



## LEAVENWORTH COUNTY, KANSAS

### FT. LEAVENWORTH

Ft. Leavenworth was established in 1827, and the town of Leavenworth developed south of the fort after Kansas was opened for settlement in 1854. Over time a myriad of roads had developed for the comings and goings of the Army. Emigrants and traders used these roads when convenient. Just a few of these included the Liberty to Leavenworth Road; Military Road from Ft. Leavenworth to Ft. Gibson, Oklahoma, which included the Ft. Leavenworth to Ft. Scott Road after the early 1840s; alternate road west and north of Ft. Leavenworth to the Blue River in northcentral Kansas, to join Oregon Trail; Military Road from Ft. Leavenworth to Ft. Riley; and the Leavenworth Road to Ft. Kearny. These and other roads going to and from the fort added to the network of available nineteenth-century roads which extended well beyond Leavenworth County.

#### **Major General Brown**

##### **1827 March 7, Order No. 14**

“Colonel Leavenworth of the Third infantry with four companies of his regiment will ascend the Missouri and when he reaches a point on its left bank near the mouth of the Little Platte River and within a range of twenty miles, above or below its confluence, he will select such position as in his judgment is best calculated for the site of permanent cantonment. The spot being chosen, he will then construct with the troops of his command, comfortable, though temporary, quarters sufficient for the accommodation of four companies. This movement will be made as early as the convenience of the service will permit.”

\*\*\*\*\*This order mandated the establishment of Cantonment Leavenworth, which later became known as Fort Leavenworth. **Source:** Kanaga, Clinton W. “Early-Day Missouri: Fort Leavenworth”, *The Trail Guide* [published by The Kansas City Posse of The Westerners], 1(3): (July 1956), 7-20, quote on p. 7.

#### **Lieutenant Cooke**

##### **1829 fall**

“...on these hills stands Fort Leavenworth. On the one hand is the mighty river, winding in the distance through majestic forests and massive bluffs stretching away until mellowed to aerial blue; on the other, rolling prairies dotted with groves and bounded on the west by a bold, grassy ridge. This enclosed in an elliptical sweep a beautiful amphitheatre [variant spelling], which terminates five miles southward in a knob [Pilot Knob according to Kanaga], leaving between it and the rivers a view of the prairie, lost in a dim and vague outline.”



\*\*\*\*\***Source:** Kanaga, Clinton W. "Early-Day Missouri: Fort Leavenworth", *The Trail Guide* [published by the Kansas City Posse of The Westerners], 1(3): (July 1956), 7-20, quote on p. 14.

### **Colonel Elvid Hunt**

**1833**

"About a dozen white-washed cottage-looking houses compose the barracks and the abodes of the officers. They were so arranged as to form the three sides of a shallow square; the fourth is open and looks out on a wide prairie."

\*\*\*\*\*Colonel Hunt was a visitor to the post. **Source:** Gardner, Hamilton. "Romance at Old Cantonment Leavenworth: The Marriage of 2d Lt. Philip St. George Cooke in 1830," *The Kansas Historical Quarterly*, 22(2): (summer 1956), 97-113, quote on p. 103.

### **Francis Parkman**

**1846 May, from memoir**

"On the next morning we rode to Fort Leavenworth. ... In the square grassy area, surrounded by barracks and the quarters of the officers, the men were ... lounging among the trees; although not many weeks afterward it presented a different scene, for here the very offscourings of the frontier were congregated, to be marshaled for the expedition against Santa Fe. ..."

\*\*\*\*\*Parkman describes an inactive time at the fort, but says that soon would be different. Parkman is referring to the thousands of soldiers who congregated at Fort Leavenworth to head Southwest during the Mexican War. **Source:** Parkman, Francis. *The Oregon Trail: Sketches of Prairie and Rocky Mountain Life*. Edited by William MacDonald. Chicago: Scott, Foresman, 1911, 1919, quote on p. 40. Accessed online from U-M Library Digital Collections at [quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moa/5087610.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moa/5087610.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext) on April 13, 2020.

### **Anna Maria Morris**

**1850 May 2**

"Camp on the Stranger [Creek] 13 miles from Fort Leavenworth May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1850  
To my dear Father We left Fort Leavenworth this morning at 1 Ocl[ock] I should say afternoon.... I started [in] our Spring Wagon with my Maids and Sargeant [sic] Jones as driver & guide. When we arrived at the Camp the Command was waiting for Rations to be open and as I thought it would be [a] more agreeable camp We drove on to Salt Creek where we halted till the whole command came up, we then came on to the place where we shall encamp for the night-- ... As soon as our carriages halted Dr. McDougal and the other officers were invited to take a social glass which they appeared to enjoy very much particularly as we had a good supply



of ice which all the others had forgotten—then Capt. Easton brought me a glass of Champagne which I feel the better for taking. We passed any number of California emigrants to day ... Dr. McDougal bought a beautiful carriage just before leaving Leavenworth which I am to have the use of and also of his Poney [sic] which is perfectly gentle—after travelling [variant spelling] six miles we struck a new road which extends to Council Grove, and cuts off 60 miles of the route to Santa Fe it was made this spring I am resting in the wagon while waiting for the baggage wagons to come up. I see the camp fires already blazing around me. ... The Quarter Masters clerk started in a beautiful carriage, the horses ran off and it was broken all to pieces. He came into camp horseback....”

\*\*\*\*\*Anna Maria Morris was the wife of the commander of a military unit headed to Santa Fe to deal with post-Mexican War issues. Major Gouverneur Morris would serve in Santa Fe from July 11, 1850 to June 30, 1853. Anna’s first letter after leaving Ft. Leavenworth shows that she was accustomed to luxuries. She did not cook any meal nor do any laundry on the entire trip to Santa Fe. Mention of a new road is an indication of the dynamic nature of the western roads. **Source:** “A Military Wife on the Santa Fe Trail: Anna Maria Morris”, 15-43, letter on pp. 19-21, in Holmes, Kenneth L., editor. *Covered Wagon Women: Diaries & Letters from the Western Trails, 1850*, Vol. 2. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1983 [reprint of 1996 edition].

### **Marian Russell**

#### **1852 spring, from 1954 memoir**

“When the school closed in the spring of 1852, mother decided that we would go to California.... So we left Kansas City and moved to Fort Leavenworth where immigrant trains were wont to assemble in preparation for the trip westward. Fort Leavenworth was a little city of tents and covered wagons encamped on the edge of the prairies. Wagon trains from the east and west were arriving daily.

Mother’s friend and ardent admirer was Francis Xavier Aubry, a famous wagon master. He was a young man some where [sic] in his late twenties. ... Mother had planned that we were to take passage in Captain Aubry’s train, for the Indians were bad along the Santa Fe Trail and she had great confidence in him. Captain Aubry’s train was encamped at Fort Leavenworth waiting until more wagons arrived westward bound. The more wagons the greater safety from attack by the Indians. At last a big government train pulled in from the east and Captain Aubry made plans for an early departure.

Passengers on the government train included three young men. Two were army officers enroute to Fort Union. The third was a graduate doctor from West Point. These young men offered mother, Will and me transportation as far as Fort Union if mother would prepare their meals for them. Mother gladly agreed for transportation from Fort Leavenworth to Santa Fe, New



Mexico, in 1852, was \$250 and, of course, there also was half fare for the children. She saved \$500 by cooking for the young men, besides which they furnished the provisions.

... The dread cholera was raging in Fort Leavenworth the day our white-hooded wagons set sail on the western prairies. ... Captain Aubry broke camp first; his great wagon swayed out onto the trail. We heard his powerful voice calling orders to follow. Wagon after wagon rolled onward and it was not until the last of Captain Aubry's wagons was well on the trail that the first of the government wagons followed. ...

The timid were always frightened, but most of the people felt safe for the train now numbered more than 500 wagons. Tar barrels were burning in the streets of Fort Leavenworth to ward off the cholera, and clouds of black smoke drifted over us as we pulled out."

\*\*\*\*\* F.X. Aubry was a well-known Santa Fe trader who also led some expeditions to California. His quite successful career ended with a fatal gunfight in 1854. During nineteenth-century historic trail times, people believed in various causes of cholera. Many cities did keep barrels burning to eliminate the believed harmful vapors rising from the environment thought by many to be the cause of cholera. Marian's name actually was spelled "Marion", but the University of New Mexico Press used a variant spelling. **Source:** Russell, Marian. *Land of Enchantment: Memoirs of Marian Russell along the Santa Fe Trail*. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1954, excerpt on pp. 12-14.

### **Anna Maria Goodell**

#### **1854 May 2**

"May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Have just got off the bar [sand/gravel]. It is a beautiful morning. We stoped [sic] at Ft. Leavenworth and about 40 Mormons left the boat. This afternoon stopped at Weston. Saw a great many wagons and oxen and horses ready to start to California and Oregon."

\*\*\*\*\*The Goodell family, headed to Oregon in an organized company, had traveled by railroad and steamboat from Detroit, Michigan via Chicago to St. Louis and had continued on steamer until switching to wagon. **Source:** "Vermillion Wagon Train Diaries, 1854: Anna Maria Goodell [sic] & Elizabeth Austin", 78-130, quote on p. 91, in Holmes, Kenneth L., editor. *Covered Wagon Women: Diaries & Letters from the Western Trails, 1854-1860*, Vol. 7. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1998 [reprint of 1987 ed.].