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Letter from the Secretary of War, transmitting report of Lieut. Gen. P. H. Sheridan, in regard to operations to control squatters in the Indian Territory

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L E T T E R

FROM

T H E S E C R E T A R Y O F W A R ,

TRANSMITTING

Report of Lieut. Gen. P. H. Sheridan, in regard to operations to control squatters in the Indian Territory.

DECEMBER 9, 1879.—Referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
December 6, 1879.

The Secretary of War has the honor to transmit to the United States Senate copy of report of Lieut. Gen. P. H. Sheridan as to the stations of troops, in order to control the squatter emigration threatening the Indian Territory, and stating his belief that these various stations cannot be abandoned, and that perhaps others will have to be established, in order to give protection to the Indian lands, and that unless relief is afforded by Congress, military occupancy of the points named in his report may be regarded as perpetual.

GEO. W. McCrARY,
Secretary of War.

The PRESIDENT
of the United States Senate.

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSOURI,
Chicago, July 28, 1879.

SIR: I have the honor to make the following statement for the information of the General of the Army:

In order to control the squatter emigration threatening the Indian Territory, we occupy Fort Gibson with three companies of infantry; Coffeetown and Baxter Springs, in Kansas, with one company each; Arkansas City with a detachment and a commissioned officer; Wichita, Kans., and Vinita, Ind. T., with one company each; and will, in all probability, have to occupy the Pottawatomie country with one company.

These detachments have so far been able to control the advancing squatters, and compel compliance with the President's proclamation, under the instructions and by virtue of the authority given by him. It will be seen that only one of these stations is at a regular military post, viz, Fort Gibson. After a careful consideration of the whole matter

for some weeks past, I am satisfied that these various military stations cannot be abandoned; and perhaps others will have to be established, in order to give protection to the Indian lands.

It is very clear to me that, should any of these troops be removed, the squatters will at once conclude that the government has given up its idea of protection, and emigration will again commence with increased numbers and renewed determination on their part to possess themselves of the country; so that, unless something is done by Congress to relieve this state of affairs, our occupancy of the points named, and other points, might as well be regarded as perpetual.

It is for the purpose of calling attention to this condition that this paper is submitted for the information of the General of the Army.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Lieutenant-General.

ADJUTANT-GENERAL, U. S. A.,
Washington, D. C.

[First indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
Washington, July 31, 1879.

Respectfully submitted to the Hon. Secretary of War, inviting his special attention to this subject.

This case illustrates the mode and manner in which so many military posts have grown up on the frontier. As long as mild weather continues, say till October, we can maintain these "camps," but when winter comes, better shelter must be provided.

W. T. SHERMAN,
General.