FROM "THE CRACK POST OF THE FRONTIER": LETTERS OF THOMAS AND CHARLOTTE SWORDS

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INTRODUCTION

IN THE FOUR year period, 1842-1846, enlisted men and officers of the First United States dragoons established, built, and garrisoned Fort Scott. One officer, Capt. Thomas Swords, and his wife give insight to those years in a series of letters to fellow officer Lt. Abraham R. Johnston. The letters detail a very personal and moving account of life not only at Fort Scott but all along the Western frontier. The joy of life, the pain of death, and the everyday boredom of a military post, as reflected in the letters, present a true and accurate view of army life in the 1840's.

Thomas Swords was born in 1806 in New York city. His father was a partner in the publishing house of T. and J. Swords. Young Tom was graduated from the U.S. Military Academy (U.S.M.A.) at West Point in 1829 and assigned to the Fourth Infantry. He served in Alabama, Florida, and Missouri until 1833, when a regiment of dragoons (forerunners of the cavalry) was authorized by congress. Swords was promoted to first lieutenant and transferred to the dragoon regiment in March, 1833. He marched with the regiment from Jefferson Barracks, Mo., to Fort Gibson, Okla., and in November was appointed as an acting assistant quartermaster (AAQM). In 1834 the regiment and Swords were again on the march, this time to the Comanche and Pawnee Pict villages. September found Swords and four companies of dragoons at Fort Leavenworth, where he retained his appointment as AAQM.  

Lt. Abraham R. Johnston joined Swords' dragoon company at Fort Leavenworth in January, 1837, where the two men undoubtedly were introduced. Johnston was born at Upper Piqua, Ohio, in 1815. His father, John Johnston, was an Indian agent in Indiana territory. Abraham, one of 15 children, graduated from West Point in 1835 and was assigned to the dragoon regiment.  

Swords was promoted to captain of Company D in April, 1837, remaining as quartermaster while another first lieutenant commanded the company. In July Johnston was promoted to first lieutenant and given command of company D. The result was a common bond which grew into close friendship.

Called to Washington by the quartermaster general in December, 1837, Tom Swords was able to spend some time in New York city and win the heart of Charlotte Cotheal. He and Charlotte were married in May, 1838; and shortly afterwards Tom returned to Fort Leavenworth with his bride. Johnston and Company D were sent to Fort Gibson in December, 1839, yet the bond formed between Tom, Charlotte, and Abraham (or John as they called him) in that short year and a half all three were at Leavenworth was to last until Johnston's death in 1846.

Plans for the defense of the Western military frontier at that time called for two posts along the Missouri border as checks against raiding during the Mexican war. Company D, Fourth infantry joined dragoon Companies A and C at Fort Scott in October, 1842. Company C, Fourth infantry arrived at the post in May, 1843, after dragoon Company C was transferred to Fort Leavenworth.

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2. George W. Callum, Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy, 1802 to 1887 (New York: James Miller, 1879), v. 1, no. 963, p. 330; Swords to Jessup, March 4, 1843, Consolidated Quartermaster General File, Record Group (RG 92), National Archives and Record Service (NARS), Washington, D.C.; "Fort Leavenworth Post Returns, September, 1834", Records of Army Commands, RG 98, NARS.
Map of the Western frontier (1842-1846) based on Josiah Gregg's 1844 map of the Indian territory.
Capt. Thomas Swords (1806-1886) was quartermaster at Fort Scott from 1842 to 1846 and was responsible for design and construction of the fort buildings. He retired from active service as a major general in 1869. Captain Swords and his wife, Charlotte, give insight to the years they were stationed at Fort Scott in a series of letters they wrote to a fellow officer and friend, Lt. Abraham R. Johnston. Photograph reproduced courtesy United States Military Academy.

Indians in the territory. However, the decision to abandon Fort Wayne (Oklahoma) in 1842 prompted the establishment of Fort Scott on the Marmaton river, midway between Leavenworth and Gibson. Capt. Thomas Swords was ordered there in June to direct construction of the new post. Meanwhile, Johnston was assigned to recruiting duty in 1840, spending time in Boston and New York. He returned to Fort Gibson in 1842. This is when the Swordses’ Fort Scott letters begin.

Swords and Johnston were destined to serve together one last time. By mid-1846 war had been declared on Mexico, and Col. Stephen W. Kearny was ordered to capture Santa Fe and secure California’s allegiance. Johnston, promoted to captain in June, was appointed regimental adjutant in Kearny’s Army of the West. Swords, promoted to major in April, was the army’s quartermaster.

In September, without firing a shot, the army captured Santa Fe. Four months later, worn out by a long march over rough and uninhabited territory, 100 dragoons and 10 officers reached California. After a brief respite, they continued on toward San Diego. Word was received that enemy troops were blocking their way. Late on December 5 a reconnaissance party was dispatched but was discovered by the opposing forces. With surprise now out of the question, the decision was made to attack. In the early morning hours of December 6, Capt. Abraham R. Johnston led the charge into enemy lines near the settlement of San Pasqual. He was shot in the head and died instantly. Capt. Benjamin D. Moore and Lt. Thomas Hammond were also among the 18 officers and soldiers to die that early December morning. Swords, busy in the rear with the baggage train, saw little action. He must have been shocked to find that his close friend was dead.

Swords, Kearny, and the surviving troops were relieved by a force from San Diego on December 10. Kearny succeeded in subduing California, while Swords sailed to the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands to get supplies. He

10. “Fort Leavenworth Post Return, July, 1842,” RG 98, NARS; Swords to Jessup, December 16, 1842, RG 92, NARS.
12. Ibid., nos. 563, 813, pp. 350, 477.
The letters written from Fort Scott by Captain Swords and his wife provide a picture of army life on the Western frontier in the 1840's. Living quarters for officers and their ladies included four sets of quarters on the north side of the parade ground at the fort. Each building contained two quarters. This painting by Gary Hawk, "Iola," is reproduced courtesy of the Friends of Fort Scott, Limited.

It is thought that Charlotte died two years after Tom in New York city.

Sally Johnson Ketcham, historic furnishing expert working on the Fort Scott restoration in 1973, found the letters in the United States Military Academy collections. Without her knowledge and perception, the letters would yet be unnoticed today.

**The Letters**

Fort Scott, Nov. 26th 1842

**Dear John,—**

Although so long a time has passed since I rec'd your last from Boston, you must not think you have been forgotten, or that my duties here have been so important and numerous, that I have not had time to write to you—but the fact is, we have had so many reports of your whereabouts, first at Boston, then at N. Y.[,] then at Carlisle, Ohio &c &c that it has been impossible to mail a letter with any probability of its reaching you"—However you are at last caught and I fear, fast anchored for some time

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to come, as we may now give up all hopes of our Regt. leaving Ft. Gibson entirely—I believe the only chance to get D Co[,] away would be for me to offer to take comd. of it on condition of their removing it, as its Co. has so long been at me to leave the Staff, I think he would move heaven and earth to effect his object—but you need not fear my dispossessing you of the honor.

You of course have heard all about our delightful post here, and that we are going to make it the crack post of the frontier, even going ahead of Leavitt, and were I as comfortably fixed here as there, and the same society for Mrs. S. I believe would not much mind remaining here permanently, but cannot now think of it, without they tell me that I must consider it as my permanent station.—

I hear from my Sister that Dr. Maffitt has been in N Y on his way to Phil. to consult the faculty about his health, though she says he is looking very well, and cannot imagine what his particular complaint is—perhaps he has not yet recovered from the shock he received in N. Y.—poor fellow he ought to make up his mind to hear such things more philosophically, but he may get used to it in course of time—Thompson who is now probably at N. O. was in N. Y. a short time before he left Carlisle—was escorting my pretty sister Kate to Governor’s Island &c—wonder the old lady did not take a broomstick to him, as it would break her heart to have Kate run away with—

Dr. Walker was much disappointed in Mrs. W. not coming down with Moore—he is now up in Platte to bring her here—think he had better have pursued my plan, as there are none but temporary quarters for her—Mrs. S. begs very hard to come down, but I tell her it is out of the question—Shall go up again about the 20th next month, when I will have a begging spell as usual—In my order sending me here they say it would be temporary, as I would be relieved as soon as an officer of the Dept. could be spared from other duty, but as so many are sent to company duty I despair of getting away until the work is completed which will not be until next fall—wish you were here to consult about matters and things, am thrown entirely upon my own resources for plans &c. Not one of them here can draw a straight line, even with the assistance of a ruler—you may judge of their qualifications in this respect, as I believe Eustis stands at the head of the list—Graham has been staying with me since he came here, so I do not feel very lonely—they are now all out at the mill to see Eustis who is sick, he remaining there through choice—has every thing his own way, and his horses dogs

17. Fort Gibson was established in 1824 on the east bank of the Neosho river, north of its junction with the Arkansas river. The fort, which replaced Fort Smith, was responsible for keeping the peace between the different tribes and the Chickasaw tribes who were being resettled in the Indian Territory—U.S. National Park Service, Soldier and Brave, in The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings (Washington: Department of the Interior, 1971), p. 12, p. 264.

18. Stephen Watts Kearny joined the army as a first lieutenant in 1813. After serving in the infantry, he was appointed lieutenant colonel of the newly formed First dragoons in 1833. He was promoted to colonel of the regiment in July, 1836, serving as the commanding officer until June, 1846, when he was promoted to brigadier general and given command of the Army of the West. In that capacity, he led the march to Santa Fe and California, successfully capturing those areas. He died in 1848—Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), v. 1, p. 586.

19. Fort Leavenworth was established in 1827 by Col. Henry Leavenworth to protect traders on the Santa Fe trail. He served for the First dragoons occupied this post from 1834 to 1842—U.S. National Park Service, Soldier and Brave, p. 145.

20. William Maffitt entered the army January 1, 1826, as an assistant surgeon. He resigned October 31, 1843—Heitman, Historical Register, p. 683.

21. Philip Booth Thompson was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1838 and assigned to the First dragoons. He was promoted to first lieutenant in 1837, served as regimental adjutant from 1839 to 1841, promoted to captain in 1846, served at Fort Scott from 1848 to 1850. He was cashiered from the service in 1855 for appearing before a court-martial in a state of intoxication—Cullum, Biographical Register, v. 1, p. 481.

22. Kate Cathwell was Charlotte Swords’ sister.

23. Joseph Walker was the surgeon at Fort Scott from 1842 to 1847. He was appointed an assistant surgeon in 1838 and resigned in 1849—Heitman, Historical Register, p. 996; "Fort Scott Post Returns," RG 98, NARS.

24. Walker married Frances (Fanny) Hughes December 1, 1841. She was the daughter of Matthew B. Hughes, prominent Platte county, Missouri, resident—W. M. Paxton, Annals of Platte County, Missouri (Kansas City, Mo.: Hudson-Kimberly Publishing Co., 1897), pp. 271-272.

25. Benjamin Davis Moore was appointed a midshipman in the U.S. navy in 1829 and resigned to join the mounted rangers as a first lieutenant in 1832. He joined the First dragoons in 1833 and was appointed captain in 1837. Moore, in charge of Companies A and C of the First dragoons, founded Fort Scott in May, 1842, and was post commander until October of that year, when Major Graham and the Fourth infantry arrived. Moore was killed with Johnstone at San Pasqual in December, 1846—Heitman, Historical Register, p. 721; "Fort Scott Post Returns," RG 98, NARS.


27. William Eustis was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1830, was assigned to the Third infantry, and transferred to the First dragoons in 1833. He was promoted to first lieutenant in 1836 and sent to France in 1839 to attend cavalry school and translate cavalry tactics. Two other dragoon officers accompanied him, Henry S. Turner and Philip Keany. Eustis served at Fort Scott from 1842 to 1846. Promoted to captain in 1845, he served in the Mexican War and resigned in 1849—Cullum, Biographical Register, v. 1, no. 653, p. 377; "Fort Scott Post Returns," RG 98, NARS.

28. William M. Graham was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1817. Serving in the artillery and then infantry, he rose to the rank of brevet major and served as Fort Scott’s post commander from 1842 to 1845. He was killed in the battle of Molino del Rey, Mexico, in 1847—Cullum, Biographical Register, v. 1, no. 164, pp. 162-163.

29. Fort Scott’s sawmill was located on the quartzite and one-half miles away on Mill creek. Swords wrote that the mill could cut from 2,000 to 6,000 feet of plank per day, however, as he later relates, many problems were encountered with the mill—Swords to Quartermaster General Jesup, December 16, 1842, RG 92, NARS.
&c around him, is perfectly satisfied—is raising a pack of hounds for his private amusement, has a Kennel and all other necessary fixings but never hunts,—is great in theory but not much for practice.—I go out generally when the others do, that is once or twice a week if the weather permits.—Sometimes have fine sport—have a very fine country to run over and not the same chance as at L. for a body to get his neck broken.

Suppose you will be on Carleton's 29 court [torn] regret very much he has got into any difficulty—and hope it may turn out that Mason 30 has been misled by some of those infernal tattlers that were about Gibson—if Carleton has erred, think it has been an error of the head and not of the heart—as himself and Wickliffe 31 were said to have been bosom friends—Saw your wild stock when I was last up—don't know how many you have—they were running with mine, so I shall have an eye kept to them,—think you had better come up in the spring and have them driven down.—Were much disappointed at your not coming by this way—as we are on the main road to Gibson from St. Louis or New Orleans.

Moore says he is much obliged for your remembrance though not fortunate enough to receive the pipe—Cannot Miss Mary H's 32 presence here induce you to pay us a visit—don't yet know which of the bachelors here is to be the fortunate man—what say you for a hand.—If you do not come up—lets hear from you often, as we are again within striking distance.—Take good care of the D's and make your Sub 33 toe the mark—they say it is now equal to "H" Co.—a good name indeed—Remember me to Capt. Boone— and believe me,

As ever, Dear John,

Tom

Dear John—

Ewell 34 got up last night, and handed me your letter this morning, after having told me that you had not written nor sent any particular message at which I felt very wrathly, said you might go to the devil and that I should apply for another 1st Sub—but your letter, which he did not know that he had until overhauling his saddle bags, cooled me down and I am again in a good humor with you, and not only with you, but with myself and all the world—the reason why I have been dining at Moore's with Majors Walker 35 and Graham &c—eat and drank abundantly and am just in that happy state to which we mortals can only attain—to be sure I

32. Mary Hughes was the third daughter of Matthew M. Hughes. She married 1st Lt. Thomas C. Hammond, First Dragoons, in 1845. She was probably visiting her sister, Mrs. Benjamin Moore, who had given birth to a daughter July 20, 1842, soon after her arrival at Fort Scott.—Paxton, Annals of Platte County, p. 272.
33. A subaltern was an officer with the rank of lieutenant.
34. Nathan Boone was the son of the famous frontiersman Daniel Boone. Nathan was appointed a captain in the mounted rangers in 1832 and remained in that rank when he joined the newly formed First Dragoons in 1833. He retired from the army in 1853 as a lieutenant colonel.—Heitman, Historical Register, p. 230.
35. Richard S. Ewell was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1840 and assigned to the First Dragoons. He was stationed at Fort Scott from 1842 to 1845, when he was promoted to first lieutenant. Ewell resigned from the army in 1861 and attained the rank of lieutenant general in the Confederate army.—Culley, Biographical Register, v. 1, no. 1029, p. 902.
have since written two sheets home and am now somewhat cooled down—the sheets for home are filled but don't know whether they can be read—if not the intention was good and I claim credit accordingly.—By last mail I recd. a letter from the Col. he says he will keep the recruits until spring, if the river is not open, at the Bks. but assign them to companies.—So Thom. may lose a chance of spending the winter there and of again falling in love with Miss Julia Chouteau, if the impression left by our friend Maffitt is not too strong to contend against.—Poor fellow wish he would get a rich wife, as he could make proper use of the means—he is to be pitied if he joins the Company with a manned Capt and 2d Sub. as I take it for granted that Jenkins has by this time succeeded in the affections of Miss Nan—as she some time since, according to all accounts, made a deep impression on him.

How does Company duty go? Is it advisable for one so long separated from it as you and I have been to join if we can help it? As the talk is of dismounting us had I not better remain in the Staff and ride a public horse than take it afoot?

We are getting on here slowly, all we now want is water, the mill is ready and with plenty of water can cut the lumber faster than it can be used, am going on framing and by the time Genl. Taylor drives Co. "D" out of his Dept will have Quarters and Stables in abundance for you.—Why dont you go down to Ft Smith and make a sett at Miss Betty, perhaps he would become reconciled to the Drgs. if he had another son in law in them.—Mrs. S. has just sent me a letter from Annie—speaks of you and Thom—that she feels quite anxious to come out and see the Drgs. in their every day costume—believe it won't do to let any more of the Subs go on there, without first warning the old ladies—you spoil their tastes for the city beaux—

Have been reading Dickens Notes on America—what a pity he should have written so much trash and blaquashish—how far beneath the concever of such characters as Little Nell—Just as we might have expected after making ourselves such fools on his arrival in this country—Will we never learn wisdom.

Eustis is still at the mill, has been quite sick for some days, has his horses[,] guns[,] point—

37. Jefferson Barracks, a short distance south of St. Louis, was established in 1826 by Col. Henry Leavenworth and Capt. Stephen W. Kearny. The first dragoons were organized there in 1833.—U.S. National Park Service, Soldier and Brave, p. 177.
38. Philip Roots Thompson.
39. Julie Chouteau, born in 1816 in St. Louis, was the daughter of Pierre Chouteau, Jr., of fur trade fame. Dr. Maffitt's impression was very strong—in 1842, the two were married in New York city—Telephone conversation, author to Missouri Historical Society Library, August 5, 1980.
40. Leonidas Jenkins was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1841 and appointed a second lieutenant in the First dragoons—Gulick, Biographical Register, v. 2, no. 1071, p. 13.
41. Congress, as part of a general cutback in 1842 at the close of the Seminole war in Florida, ordered the Second regiment of dragoons dismounted and turned into a rifle regiment; to take effect in March, 1843.—Heitman, Historical Register, p. 143.
42. Gen. and later Pres. Zachary Taylor was in command of the Second military district at Fort Smith. The Second district covered the present day states of Arkansas and Oklahoma. Fort Scott was in the Third military district, which covered all of the present day states north of the southern border of Missouri to the eastern borders of Illinois and Wisconsin.—Prucha, A Guide to the Military Posts of the United States, p. 149.
43. Fort Smith was established in 1817 at the junction of the Poteau and Arkansas rivers. Abandoned in 1824 when Fort Gibson was established, it was reoccupied and built anew in 1838. Fort Smith served as an active military post until 1871.—U.S. National Park Service, Soldier and Brave, pp. 85-87.
44. Miss Betty was General Taylor's daughter. Sara Knox Taylor, another of the general's daughters, over the objections of her father, married Jefferson Davis, who was an officer in the First dragoons from 1833 to 1835. Davis resigned in 1835 and married Sara.—Grant Foreman, Pioneer Days in the Early Southwest (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1929), p. 171.
45. Ann Maria Colthill was Charlotte's cousin.—Mrs. Haakon Andersen, Trinity church, New York city, to author, October 17, 1980.
Capt. Benjamin D. Moore (1810-1846), in charge of two companies of the First dragoons, founded Fort Scott in May, 1842, and was post commander until October of that year. Moore was killed with Johnston at San Pasqual in 1846. Photograph reproduced from Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California, Vol. 6 (Los Angeles: Geo. Rice & Sons, 1904).

ers and hounds, but never hunts—I was out the day before yesterday—had a chase after a wolf, but could not catch him—I am ready for another on the first favorable day—I am growing young fast—No hope of promotion for you—
You will find Simpson, should he get to Gibson a very clever fellow—plain and unostentatious—he will give you all the news so good night—

Yours as ever
Tom

Fort Scott, Feb 1st/43

Dear John,

The express from Leavwth. arrived this afternoon, and has brought us the latest news by a month—We have been entirely cut off from the world by the water—had been looking for Burgwin 46 for the last two weeks, could not account for his non-appearance except on the supposition that he was detained for the Ct. of Inquiry, or by the [illegible] of the wily Angeline—As I was somewhat inclined to the last supposition, must confess that I was much pleased to hear from him at L—he could not get here on account of the high waters—Moore tells me that you write that there is some probability of our presence being required on the Ct. of Inq. God forbid, as I am not at present anxious to show myself at Ft. G. inasmuch as I prefer spending all my spare time at L—I intend leaving for L on the 4th and would put off tomorrow for fear of a Summons were it not for the expectation of receiving a mail on the 3d—if one is on the way hope he is detained by high water or some slight accident—Mrs. S. expects me on Monday night, and I have heretofores been as regular as a clock, so do not wish to disappoint her this time.—

Trenor 48 has Cooke 49 in arrest, has been hunting up all the charges he could against him—So I may expect to be detailed as a member of that Ct if the Col. approves the charges—do not know the nature of them.—Thompson writes that he will be up in the first boat with the recruits, and as the river is open, and a boat which was caught by the ice below has been up, I hope to meet him next week—Could you only come along at that time what a social chat we might have—Could all talk of old times when by ourselves, and of Kate, Anna &c when with a certain little body who would not consent that we should have all the talk to ourselves.—

Our mill is going finely, so have some hope of getting the qtrs &c finished in course of time—Eustis is at Col. Douglass[.] 50 Has been

46. Josiah Simpson was appointed assistant surgeon in 1837. He served briefly at Fort Scott in 1842. —Holtman, Historical Register, p. 888; “Fort Scott Post Returns,” RG 38, NARS.

47. John Henry K. Burgwin was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1830 and was assigned to the infantry. He transferred to the First dragoons in 1833, was promoted to first lieutenant in 1835 and captain in 1837.—Collum, Biographical Register, v. 1, no. 614, p. 372.

48. Eustace Trenor was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1822. He joined the First dragoons as a captain in 1833, after serving in the Fourth infantry.—Ibid., no. 305, pp. 239-231.

49. Philip St. George Cooke, upon graduation from the U.S.M.A. in 1827, was assigned to the Sixth infantry. He joined the First dragoons in 1833 as a first lieutenant and was promoted to captain in 1835.—Ibid., no. 492, pp. 317-318.

Captain Swords drew the basic plan for Fort Scott shortly after his arrival in 1842. This plan was sent to the quartermaster general in 1848 reporting on the progress of the construction.
there 2 weeks, went for his health as he was continually sick while at the mill, expect him up to-morrow—he is in very bad health indeed, a trip to the north, particularly Washington, would be of great service to him—

It is now late, have been all the night at my monthly papers, no clerk—When you think of coming up, let me know before hand if you can, that I may go up with you—

Remember me to Capt. Boone, tell him I will attend to the matter about which he wrote when I go to L—

A Sleepy good night from yours

TOM

Ft Scott, March 5th 1843

DEAR JOHN,

What will you say to see me coming juggling along with a wife, half a dozen negroes and sundry horses, many colts, cows &c to Fort Gibson—(don't be alarmed I wont deprive you of the glory of the D's)—as Qr. Master—well such I fear is to be my fate—the Qr. Master Genl. has written me that it is intended to send me to put up the new buildings at Ft G. in case the appropriation asked for passes

So before this my fate is decided, but as yet I dont know what it is—at any rate I am broken up at L. Capt McKissack being ordered there—Crosman to Jeff. Bks.—if I do not go to G—I am to remain here until the work is completed, after which to the devil perhaps—or to G—which is still worse—I was much surprised at the change as I was sent here only temporarily—Mrs. S does not yet know that I am to go to G—but that I am not to return to L—She takes it all in good part, only regrets leaving our little garden and other little comforts to which she has become attached there—have not seen her

since but will probably go up in 5 or 6 days to talk over matters and things about breaking up and selling out—our greatest consolation is that we will be with you, and that I will occasionally see Hunter—

Eustis has come in from the mill, still very unwell—has applied for a sick leave, and expects to leave for the east about the end of the month—his spirits have risen 100 per cent since he got the Dr's certificate, don't know the cause, as he says he goes off with less pleasure than ever before—he goes to Washington for what purpose he don't state.

Moore has been absent for 4 days, duck shooting about Douglass—Sent up a pack mule to day loaded—there are vast quantities of them now about the lakes—So if you were here you might be more successful in your hunting than at G.—What kind of quarters will I be able to get—don't want to be under the hill if I can have a hut where the new work is to be put up—as I have no idea of again shaking hands with the grim monster as I did while there in '34—Shall wait until I hear positively what is my destination before I move from L—without my quarters are required, in which event I will make this a half way ground—and move every thing by land—What a change it will be for Mrs. S from the delightful society of L.—expect she will be very retired at G. as she cannot amalgamate with some folks there—What has become of Carleton—by marrying he may do the rest some service but the Regt a good deal of harm—So I hope he will not be so lost to all respect for the memory of his late wife and himself—

Tell Cap. Boone one of his neighbors, who has a distillery a mile from his house was here 2 days since with a load of whisky for the

51. Fort Gibson was originally built of cottonwood in 1824 and thus, 19 years later, was in a severe state of disrepair. In an attempt to improve the old fort, the army requested funds for new construction. In 1844 Congress appropriated a limited amount for new buildings.—Grant Foreman, *Advancing the Frontier*, 1830-1860 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1933), pp. 58-60.

52. William M. D. McKissack was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1823 and was assigned to the Sixth Infantry. He was assigned to quatermaster duty as a captain in 1839 and was stationed at Fort Leavenworth from 1842-1845.—Collum, *Biographical Register*, v. 1, no. 832, p. 482.

53. George H. Crosman was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1823 and also assigned to the Sixth infantry. He was assigned to quartermaster duty as a captain in 1839 and was stationed at Fort Leavenworth in 1842-1845.—Collum, *Biographical Register*, v. 1, no. 835, p. 253.

54. By this time, the custom of a departing officer selling all or some of his goods to another officer was well established.—Ketchum, *Officers' Quarters*, No. 2, Fort Scott, Kansas, p. 11.

55. David Hunter was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1822 and was assigned to the Fifth infantry. He was promoted to captain and joined the First dragoons in 1833. He resigned in 1839 and in 1842 was reappointed as a paymaster. He was stationed at Fort Smith from 1842 to 1846.—Collum, *Biographical Register*, v. 1, no. 310, pp. 252-253.

56. "Under the hill" is a reference to the old stockade portion of Fort Gibson. Located in the hoodmouth along the river, this was the least defensible location. The dragoons made their camp on the bluff away from the main garrison.—Foreman, *Advancing the Frontier*, p. 56.

57. The other option was to go by boat from Fort Leavenworth down the Missouri to the Mississippi, down the Mississippi to the Arkansas, and up that river to the Neosho and Fort Gibson.

58. Carleton's first wife, Henrietta Loving Carleton, died at Fort Gibson in October, 1844. Evidently he had a romantic interest at this time but did not remarry until 1848.—Hunt, *Major General James Henry Carleton*, pp. 111-112.
Company A, led by Capt. Burdetto Terrett, rides from the Fort Scott stables to join Major Wharton and four companies from Fort Leavenworth on a march to the Pawnee villages on the Platte river. The 1844 journey was to impress the Indians with the power of the U.S. government. Painting by Gary Hawk reproduced courtesy of the Friends of Fort Scott, Limited.

Compy—says his family are all well, and what perhaps he will be pleased to know that he wanted to pay him some money—Can't you contrive to come up next month, we will drive all our stock down together—but what we can do with them after we get them down, the Lord only knows—

How does Chilton make out without his valuable dogs? if there are as many with you as here, he had better let them remain—as 5 or 6 don't materially change the number here—I have not one, but some of the others would be puzzled to count their number—the wolves are all run out of the country—and deer, of which there are plenty, they can't catch.—Tell West I am going to work to get a block of the permanent quarters ready for him and myself, but he must not come up too soon—I would much prefer remaining here to going to G—as I am sure I will be sick the greater part of the time there—

Will you please see that Mr McKee gets the enclosed letter, I am particular as it contains his discharge—it was left to me to do so whenever I could dispense with his services, and as we have got along so far without him can continue to do so—they are reducing expenses on every hand—Write by return about matters and things of the Post—you may know positively about the appropriation before I do—

Yours

TOM

Fort Scott, Aug 7th 1843

DEAR JOHN—

I, three days since, received yours of the 20th June from the Arkansas 2 weeks after we had heard of your mishap &c by the return of Terrett—Why in the world did you not come in with him? We could have fixed you off nicely, and soon have cured your foot by good nursing


60. Robert H. Chilton was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1837 and assigned to the First dragoons. He was promoted to first lieutenant in 1832 and served at Fort Gibson from 1843 to 1845.—Cullum, Biographical Register, v. 1, no. 938, pp. 546, 547.

61. Richard W., Jr. joined the army as a second lieutenant in the First dragoons in 1837. He was promoted to first lieutenant in 1839 and died in 1844.—Hoffman, Historical Register, p. 1020.

62. John McKee was appointed civilian forager master at Fort Scott in 1842. The discharge referred to may be the termination of his services.—Swords to Jesup, August 24, 1842, and March 4, 1843, RG 92, NARS.
commander⁵—We are quite comfortably fixed here, living in the temporary quarters⁶ put up for Capt. Moore—which by the bye are much better than any of the permanent quarters at Gibson, without they are much improved since I was there—as, they don't leak and are nicely plastered—

Our old friend Chas. McPherson, was here the other day, being one of the disarmed band of valient Texans, on his way to Gibson to see [illegible]—I told him I wanted to send some letters by him—but the first thing I heard, he had taken a sudden resolution and left in the afternoon.—had he let me know, you would have stood a chance to get this, or a substitute, by the same means, that takes the order to you—to escort the Traders. but as the word will probably have been sent to you, before Mr Hiram Wilson,⁹ who takes this reaches Fort Gibson, there is no telling when or where you will receive it.—The Dragoons have a fine prospect before them, of escorting every caravan of traders, that may ask for protection between this and Santa Fe—the only relief will be, the possibility of sometimes getting as far as Santa Fe itself—it will be horrid, if they have always to turn back at the Arkansas.—There is one of Capt. Boone's horses among the Osages, in charge of Mr. Papin, the trader—he says, the Osages say they found him on the prairie—which is also the story Mr. Giraud tells—but for all that I would not hesitate to accuse them of the theft, if any good reasons exist for believing them guilty.—Mr. Papin says, he will send him in, when he does so, I will either send him down to Capt. Boone, or receipt for him—¹⁰—What a delightful time you

63. On an expedition along the Arkansas river led by Captain Boone in concert with Capt. Philip St. George Cooke, Johnston accidentally shot himself in the foot. Occurrences of this type were not uncommon. Typically, at least one soldier on a march would wound or kill himself from accidental discharge of firearms.—Louis Felzer, Marches of the Dragoons in the Mississippi Valley (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1917), p. 299.

64. Burdett A. Terrett was appointed a third lieutenant in the mounted rangers in July, 1853. In November of that year, he was promoted to second lieutenant in the First dragoons. He took command of Fort Scott's dragoon Company A as a captain in February, 1842.—Heiman, Historical Register, p. 951.

65. The commander referred to is Capt. Philip St. George Cooke. In April, 1843, Texan freebooters robbed and killed a trader on the Santa Fe trail. Fear of further incidents led the merchants to request the army to provide an escort to their annual caravan to Santa Fe. In May, 1843, Cooke and four companies of dragoons from Fort Leavenworth met Capt. Terrett and 26 dragoons of Company A from Fort Scott at Counsel Grove, gathering point for the convoy. The troops and traders left the Grove and followed the trail, while Captain Boone and his soldiers patrolled the south bank of the Arkansas. In late June Cooke's dragoons discovered a group of Texans led by Jacob Snively. After much discussion and negotiations by Snively, Cooke declared that the Texans were in U.S. territory (east of the 100th meridian). The soldiers disarmed the group, and Terrett marched them part way back home, while Cooke saw the marchers to the edge of U.S. territory.—William E. Connolly, ed., "A Journal of the Santa Fe Trail," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, v. 12, no. 1 (June, 1925), pp. 72-98, and v. 12, no. 2 (September, 1925), pp. 227-255.

66. In August Cooke and the dragoon companies once again rode escort with the freighters. Upon reaching the border crossing, they were met by Mexican troops, who guarded the train into Santa Fe. Terrett did not participate, rather Lieutenant Ewell of Company A, 2d Lt. Allen Norton, Fourth infantry, and 31 dragoons from Fort Scott made this journey.—ibid., "Fort Scott Post Returns," RG 98, NARS.

67. The temporary quarters were log structures, reputed to be 50 in number. The site of the structures is unknown.—Ervin Thompson, Fort Scott, Kansas (Washington: National Park Service, 1987), p. 12.

68. Hiram Wilson in 1843 became a partner to John Bugg, who was the Fort's sutler (trader).—Ibid., pp. 38-39.

69. Ten horses and two mules were stolen from Captain Boone's party on his 1843 march. Four of the horses were the personal property of the officers. The other six horses and two mules were army property.—Felzer, Marches of the Dragoons, p. 85.

Pierre Mielcourt Papin was the agent for the American Fur Company in charge of the trading house for the Osage on the Neosho river near present day Erie. Michel Giraud was an associate of Papin's. From 1859 to 1842 he ran the establishment at Trading Post north of Fort Scott on the military road.—Louise Barry, The Beginning of the West (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972), pp. 326, 410, McDermott, Tester's Travels on the Osage Prairie, p. 117.
will have at the Washita—suppose you will be constantly on the go—after whisky sellers—horses thieves &c—occasionally relieved by the delights of a platoon drill.—Wharton certainly deserves a brevet, for his penetration in discovering that “D” Co. ought to go—Do let us know, what sort of place it is—what quarters &c you have, as I may some of these days take a disgust at the Q. M. D. and take cond. of the “D”'s Am pretty well disgusted now, my only hope is in the instability of all earthly things, a change must take place some of these days,—and any change must be for the better—the same remarks will perhaps apply to Regtl. duty—as I see but little in that at present to excite a man's military spirit—

We get along here slowly—our mill has stopped for want of water—and without we do a better business with it next year, it will take 2 years longer to finish, for want of lumber—Mrs. S.—has said she would write you a note, to enclose in this, so I must leave all the gossip for her—

All the military news, you will of course hear from the Leavith. comd. if you meet—and if not it will be stale by the time you receive this.—Eustis is still east, Capt. McCall writes, looking very badly—his leave is out.—Hoping you may have the luck to pass some time in the city of Santa Fe—

I am, Dear John,

Your Tom

Fort Scott, Aug. 7th '43

Your kind letter my dear friend I read, sometime in May[,] and repeatedly in T--; your remembrance—how sweetly gratifying it is to know when separated from friends that you still live in their memory, and that a re-

union is eagerly looked forward to,—from this don't imagine I'm in a very good humor with your lordship why did you not accede to Capt. Territt's proposition to come to us? how carefully we would have nursed your poor foot, and what amusement it would have afforded you to have seen what a lofty conception I have of my own abilities in making jellies &c.—which should hourly have been administered unto you instead of your now disgusting pork and beans or maybe some nauseating dose compounded by your attending physician.

Is there any hope of your ever visiting us? none I fear, the thought delighted us when we left Leavenworth, that being so much nearer Gibson there was a possibility of your being with us a few days; and the only comfort we had in the prospect of going to Gibson, the only ray of pleasure it afforded was the thought of your being there to share our misery—Even this gratification is now denied us should Gen Jessup^3 adhere to his determination of sending T—there you will be on the Washita equally distant from us, and I fear a dismal prospect before you of months and months of gloomy seclusion without anything but your own resources to diminish it, dreariness—"How do I like my new home?" you say—pretty well—we are happy very happy all to each other "the world forgetting by the world forgot" our time is mostly passed in reading, within a few days there has been a considerable addition to the Library (mostly) standard works—; and then when our books become irksome, we ride[,] fish[,] and walk, collect all the pretty flowers we see and try to become botanists, the flowers here far surpass those of Le[avenworth] in fragrance.

You doubtless have heard Capt. Swords lost his good old father in June, for three years he has been a great but uncomplaining sufferer, he arrived at a good old age (eighty) and death to him has been a joyful release from the cares of this life, to uninterrupted joys in another; for sometime we have endeavored to prepare ourselves for the worst, still it seemed a great shock—the more so that we were deprived of the mournful gratification of being with him in his last hours—. All the rest are well at home and frequently speak of and send many kind messages to you—good bye, take good care of

70. Fort Washita was established in April, 1842, on the Washita river about 20 miles north of its confluence with the Red river. Founded at the request of the relocated Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes, the fort provided protection from the Plains Indians and Texas settlers.—U.S. National Park Service, Soldier and Braver, p. 273.

71. Clifton Wharton was appointed a second lieutenant in the light artillery in 1818. He transferred to the First dragoons in 1833 as a captain, was promoted to major in 1836, lieutenant colonel in 1846, and he died in 1848.—Heitman, Historical Register, p. 1022.

72. George A. McCall was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1822, was assigned to the First infantry, and later that year transferred to the Fourth infantry. He was promoted to captain in 1836 and was assigned to Fort Scott from 1843 to 1845. McCall in his book Letters From the Frontiers, included several letters from Fort Scott in which he vividly details his hunting activities while there.—Callum, Biographical Register, v. i, no. 311, pp. 233-234; George A. McCall, Letters From the Frontiers (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., , pp. 410-420.

73. Thomas Sidney Jessup was the quartermaster general of the army from 1818 to 1830.—Heitman, Historical Register, p. 573.

yours and write us all the particulars of the summers campaign

Yrs ever
C.A.S.

Mr. Ewell desires to be remembered—

Fort Scott, August 13th 1843

DEAR JOHN—

We were taken quite aback yesterday morning by the arrival of Col. Mason’s negroes—on their way to Gibson, as we had previously had no intimation of the change of stations of himself and Wharton—What is the meaning of this change? Is the good of the service or the private convenience of one of the officer’s most consulted? It will, to be sure, give M—— the command of Gibson—which will probably be an advantage to the place—but I don’t believe that was thought of when the change was ordered—You now have your revenge on Wharton for ordering you to the Washita—

I recd. a letter from Chilton, written 2 days after his return to G.—he speaks in high terms of your trip, except in a military point of view—says your usual ill luck attended you after parting with Boone as you had got lost and out of provisions”—The country he describes having passed through—must have been a very interesting one— Had Eustis been along, he would have loaded your teams, with specimens—You, of course, have collected a few for the Institute— I don’t know whether I ever told you E. left a jar of arsenical soap, which is still in my office to be sent to you—the only opportunity we have had, was when Steen® went down—I was absent at the time, but got Ewell to ask him to take it—he said he could not do so, as he was overloaded, with public property—of course, and that it would be of no use to you, as the season for curing specimens would be over—the jar don’t weigh but 2 or 3 lbs.—So the cause of science must be indebted to him for the want of specimens from the S. W. frontier—I have to take a trip next month up to Platte, about our land claim business—the Sales come on in Oct. Our old friend Genl. A. S. Hughes® has got some person to squat over us, he comes in for half the profits—having advanced all the capital to build the cabin—I wish I had never seen Platte—it has been more expense and annoyance to me than the whole country is worth.

I sent a letter enclosing a note to you from Mrs. S. the other day to Steen—hope you will get it without having to pay double postage, as it is not worth even simple postage—I thought you would return to G. before going South—How do you like Washita? What officers have


75. Probably the National Institution for the Promotion of Science, 1816-1836, a predecessor of the Smithsonian Institution. Johnston’s interests were far-ranging. In May, 1844, he sent a letter to the American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine describing the appearance and behavior of two prairie dogs. He also kept a journal of the 1846 march to California, in which he describes the route and his drawings of potsherds found along the way.—John Francis McDermott, ed., Travels in the Western Frontier (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), p. 199 U.S. House of Representatives, Executive Document No. 41, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 567-614.

76. Enoch Steen was appointed a second lieutenant in the mounted rangers in 1832. Joining the First dragoons in 1833, he was promoted to first lieutenant in 1836 and captain in 1840.—Heitman, Historical Register, p. 919.

77. Andrew S. Hughes was the agent for the Iowa Indian sub-agency, 1833-1836, located near Fort Leavenworth. Hughes retired to Platte City, Mo., where he practiced law, and died in December, 1843. In November of that year, Swords and John Dougherty, former Indian agent, purchased the townsite of Iatan, Mo.—Burry, The Beginning of the West, p. 251. Paxton, Aims of Platte County, p. 87.
you there? Are any of them married? and have they got daughters to tempt a certain tall Dragoon with?

Chilton says your foot was doing well when he left you, so I presume you will suffer no further inconvenience from it—Mrs. S desires to be remembered—Hope your trip to Townsend may be agreeable—and that your duties on the court may be attended with as little annoyance as the nature of them will admit—

Regards to Gardiner

and believe me

Your Tom

(PS) Wharton will of course renew the attack for the comd. of this post with redoubled vigor—I won't object to his getting it if he brings Sister Joe along with him—otherwise the Lord deliver us.—Capt. Moore has gone off with Mrs. M. on account of her health—She is fast going into a decline—Mrs. S received a letter from Mrs. Davidson the other day.—D. at her death left a memento for Ruff—which she wishes to send to him—Thinking of Mrs. Moore, my mind slid off to her sister Fanny—which brought up Davidson.—Mrs. Dr. W. is here—a perfect stick[,] no addition to the Society for any body—David made a lucky escape—even had he lived.—

Fort Scott, March 26th '44

DEAR JOHN—

I am just starting some horses for the Gibson squadron—some of which were purchased by McKissack and some by myself—I have bought some very good horses of at least an average quality for $50. What McKissack's cost I don't know.

78. Fort Townsend, on Gates creek, north of the Red river, was built shortly after Fort Gibson in 1834. Abandoned in 1830, it was rebuilt south of the old location in 1830 to protect the resettled Checataw from the Plains Indians.—U.S. National Park Service, Soldier and Brave, pp. 272-273.

79. John W. T. Gardner was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1840 and assigned to the First dragoons. He was stationed at Fort Washita in 1843.—Cullum, Biographical Register, v. I, no. 1042, p. 610.

80. A monument in the Platte City, Mo. cemetery in memory of Captain Moore and his brother. Thomas Moore's gravestone. Her inscription reads: "Here lies Martha Hughes, Wife of Capt. B. D. Moore, 1818-1849."

81. Wife of Levi Platt Davidson who was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1837 and assigned to the First dragoons. On sick leave from 1840. David died in 1843 at Saratoga, N.Y.—Cullum, Biographical Register, no. 937, p. 546.

82. Charles Frederick Ruff was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1839 and assigned to the First dragoons. He was stationed at Davidson at Fort Leavenworth from 1839 to 1840. Ruff resigned in December, 1843, but participated in the Army of the West in 1846 as an officer of a Missouri regiment.—Ibid., no. 984, pp. 570-571.

83. Fanny, wife of Dr. Walker.

Gen. and later Pres. Zachary Taylor (1784-1850) was in command of the Second military district at Fort Smith at the time of the Swords' letters from Fort Scott.

Eustis reported last month still unable to join the company—having stated in his report of the previous month that he expected to leave for Ft Scott in March—Perhaps the expected vacancy had something to do with it—though he said Shamborghini will probably be confirmed, as he had a great deal of political influence. We have heard nothing officially of the proceedings in Pat's case—McKissack writes he is anxious waiting his honorable acquittal, in which he will be somewhat disappointed, as Eustis writes he has been suspended for 18 months—Well it is better so than to have him dismissed and the Regt to be cursed with Shamburgh. Pat cannot last long—and S. has probably by this time learned a little prudence, and we could not easily get rid of him, after he once gets a
foothold—our only hope now is that no vacancy will occur until after the 4th March next—

A Court of Inquiry has been ordered by the Presdt. to consist of Cols Kearny, Vose & Hitchcock to meet at Leavth. on 2d April, to investigate the conduct of Capt Cooke in disarming the Texans &c. The result of which will, of course, be C’s honorable acquittal—and if the affair is attended with any notoriety—and Cooke becomes a lion in the papers—he will hold his head at least a foot higher—and take steps of 12 feet instead of 6 feet—

We broke the shaft of our mill about 4 weeks since, and consequently have been doing nothing since—and all the water is running away over the dam—rather provoking at this time—Holloway is gone to St. Louis for a new one, and is hourly looked for back. Territt is now absent after Madam, will be back about 25th next—It is said the Col. wishes to take a trip to the mountains this summer to return by Bent’s fort—Co. A is expected to go with him—Yours in haste

As ever

TOM

I would save this for C.A.S. to fill up—but have no time as his horses are ready to start—Mrs. Wharton has been to St. Louis and is expected back with 2 young ladies—don’t know who—perhaps Miss Joe is one—can’t you pay us another visit—I will perhaps go up with you—Rucker has applied for a 6 months leave, and expects to get off next month—

DEAR JOHN—

Major Steuart left here yesterday, having

Fort Scott, Novr. 10th 1844

86. Josiah H. Vose was appointed a captain in the infantry in 1812. He remained in that branch, dying with the rank of colonel in 1845.—Heitman, Historical Register, p. 900.
87. Ethan Allen Hitchcock, grandson of the Revolutionary War hero of the same name, was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1817 and assigned to the corps of artillery. After a distinguished career, he retired as a colonel in the infantry in 1836. He was called to service as a major general in 1862 and served until 1867.—Collum, Biographical Register, v. 1, no. 177, pp. 169-170.
88. Cooke was indeed acquitted—General Order 19, April 24, 1844, RG 94, NARS.
89. Edmund B. Holloway was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1843 and assigned to the Fourth infantry. Fort Scott was his first duty station, where he served until 1845.—Collum, Biographical Register, v. 2, no. 1195, pp. 84-85.
90. Colonel Kearny with Company A and four other dragoon companies made the trip to the Rocky Mountains in 1848. (See letter of June 15, 1845.)
91. Josephine Ormsby was the sister of Oliveretta (Ormsby) Wharton, wife of Maj. Chilton Wharton.—Barry, The Beginning of the West, p. 378.
92. Daniel Henry Rucker joined the First dragoons as a second lieutenant in 1837 and was promoted to first lieutenant in 1844. He retired in 1862 after serving 13 years as quartermaster general.—Heitman, Historical Register, p. 849.
93. Adam Duncan Steuart joined the army with the rank of major in the paymaster corps in 1833.—Heitman, Historical Register, p. 921.
That was the matter, he said he had answered for the boy.

Our men were quite taken aback. Mr. Walker as if the

family had just found out something.

Mrs. Walker called me Mrs. Easter. Mrs. E. and Mrs. Bealy

kindly received by Mrs. Bealy.

They were all of the

family. They had written for me to come down. They all

had dinner with me! I shall come back to

them and help them. I know we are all.

I will see them again if you can recall all this. (In confidence)

Our mother is in agreement.

All went well. This has been

The funeral calls, going in most show to express

The taking people of a person of marked and

sweet memory.

Dear John, Little Christmas love always

for love. Little room as usual, and as

she has taken care to foretell me

the news. I tell you of all the

same. E. is the only one of these that I

know. I don't care if I knew

where, to the power of the old boys

or the lady, unless they tell me as the latter

tells you to proportion, as might be

a long ago. She was much being the

name of J. W. S. from the Army

Easter was in some account of his

haunt. The time came right, or proper

as this latter, has come without any

pretense; through the post being the cause.

Copy of page three of Tom and Charlotte Sword's letter of April 20, 1845.
The Greek revival architecture as evidenced by the well canopied, left, and powder magazine, center, complement the post hospital, right. Officers' quarters number three can be seen in the background. This view of Fort Scott belies the notion that all frontier forts were of log construction.

exchanged with Majr Walker for this payment, as he was anxious to come up to Leavith to bring up Mrs. Bullite, who spends the winter with Mrs. Phil Kearny—although Major W. is a very clever good soul, still we would be very well satisfied with the exchange of districts could be permanent—The only news Steuart brings us is that you had preferred charges against Major Harney, which Genl. Gaines had declined acting on. What is the matter? Has Harney changed his course since his regt. has been remounted, as I thought he let you have every thing your own way with your company, but these kind of comg. officers are the ones that always create difficulty—no acting when it would be proper for them to do so, and interfering with small matters with which they have no concern—

We have just heard of the death of Bowman[,] a very unexpected thing with us—as

94. Wife of Philip Kearny, who was a nephew of Stephen Watts Kearny. Philip was appointed a second lieutenant in the First dragoons in 1837, promoted to first lieutenant in 1839, and sent to France to study cavalry training and tactics. He resigned in April, 1845, only to be reinstated the next month. Mrs. Bullite was his mother-in-law.—Ibid., p. 396.

95. William Selby Harney joined the infantry as a second lieutenant in 1819. After serving in the artillery and as paymaster, he was promoted to lieutenant colonel in the Second dragoons upon that unit's formation in 1836. He was appointed regimental colonel in 1843 and served in that position until 1858.—Ibid., p. 392.

96. Edmund Pendleton Gaines joined the army as a second lieutenant in 1799. By 1814 he had gained the rank of brigadier general and served in this rank until his death in 1849.—Ibid., p. 442.

97. The second regiment of dragoons was remounted by congress in 1844.—Ibid., p. 66.

98. William Bowman from 1835 to 1837 was a sergeant major in the First dragoons. He was appointed a second lieutenant in that regiment in August, 1837, and promoted to first lieutenant in June, 1842. He died October 8, 1844.—Ibid., p. 239.

he was looked upon as one of the toughest cases in the Regt. it is certainly a very melancholy occurrence for Mrs. B. and particularly unfortunate for poor Steen—but perhaps no great loss to the service, as the fewer of that set we have with us the better.—We have heard that Cos E & H have been with you this fall, which must have been very gratifying, if old Boone did not again disgust you with his total of want of proper military pride and discipline.

We get along here very slowly with the buildings, and Territt is heartily disgusted with having so many of his men on extra duty—Duck-shooting and wolf chasing are the only things that at all reconcile him to the place—Can't you recommend his removal to Washita or Gibson, perhaps at those posts he would have nothing but military duty to attend to, and fine quarters and stables ready for him. I think he had better be satisfied with his present position, as he might be much worse—Fort Scott is a dull, very dull place, and would like to leave it myself for a better—but am content to let well enough alone at present—Eustis is again looking very well, and has turned out a perfect hunter, out every day, and kills a good deal of game. Must leave the other page for a more interesting correspondent

As ever, Dear John, Your Tom

99. This is somewhat of a cynical statement, as both posts were in much worse condition that Fort Scott.—Prucha, Army Life on the Western Frontier, pp. 41, 51-52.
The enlisted men’s barracks, left, at Fort Scott were designed by Swords to house one company (71 men) on the second floor, and the company kitchen, messroom, storeroom, and laundress’s quarters on the ground floor. The quartermaster complex, upper right, contained the quartermaster stable, blacksmith, and woodworking shops, and corn and oats cribs. It was not completed until 1850.

MY DEAR FRIEND

Have you read the Prairie bird and do you know I am Olitipa? whilst reading Sir Chas Murrays romances all that I had hitherto seen to disgust me with the Indian Character, passed from my mind and I sat like one entranced listening to the heroic deeds of Delawares[,] Crows[,] Blackfeet.100 I hunt with my husband and in the hall stands my bow and arrow ready strung for the first unfortunate Buffalo that makes his appearance at Scott.101—[I have found out a tribe of Soft heads (you know in this Country there are so many tribes) but the tongue is more useful than arrow, to rid me of the nuisance—So Mr Berry102 is in love—it is no longer necessary [to] conceal it—not with Miss Garland as we all supposed but with a Miss Bows of Charleston—my telling this would be rather a breach of confidence, had he not already confided it to at least half of the garrison[,] he is hoping to get a leave of absence to address the fair and he has not lisped a word of it to me.—(I’m sure I could not pity any one but the lady) but un-


101. The sighting of buffalo at Fort Scott must have been very rare. Travelers do not mention seeing buffalo until approximately 200 miles west of the Fort.—Connelley, "A Journal of the Santa Fe Trail," p. 93.

102. Benjamin A. Berry was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1841 and assigned to the Fourth Infantry. He served at Fort Scott as a second lieutenant from 1843 to 1845.—Callum, Biographical Register, v. 2, no. 1106, p. 34.

burdened his heart to Mrs. Territt. I’ll tell you some laughable stories when we meet.

A fortnight since Kate wrote me a long letter—mother[,] Wm and herself had been on a visit to the Point—met with Lt. Norton103—he was extremely polite—she tells highly complimented anyone should see a likeness between them, says he is too young for her, will turn him over to Emma104 as she wishes for no other beau than William who is all devotion.

Capt McCall has returned—hem hem!—I miss my stars. Mr. Love105 has gone on leave—do you remember it was Lilley I gave him not Kate. What mischief Mr. Wilson makes when I told Mrs. Love of the mistake, he had been previously informed by Mr. Wilson.—said I never said Lilley but Kate. Och movenrmm

Henry Cotheal106 has a lovely wife. Mrs. Maj. Wharton a lovely little daughter. Dr. Madison107 a son—Mrs. Cochrane108 a daughter two months old.

103. Allen H. Norton was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1842 and assigned to the infantry. He served in the Fourth infantry as a second lieutenant at Fort Scott in 1843 and was stationed at the U.S.M.A. as an instructor in infantry tactics from 1844 to 1846.—Ibid., no. 1140, p. 58.

104. Emma Cotheal was Charlotte’s sister.—Telephone conversation, author to Donald Kloster, Smithsonian Institution, August 5, 1980.

105. John Love was graduated from U.S.M.A. in 1841 and assigned to the First dragoons. He was assigned to Fort Scott as a second lieutenant from 1843 to 1845.—Callum, Biographical Register, v. 2, no. 1072, p. 13.

106. Henry Cotheal was Charlotte’s uncle.—Keteham, Officers Quarters No., Fort Scott, Kansas, p. 7.

107. Thomas C. Madison was appointed assistant surgeon in 1840, major surgeon in 1856, and resigned in 1861.—Heitman, Historical Register, p. 153.

108. Richard E. Cochrane joined the army as a second lieutenant in 1833. He was at Fort Scott from 1843 to 1845 as a first lieutenant in the Fourth infantry.—Ibid., p. 313.
General-in-Chief Winfield Scott (1786-1866) was the man for whom Fort Scott was named. A national hero in the war with Mexico, he was highly popular with his men. In 1852 he received the Whig nomination for President, but was defeated by Franklin Pierce.

Dear me what a string of gossip—dinner is ready. T. talking like a magpie not a word of sense and no words of his own, oh pshaw

Yours
Olittia

You will exclaim[,] you arrant little gossip cease—one word more Mrs. Gulland is soon expected—another word ______ guess I'm going to learn to shoot. T_______ gives me his gun.

I have been able to get through all but one vol. of Waverly, slow, they are so difficult to obtain—each vol [torn] three or four novels—I am now reading Psalms will [torn] [tak] up Job next—

Hoskins is said will marry in the spring— all that prevented the affair coming this fall was want of quarters. T_______ actually wrote yesterday to PRT imagine how little deserv-

ing of a line—when we have rec'd nothing from him since you were here—goodness knows how long before. Maj. Stewart says 'tis rumored he was attentive to his cousin Miss Hewitt in Louisville but he complained much of being the victim of idle reports. He expects again to be ordered to Louisville. Maj. Stewart talks of nothing but his wife—Lt. Kearny is living at Leavenworth Maj S_______ says Mrs. K_______ had, or was trying to exact a promise of him that after remaining a certain time on the frontier, he should resign and go to Europe. Mr K_______ thinks his health delicate and wishes to go to Oregon. You remember the conversation we had about Mrs. Bowmans Anderson when he was here on his way to Gibson I questioned him regarding the scrofulas affection he said there never more was any sign of it. nor had there been since he had been with Mrs. B_______ I asked why he every now and then wore his face bandaged—he said junks came. Job said Ebenezer had given him some powder which caused it and poisoned him. This probably was the disease in a light form—upon the whole I was very much pleased with him. he seemed to behave remarkably well—was extremely obliging and was crazy to go to you, is quite a good plain cook 'tis said.

Fort Scott, Dec. 10th, 1844

Dear John—

Rucker arrived here day before yesterday with his family and leaves this afternoon to join Co. “E” probably at Towson. he has had a pretty rough time of it so far as it snowed quite heavily a few days since, has been very cold, and the ground is still covered with snow—he brings no military news, all on the ‘qui vive’ for the rejection of Shamburg’s nomination which will certainly be the case—

Rucker brings almost confirmation of a rumor, which has been current for some time, in regard to Bowman—that we had not previously heard it, and if such should be the case his death is a happy occurrence for his family as well as for the service—It appears he has a wife and two children now living in Pennsylvania—and the subject arises about coming out publicly, as the Col. got hold of it—and called upon Bowman last spring, when he was on Cook’s Court of Inquiry, to clear the matter up—which he had not done, though the subject
was again brought to his notice by Col. Mason by the Col’s (Kearny’s) order—It is supposed by many that he committed suicide—How horrible it will be when Mrs Bowman comes to know it—as his legal wife will, of course, come forward to claim his negroes and other property—You may recollect that I had my suspicions aroused some years ago by an accidental hint let fall by Mrs Kearny—but I had no idea the thing was as bad as it turned out to be—The first Drags have been nicely saddled with some beautiful cases—I would not have mentioned this—but I know it must soon become public—perhaps you knew it before—it appears Rich113 knew it soon after Bowman’s marriage—

Rucker saw Turner114 a few week’s ago at St. Louis, he is as dissatisfied as ever—wonder that he does not give up the Adjutancy, and run the risk of any post in the Regt—Got a letter from Thompson a short time since. he is now perfectly satisfied being in cond. at Jeff. Brks—

Every body here is hunting mad. hunting and dogs constitute their thoughts of day and dreams by night—Have caught two bucks, with the greyhounds, so that wolf chasing is thrown quite in the shade—there are a great many deer about and at least two hunters for every deer—the Delawares and Pottawattamies115 camped in every direction—I go out occasionally but being very very unsuccessful as usual, [do] not make a business of it—

Rec’d your package by Rod Duncan a short time since, will take care of the flower seeds, and send some of them to our daddy in law—so you may in a year or two see a flowering description by [Housum?] of a few seeds for sale of a new and elegant flower—from the far west named after the celebrated florist and geologist Lt Johnston, and named in honor of him Johnsonium—The letter you sent Chilton to be forwarded is not yet received—

Heard from home last mail—all well as usual—Don’t know whether little Chatterbox can stop talking long enough—now she has a new face to talk to—long enough to write yours

Tom

Tell Chilton, if he is with you still that I would have written—but have been run to death all the morning—Mrs. S sends her respects to him—he owes me a letter—

In haste

Tom

We are about sitting down to table for lunch. Children squalling and fighting. All confusion—A letter yesterday from father; Kate and H S all well—father says “You know I never interfere with such matters, but Kate has killed Warner.”116 don’t speak of it. Kate did not.

Yrs

CAS

Fort Scott, April 20th ’45

My dear friend with what joy we rec’d your letter yesterday, and what gloomy events have occurred here since we wrote; indeed for the last month scarcely a day has passed but intended writing to you, but the almost constant care I have with Mrs. Terrett and Burdett116 caused me to postpone it, and now I’m watching her sick bed and scribbling this; poor creature, how terrible was the fate of her dear husband. I know you mourned with her; a moment before he was full of life and health; how his pistol became loaded and for what purpose he took it from the holster117 whilst dismounting is buried in oblivion; we only know the horse started when dismounting, the reins became entangled in the lock, and in a few minutes he stood before his God. all that he said was to his frantic wife “I know you” “I’m not much hurt—” and bowed his head when she repeated the Lords prayer over him. He passed without suffering—a fortnight before they buried their little babe one month

112. Hiram Rich was the post sutler at Fort Leavenworth from 1841 to 1802.—Elvid Hunt, History of Fort Leavenworth, 1827-1827 (Fort Leavenworth: General Service Schools Press, 1926), p. 263.

113. Henry Smith Turner was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1834 and assigned to the First Dragoons. As a first lieutenant, he traveled to France with Eustis and Kearny to study cavalry training and tactics in 1830. From 1841 to 1846 he served as regimental adjutant.—Gulick, Biographical Register, v. 1, no. 720, p. 454.

114. The Delaware reservation was in the vicinity of Fort Leavenworth. The Pottawatomie reservation was north of Fort Scott, largely in present-day Linn county.

115. Possibly William H. Warner who was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1836 and assigned to the artillery. He was transferred to the topographical engineers in 1838 and accompanied the Army of the West in 1846.—Gulick, Biographical Register, v. 1, no. 851, pp. 498-499.

116. Burdett was the Terrett’s son. Captain Terrett’s misadventure occurred March 17, 1845.

117. At this time, holsters were attached to the front of the saddle.—Randy Steffen, The Horse Soldier, 1776-1850 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977), v. 1, pp. 143-144.
old—in perfect health, and in a few hours it passed away with the malignant-intermittent—On us has devolved the melancholy task of trying to soothe the wretched the disappointing widow—she allows me to guide her as a child; when all other means fail to soothe her,—the beautiful prayers of our church soon will cause perfect calmness—. I feared for her mind, being extremely excitable and unaccustomed to act for herself, but to the surprise of all she has borne up well under afflictions; she came immediately to live with me, and will remain until sometime in May or June when she expects a relative to take her to Virginia; the remains of infant and husband go on at the same time. She begs me to request you will give up to her the likeness of her husband—I wish you would write a few lines at the same time and send it to Alexandria D. C. It would gratify her exceedingly, as she was so devoted to him and he so often spoke of you.

Yesterday the flower seeds you sent were planted; I find myself already talking of Mr. Johnstons bed, the extreme dryness of the season prevented their being planted before—

Talk of our icy region—cease sir—flowers in Febly and yours were only in Jany.—the peach trees in full bloom by the middle of March, but alas! our fruit is all blasted, even my sweet little trees had flowers on—so if you expect to eat any of my precious preserves they must be last years.—How my heart beats with delight when you speak of coming North—alack! don’t let prudes see that for they admit no love but conjugal, we both love you so dearly. By the way I turned T.______ down to the foot of the class yesterday because he could not answer the question, “if Mr. Loves sister is all that we could wish in a sister of Mr Loves, what kind of lady is she?” the dumbhead could not answer, but by the expressive grin, that some people put on when they know nothing; but I was not to be imposed on—

The state of your society does not seem agreeable and gossip at Gibson has been busy with ours, Mr. Chilton wrote to know what was the matter, he said he had answered for the Drg. ladies—we were quite taken aback—Mrs Walker as of old keeps herself at home visiting only Mrs Cochrane—never even having called on Mrs. Eustis—Mrs C______ and Miss Bank seem very kindly disposed—Mrs Gulland is one of the most charmingly interesting women I ever met with, very unlike her daughter—ah, sin! she is too flighty too fidgety, and helpless a body, to suit me altogether, but still a nice little thing—if you can reconcile all this (in confidence) her mother is so delightful in conversation, manner, and appearance—. All well at home, this has been written between social calls, going in next door to dispose of things, buying myself a new set of china and all on Sunday too.

Yours ever C. A. S.

DEAR JOHN—Little scribbler has left me but little room as usual—and as usual has taken care to forestall me in all the news—I tell you if all the Cotheal family resemble one of them I know of—I pity any poor fellow who may put himself in their power—of the old lady I, of course, must say nothing as she entertained you so agreeably one night about 3 years ago.—We have just received the order erasing the name of J. W. S.118 from the Army Rolls—Eustis was in such alarm about it previously—he has since brightened up amazingly.—The Col. has congratulated him on his promotion,119 though deeply lamenting the cause at which E. turns up his nose, after the effort made to overslaught him.—We hear today from Leavth. that Mat. Hughes, the M. C.120 brings word that $40,000. was appropriated for a Post at Table Creek21 which has created quite a sensation up there, as some of them will probably have to go there—

We are all here in a glorious state of uncertainty—rumor having reached us that it is expected the 5th22 will garrison Jeff. Bks. in which event the two companies of the 4th here will probably go south23.—Have any of your

118. General Order 7. dated March 24, 1845, directing that the name of James W. Schaumhurgh be erased from the army register, was received at Fort Scott April 18, 1845.—Fort Scott Post Returns, RG 98, NAHS.
119. William Eustis was promoted to captain March 17, 1845, and assumed command of Company A. First dragoons.—Ibid.
121. Table creek is the present day location of Nebraska City, Neb. The post was established to protect immigrants on the Oregon trail. In May, 1846, Company C, First dragoons, and Company A, First infantry, started construction of the first post to be called Fort Kearny in honor of Stephen Watts Kearny.—Notes of the Early History of the Nebraska Country, Nebraska State Historical Society Publications, Lincoln, 20 (1922), pp. 150-151.
122. Fifth infantry.
123. Companies C. and D. Fourth infantry, stationed at Fort Scott received orders for Texas and left via Independence Landing to Jefferson Barracks. March 16, 1847. There were five officers, 99 men, five women, and five servants.—Fort Scott Post Returns, RG 98, NAHS, Barry, The Beginning of the West, p. 557.
wiseacres yet discovered the why or wherefore of Mr. Wilkins's orders in Fulton's case, we cannot here comprehend it—it appears to me, a plain case, if he is so valuable an officer that his services cannot be spared—The late Secy ought to have said so, and not tell the world the court was a set of nincompoops, who could not construe one of the plain articles of War—Poor Wilkins—his last act damned him—

Heard from P R T the other day—appears to be hip'd as usual—Don't want to re-join his company—uncertain how long he will remain at the Bks.

Rumors are afloat still respecting Josephine O—— and Capt. McKissack but I expect without foundation—Mrs. Wharton wrote to me a week since no news with some goodies— and to day some lemons—Cisco has just returned from a Leavenworth visit.

We have hardly had rain enough to lay the dust since last July—everything as dry as a Powder horn—the mill idle and no lumber—

This moment I walked in the parlor before breakfast as I have the basement swelly fitted up for my room—and without the slightest curiosity I took this up to read[,] now I'll go down and take my fists and pound that T——— the sarpint, until he says I am an angel and all my family, the impertinence of leaving it stretched out for me to read—now I go with wrath in my eyes and vengeance in my fists—

[This latter paragraph is C. A. S.]

Fort Scott June 15th '45

I turn to you to converse my dear friend, it is pouring out-doors, and T——— is sitting by my side so uninteresting! reading the newspapers, and conversation a moment since—"my husband do you not feel wretchedly when away from me?" "he, he." you really think I've

become matter of fact and hum drum at Ft Scott?" "he he"! "it seems to me I speak excessively cross to my Jack"? "Yes"—Poor me. I never thought but to be contradicted and I turned from the savage with inward disgust— now all this unloved conversation occurs a day or two after his return from Leavenworth. Who do you think returned with T——— after he took Mrs. Terrett to the river? why Miss Joe! she remained a fortnight seemingly enjoying herself very much fishing[,] riding[,] walking and chatting, the beaux at Scott really turned out and were all devotion and attention—Mr Wilson says he has no doubt they all will get 'scissas' from another quarter.

Yesterday we recd a long letter from your own dear self, written from Ft Smith with numerous complaints about our neglect—not intentional I assure you, as Mrs. Terrett remained about two months with us, and for my part—I scarcely had time to make a scratch of the pen—so tied down was I by her excessive and violent grief, and she clung to me with such tenacity, that any moment I was free from domestic duties was devoted to her, and her interesting child. Poor creature how extreme was her grief when she found that her hus-

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124. William Wilkins was secretary of war from February, 1844, to March, 1845.—Heitman, Historical Register. p. 16.

125. William M. Fulton was appointed a captain in the Second Dragoons in 1836. He resigned in March, 1846.—Ibid., p. 441.

Fulton was tried by general court-martial for substituting two of his horses for two army horses of greater value. Found guilty, he was sentenced to pay for the horses and to be dismissed from the service. Secretary of War Wilkins, in his review of the case, stated that the court had erred in the 36th Article of War in passing the sentence but that, since the offense did not fall within the 36th Article, Fulton was therefore not guilty. Fulton was ordered to pay for the horses and was returned to duty.—General Order 6, March 3, 1845, RG 94; NARS.

126. "Hipped" was a word of the time meaning depressed or melancholy.—Bernard DeVoto, The Year of Decision, 1846 (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1943). p. 145.
bands remains were to remain here until fall; yesterday I read a letter from her[,] she was at Cincinnati wild and broken with grief—so incoherent was her letter, that I scarcely can make out its contents—Mr Dey's of St Louis[127] had taken her husband likeness from memory with a few directions from her, "so exact was it" she says "that I came near fainting, and my boy exclaimed my papa oh! my papa!" this was cabinet size and she left orders for half length.

Yesterday brought me letters from Kate and H. S. the former devoting her time to raising flowers and canaries; the latter is priding herself on superior knitting and sewing—

They seem expecting us East—Mr Chilton went so far as to write we had applied for a leave, you know I presume he has gone again--; the fear of returning to Ft. Scott after making all arrangements to leave for good, caused us to conclude to remain quietly another year; as for yourself, should you go on—you have my best wishes for success—but I feel so well assured Kate will take mothers feelings rather than her own into consideration, that I dread you going—and as for resigning pray don't think of it. should you do so mother would find just as powerful objections, to the state of Ohio.

How came Mrs. S—— and Constance at Washita? give my love to C—— and say I reed. the exquisite lace which I hope was a specimen of her own industry, at any rate I have exhibited it as her work amongst the numerous admirers she left at Scott—tell her also when a smart fit takes me I'll answer her note, but I'd much rather see her.—Woe betide you if you dint say all this.

The only flower seeds you sent that came up was the beautiful red, not yet in bloom. Kate speaks of having prairie flowers on her porch, seeds given by T. S.—

Josephine gave a most ridiculous account of the wedding, the greatest sympathy is felt for the groom, as he had no wish nor intention to marry—the whole is openly attributed to the lady—they seem very happy—he has gone to the Ms.

Mrs. Bullit and Mrs Kearny intend spending some of their time with Mrs. Johnston—

Write soon

Good Bye
Yrs C. A. S.

Think of us at twilight—promenading our fine large porch. by our side two boxes of mignonette—one of jessamine and a cactus—which bloomed this season.

Mrs. Hoskins arrived a week since—seems lady like and interesting[.] my next neighbor, when she goes to housekeeping—

Josephine said to me—"I heard at Carlisle Mr Johnston was in love with your sister Kate" my only reply was nonsense if such had been

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[127] This is probably Carles Dea, artist/painter from St. Louis, who accompanied the dragoons on their 1844 march to the Pawnee villages.—Louis Pelzer, ed., *The Prairie Logbooks* (Chicago: Caxton Club, 1943), p. 283.
the case he was here so long he certainly would have spoken of it, which he never did—"why yes"—so it passed from her mind—In what way is Mrs S________ related to Col. Harney? because her daughter rejected him—as she told me—this must be it—

[Tom’s writing] was in hopes, Dear John, we would have the pleasure of seeing you about this time, thinking it possible, that after the Court was through you would get a short leave and pay us a visit—Within the last month I have been twice to Leavith, where the Drags started out—All appeared much pleased at the idea of going, anticipating a very pleasant trip—the men, horses &c looked in extremely fine order and the Col. expressed himself very well satisfied with their appearance—He drove out some cattle and sheep, the latter as an experiment—but Capt. Fremont, who I saw the other day at his camp near Westport, says they will not answer, as he has tried them and finds they cannot travel in hot weather 10 miles a day without suffering greatly—

Hope your charges against Col. Harney may not give you any additional annoyance—[torn] no idea the Presdt. will dismiss him, let the finding and sentence of the ct be what it may, at least not without Genl. Jackson[130] should drop off before his influence could be brought to bear—The charges have been kept a great secret, as I have met with no one that knew anything about them, except that of his negro whipping a soldier—

Mrs. Eustis is growing enormous and now looks very respectable—expect Billy will be a daddy when he returns—How do you think he will bear it—

We have had almost constant rain for 3 days and every prospect of another overflow—I have hardly been out of the house, having caught cold wading through [Sunday] creek on my way down—Leavith is a dull place now, and looks in a very delapitated condition—ev-

128 In 1845 Colonel Kearny led five companies of dragoons, including Fort Scott’s Company A, on an expedition to South pass via the Oregon trail and returning by way of Bent’s Fort on the Santa Fe trail.—*Ibid.*, pp. 155-283.

129 Gen. and former Pres. Andrew Jackson did “drop off” before he could affect the decision. He died on June 8, 1845, a week before this letter was written.—Heitman, *Historical Register*, p. 15.

130 Harney was charged with “arbitrary and unmilitary conduct” for ordering a soldier to fight Harney’s servant and for beating a soldier with a cane; and “conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline” for cursing enlisted men. Found guilty on these and other charges, Harney was to be reprimanded in the general orders and suspended from rank and command for four months. General-in-Chief Winfield Scott, in his review of the case, called Harney a “conspicuous violator of law and morals.” Because of the “inadequacy of that sentence,” Scott released him from arrest and ordered him to report to his regiment on duty in Texas.—*General Order 39, August 15, 1845, RC 94, NARS.*
Every thing appears as if it was falling down for the want of a few timely repairs—The police as usual—Don’t think Co D. would gain much by going there, especially as it now has Capt. Steen for its Squadron Capt.—Yours

TOM

August 18th, 1845

Dear John—

The enclosed was handed me to put a postscript—did you ever hear such a piece of impudence? There not being room enough to put even a decent direction—So I have concluded to add another half sheet which will serve as the envelope, and add nothing to the postage.

We have lost the good old Major,131 and with him the Stiff Capt McCall and some others who are no less—but unfortunately they have been replaced by others, who to say the least do not add much to our Society.132—Capt Burbank133 and his two Subs are all married so we make no head way in the matter of providing quarters—Lt Caldwell his 2d. Lot. married the widow of Lacy of the 5th. with two children.134—They have not yet arrived but are expected shortly. How they will turn don’t know, but rather an unfavorable omen when a 2d. marries a widow with 2 children—We are the most humdrum set you ever saw—No body drinks, no body hunts, no body does any thing but eat and sleep, and so our lives pass in vegetable state of existence. The flies and musketoes are so bad that we cannot move out either to walk, ride, fish or hunt, that is those who are so inclined.—Our foot company dint flourish in that way—not one of them who ever shoted a gun—You must not be too much annoyed at Harney’s course, he probably found he had got into a bad scrape and felt bound to get out of it, by any means in his power—any remarks he may have made certainly cannot injure you with those that know you either personally or by reputation—and they are many.135

132. Company B, First infantry, marched into Fort Scott on July 14, 1845, replacements for the Fourth infantry—“Fort Scott Fort Returns,” RG 58, NARS.
133. Sidney Burbank was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1825 and assigned to the First infantry. He served as post commander from 1845 to 1848 with the rank of captain.—Cullum, Biographical Register, v. 1, no. 537, p. 546.
134. James N. Caldwell was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1840 and assigned to the infantry. He was assigned to Fort Scott from 1845 to 1847 but was away most of the time on leave and recruiting service.—Ibid., no. 1034, p. 699.
135. In his reply to the charges against him, Harney said that he had caught Johnston signing a false certificate of discharge and that Johnston hoped to carry favor with Colonel Kearny by pressing charges because Kearny was known to be Harney’s enemy. Harney cynically suggested that Johnston wanted to be recommended for a brevet for his “perseverance and ingenuity in this occasion.”—Extracts from the address read by Bvt. Col. Wm. S. Harney, Lt. Colonel, 2 Regt. Dragoons, in his defense before the general court-martial instituted by General Orders No. 10 dated April 10, 1845, manuscript collection, U.S.M.A., West Point.
We expect Co. A back in about a month, Mrs. E has increased wonderfully since E. left, though she was tolerably respectable then—if he is not home soon he will be a daddy before he knows it—She is a queer woman[,] is particularly devoted to—her own comfort—that is if it don't require too much personal exertion—A certain little lady is dying to hear what additional gossip you have about the Regt. I, not being a woman, have, of course, no curiosity—on the subject—The history (private) of the Regt. would be an interesting one could it be written. Buford has certainly added laurels to his former well earned reputation—We are to be cursed here with Carleton. I shall give him just a pretty wide berth.

Has Ben Beall joined the temperance—if so, it will be a matter of surprise to some of his friends I expect—

I have been looking out for orders for Texas for some time, though nothing of the kind has as yet been intimated to me. Merely judge from the number of troops there that a few additional A. Q. M.'s will be required—Will be very well satisfied to remain here until we go east, but when that will be will depend on wife, would like to go next summer if she will consent. Have not yet heard what Mexico has done since the annexation—would like very well to revel in the halls for a short time—Must be a very interesting country. Have lately been reading every work relating to it I could get hold of, and each one adds to my wonder—What a pity such a country should be in the hands of such a degraded lot—Have not heard from home since the great fire, fear we have lost some insurance stock, or at any rate, dividends for some time—Yours was just a month reaching us—Should I direct 'vice' Towson or Smith—

I am, Dear John—THOM

Fort Scott, Jany 26th 1846

DEAR John—

I enclose a letter recd. from Chilton a week since in compliance with his request, as it

136. The dragoons returned from their expedition to the mountains on August 24, 1845.—"Fort Scott Post Returns," RG 95, NARS.

137. Abraham Buford was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1841 and assigned to the First dragoons. He was stationed at Fort Washita in 1845 as a second lieutenant.—Culham, *Biographical Register*, v. 2, no. 1109, p. 37.

138. Benjamin Lloyd Beall joined the Second dragoons as a captain in 1836. In 1847 he was promoted to major in the First dragoons and became the regiment's colonel in 1861 and retired the next year.—Heftman, *Historical Register*, p. 202.

139. Texas officially became part of the United States by a joint resolution of congress on December 29, 1845.—Barry, *The Beginning of the West*, p. 568.

contains some matters which may interest you—not that I suppose it will make any difference in the course you will pursue towards Mr. Shaumberg, should you be so unfortunate as ever to come in contact with him, but that you may know he esteems you one of his particular friends—

I received another letter from Chilton yesterday dated Jany 4th in which he says he is to be detailed for duty in the Qr. Mr. Genl's Office on the next day, waiting the result of his promises for an appointment in the Dept. he knows not how long he will be at Washington, takes the situation not as a permanency but merely to receive his appointment, as he is not favorably disposed to remaining there— he wishes to come to this Post if I am willing to give it up, upon which subject I and mine have consulted and maturely deliberated, and the following conclusion is come at viz: I will consent to go East, provided I can secure a pleasant situation there, either Boston[,] Baltimore, or some place where we can board if we wish to do so, as any station I may get East cannot be looked upon as a permanency, and it would be folly to go to the expense of housekeeping for a short time— We have been led to this conclusion by thinking it our duty soon to go home, and with that intention were laying our plans to get a leave next Spring; and as Chilton writes the vacant majority is to be filled, I want to be on the ground in order to get it; if Tompkin's[141] name has not already gone in, he having, as I have understood heretofore[,] declined promotion—had I the friends Chilton has it might succeed, but friendship as I am in a political way, I fear my chance is a dull one—however if Tompkin is promoted I will be senior Captain,[142] and if I keep in the backwoods my chance may be slim for the next vacancy—and by remaining here will probably be the means of my being pushed out when the new posts are established between this and oregon—As there is great uncertainty as to this change being made, as I have no reason to suppose Genl Jesup is inclined to give me a pleasant post East, you had better say nothing about it for the present—We intend saying nothing here—Chilton in his last requests I will say nothing about his application for an appointment in the Dept. as he fears it may get to the Col's ears who will certainly oppose it with all his might—Chilton says there will be three Regts of Rifles raised, we see by the papers Mr. Benton has reported a Bill in the Senate for One Regt of Mounted Riflemen and Mr. Harralson in the House a Bill for 2 Regts of Riflemen[—]Mr. Calhoun's speech has quieted the waters—and it now appears there will be no war &c the two bills or one of them may fall through—Chilton also says the companies of Dragoons will be increased 10 men each[—]also—Phil Kearny is in N. York and expects to resign in the spring[—]that Ewell who is now on leave told him Turner will probably resign soon & Northrup shortly[—]I can't think Turner will resign—He says the articles in the Union[143] against Jno. Ross was written by Amos Kindall, the materials furnished by Stambaugh, both being employed as lawyers by the old party, that Jno. Ross is chafing like a mad bull under thin strings, and his lawyer directed to prosecute this author for slander, if he can be found out—I tell you this as it may interest you being in the Cherokee country[144]—We wrote you 2 weeks since, and C. A. S. says she has not time to write this morning—has no news—I write now as there is an opportunity—of sending it part of the way more direct than by the mail—We are looking

141. Probably Daniel D. Tompkins who was graduated from the U.S.M.A. in 1820 and assigned to the ordnance department. After serving in the artillery in 1828, he was promoted to captain as a staff officer in the quartermaster department—Cullum, Biographical Register, v. 1, no. 241, pp. 209-201.
142. Senior captain in the quartermaster department.

143. Sen. Thomas Hart Benton was elected from Missouri in 1850 and served until 1856—Who Was Who in America, Historical Volume, 1607-1896 (Chicago: A. N. Marquis Co., 1963), p. 53. Hugh A. Hanson was elected to Congress from Georgia and served from 1843 to 1851—Ibid., p. 223.
145. Dragoon companies which had numbered 35 privates since 1842 were increased to 60 privates by Congress in 1848—Charles Judah and George Winston Smith, Chronicles of the Gringos (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1966), p. 1.
146. Philip Kearny resigned in April, 1846, and was reinstated in May of the same year—Beitman, Historical Register, p. 586.
147. Possibly the Washington Daily Union.
out for a visit from you, and will be much disappointed if you do not come up—Should I be ordered east, I will immediately let you know, as your presence there at the same time may promote your wishes in a certain quarter—

What do you think of the appointment of Chilton as A. Q. M.? he will have to come in contact with many characters, whom it will be hard for him to meet with decent civility—hope the experience he has already had in the Dept may be of service to him hereafter—Thompson’s right now to apply—Experience I fear will never make either of them less the Sovereigns—Hoping to see you soon

I am in haste,

TOM

Who is Tom, that Mrs. Steen sold with Sarah? We are all wandering at the price—and as I am a negro holder feel some interest in the rise and fall of the market—