Bean, Augustus Magee, James Long, and Pierre and Jean Lafitte caused the Spanish officials much concern. After 1821, the Mexican Government likewise was confronted by problems created by troublesome adventurers. When in 1826 the Edwards brothers, Haden and Benjamin, who had been granted a tract in East Texas found that much of their land had already been granted to Mexican families or taken up by squatters, they attempted a revolution, and set up the State of Fredonia. The Fredonian Rebellion, as it was called, amounted to little, but its influence was far reaching. Such movements, along with several attempts of the American government to buy Texas, seemed to convince the Mexican authorities that the ultimate aim of American settlers was to obtain Texas for

the United States. Thus to protect themselves from American imperialism, the Mexican officials administered retaliatory and depressing rules upon the Texans. Vincente Guerrero, President of Mexico, struck at immigration into Texas by his decree of July 15, 1829, which practically abolished slavery throughout the Mexican Republic. Shortly after this event the Guerrero Government was overthrown and the ambitious Vice President, Anastasia Bustamante, upon ascending to power, immediately erected another barrier against further immigration from the United States. The law of April 6, 1830, forbade further entry into frontier states of Mexico of colonists from adjoining foreign territories, and provided for settlements in Texas by Mexican peons and ex-convicts to neutralize American influence. Under the same administration George Fisher, Mexican revenue collector, ordered all ships departing from Texas to secure clearance papers from his office in Anahuac. These exhibitions of tyrannical government worked hardships upon Americans, residing in the territory both east and west of the Sabine River. It was during these troubled years that Texas became involved in the current of Mexican revolutionary politics. The people of Texas became weary of such tyrannical action on the part of the Mexican government; and the friction which ensued between the two was inevitable. Their bonds, binding them to Mexico, broke entirely when on March 2, 1836, the Texans declared their independence from the Republic of Mexico. This action, of course, was contested



by Mexico, but the determination of the Texas patriots, together with the aid of people from the United States, made short work of this opposition.

The victory won on April 21, 1836, at San Jacinto secured freedom from Mexico, but did not guarantee that they were free from all danger, or that all problems had been solved. It meant, moreover, that Texas was now faced with problems relating to education, finance, public lands, prisoners of war, national defense, and annexation. They proved to be even more difficult, because the statesmen of Texas were inexperienced in comparison with those of her older neighbors in conducting the affairs of state. Finding themselves unable to keep the Republic from slipping further and further into debt, they sought to relieve themselves of much worry and expense by annexing Texas to the United States of America. Securing the recognition of their independence had been a big problem; annexation proved a larger one.<sup>1</sup>

There can be little doubt that Texas would have failed to obtain her independence if she had not been aided in the form of money, men, and moral support, by the citizens of the United States.<sup>2</sup> It has even been asserted that not only the people of the United States, but the government thereof,

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1 For this general information concerning the period 1819 to 1843, consult J. H. Smith, Annexation of Texas, George P. Garrison, Texas A Contest of Civilizations, pp. 97 ff, and E. C. Barker, Mexico and Texas, 1821-1835.

2 Smith, The Annexation of Texas, p. 31.

nursed the flame of revolution in Texas. An outstanding authority on the history of the annexation of Texas quotes the London Times' comments upon the Texas Revolution as saying, it "was known, watched and encouraged by the cabinet of the day in Washington."<sup>3</sup> Just to what extent the people of the United States encouraged and aided the Texans will probably never be known; but it was perfectly natural that these kinsmen should feel drawn into closer unison at the end of the struggle for independence. This spirit of brotherly love, however, was rather sectionalized, on the part of the United States. Most of the support came from the slaveholding states, while many men from the "free" states as for example, Daniel Webster, denounced the movement.<sup>4</sup>

The desire on the part of the Texans for statehood in the American Union was shown in September, 1836, when the vote in a general election on the question of annexation was practically unanimous for joining the United States. Unfortunately for Texas, however, conditions in the United States were such that, at the time, annexation was an impossibility. The congressmen in Washington were divided into those who spoke with growing enthusiasm for abolition, and a proslavery, democratic element who favored the annexation of Texas, which would mean the extension of slavery. George P. Garrison,

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3 Smith, The Annexation of Texas, p. 21.

4 Ibid., p. 14.

noted historian, stated that, "the voice of slave holding Texas offering annexation was listened to by one party with hesitation and by the other with scorn."<sup>5</sup>

Sam Houston was inaugurated as the first President of Texas in October, 1836; but his long acquaintance and close friendship with President Andrew Jackson could do no more than secure recognition for the new Republic by the United States.<sup>6</sup> With annexation out of the question, for the time being, the people of Texas settled down to run their own affairs, and to solve the problems which were confronting them. Agents were sent out to establish trading posts among the various Indian tribes. Houston, who was very popular with the Red Man at this time, succeeded in making treaties which served to keep the Indians on a fairly friendly basis with the whites. During the latter part of his term, however, Indian raids, incited by the Mexicans, were common and brought criticism on his administration.<sup>7</sup> Houston's administration cannot be criticized for idleness, though it cannot be praised highly for accomplishment.

In 1838, when M. B. Lamar succeeded Houston, the people of Texas showed less interest in annexation. Lamar's intention had been to chastize the Indians, and in his inaugural

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5 Garrison, Texas, A Contest of Civilizations, p. 256.

6 Ibid., p. 256.

7 R. N. Richardson, The Comanche Barrier to South Plains Settlement, pp. 97-99.



address he expressed himself as being opposed to annexation. By practically a unanimous vote, the Congress of the Republic supported him in his views,<sup>8</sup> but had the members known what was ahead in the next few years they would have been clamoring, no doubt, for annexation at any price.

Lamar, whom Anson Jones, in his memoirs, calls a "political troubador,"<sup>9</sup> often overlooked the present in planning for the future. He was a theorist with a vision of making Texas a great empire.<sup>10</sup> His Indian policy proved both expensive and unwise in many instances. He hated the Indians personally, and politically made no attempt whatsoever to appease them. Forts took the place of Houston's trading posts, and Indians were hunted down like "varmints." Naturally they sought vengeance against the white man.<sup>11</sup> Lamar clashed with the Mexican Government, also, by helping the North Mexican States in their rebellion, and by his ill-fated Santa Fe Expedition.

The public debt, which at the end of Houston's administration was \$2,000,000, soared during Lamar's term to \$10,000,000. There was an annual revenue income of only \$188,000 in 1839, while the expenditure for the same period amounted to \$900,000. There was at this time \$1,800,000 circulating in

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8 H. S. Thrall, History of Texas, pp. 302-308.

9 Anson Jones, Republic of Texas, p. 34.

10 Smith, op. cit., p. 36.

11 Richardson, op. cit., pp. 103-104.



bank notes, which by 1840 decreased to fourteen per centum of par value. There were rumors to the effect that Texas had no coin except gin, rum, and brandy, while living costs due to inflation were exorbitant.<sup>12</sup>

In 1841, when elected President of Texas for the second time, Houston was supported by those who thought he could manage the Indians and bring prosperity to the Republic. This, however, he was unable to do. During this period, for instance, the revenue was insufficient to meet the interest payment on the public debt, while the Indians remained on the war-path.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, Texas had been unable to secure Mexican recognition of its independence. Mexico was stirred into action, however, when she realized that her failure to reconquer this province would cause other nations to regard Texas as a Republic. To regain her prestige Mexico made strong attempts at this time to regain Texas. Several invasions were made and San Antonio was captured by General Rafael Vesquez; while at the same time Refugio and Goliad were occupied. Thirty-five hundred troops were mustered into service by the Republic, but before they could strike, the Mexicans had hurried back across the border. General Adrian Woll returned again, however, and captured San Antonio in

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12 See Smith, op. cit., p. 36.

13 Ibid., p. 36.

September, 1842.<sup>14</sup>

These invasions had a far reaching effect upon the Texans. In the first place, they produced a feeling of uncertainty and insecurity which depressed the inhabitants and discouraged immigration; secondly, homes were left exposed to marauding Indian bands while the able-bodied men were protecting the Republic from Mexican invasion; and thirdly, the Texans were uneasy because Mexico had taken steps toward purchasing two battleships from English ship-builders.<sup>15</sup>

Many wanted to invade Mexico. Houston promised such action at the first opportunity but changed his mind at the last moment. He was accused of being a traitor and an imbecile; while some contended that he wanted to become a dictator. The Texas Congress passed an act bringing the currency down to two per centum of par value, which was virtual bankruptcy. Authorities of Galveston reported that there was only enough ammunition to defend the city fifteen minutes.<sup>16</sup>

The following statement tersely analyses the condition in Texas in the closing days of the Republic. "The New Orleans Courier described the country at this time as without money, credit, a regular army, or able or popular general,

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14 Garrison, op. cit., pp. 246-247.

15 Consult Yoakum, op. cit., pp. 346-363.

16 Smith, The Annexation of Texas, pp. 39-41.

threatened by Mexico and harassed by the Indians."<sup>17</sup>

Conditions were rapidly reaching a crucial point, and in the words of a reputable historian,

to sum the situation, Van Zandt, the Texas Charge at Washington, explaining in March, 1843, why the commercial treaty which he had negotiated with the United States had not been accepted. . . ., represented the Senators as saying in debate upon it: 'Texas is rent and torn by her own internal discords; she is without a dollar in her treasury; her numbers are small; her laws are set at defiance by her citizens; her officers, both civil and military, cannot have their orders obeyed; Mexico is now threatening to invade her with a large land and naval force; she cannot long stand under such circumstances; the chances are against her; she will either have to submit to Mexico or come under some other power.'<sup>18</sup>

It was when Texas found herself in such trouble and in need of help, that she again turned to the United States. Yet in the latter part of Houston's term prosperity returned in some degree; the Mexican menace had not materialized; and Texas was ready to make its own way in the world. Houston, however, had kept the annexation question open, so as to play England's jealousies against those of the United States. Many citizens believed that the Federal Government was more capable than the Republic to cope with the actual problems which were accompanying the great increase in population in Texas.

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<sup>17</sup> Smith, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 42.



It was fortunate for those who wanted Texas annexed that John Tyler became President of the United States in 1841. When his closest political colleague, H. A. Wise, advised him to obtain Texas, the President wrote his Secretary of State, Daniel Webster, as follows:

I give you a hint as to the possibility of acquiring Texas by treaty--I verily believe it could be done--could the North be reconciled to it--would anything throw so bright a luster around us? It seems to me that the great interests of the North would be incalculably advanced by such an acquisition--How deeply interested is the shipping interest? Slavery--I know that is the objection--and it would be well-founded if it did not already exist among us--but my belief is that a rigid enforcement of the laws against slave trade, would make in time as many free states, south, as the acquisition of Texas would add of slave states, and then the future (distant as it might be) would present wonderful results.<sup>20</sup>

Webster, a leader of the Whig party, however, opposed the acquisition of any slave territory. This blocked the president's action in regard to immediate annexation, but upon Webster's resignation in 1843, Tyler immediately set about to annex Texas by treaty. This treaty was presented to the Senate in April, 1844, and after much debate was defeated by a vote of thirty-five nays and only sixteen ayes. Tyler thus failed in his first attempt to annex Texas, but by so doing, he forced the question in such a way that it became the principal issue in the following presidential campaign. Tyler interpreted the election of James K. Polk,

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20 Quoted in Smith, op. cit., p. 103.

whose slogan was "Reoccupation of Oregon and the Re-Annexation of Texas," as a mandate of the people for annexation; and he succeeded in securing the adoption by Congress of a joint resolution for that purpose only four days before Polk was inaugurated.<sup>21</sup>

It was amid this excitement and clamor for annexation that Anson Jones, the fourth President of the Republic of Texas, came to office. He favored annexing Texas only under the most favorable conditions. L. J. Wortham quotes Jones' views as to the conditions under which Texas was annexed:

'To make annexation sure,' wrote Jones, 'I have had to make great personal sacrifices, and probably no less than to be misunderstood and abused for the remainder of my life, though I trust truth will ultimately prevail and posterity judge correctly; at all events, I shall be in a few years beyond the reach of injustice. I had a difficult task to perform, to secure the success of this great measure, by exciting the rivalry and jealousy of the three greatest powers in the world, and at the same time so to act as to effect my object and maintain the perfect good faith of Texas towards all these powers. The people were and are impatient; they have been ground down by years of adversity, poverty and war; and they look to but one object--escape from the manifold evils of the past. They would not, perhaps, break the national faith wantonly, but it is a far-off consideration to them, compared with annexation. The cry has been, and is, annexation at once, at any price and at any sacrifice. But I have been unwilling to break the national faith in order to gratify this unfortunate impatience.'<sup>22</sup>

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21 Consult Garrison, Texas, A Contest of Civilizations, pp. 253-258.

22 L. J. Wortham, A History of Texas, vol. IV., p. 203.

But soon Jones was to bow to public sentiment, and on February 16, 1846, the "Lone Star" gave way to the "Stars and Stripes" and Anson Jones, the last President of the Republic of Texas, proclaimed, "The Republic of Texas is no more!"

## CHAPTER II

### FACTORS NECESSITATING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FORTS

Of the many factors influencing the erection of Federal garrisons in Texas, there can be little doubt that the Indian problem was most important. Texas was inhabited by three groups of Indians: plains, coastal, and timber. The Plains Indians, dominated by the Comanches, were nomadic, crafty, and cruel. As a consequence, the less war-like coastal and timber Indians were in the minority in Texas by 1800.<sup>1</sup>

The sedentary Indians were friendly when first visited by the White Man because there was plenty of land and game for both. As time passed, however, and more whites settled in the territory of the Tejas, game and choice land became scarce. The once sedentary Indians were pushed farther and farther into the rugged hill and plain country where they came into conflict with the all-powerful Comanches. The Indians from the East found themselves in a vise between the terror of the Comanches and the greed of the whites. Learning through experience, these Indians in some cases surpassed their cunning brothers in horrible deeds along the border. The Plains Indians' knowledge of the country and their ability

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1 Richardson, The Comanche Barrier, pp. 13-37.



at horsemanship, made them all but invincible.<sup>2</sup>

The Indian problem had been important during the years of the Republic, but was to prove equally as serious after annexation. Thomas J. Rusk, United States Senator from Texas, in a report to the Senate in 1846, estimated that the Republic of Texas in its nine years of existence had spent \$3,815,011, exclusive of interest, on protection from the Indians. In nearly every instance, the Indian onslaughts were uppermost in mind, when recommendations were made to the War Department for frontier protection; but there were many factors that influenced the Indian in his "dirty work."<sup>3</sup>

An important factor which led to a great deal of conflict between the pioneer and the Indian was the growth of population. A well-known authority on finance in early Texas states: "Texas shared with the rest of the United States the great prosperity and material development which characterized the years 1846 to 1857."<sup>4</sup> The population increased from 135,000 in 1845 to 212,000 in 1850. There was an increase of 173.24 per centum between the years 1850 and 1860. The fact that Galveston, the leading city, had a total of 4,177

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2 H. E. Bolton, Texas in the Eighteenth Century, pp. 2-13, 79, 62-73, 407.

3 George Bancroft, History of the North Mexican States and Texas, p. 413.

4 E. T. Miller, "The Finances of Texas, 1846-1861," E. C. Barker, (Editor), Readings in Texas History, vol. II, p. 410.



shows that the population was either rural or concentrated in very small towns. This increase in population was largely due to an influx of immigrants from European countries. These immigrants spread rapidly over a large part of Texas, thus crowding the Indians farther and farther into a rugged territory in search of food and protection. The sparseness of unorganized westward expansion made it much easier for the Indians to release their hatred and passions against the "greedy" whites.<sup>5</sup> Since it was understood that the Indians would never give up their lands without a bloody struggle, a line of defense was thrown out in advance to protect the frontier.<sup>6</sup> The discovery of gold in California added thousands to the population of the mid-western states. After the "forty-niners" had, or had not, found their gold, many trekked back across mountain and desert to settle on the rich prairie of the Great Plains.<sup>7</sup>

Obtaining food had always been the chief problem confronting the prairie Indians. The rapid diminution, therefore, of the buffalo and other game which constituted the chief sustenance drove the wandering tribes to commit many bloody crimes. "They were suspicious of the white people and dared not trust them far; and as they saw the frontiersmen

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5 Ibid., pp. 410-412.

6 Carl Coke Rister, The Southwestern Frontier, p. 43.

7 C. R. Wharton, Texas Under Many Flags, vol. II, pp. 44-47.

invade their hunting grounds and kill their game in such wasteful fashion, they were moved by hatreds and passions stronger than pledges of peace."<sup>8</sup>

There were always many temptations on the part of the Indians to steal when the opportunity presented itself, because there was always a ready market for the stolen goods and plunder acquired on the raids. This booty, including horses, guns, cattle, and other plunder, were bought by the unscrupulous operators of the frontier trading posts.<sup>9</sup>

The unwarranted actions of a few frontier pioneers were surely a leading factor in prodding the Indians to further depredations. Raids of thoughtless and selfish adventurers, such as was shown on the night of December 27, 1858, when an entire group of innocent reservation Indians were completely destroyed, were not uncommon.<sup>10</sup>

A second circumstance which led to establishment of frontier forts was the boundary dispute between Mexico and the United States. The annexation of Texas may not have been a direct cause of the Mexican War, but the boundary controversy over the territory between the Nueces and the

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8 Frank W. Johnson, Texas and Texans, E. C. Barker, (Editor), vol. I, p. 514.

9 W. C. Holden, "Frontier Defense 1846-1860," West Texas Historical Association Yearbook, vol. VI, (June, 1930), p. 35.

10 Richardson, The Comanche Barrier, pp. 28-30.

Rio Grande was certainly a major reason. Anson Jones as President of the Republic of Texas had made no effort to establish forts in this region of Texas; moreover, he had refused to let General Zachary Taylor and his Federal troops go into this section before Texas had been finally annexed. Within three weeks after Jones had hauled down the Texas flag, however, General Taylor was heading for the Rio Grande and the Mexican War. It is significant to note that Taylor and his army had been camped near the Nueces for several months, waiting for the resolution to be accepted by the Texans, and that the Mexicans had made no issue of the fact that Federal troops were just across the Nueces in what they deemed Texas. Taylor left the Nueces on March 8, 1846, and hurried to the Rio Grande.<sup>11</sup> His aim was to establish a stronghold on the border before the Mexicans mobilized. This he did, and on March 25 erected Fort Taylor, later called Fort Brown, the first Federal garrison to be located in Texas.<sup>12</sup>

Two weeks later General Pedro Ampudia reached Matamoros, and dispatched the following order to General Zachary Taylor:

. . . to break up your camp and retire to the other bank of the Nueces River, while our Governments are regulating the pending question

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11 Wortham, A History of Texas, vol. IV, pp. 211-214.

12 32nd. Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, pp. 284-285; Nevin O. Winter, Texas The Marvelous, p. 193.



in relation to Texas. If you insist on remaining on the soil, of the Department of Tamaulipas, it will clearly result that arms, and arms alone, must decide the question; and in that case I advise you that we accept the war to which, with so much injustice on your part, you provoke us.<sup>13</sup>

Taylor failed to comply with this demand and the United States found herself in a war resulting in the acquisition of a great expanse of territory from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico which now must be protected from the Mexicans as well as the Indians. Some forts were established before the Mexican War to keep the Mexicans from getting a foot-hold in the disputed area; while other garrisons were created to keep the inhabitants across the river from retaliatory raids, as is discussed in detail in a later chapter.

Another cause for the creation of forts, particularly along the Rio Grande, was the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in which the United States forced Mexico to sign a humiliating pact giving up a vast territory inhabited chiefly by Indians and Mexicans; however, the United States promised to give protection to the Mexicans in the newly acquired territory, as well as Mexicans who resided south of the boundary line, from all Indians residing in the United States.<sup>14</sup> Both these problems proved difficult, and the latter an impossibility

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<sup>13</sup> Wortham, op. cit., p. 211.

<sup>14</sup> Hunter Miller, (Editor), Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America, vol. V, pp. 219-221.

due to the fact that the Federal troops could not establish themselves in a foreign country. A report of Quartermaster General Thomas S. Jesup to the Secretary of War, C. M. Conrad, shows that the Mexicans expected protection from Indians living on the south side of the Rio Grande. It was truly hard to determine, Conrad said, whether the Indian raids into Mexico were being made by Indians from the United States or by Mexican Indians. The report continued:

At present and heretofore the bands on both sides of the line unite in their predatory expeditions against that Republic, and sooner or later this country will be called on to pay the bill for the depredations of both.<sup>15</sup>

Still another factor which influenced the actual location of the forts, if not their establishment, were the renegades along the border country, both Mexican and American, who lived off the "fat of the land" from Texas to California. When in trouble on one side, they rushed hurriedly to the other side of the Rio Grande. The "green horns" from the East, on their way to or from California, fell easy prey to Indians and Mexican and American highwaymen. Juan Cortina was a noted example of this class. He had over a thousand members in his gang, and in his first attack defeated a company of United States regulars; but soon he became too bold and set himself up on the American side of the border and issued a proclamation against the whites. Then

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15 33rd. Congress, 1 session, House Executive Document, no. 1, pp. 12-14, 129-136.

Colonel John S. Ford of the Texas Rangers, and Colonel Robert E. Lee of the United States regular army, chased Cortina across the Rio Grande. He never returned to the United States.<sup>16</sup>

The lack of adequate facilities of transportation and communication necessitated the erection of various depots and supply lines. At the conclusion of the Mexican War, Texas was without a single mile of railroad. Communication, trade, and travel were accomplished by means of the stage coach and the ox wagon. The roads were often no more than clearings through the wooded countryside. A good road was "thirty feet wide, the bridges fifteen feet wide, and the stumps not more than twelve inches high."<sup>17</sup>

Several months were required to ship supplies from Indianola, a Gulf port, to El Paso; while in some instances the mail was delayed for weeks due to floods, raids, or destroyed bridges.<sup>18</sup> The problem became so serious that Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, imported some forty camels from the Orient, along with the Armenian drivers from Asia Minor, to try to solve this transportation problem. The

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16 Wortham, op. cit., vol. IV, p. 233, and George P. Garrison, Texas, A Contest of Civilizations, pp. 273-275.

17 C. S. Potts, "Transportation in Texas," E. C. Barker, (Editor), Readings in Texas History, p. 544.

18 J. H. Toulouse and J. R. Toulouse, Pioneer Posts of Texas, pp. 82-87.



camels did not prove very satisfactory, but were used until the outbreak of the Civil War.<sup>19</sup> Because the methods of travel were so slow and tedious, and because of the lack of navigable streams by which military supplies might be transported, several garrisons and camps were stationed at various positions to be used more as supply lines or depots than as active forts to chastize the unscrupulous Indians, Mexicans, and whites. Probably in most cases they served a dual purpose as did Austin, San Antonio, and Fort Davis.<sup>20</sup>

Some thought was given to the location and establishment of the forts in regard to the mail and stage line. This accounts for the fact that the line of forts from Fort Preston, on the Red River, to Fort Davis follow very nearly a straight line. This survey was made by the Army Captain-engineer, R. B. Marcy for the Butterfield stage and mail route prior to the erection of Federal posts along that line. This implies that the forts along this stage line were to protect the road and mail line, as well as to protect the settlements from the Indian raids.<sup>21</sup>

The following factors have been discussed as causes

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19 Chris Emmett, Texas Camel Tales, pp. 9-21.

20 Arrie Barrett, "Western Frontier Forts of Texas," West Texas Historical Association Yearbook, vol. VII, (June, 1931), pp. 115-123.

21 31st Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 64, pp. 18-23.

which necessitated the establishment of federal forts in Texas: Indian raids, boundary dispute, mistreatment of reservation Indians, Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, poor facilities of transportation and communication, and the need of protection for mail and stage lines. Any one of these factors might have been reason enough for the creation of military posts, but usually a combination of several reasons was instrumental in the establishment of each garrison.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE RIO GRANDE LINE OF PORTS

During the fifteen years following the annexation of Texas the United States Government inaugurated and conducted an extensive program to bring peace to the trans-Mississippi territory. The acquisition of the Mexican Cession, the annexation of Texas, and the discovery of gold in California, produced immigrant and Indian collisions which necessitated the adoption of a definite governmental policy in the far west.<sup>1</sup>

During the Mexican War, the Indians, who, as always, were the chief cause of fear along the frontier, were very quiet and peaceful. This may have been caused by two factors: first, the constant display of military force overawed the Red Man;<sup>2</sup> and secondly, at this time particularly, interest was taken in the welfare of the powerful tribes. Some forty chiefs were sent to Washington, "to study the white man's ways," and in some instances they returned converts to the routine of the white man's civilization.<sup>3</sup>

Following the Mexican War the federal government, having

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1 A. B. Bender, "Opening Routes Across West Texas, 1848-50," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, vol. 37, pp. 116-121.

2 32nd. Congress 1st. session, Senate Executive Document, No. I, vol. I, pp. 105-106.

3 Richardson, The Comanche Barrier, pp. 117-137.

been importuned by the Texas Congressmen,<sup>4</sup> sought to carry out its elaborate program. The Texans were chiefly interested in the protection from the Indians who had gone back to their fiendish habits after the withdrawal of a large part of the Federal troops.<sup>5</sup> Complaints were made by the citizens of Texas, and results were obtained. The following joint resolution of the Legislature of Texas on March 20, 1848, was an outgrowth of those grievances:

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the State of Texas, that our Senators in Congress be instructed, and our Representatives requested to use their influence for procuring the passage of an act establishing a chain of military posts in advance of the settlements between the Red River and the Rio Grande, and that said posts shall be removed from time to time as the settlements advance.<sup>6</sup>

Just how much the Congressmen from the State of Texas influenced the Federal government to carry out this plan, however, is not known.

The United States Government had in mind more than just protecting the people of Texas from marauding Indian bands. Instead, the program involved the following objects: (1) Opening the trans-Mississippi country to trade and settlement; (2) locating a route for a Pacific railroad; (3) survey of the boundary between the United States and Mexico; and (4) frontier

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4 H. N. P. Gammel, The Laws of Texas, vol. III, p. 1315.

5 Holden, "Frontier Defense 1846-1860," West Texas Historical Association Yearbook, vol. VI, pp. 41-45.

6 Gammel, The Laws of Texas, vol. III, p. 206.

defense. This program focused around road construction, the erection of military posts, and regulating Indian affairs.<sup>7</sup>

On August 31, 1848, General Order number forty-nine from the office of the Secretary of War, C. M. Conrad, created "Department No. 8", comprising the state of Texas, with the exception of El Paso County, which was placed in department nine because of the disputed territory between Texas and the United States. Between August 31, 1848, and October 31, 1853, Texas was known as the Eighth Military Department. It was after the latter date, but prior to secession, that this area was designated as the Department of Texas. This government order forty-nine assigned troops to the Department, but the distribution of these troops was left to the discretion of the general staff at the department headquarters.<sup>8</sup>

There were only two garrisons in Texas at the time of the execution of this order. These were Fort Brown and Fort Bliss, both of which had been established to repel the Mexicans during the period of the Mexican War. In 1849 Federal troops established seven military forts along a course known in Washington as the Indian frontier line, and two others along the Rio Grande between forts Brown and Bliss to form what

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7 Bender, op. cit., pp. 116-117.

8 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, No. I, vol. I, pp. 105-107; also see Bender, op. cit., pp. 121-125.

was known as the Rio Grande line.<sup>9</sup> Ringgold Barricks had been established on the Rio Grande in October, 1848, after the general order in August of the same year.

The order of 1848, made San Antonio headquarters for Department Eight, because of its location and healthful climate. According to a report of Inspector General J. K. F. Mansfield, moreover, the same factors prevailed as late as 1858.<sup>10</sup>

Texas, it is to be remembered, had retained her public lands in the annexation resolution with the United States, and depended upon the sale of these lands to pay her indebtedness.<sup>11</sup> The line of forts established in 1849 were not located as far west as Texas had contemplated and she found that a portion of her lands lay beyond the forts and were without protection. This is expressed clearly by a report of the committee on Indian affairs to the Legislature of the State of Texas on December 1, 1849, which read as follows:

The whites and Indians can never live in juxta-position and enjoy peace; experience has too often furnished evidence of the truth of this assertion, and Texas should at once profit thereby, and seek the early removal of all Indians from her

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9 32nd. Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, No. I, vol. I, pp. 105-107, 276, 279, 282, 284.

10 Colonel M. L. Crimmins, (Editor), "Colonel J. K. F. Mansfield's Inspection Report of Texas," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, vol. XLII, (October, 1938), pp. 130-132.

11 3rd. Legislature, House Journal, 1845-1850, 1 session, p. 211-212.



immediate frontier; and the establishment of a cordon of military posts at a sufficient distance therefrom, to enable our citizens and creditors to locate such lands as may be due them, without intruding too near or crossing such line.<sup>12</sup>

How much such reports influenced Secretary Conrad is not known; but he recommended, early in 1851, that there be erected a line of forts following as nearly as possible the mail route surveyed in 1849 by Captain R. B. Marcy, which began at Preston on the Red River and ran in a southwesterly direction to the Big Bend Country.<sup>13</sup> In this study these garrisons will be discussed as the Western Line of Defense. The remaining Federal forts in Texas were not established in any particular pattern or group, but each was erected as the need occurred whether as a protection for a mail route, Indian reservation, or an isolated settlement.

The Rio Grande Forts were established during the period commencing with the outbreak of the Mexican War and ending with the eve of the American Civil War. They were designed to serve, generally speaking, a threefold purpose: (1) to repel Mexican invasions; (2) to keep the Mexican Indians out of the United States; (3) and to keep the United States Indians from making excursions into the Republic of Mexico. The Comanches of Texas, and those even as far north as Kansas, seemed to find much pleasure in plundering raids across the

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12 3rd. Legislature, House Journal, pp. 211-212.

13 32nd. Congress, 1 session, House Executive Document, No. I, vol. I, p. 105.

Rio Grande. After the ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, as has been noted, the Federal government was under solemn pledge to stop such marauding expeditions. Thus these forts came into use and were located at highly strategic positions. This line included the forts Brown, Bliss, Ringgold Barracks, McIntosh, Duncan, and Quitman. Each of these forts will be described in chronological order.

### Fort Brown

On the 25th of March, 1846, General Zachary Taylor established a fort on the Rio Grande not far from its mouth. Prior to this the "Army of Occupation" under the command of Taylor reached Point Isabel, on the Gulf near the mouth of the Rio Grande, which he intended to use as a base of operations and a depot of supplies. A garrison was left here; but other troops advanced to a point almost opposite the town of Matamoros.<sup>14</sup> In fact, four eighteen-pound cannons were placed in a position to command Matamoros.<sup>15</sup> Originally the post was called Camp Taylor and was garrisoned by a detachment of the Seventh Infantry and Third Artillery, under the command of Major Jacob Brown. On May 7, the name of the post was changed from Camp Taylor to Fort Brown in honor of Major Brown who was killed in the battle of Palo Alto.<sup>16</sup>

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14 Nevin O. Winter, Texas the Marvellous, p. 193.

15 Joseph C. McConnell, The West Texas Frontier, vol. I, p. 193.

16 Ibid., p. 193.

The government reservation upon which Fort Brown was built contained 358 $\frac{1}{2}$  acres and was immediately adjacent to the city of Brownsville, Texas. The fort had an elevation of about 50 feet above sea level and its latitude was 25° and 53' and 16" north and 20° and 93' west longitude.<sup>17</sup> Besides being one of a cordon of posts established along the Rio Grande from Brownsville to El Paso for the purpose of protecting the border, it was also a unit in the series of military posts which extended across the frontier. Until the beginning of the Civil War, excepting for short intervals, from one to four companies were kept at Fort Brown.<sup>18</sup> In the report of the Adjutant General's Office dated November 28, 1849, it was explained that,

Fort Brown, opposite Matamoros, has larger garrisons than any of the frontier posts, because being a key to the upper provinces of Mexico, it must necessarily have a strong influence in maintaining peaceful relations along the boundary line, and, in protecting the revenue laws.<sup>19</sup>

During this period the cantonment was the most southern of all United States Army posts.<sup>20</sup>

The original buildings have long since disappeared but a later one still stands<sup>21</sup> approximately one mile above the

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17 Toulouse and Toulouse, Pioneer Posts of Texas, p. 93.

18 McConnell, op. cit., p. 66.

19 32nd. Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, No. I, vol. I, p. 284.

20 McConnell, op. cit., p. 66.

21 Winter, op. cit., p. 193.

first location.<sup>22</sup> This later fort was new Fort Brown which was established on June 21, 1848, as a supply depot for the army at Matamoros by order of Colonel Davenport.<sup>23</sup> Many of the buildings were constructed from old ones removed from Point Isabel, Brazos Santiago, and the mouth of the Rio Grande. The structures, which were all built in a cheap, rough manner (some were covered with shingles and four were covered with paulins) included six sets of officer's quarters, four store-houses, two soldiers' barracks, one hospital, temporary stables for artillery horses and animals belonging to the quartermaster's department, and several work shops.<sup>24</sup>

This post was one of the few at which brick or lime could be obtained--brick at four dollars per thousand and lime at one dollar and fifty cents per barrel. It was necessary to import lumber from New Orleans at about twenty-eight dollars per thousand feet when delivered at Fort Brown.<sup>25</sup> The post was connected by "good, natural roads" to Point Isabel, Brazos Santiago; to the mouth of the Rio Grande, twenty-five to twenty-eight miles distant; to Corpus Christi, one hundred and fifty miles away; and to Ringgold Barracks, which was about one hundred and eight miles distant. Supplies, however,

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22 McConnell, op. cit., p. 66.

23 32nd. Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, No. I, vol. I, p. 284.

24 Ibid., p. 285.

25 Ibid., p. 285.



were drawn from New Orleans, 628 miles distant. Government steamers plied from the Brazos to Fort Brown.<sup>26</sup>

By order of Major General D. E. Twiggs this cantonment was abandoned on March 20, 1861. In the summer of 1865, however, Federal troops again occupied the spot.<sup>27</sup> At present Fort Brown is being used as a Cavalry Post by the United States Army.

### Fort Bliss

"The Post of El Paso" was established near El Paso on February 11, 1848, and garrisoned by three companies of the First Dragoons, one company of the Santa Fe Battalion, and one company of the Third Missouri Mounted Volunteers.<sup>28</sup> On March 8, 1854, the designation of the post was changed to Fort Bliss,<sup>29</sup> in honor of General W. W. W. S. Bliss, General Zachary Taylor's Adjutant General in the Mexican War.<sup>30</sup>

Fort Bliss was the second post on the western frontier,<sup>31</sup> but was used more for a Rio Grande post to guard against

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26 Ibid., p. 285.

27 McConnell, op. cit., p. 66.

28 Carl Coke Rister, The Southwestern Frontier, p. 62.

29 Ibid., p. 62.

30 Lebam Kralc, "Roaring Frontier Forts Now Historic Ruins," Naylor's Epic-Century Magazine, San Antonio, Texas, vol. III, (October, 1936), p. 36.

31 32nd. Congress, 1 session, House Executive Document, No. 2, pt. i, p. 237.

Mexican raids than to aid in the defensive scheme against the Indians.<sup>32</sup> This post was later used as the depot of the Ninth Department for receiving supplies from San Antonio; so there was a necessity for keeping a large number of animals here.<sup>33</sup> With the establishment of Fort Bliss began the history of El Paso as an American city.<sup>34</sup>

In 1852 troops were moved to Fort Fillmore, a distance of about forty miles; but the necessity of a strong post at El Paso del Norte was soon recognized.<sup>35</sup>

On February 24, 1861, W. A. Nichols, Acting Adjutant General, gave the order for the Federal troops to evacuate Fort Bliss after the officials had given over the public property to the commissioners of the State of Texas.<sup>36</sup> During the Civil War, El Paso was occupied alternately by Confederate and Federal troops.<sup>37</sup> In March, 1867, the fort was permanently reoccupied.<sup>38</sup> In 1890 it was modernized and has since been used as an army camp.<sup>39</sup>

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32 Rister, op, cit., p. 44.

33 32nd. Congress, 1 session, House Executive Document, no. 2, pt. 1, p. 237.

34 Winter, Texas the Marvellous, p. 158.

35 33rd. Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, pt. ii, p. 3.

36 Barrett, "Western Frontier Forts of Texas," West Texas Historical Association Yearbook, vol. VII, (June, 1931, p. 117.

37 Winter, op, cit., p. 158.

38 Rister, op, cit., p. 62.

39 Kralc, loc, cit., vol. III, p. 36.

### Ringgold Barracks

Companies C and G, First United States Infantry, under the command of Captain J. H. LaMotte, established a post on the left bank of the Rio Grande on October 26, 1848.<sup>40</sup> In latitude it was situated 26° and 23' north, and in longitude, 21° and 50' west.<sup>41</sup> The post, was called Camp Ringgold for Major David Ringgold of the United States Artillery who was slain in the Battle of Palo Alto, May 8, 1846.<sup>42</sup> By General Order No. 8, of July 16, 1849, Headquarters of the Army, its designation was changed to "Ringgold Barracks".<sup>43</sup>

Ringgold Barracks was near Rio Grande City,<sup>44</sup> a port of entry, and county seat of Starr County;<sup>45</sup> Fort Brown was 105 miles away by land; Camargo, Mexico, on the same river, five miles south; and San Antonio 110 miles north.<sup>46</sup> The site of the fort, which was established during the Mexican War, was evidently chosen because of its proximity to this Mexican town as a strategic point for observing the enemy territory

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40 32nd. Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. 1, p. 282; see also Toulouse and Toulouse, Pioneer Posts of Texas, p. 117.

41 Toulouse and Toulouse, op. cit., p. 117.

42 McConnell, The West Texas Frontier, vol. I, p. 66.

43 Toulouse and Toulouse, op. cit., p. 117.

44 Kralc, loc. cit., p. 36.

45 Toulouse and Toulouse, op. cit., p. 117.

46 32nd. Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 282.

round about, and its location at the head of steam navigation as a supply distributing center.<sup>47</sup>

Ringgold Barracks contained more frame buildings than most other frontier posts, perhaps explained by the "Remarks" made in Quartermaster E. E. Babbitt's report as follows:

Much of the lumber of which these buildings were made came from the old buildings at Brazos Point Isabel, and the mouth of the Rio Grande, the cost very difficult to estimate. The new lumber used sent up by Major Chapman, Assistant Quartermaster from Fort Brown. About one-fourth of labor performed by troops, and the balance by hired mechanics.<sup>48</sup>

The hospital of the fort was surrounded by a ten foot piazza, and was heated by two fireplaces each with a brick chimney. There was no stone, lumber, or wood for building purposes near the fort. Much of the lumber was sent from New Orleans.<sup>49</sup>

Ringgold Barracks was connected by roads with Rio Grande City and Roma, fifteen miles above the fort; with Fort Merrill and Corpus Christi, northeast 150 to 200 miles; with Forts McIntosh and Duncan, 130 to 235 miles up the river; and with Fort Brown. The roads were sandy in places and along them water was very scarce. Supplies were brought by a government steamer from Fort Brown, about 365 miles by water.<sup>50</sup>

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47 32nd. Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. II, p. 282.

48 Ibid., p. 282.

49 Ibid., p. 282.

50 Ibid., p. 282.



On March 3, 1859, the post was abandoned and the troops transferred to Camp Hudson; but in December, 1859, it was again re-occupied. During the Civil War it was abandoned, but after being re-garrisoned in 1867 it has been maintained as a military post, except for short intervals, until the present time.<sup>51</sup>

### Fort McIntosh

Under the command of Lieutenant Viele, one company of the First Infantry established Fort McIntosh on March 1, 1849.<sup>52</sup> The post was situated on the left bank of the Rio Grande, latitude 27° and 45' north, longitude 99° and 50' west, with an altitude of 806 feet, and near the town of Laredo, Texas, which was the oldest settlement on the frontier.<sup>53</sup> During the Mexican War, United States soldiers took possession of Laredo, paving the way for the establishment of a post at that place.<sup>54</sup>

This outpost was known as Camp Crawford until January 7, 1850, when the name was changed to Fort McIntosh.<sup>55</sup> On December 31, 1849, Lieutenant Viele and his men were joined by Captain King with his company; after that time two companies were

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51 McConnell, op. cit., p. 66.

52 32nd. Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 276.

53 Toulouse and Toulouse, op. cit., p. 83.

54 Winter, Texas the Marvellous, p. 189.

55 McConnell, op. cit., p. 67.

garrisoned at the post.<sup>56</sup> In reality it served a two-fold purpose, since it was one of a series of posts extending from Brownsville to El Paso, and likewise belonged to the cordon of posts extending from the Red River to the Rio Grande.<sup>57</sup>

In 1858, the post was abandoned and the stores taken to Fort Brown. Subsequently the fort was re-occupied by two companies of the First United States Infantry, who were garrisoned there until the outbreak of the Civil War.<sup>58</sup> A company of the Second Texas Cavalry held the post in 1865.<sup>59</sup>

In a report written by Lieutenant Turnley, Acting Assistant Quartermaster at Fort McIntosh in 1850, mention was made of the following items: one frame building used as a hospital; several frame buildings, used as officers quarters and company quarters; a stone magazine and a prison and guard-house made of the same material; one carpenter's shop; and a "jacal" structure made of mesquite poles placed perpendicularly in the ground with a dirt floor and shingle roof, used for additional officers quarters. Other similar structures used for officers quarters were covered with paulins.<sup>60</sup> The report

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56 32nd. Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 276.

57 McConnell, op. cit., p. 67.

58 Toulouse and Toulouse, op. cit., p. 84.

59 McConnell, op. cit., p. 67.

60 32nd. Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 276.

continued:

Stabling consisting of poles placed perpendicularly in the ground, covered with paulins, at present nearly rotten and scarcely affording shelter for forty-five animals.<sup>61</sup>

Stone was the only building material in that section but there was an abundance of this about four miles above the post on the river bank convenient for boating. The lumber used at the post was sent from Ringgold Barracks at a transportation cost of practically \$65.00 per thousand feet.<sup>62</sup>

Four roads led from the post. That to Ringgold Barracks, 120 miles away, crossed no running streams and water and grass were scarce during the summer months. A second road led to Corpus Christi, 38 miles distant, and teams were easily watered at any of the small streams which were forded. The Nueces, Rio Frio, and San Miguel Rivers were traversed by the San Antonio road and water was quite abundant except in very dry seasons. A good natural road led to Fort Duncan, 105 miles up the Rio Grande.<sup>63</sup>

There were no means of communication except by government trains and horseback. Interruption by floods and Indian marauders made this communication even more irregular. Sometimes the mail was delayed for as much as three weeks. The nearest

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61 Ibid., p. 276.

62 32nd. Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 276.

63 Ibid., p. 276.

railroad approach was at Brenham, 350 miles east of the post.<sup>64</sup>

### Fort Duncan

On March 27, 1849, soon after the conclusion of the Mexican War, Companies A and F of the First Infantry, under the command of Captain Sidney Burbank, established Fort Duncan on the east bank of the Rio Grande about 650 miles from its mouth.<sup>65</sup> Adjoining Eagle Pass in Maverick County, it was directly opposite Piedras Negras, Mexico, about forty miles south of Fort Clark, and 156 miles southwest of San Antonio.<sup>66</sup> It was originally located on a plot of land of about 5,000 acres which the government leased from John Twchig, a San Antonio banker, at \$130.00 per month until 1876.<sup>67</sup>

This post was fifth of the series established in 1849, and had a latitude of 28° and 50' north, and longitude of 100° and 30' west.<sup>68</sup> This cantonment was called California Camp, since so many California immigrants were stranded here during the gold rush. "Many of these later became gamblers

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64 Toulouse and Toulouse, op. cit., p. 84.

65 32nd. Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 279; see also, McConnell, The West Texas Frontier, vol. I, p. 68.

66 Toulouse and Toulouse, Pioneer Posts of Texas, p. 89.

67 Colonel M. L. Crimmins, "Old Fort Duncan: A Frontier Post," Frontier Times, vol. XV, (April, 1937), p. 379.

68 McConnell, op. cit., p. 68; also Toulouse and Toulouse, op. cit., p. 89.



and highwaymen so it is said by local authorities."<sup>69</sup> In 1851, Fort Duncan became headquarters of the First United States Infantry under the command of Colonel Thompson Morris.<sup>70</sup>

In a report to Quartermaster General T. S. Jesup, dated September 1, 1851, E. E. Babbitt, Brevet Major and Assistant Quartermaster, San Antonio (Headquarters for Department No. 8), stated that there were "six grass houses occupied by the companies built entirely of willow poles and grass, no floors or windows."<sup>71</sup> Later the buildings were warmed by fireplaces and ventilated through openings at the eaves. The guardhouse which held an average of nineteen prisoners was too small and not properly lighted or ventilated. The hospital, surrounded by a porch, had no provision for ventilation. Water which was obtained from the river was kept in barrels and supplied by water wagons.

An excellent quality of stone, easily quarried, was found in abundance at a high bluff about half a mile distant from the fort; but there was no timber suitable for building in that part of the country. Lumber used was sent from Ringgold Barracks at the rate of about \$80.00 per thousand feet,

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69 Winter, Texas, the Marvellous, p. 186.

70 Crimmins, op. cit., p. 379.

71 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 279.

shingles at \$10.00 per thousand. Corn was procured from Nava, San Juan, Pictis and other small Mexican towns, twenty-five to forty miles distant from the river.<sup>72</sup>

Only two roads led from the post--one to Fort Inge and thence to San Antonio, and the other down the river to Fort McIntosh at Laredo. Both were excellent roads for the time, and were generally in good condition. All public supplies in 1850 were still drawn by public teams from the depot at Ringgold Barracks.<sup>73</sup>

The troops were withdrawn on June 18, 1859, and transferred to Camp Verde; but the post was re-garrisoned March 18, 1860.<sup>74</sup> During the Civil War, and for a few years thereafter, there were no soldiers there and the conditions were almost unsafe for law-abiding citizens. Indians, a few renegade white men, and some unscrupulous Mexicans were the principal occupants over a ten year period.<sup>75</sup> When the fort was re-garrisoned in 1868 the buildings were in bad condition and much property had been destroyed or taken away.<sup>76</sup> Eighty Seminole Indians were attached to the fort in 1870.<sup>77</sup> In 1883

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72 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 280.

73 Ibid., p. 280.

74 McConnell, op. cit., p. 68.

75 Winter, op. cit., p. 186.

76 Grimmins, op. cit., p. 380.

77 McConnell, op. cit., p. 68.

the post was discontinued and became known as Camp Eagle Pass.<sup>78</sup> It was completely abandoned in 1905; however, troubles across the border caused the fort to be reoccupied about five years later at which time its old name was assumed.<sup>79</sup>

### Fort Quitman

One of the last forts established along the border before the Civil War was Fort Quitman, which was garrisoned on September 28, 1858. This cantonment, which was near El Paso, completed the cordon of posts extending from El Paso to Brownsville.<sup>80</sup> The fort was located on a sand prairie covered with stunted chaparral, mesquite bushes, and wild cactus, not ten miles away from steep, rocky mountains destitute of any plant growth. There was a gradual slope from the fort affording excellent drainage to the river about four hundred yards distant. Adobe houses comprised the post's structures.<sup>81</sup>

The fort was named for General John A. Quitman, who was presented a sword by Congress for gallant service in the Mexican War. It was built to assist in the protection of

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78 Crimmins, op. cit., p. 380.

79 Winter, op. cit., p. 186.

80 Jesse A. Ziegler, Wave of the Gulf, p. 228; also Joseph C. McConnell, The West Texas Frontier, vol. I, p. 70.

81 Toulouse and Toulouse, Pioneer Posts of Texas, p. 131.

the stage line running east and west.<sup>82</sup> During the Civil War the fort was evacuated, but it was re-garrisoned on June 1, 1868. Final abandonment came on January 5, 1877.<sup>83</sup>

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82 McConnell, op. cit., p. 80.

83 Rister, The Southwestern Frontier, pp. 61-62.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE LINE ON THE INDIAN FRONTIER OR THE INNER CHAIN OF FORTS

The seven posts on the Indian frontier which were established in 1849 offered a protecting wall which extended from the northern plains, near Fort Worth, to the Rio Grande, in a fairly straight line. Fort Duncan and Fort McIntosh were the termini for the inner cordon, and "tied" this line with the Rio Grande posts. As the frontier moved westward, however, many of these forts were abandoned or moved to new locations on the frontier. These forts shall be discussed, following the chronological order: Martin Scott, Inge, Graham, Croghan, Worth, Lincoln, and Gates.

#### Fort Martin Scott

Fort Martin Scott was established December 5, 1848, at Fredericksburg on the Perdenales River, a branch of the Colorado River.<sup>1</sup> At first it was called Camp Martin Scott for Lieutenant Colonel Martin Scott, who was killed in action September 8, 1847, in the battle of Molino del Rey in Mexico.<sup>2</sup> But by an order dated December 28, 1849, the name was changed

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1 Frontier Times, vol. III, (July, 1926), p. 8.  
(Material compiled by Colonel M. L. Grimmins from the  
Army Register, 1789-1889.)

2 Joseph C. McConnell, The West Texas Frontier, vol. I, p. 67.

to Fort Martin Scott.<sup>3</sup> At the time of its establishment this post stood beyond the settlements as an advance guard to civilization.<sup>4</sup>

Fort Martin Scott was one of the first in the inner line of defense. In 1849 and 1850 the post was occupied by Company K of the United States Eighth Infantry, but the garrison varied from two officers and seventy-two men to eight officers and one hundred fifty-six men. Water was procured from springs nearby.<sup>5</sup>

On December 29, 1853, the fort was abandoned because of the other line of posts which had been located much farther west. From 1861 to 1865 Confederate forces garrisoned the fort. In October, 1866, it was reoccupied by Company A, Fourth Cavalry but on December 28, 1866, was permanently abandoned. Homes have been improvised from the buildings.<sup>6</sup>

#### Fort Inge

Captain Sidney Burbank, with two companies of the First Infantry, located Fort Inge in February, 1849, on the Leona River, a tributary of the Frio, a few miles south of the city of Uvalde at the intersection of the mail routes to the more

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3 Esther Mueller, "Old Fort Martin Scott, at Fredericksburg," Frontier Times, vol. XIV, (August, 1937), p. 463.

4 McConnell, op. cit., p. 67.

5 Mueller, op. cit., p. 463; also McConnell, op. cit., p. 67.

6 Mueller, op. cit., p. 463.

distant west and to Mexico.<sup>7</sup> This fort, the second of the first series of posts established between the Red River and the Rio Grande, was named in honor of Lieutenant Z. M. Inge, who was killed May 9, 1848, in the battle of Resaca de la Palma.<sup>8</sup>

Lieutenant J. M. Barton, First Infantry, Acting Assistant Quartermaster at Fort Inge, in 1850, reported the following buildings: Temporary log quarters--erected by the troops--some with thatched roofs, including three blocks of officers' quarters; two blocks of company quarters; several storehouses; and a commissary. Stone, admirably suited to building purposes, was found in abundance near the fort. Lumber cost from \$75.00 to \$85.00 per thousand feet hauled from Bastrop, 165 miles, or about \$20.00 to \$30.00 for indifferent hard lumber made at the mill on the Rio Frio.<sup>9</sup>

A road led from Fort Inge west to Fort Duncan, seventy miles away on the Rio Grande; another east to San Antonio, ninety miles distant; and a third to El Paso, 580 miles away. All were natural roads and usually very good. The Leona and Nueces Rivers and the Chacon Creek were crossed by the road

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7 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 278; also, McConnell, The West Texas Frontier, vol. I, p. 67.

8 McConnell, op. cit., p. 67.

9 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 278.

to Fort Duncan but all were fordable. The Pecos, on the road to El Paso, was generally fordable, but when swollen had a swift current and floats or bridging was necessary to cross over. The average cost of transportation from San Antonio was eighty-five cents per one hundred pounds.<sup>10</sup>

During its existence Robert E. Lee was a frequent visitor at the fort and, at one time, General J. B. Hood was stationed there. Occupancy of the fort was somewhat irregular. In April, 1851, the troops were withdrawn, but it was reoccupied in July of the same year. During 1855 the garrison was removed to Fort Clark and for over a year Fort Inge remained unoccupied, but in 1856 troops were stationed there once more. Troops were withdrawn from the post during the Civil War but it was reoccupied after the war and maintained until February, 1869, when the fort was permanently abandoned.<sup>11</sup>

#### Fort Graham

Brevet Brigadier-General W. S. Harney established Fort Graham on March 27, 1849, by virtue of order No. 9, dated Headquarters, 8th and 9th Departments, San Antonio, February

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10 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 278.

11 Bertha Dalton, "History of Fort Inge on the Leona River," Frontier Times, vol. I, (October, 1923); see also, McConnell, op. cit., p. 68.



8, 1849.<sup>12</sup> The fort was located about one mile east of the Brazos River in Hill County at the site of the old Jose Maria Indian village, approximately fourteen miles west of the present town of Hillsboro. There were high bluffs at this point and the Brazos River did not overflow in the region of the camp. The fort was named in honor of Lieutenant Colonel W. M. Graham, who was killed in the battle of Molino del Rey in Mexico, September 8, 1847.<sup>13</sup>

The hospital, commissary store, officers' quarters, and company quarters were constructed with squared oak logs covered with clapboards. The roofs were shingled, and all the buildings had stone chimneys. Cedar logs were used in building a stable, a carpenter and wheelwright shop, and a blacksmith shop. A proposed building for the assistant surgeon was left unfinished. Colonel James V. Bomford gave orders that a stone magazine be built, but, when completed it was leaky and unfit for use.<sup>14</sup>

Good quality building stone was found in large quantities

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12 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 271; see also, Kralc, "Roaring Frontier Forts Now Historic Ruins," Naylor's Epic-Century Magazine, San Antonio, Texas, vol. III, (October, 1936), p. 36.

13 Barrett, "Western Frontier Forts of Texas," West Texas Historical Association Yearbook, vol. VII, (June, 1931), p. 121; also, Captain B. B. Paddock, A History of Central and Western Texas, vol. II, p. 488.

14 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 273.

near the fort. Post oak, hackberry, cottonwood, elm and cedar timber grew in the vicinity of the post; but it was unsuitable for sawing into boards; so lumber was brought from Porter's Bluff, on the Trinity, 120 miles away, and delivered at the post for \$60.00 per thousand feet.<sup>15</sup>

One road connected this fort with Fort Worth, sixty miles to the northeast; another led to Austin, via Fort Gates, 130 miles to the southwest, and thence on to the Red River. During dry seasons the roads were good but often became impassable during rainy weather, because of the swollen streams which had to be crossed. Near the fort there was a ferry over the Brazos. Freight to Austin cost from \$2.00 to \$2.50 per one hundred pounds and \$3.50 to San Antonio--when it was possible to hire public teamsters.<sup>16</sup>

Troops abandoned Fort Graham, October 6, 1853, because of the establishment, in 1851 and 1852, of a second cordon of posts farther west.<sup>17</sup>

### Fort Croghan

Lieutenant C. H. Tyler, commanding A Company, Second Dragoons, located Fort Croghan, May 13, 1849. This company alone garrisoned the fort until the following October. At

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15 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 273.

16 Ibid., p. 273.

17 McConnell, The West Texas Frontier, vol. I, p. 68.

that time it was increased by the addition of C Company, Eighth Infantry, commanded by Captain A. T. Lee, Eighth Infantry. The fort was named for Colonel George Croghan, who died January 8, 1848.<sup>18</sup>

Fort Croghan was the fourth fort of the inner chain of defense established in 1849, and was at first located in Burnet County on Hamilton Creek, about fourteen miles above the Colorado River. Later it was moved four miles up the creek because of a disagreement with the owners of the land. On March 22, 1852, Lieutenant Colonel D. D. Tomkins for \$50.00 per month leased from Peter Kerr the site of Fort Croghan for a period not to exceed ten years with the privilege of cutting and using timber.<sup>19</sup>

The buildings consisted of four double houses, two rooms each, with common log kitchens for officers quarters. They were constructed of oak logs and covered with oak shingles. Lumber was brought from Bastrop, ninety miles, and cost \$45.00 per thousand feet.<sup>20</sup>

Three roads led from the post; one to Austin, sixty miles east by south; one to Fort Gates, north by east; one to Fort Martin Scott, fifty-five miles southwest. Four streams,

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18 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 275; also McConnell, op. cit., p. 68.

19 32nd Congress, 1 session, House Executive Document, no. 3, vol. I, pt. 1, p. 275; also, Barrett, op. cit., p. 119.

20 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. II, p. 275.

the San Gabriel, Lampasas, Cow House, and Leon, all fordable the greater portion of the year, were crossed by the second road.<sup>21</sup>

As a result of a survey of Western Texas made by Lieutenant W. H. C. Whiting, in the fall of 1849, the imaginary line between Texas belonging to the White Man and Texas given over to the Indian, was moved westward, and Fort Croghan, with others, was evacuated, December 1, 1852.<sup>22</sup>

### Fort Worth

At the close of the war with Mexico, General Winfield Scott dispatched a troop of dragoons to north Texas to locate a post for the purpose of protecting that sparsely settled country from the ravages of the Indians who were then numerous in that region. The result was the creation of Fort Worth on June 6, 1849, by Company F, Second Dragoons, under the command of Brevet Major R. A. Arnold.<sup>23</sup>

The post was called Camp Worth on October 17, 1849, in honor of Brevet Brigadier General William J. Worth, Colonel

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21 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. II, p. 276.

22 R. C. Crane, "Some Aspects of the History of West and Northwest Texas Since 1845," E. C. Barker, (Editor), Readings in Texas History, pp. 583-585; also McCormell, The West Texas Frontier, vol. I, p. 68.

23 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 270; also Winter, Texas, The Marvellous, p. 10.



of the Eighth Infantry, who died in San Antonio May 7, 1849. But on November 14, 1849, the name was changed to Fort Worth.<sup>24</sup>

Assistant Surgeon Thomas H. Williams in 1852 described the location, as follows:

It is built upon the northern extremity of an extensive high prairie, with a southern exposure, and at an elevation of one hundred and fifty feet above the ordinary low water mark of the Trinity. Immediately above the fort, the 'Clear-Fork' of the Trinity empties into the 'West Fork'; the former running west by south, and the latter northwest by west.<sup>25</sup>

According to present interpretation of the term, there was never a real fort at this place. Instead there were only barracks of the soldiers who were stationed in what is now the heart of the city. During the four years of its brief existence, there were extensive changes made in the personnel of the fort. Some of the officers, such as Captain James Longstreet, became outstanding military leaders during the Civil War.<sup>26</sup>

The troops furnished most of the labor for erecting the log buildings which constituted the fort. The officers' quarters had two large stone chimneys, but company quarters had mud and stick chimneys and no floors. Other temporary

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24 McConnell, The West Texas Frontier, vol. I, p. 69.

25 32nd Congress, 1 session, House Executive Document, no. 2, vol. II, p. 270.

26 Winter, Texas the Marvellous, p. 222; also, McConnell, op. cit., p. 69.

structures included a hospital, an office building, a stable, a commissary store, a guardhouse, a blacksmith shop, and a wheelwright shop. Both stone and timber suitable for building purposes were found near the post.<sup>27</sup>

Leading from the post were roads to Austin, Houston, and Shreveport, Louisiana. They crossed the Brazos, Trinity, and Sabine rivers, respectively, by means of ferries. The bottom lands of the Trinity were bad, and during heavy rains small streams were difficult to cross. Supplies were drawn chiefly from New Orleans and forwarded via the Trinity and Brazos rivers, or overland from Houston. Public teams were hired at an average rate of \$3.00 per hundred pounds.<sup>28</sup>

When visiting the fort in 1849, Lieutenant W. H. C. Whiting recommended that a new post be established above Fort Worth, because this latter garrison was small and not able to protect one hundred and twenty miles of frontier. The old fort was abandoned on September 17, 1853, because of a second cordon of posts established farther west.<sup>29</sup>

### Fort Lincoln

Fort Lincoln was established on the left bank of the Seco River, fifty miles west of San Antonio, July 7, 1849,

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27 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 270.

28 Ibid., p. 271.

29 McConnell, op. cit., p. 69.

by two companies of the Eighth Infantry, under the command of Brevet Major James Longstreet.<sup>30</sup> It was named for Brevet Captain George Lincoln, who was killed in action February 23, 1847, in the battle of Buena Vista, Mexico.<sup>31</sup>

The buildings consisted of three blocks of small quarters for officers, a commissary store, a storehouse for company property, a storehouse for the quartermaster's depot, a hospital, and two blocks for company quarters. Additional log or pole quarters were built for two companies. The buildings were constructed of wood. Some were covered with shingles, some were thatched, and others were covered with paulins. With the exception of some mason work in building the chimneys, all were temporary structures, having been erected by the troops. Stone was the most abundant and satisfactory material for building found near the post. It was a compact limestone which withstood the frosts and rains of that climate.<sup>32</sup>

Only one road passed the post. It led west to Forts Inge and Duncan, and east to San Antonio, and was good except in very wet seasons.<sup>33</sup>

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30 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 277.

31 McConnell, The West Texas Frontier, vol. I, p. 69.

32 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 278.

33 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 278.



Fort Lincoln was abandoned on July 20, 1852, when the outer line of defense was built.<sup>34</sup>

### Fort Gates

On October 26, 1849, Brevet Lieutenant Colonel W. R. Montgomery, commanding two companies of the Eighth Infantry, established a post on the Leon River, some seventy-five miles north of Austin near the present town of Gatesville. The cantonment was named in honor of Brevet Major C. R. Gates of New York, who won distinction for gallant service during the Mexican War, and who died June 28, 1849. It was the last of the first line of forts to be established, but the first to be abandoned.<sup>35</sup>

The fort consisted of four buildings for officers' quarters, three for laundresses, one for muleteers and employees, a hospital, a forage house, two storehouses, one guardhouse, a blacksmith shop, and a stable. These buildings were of temporary construction. The cheapest building material was stone which was found in abundance and of good quality near the fort. Lumber cost \$25.00 per thousand feet at Bastrop, eighty-five miles away, whence it was carried by government

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34 Frontier Times, vol. III, (July, 1926), p. 8.  
(This information was furnished by Colonel M. L. Crimmins, retired, of Fort Sam Houston and was taken from the Army Register, 1789-1889.)

35 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 274; see also, McConnell, op. cit., p. 70.



teams.<sup>36</sup>

One road connected Fort Gates with Fort Graham, fifty miles to the northeast, and another led to Austin. From a branch of the latter road also it was possible to reach Fort Graham. These were "natural roads . . . usually good, but bad in wet seasons."<sup>37</sup> Trains were often delayed several days by the swelling of small streams between Forts Gates, Austin, and Fort Croghan. The Bosque, a stream between Fort Gates and Fort Graham, was very treacherous because of the sudden rises after every heavy rain. There was a bridge over the Brazos at Fort Graham and another at Waco Village.<sup>38</sup>

During 1850 the supplies for Fort Gates were transported from Washington-on-the-Brazos, and from Houston, 220 miles away. Later they were sent from Indianola by public team.<sup>39</sup> Fort Gates, however, was evacuated in March, 1852, because of the second cordon of posts farther west.<sup>40</sup>

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36 32nd Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. I, p. 275.

37 Ibid., p. 275.

38 Ibid., p. 275.

39 Ibid., p. 275.

40 McConnell, The West Texas Frontier, vol. I, p. 70.

## CHAPTER V

### THE WESTERN LINE OF DEFENSE

The western line of forts formed the third leg of the triangle of defense. It simply took the place of the majority of the inner line forts. These posts were the answer to the request of the people of Texas who thought the inner line too close to the advancing white settlements. This cordon of forts was about two hundred miles in advance of the 1849 line. They were not placed upon the stage and mail line for the sole purpose of giving it protection, but being on a direct road to California gave security to travelers, and made possible a higher standard of living in the forts, due to the fact that the supply line could be kept intact. These posts of the outer line were: Forts Belknap, Merrill, Terrett, Phantom Hill, McKavett, Clark, Chadbourne, and Camp Cooper.

#### Fort Belknap

Fort Belknap was established to protect immigrant travel on the new trail surveyed in 1849 by Captain Marcy.<sup>1</sup> This fort was first of the exterior line of posts to be established. It was located on September 3, 1849, on the Brazos River, in Young County, and occupied a strategic position near the hostile

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1 R. C. Crane, "Some Aspects of the History of West and Northwest Texas, since 1845," E. C. Barker, (Editor), Readings in Texas History, pp. 583-585.

tribes living along the Red River.<sup>2</sup>

Fort Belknap was established under the command of Brigadier General William G. Belknap, of the Fifth United States Infantry, for whom the post was named. General Belknap was from New York, and had won renown in fighting the Florida Indians, and in the battles of Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma and Buena Vista, during the Mexican War. The post was first garrisoned by a detachment of Companies G and I of the Fifth United States Infantry; which later was augmented by detachments of other companies of the Fifth Infantry, under the command of Captain Carter L. Stevenson of Virginia.<sup>3</sup>

Not only did the post hold an advantageous position near the Old California Trail, or Marcy's Return Route, but it was also an important stopping place on the Old Butterfield Stage Line, which, prior to the Civil War, carried both passengers and mail between St. Louis and San Francisco.<sup>4</sup> In 1854, two Texas Indian Reservations were surveyed and located on opposite sides of this post.<sup>5</sup>

Fort Belknap and Camp Cooper were the two most northern posts before the Civil War. During that conflict the post was occupied by a detachment of the frontier regiment which

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2 Rister, The Southwestern Frontier, p. 48

3 McConnell, The West Texas Frontier, pp. 70-71.

4 McConnell, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

5 R. N. Richardson and Carl Coke Rister, The Greater Southwest, p. 282.

was stationed in a series of camps extending from the Red River to the Rio Grande in order to protect the exposed frontier settlements. The post was evacuated August 30, 1867.<sup>6</sup>

### Fort Merrill

Fort Merrill was established 100 miles southeast of San Antonio and sixty miles from Corpus Christi on March 1, 1850, by companies H and K of the First Infantry from Fort Brown, under the command of Captain S. M. Plummer. The cheapest and most abundant building material available in that area was stone. Lumber was brought across the Gulf of Mexico via Corpus Christi and cost about \$30,000 per thousand feet at Fort Merrill. The whole cost of erecting these quarters, including lumber from New Orleans was estimated not to exceed \$3,000. The buildings were all erected by the troops with the aid of a carpenter and mason.<sup>7</sup>

Roads led northeast to San Antonio and Goliad; southeast to San Patricio, Copano, and Corpus Christi; and southwest to Fort Brown, Ringgold Barracks, and Fort McIntosh. All were generally good natural roads, and Government teams brought supplies from Corpus Christi.<sup>8</sup>

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6 McConnell, op. cit., p. 71.

7 32nd. Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 1, vol. II, pt. II, p. 271.

8 Ibid., p. 271.



### Camp Cooper

In July, 1851 companies A, F, and H of the Fifth Infantry under the command of Captain John A. Whittall camped at a point near the site of Camp Cooper which was occupied then by a tribe of Caddo Indians. These troops were soon withdrawn from this location and Camp Cooper was not fully recognized as a military post until January 2, 1856, when troops under the command of General Robert E. Lee arrived.<sup>9</sup>

Camp Cooper was named in honor of Sam Cooper, who became Adjutant and Inspector General in the Confederate Army. Occupancy of this camp was quite irregular, but companies C, D, G, and H of the Second Cavalry and Companies B and E of the First Infantry were stationed there in 1865.<sup>10</sup> An Indian reservation was established on the clear fork of the Brazos, adjacent to Camp Cooper and in 1857, there were about four hundred fifty Comanche Indians collected there.<sup>11</sup> The camp was abandoned in 1861.<sup>12</sup>

### Fort Terrett

On February 5, 1852, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Bainbridge, Commanding Companies A, H, I, and K of the First Infantry, established Fort Terrett on the north fork of the Llano River

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9 McConnell, The West Texas Frontier, vol. I, p. 75.

10 Ibid., p. 75.

11 Richardson, The Comanche Barrier, p. 282.

12 McConnell, op. cit., p. 75.

approximately 150 miles northwest of San Antonio. Designated as "Post on the Llano River" for several months, Fort Terrett was abandoned in February, 1854.<sup>13</sup>

#### Fort Phantom-Hill

During the winter of 1851 five companies of United States Infantry troops stationed at Fort Belknap under the command of Brevet Lieutenant Colonel J. J. Abercrombie were sent to a point about fifty miles southwest of Fort Belknap with instructions to establish a post near the clear fork of the Brazos. On November 14, Lieutenant Abercrombie and his men established the post at a spot known locally as Phantom-Hill.<sup>14</sup>

After its establishment prominent Tan-a-was, Nokonies, and Yamparikas went to the Indian agent and protested because Fort Phantom-Hill had been built in the heart of their winter range.<sup>15</sup>

This fort which was always known officially as the "Post on the Clear Fork of the Brazos" was abandoned April 6, 1854.<sup>16</sup>

#### Fort McKavett

Fort McKavett, established March 14, 1852, was situated

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13 Barrett, "Western Frontier Forts of Texas," West Texas Historical Association Yearbook, vol. VII, (June, 1931), see also McDonald, op. cit., p. 75.

14 Carl Coke Rister, "Fort Phantom Hill and Its Military History," Frontier Times, vol. III, December, 1925), p. 36.

15 Richardson, The Comanche Barrier, p. 224.

16 McConnell, The West Texas Frontier, vol. I, p. 72.

on the south bank of the San Saba River near its headwaters,<sup>17</sup> 180 miles northwest of San Antonio. In latitude 30° north and longitude 100° and 20° west, it was approximately 2,600 feet above sea level.<sup>18</sup> The fort was named for Captain Henry McKavett, Eighth United States Infantry, who was killed at the battle of Monterrey, September 21, 1846.<sup>19</sup>

During the summer of 1852 the troops erected the stone buildings which comprised the fort, and by the next winter five comfortable structures had been completed.<sup>20</sup> They were located on the top of a hill and were built on the four sides of a 100 yard square plaza. Defensibility against the Indians was the purpose behind such a plan.<sup>21</sup> Still discernible, in 1930, were the carved words "U. S. Hosp. 8th Inf, 1852" on the old cornerstone of the hospital, used for many years as a doorstep to a little country store. Most of the buildings were sold to individuals for adaptation into homes and in 1930 many were still being used as such.<sup>22</sup>

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17 34th. Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 96, p. 156, as quoted by Arrie Barrett, "Western Frontier Forts of Texas," West Texas Historical Association Yearbook, vol. VII, (June, 1931), p. 129, see also, Paddock, A History of Central and Western Texas, vol. II, p. 452.

18 Toulouse and Toulouse, Pioneer Posts of Texas, p. 111.

19 Kralc, "Roaring Frontier Forts Now Historic Ruins," Naylor's Epic Century Magazine, vol. III, (October, 1936), p. 36.

20 34th. Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 96, op. cit., p. 156.

21 Toulouse and Toulouse, op. cit., p. 113.

22 Frontier Times, "Fort McKavett Has Interesting Early History," vol. VIII, (November, 1930), p. 58.

In 1855 the Dragoons at Fort McKavett went to fight the Sioux Indians. In February, 1859, General D. E. Twiggs ordered the abandonment of the fort and the command went to a post near Camp Cooper.<sup>23</sup> When the site of the fort was reoccupied in 1868, the old post was found to be a mass of ruins.<sup>24</sup> It was finally abandoned in 1883.<sup>25</sup>

### Fort Clark

In order to protect the southwest frontier, and especially the road to California, from the depredations of Mexicans and Indians, the United States Government established Fort Clark on June 15, 1852,<sup>26</sup> under the command of Major Joseph Hatch La Motte. The site chosen was near the present town of Brackettville, Kinney County, and adjacent to the Las Moras Springs, the source of Las Moras Creek.<sup>27</sup> The post was approximately one thousand feet above sea level and at 29° and 17' north latitude, 23° and 18' west longitude. It was 125 miles west of San Antonio, and about forty-five miles north

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23 Barrett, op. cit., p. 129.

24 See Toulouse and Toulouse, op. cit., p. 113.

25 Captain Paddock, op. cit., p. 452.

26 Chaplain Cephas C. Bateman, "Old Fort Clark, a Frontier Post," Frontier Times, vol. II, (April, 1925), p. 31, see also Barrett, "Western Frontier Forts of Texas," West Texas Historical Association Yearbook, vol. VII, (June, 1931), p. 131.

27 McConnell, The West Texas Frontier, p. 75.



of Fort Duncan.<sup>28</sup> In an order dated July 16, 1852, the post was named for Major John B. Clark,<sup>29</sup> who died August 23, 1847, in the Mexican War.<sup>30</sup>

The spot was made an encampment for nearly four years before permanent quarters were begun.<sup>31</sup> The post was built in a quadrangle, one side of which ran parallel to the Las Moras Creek, atop a ridge of nearly bare limestone about fifty feet above the level of the creek.<sup>32</sup> The barracks were one-story stone buildings, shingled, floored, plastered, and with a ten foot porch across the front. They were heated by fireplaces and fitted with iron bunks. Other buildings included a commissary storehouse, a guardhouse, a hospital, kitchens, and messrooms, and the officers quarters.<sup>33</sup>

On July 30, 1852, Lieutenant Colonel D. D. Tompkins leased from Sam A. Maverick<sup>34</sup> a league of land (including the site of the post) and an additional survey for the privilege of cutting timber, at \$50.00 per month.

The camp was abandoned March 19, 1861, by order of General

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28 Toulouse and Toulouse, Pioneer Posts of Texas, p. 101.

29 Bateman, op. cit., p. 31.

30 McConnell, op. cit., p. 75.

31 Bateman, op. cit., p. 31.

32 Toulouse and Toulouse, op. cit., p. 102.

33 Ibid., p. 102.

34 Barrett, op. cit., p. 131.

D. E. Twiggs, because of the Civil War, but on December 12, 1866, it was re-garrisoned.<sup>35</sup>

### Fort Chadbourne

The last of the second cordon of posts, Fort Chadbourne, was established on October 28, 1852 on Oak Creek, thirty miles above its confluence with the Colorado.<sup>36</sup> This location was across the southern hunting grounds of the Comanche Indians who were much annoyed by the fort and its scouts.<sup>37</sup> It was named for Lieutenant Theodore Chadbourne, killed in the battle of Resaca de la Palma, May 9, 1846.<sup>38</sup> Fort Chadbourne was also a mail station on the El Paso Stage Line.<sup>39</sup>

In 1854 fifty men were garrisoned here under the command of Captain Patrick Calhoun.<sup>40</sup> In the fall of 1854 a big Indian Council met at Fort Chadbourne.<sup>41</sup> The fort was abandoned when an agreement was made with Colonel H. E. McCulloch, commissioner for the State of Texas, to deliver to him the public

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35 Ibid., p. 131.

36 McConnell, The West Texas Frontier, vol. I, p. 75.

37 Richardson, The Comanche Barrier, p. 165.

38 McConnell, op. cit., p. 75.

39 Rister, The Southwestern Frontier, p. 120.

40 Barrett, "Western Frontier Forts of Texas," West Texas Historical Association Yearbook, vol. I, (June, 1925), p. 132.

41 E. L. Deaton, "Indian Council at Fort Chadbourne," Frontier Times, vol. V, (February, 1928), p. 198.

property at the post, February 28, 1861.<sup>42</sup>

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42 Barrett, op. cit., p. 132.

## CHAPTER VI

### MISCELLANEOUS FORTS

There were a number of forts scattered throughout the triangle of defense as previously mentioned. These "in-between" posts, as they were sometimes called, had a definite purpose, although they were not established in groups as had been the case with the frontier line garrisons. There were four reasons, any one of which or all, might have been the cause for establishing these forts. The first was to protect some isolated settlement from marauding Indians and renegades; the second to protect certain roads and mail lines; the third as supply lines and arsenals, and the fourth, some were erected to protect the reservation Indians from the unscrupulous and greedy whites.

This group includes Forts Mason, Davis, Camp Verde, and Fort Stockton.

#### Fort Mason

Fort Mason was established on July 6, 1851, in sight of the Fredericksburg Road near the present city of Mason on Comanche Creek. The post was not a part of either the outer or inner line of defense, but it was established to protect a German settlement in that vicinity.<sup>1</sup> The name honored

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1 Rister, The Southwestern Frontier, p. 48.



Brigadier General Richard B. Mason, of the First Dragoon, who died July 25, 1850.<sup>2</sup>

Military leaders of great renown, including General Robert E. Lee, General A. S. Johnston, and Major Earl Van Dorn, were stationed at Fort Mason<sup>3</sup> before it was abandoned on March 25, 1869.<sup>4</sup>

### Fort Davis

"Painted Camp on the Limpia", was established in October, 1854 near Limpia Creek, Presidio County.<sup>5</sup> In latitude the post was 30° and 23' north; in longitude, 103°, 36' and 45" west, and was about 475 miles northwest of San Antonio. The altitude was 4,700 feet. The post was renamed October 23, 1854, for Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War.<sup>6</sup>

Fort Davis was one of the forts in the "Big Bend" section which was built to protect the stage line and immigrant road, running east and west.<sup>7</sup> Yet it served many other purposes. Not only was the post an intermediate station for the army

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2 McConnell, The West Texas Frontier, vol. I, p. 71.

3 Captain Paddock, A History of Central and Western Texas, vol. II, p. 444.

4 Frontier Times, vol. III, (July, 1926), p. 8.  
(This information was furnished by Colonel M. L. Crimmins, retired, of Fort Sam Houston and was taken from the Army Register, 1789-1889.)

5 Ibid., p. 8.

6 Toulouse and Toulouse, Pioneer Posts of Texas, p. 151.

7 Rister, The Southwestern Frontier, p. 61.

camel route between Camp Verde and Fort Yuma, but also it was strategically located in the midst of the favorite haunts of many of the wild Indian tribes, such as the Gila Apaches, and southern Comanches, whose marauding bands could be easily intercepted at the different crossings or fords of the Rio Grande.<sup>8</sup> Besides protecting a long stretch of border, the soldiers had rustlers with whom to contend.<sup>9</sup>

The general plan at the time of erection was to provide only for housing the men and materials rather than to make the fort impregnable defensively. After being abandoned by Federal troops April, 1861, the post was soon occupied by roving Mexican and Indian bands by whom it was almost entirely destroyed. It was re-garrisoned by United States troops on July 1, 1867, and not permanently abandoned until 1891.<sup>10</sup>

#### Camp Verde

Company B of the Second Cavalry, under the command of Captain I. N. Palmer established Camp Verde on July 8, 1856,

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8 Toulouse and Toulouse, op. cit., p. 151.

9 Kralc, "Roaring Frontier Forts Now Historic Ruins," Naylor's Epic-Century Magazine, vol. III, (October, 1936), p. 37.

10 Rister, op. cit., p. 304, footnote; also, Toulouse and Toulouse, op. cit., p. 152.

on Verde Creek a little north of Uvalde.<sup>11</sup>

Camp Verde was established as a unit in a unique experiment by the United States Government. As has been mentioned, forty camels together with a dozen Armenian drivers and their families were imported from the Orient, in an attempt to determine the adaptability of the camel as a pack animal in the arid west. Camp Verde, as the eastern base of the camel route, was made an exact reproduction of a caravansary in Asia Minor. The walls were made of concrete and timber which had to be imported from Florida.<sup>12</sup> As this section of Texas was the remote frontier for a long time, the settlers were completely at the mercy of the Indians except for such protection as they themselves provided. The establishment of Camp Verde afforded some relief and created a greater feeling of security.<sup>13</sup>

On January 28, 1861, Colonel C. A. Waite, First Infantry, commanding at Camp Verde, requested that Infantry be sent to assist in defending the camp which in his mind was poorly selected and scarcely defensible. General D. E. Twiggs, consequently, ordered Company A, First Infantry, to go from San

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11 36th. Congress, 1 session, Senate Executive Document, no. 52, p. 188, as cited by Barrett, "Western Frontier Forts of Texas," West Texas Historical Association Yearbook, vol. VII, (June, 1931), p. 137; also see, Kralc, op. cit., p. 37.

12 Barrett, op. cit., p. 137.

13 J. Marvin Hunter, Pioneer History of Bandera County, p. 18.

Antonio to Camp Verde and relieve the situation.<sup>14</sup> The troops were withdrawn by order of General Twiggs, March 7, 1861, because of the secession of the Southern States. On November, 30, 1866, the camp was re-opened but it was finally abandoned on April 1, 1869.<sup>15</sup>

### Fort Stockton

On March 23, 1859, Fort Stockton was established near Comanche Creek on the great Comanche Trail to protect the road between San Antonio and El Paso. Not only did this post safeguard this route, but it was also a valuable link in the chain of forts which protected emigrants or supply trains going to or coming from California or Chihuahua from depredations of hostile Indian tribes.<sup>16</sup>

With an elevation of 4,950 feet above sea level, Fort Stockton was 30° and 50' north latitude and 102° and 35' west longitude.<sup>17</sup> The nearest post was Fort Davis, seventy-four miles southwest.<sup>18</sup>

In May, 1861, the fort was abandoned by the United States troops, and during the Civil War, the buildings were burned.

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14 McConnell, The West Texas Frontier, vol. I, p. 79.

15 Ibid., p. 79.

16 Toulouse and Toulouse, Pioneer Posts of Texas, p. 140; see, also, Frontier Times, vol. III, (July, 1926), p. 8.

17 Toulouse and Toulouse, op. cit., p. 137.

18 Frontier Times, vol. III, (July, 1926), p. 8.



Four companies of the Ninth Cavalry and one company of the Forty-first Infantry reoccupied the fort on July 7, 1867, but on June 27, 1886, the fort was finally abandoned.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Rister, The Southwestern Frontier, p. 61; also, p. 304, footnote.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The opportunity to possess free or very cheap land had enticed the Americans to pour into Texas, but the fundamental economic and political differences between the Mexicans and the Anglo-Americans soon led to a Revolution which left the Mexican province of Texas independent. A vote at the time showed a strong desire on the part of the Texans to join the United States. This was impossible then, however, since Mexico and the United States had signed a treaty of amity. During the period immediately prior to annexation when prosperity swept the country, the Texans gained confidence in their ability to make their own way in the world, and the desire to become one of the United States decreased in popularity. The waste and extravagance of the Lamar administration however, coupled with the fear of invasion by Mexico during Houston's second term caused the Texans again to desire annexation at any price.

The annexation of Texas gave rise to a boundary dispute between Mexico and the United States over the territory between the Rio Grande and the Nueces Rivers. This dispute necessitated a line of defense set up along the Rio Grande to repel the Mexican Invasions. At the close of the Mexican War the Federal Government, upon the recommendation of the

Legislature of the State of Texas, established in 1849, a cordon of posts from Fort Worth to the Rio Grande, and at the same time strengthened the cordon along that river to help enforce the terms of the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo.

In the Annexation Resolution of 1845, Texas had retained the right to sell her public land at her own discretion, but within a relatively short period she found that she had sold all her land that was protected by the chain of forts established in 1849. In order to open the land for settlement in advance of the frontier, Texas requested her Congressmen to recommend that the existing line be moved westward by some two hundred miles, and the removal of all Indians east of that line in Texas to some territory to the north or to the west of the forts. Beginning in 1851 the Federal Government established a chain of posts from Preston on the Red River on the north to the Big Bend Country on the southwest.

As the Pacific country developed, roads were surveyed through Texas because of its climate, and good grass along the trails. Consequently, it became necessary to protect these roads, mail and stage lines, and the people who journeyed to and from the West. Miscellaneous military forts were scattered throughout Texas as a particular need occurred. These forts served the purposes of supply stations and arsenals as well as protection from frontier hazards.

At the outbreak of the Civil War the Federal forts were

surrendered to the Confederacy by General D. E. Twiggs, commander of the Department of Texas at that time. During the war Texas was well fortified, and no Union invasion successfully penetrated the defense set up by the Confederacy in Texas. The Rio Grande garrisons acted as stations of supplies between Mexico and Texas as well as to prevent an invasion from the lower Rio Grande section of the country. The last battle of the war was fought on May 13, 1865, near Fort Brown at Palmito Ranch over a month after Lee's surrender at Appomattox.

During reconstruction many of the posts were abandoned and were used by Indians and outlaws or fell into decay. Others were still maintained and towns grew up around their protecting walls. With the passing of the Indian menace all these forts were abandoned as military establishments with the exception of the posts that guarded the southwestern frontier along the Rio Grande, and the headquarters at San Antonio, which was later made an active garrison and today is the largest permanent military post in the world.

The investigation of the military status of the State of Texas through the period 1845-1861 has shown the ability of the Federal Government to cope with matters pertaining to the protection of the citizens of the State of Texas from foreign and domestic enemies. Of more importance, however, was the evolution of present Eighth Corps Area whose headquarters are still in San Antonio, and whose southwestern



border along the Rio Grande is now, as in the period of this study, guarded by Fort Brown, Fort Bliss, Fort McIntosh, Fort Clark,<sup>1</sup> and Ringgold Barracks. For nearly a century this department has been the largest both in area and in the number of men, in the United States. In 1860, twenty per cent of the United States forces were stationed in Texas. Throughout the period covered by this study Texas was a seasoning field for officers and men who were later to don the Grey and the Blue. Such men as Robert E. Lee, Albert Sidney Johnston, John S. Ford, and James S. Longstreet got their experience and hardening on the Texas frontier.

In 1941, with the development of war in the Eastern Hemisphere, and the re-armament and mobilization program launched in the Western Hemisphere because of that war, the importance of Texas as a territorial and geographical factor in the military program is clearly evident. The vast size, the diversified terrain, the strategic location as a barrier to Central and South America, both by sea and land, and a climate suitable for year round maneuvers, make Texas indispensable as a training area for a great number of the United

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1 At the time of establishment Fort Clark was not considered a Rio Grande fort, however, due to modern transportation and communication facilities, this fort is considered one of this cordon at the present time; although located some forty miles distant from the river.

States forces. Again Texas is acting in the capacity of a seasoning and toughening plant for a large portion of the Army. Today Texas is training 138,000 men for an emergency which is feared throughout the United States.

Could it be that history is repeating itself and that these men and officers of Texas today will be the heroes and generals of the war of tomorrow?

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