

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road – Old Wire Road Segment

other names/site number CN0342

### 2. Location

street & number Old Wire Road south of Blackwell

☐ not for publication

city or town Blackwell

☒ vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Conway code 029 zip code 72823

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Cashie M. Reed  
Signature of certifying official/Title

2/20/08  
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet

☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet

☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.

☐ removed from the National  
Register.

☐ other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road  
– Old Wire Road Segment

Conway County, Arkansas

Name of Property

County and State

## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private  
☒ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☒ structure  
☐ object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

	buildings
	sites
1	structures
	objects
1	Total
0	

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Historic and Archeological Resources Associated with the  
Cherokee Trail of Tears

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register**

NA

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/road-related

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/road-related

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

No style

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Earth, gravel  
walls NA  
roof NA  
other NA

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)  
See continuation form.

Name of Property

County and State

**8. Statement of Significance****Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering

**Levels of Significance** (local, state, national)

Statewide

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage: Native American

Exploration/Settlement

Transportation

**Period of Significance**

1828-1839

**Significant Dates**

NA

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

NA

**Cultural Affiliation** (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

NA

**Architect/Builder**

Joseph Henderson

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Name of Property

County and State

## Acreage of Property Less than one

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

A	<u>15</u>	<u>513793</u>	<u>3896729</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
B	15	514130	3896665

3	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**name/title** Mark Christ/Community Outreach Director

organization	Arkansas Historic Preservation Program	date	February 19, 2008
street & number	1500 Tower Building, 323 Center St.	telephone	(501) 324-9886
city or town	Little Rock	state	AR
		zip code	72205

**Submit the following items with the completed form:**

## Maps

**A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location**

**Representative black and white photographs of the property.**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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### SUMMARY:

The Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road – Old Wire Road Segment is a well-defined nineteenth-century roadbed currently designated as Old Wire Road. It is approximately 300 meters in length, approximately 18 feet wide, and features sizeable banks on either side for the majority of its distance.

### ELABORATION:

The Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road – Old Wire Road Segment is a well-defined nineteenth-century roadbed currently designated as Old Wire Road. It is approximately 300 meters in length, approximately 18 feet wide, and features sizeable banks on either side for the majority of its distance.

Located south of the town of Blackwell in Conway County, the Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road – Old Wire Road Segment clearly reflects the “vicarious experience” used as a standard by the National Park Service’s National Historic Trails office. The Native Americans who traveled the route in the 1830s would recognize the road cut today.

The Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road – Old Wire Road Segment has excellent integrity of location in that it conforms to the revised route established by Lt. James Dawson as determined by an intensive survey of the entire route of the Bell Detachment of the Cherokee Trail of Tears conducted by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program and Dr. Duane King of the Museum of the Southwest. The AHPP revised King’s 2002 study in 2007 by georeferencing 1830s Government Land Office maps to modern quad maps; the nominated road section matches the historic road location closely. It has sufficient length to maintain a sense of travel and destination and retains the physical characteristics of an early nineteenth-century roadbed, including its presumed original widths and embankments, giving excellent integrity of design, materials and workmanship as established in the National Register Multiple-Property Documentation Form “Historic and Archeological Resources Associated with the Cherokee Trail of Tears.”

Though other sections of Old Wire Road in the area show signs of twentieth-century development, the nominated section is remarkably clear of modern intrusions. This provides excellent integrity of feeling and association. The Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road – Old Wire Road Segment would easily be recognized today by the members of the Bell Detachment who traversed it during the Cherokee Trail of Tears.

Name of Property

County and State

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### SUMMARY:

The Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road – Old Wire Road Segment is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A with Statewide significance by virtue of its status one of few surviving segments of the Military Road west of Little Rock that were traversed in Arkansas by the Bell Detachment during the Cherokee Removal and that retain their integrity as nineteenth-century roadbeds. Its association with the earlier Choctaw, Creek, Seminole and Chickasaw Removals augments its importance. The property is being submitted for National Register recognition under the multiple-property listing “Historic and Archeological Resources Associated with the Cherokee Trail of Tears.”

### ELABORATION:

#### Construction of the Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road

On March 3, 1825, Congress approved a bill to establish a road from Little Rock to the Indian Territory, continuing a road between the Mississippi River and Little Rock that was authorized a year before. “The appropriation asked for is sufficient to make a wagon road,” Arkansas Territory delegate Henry W. Conway said in seeking the \$10,000 appropriation. “The land lies high and dry; and the advantages will be direct communication with the States east of the Mississippi and an increase of the value of the public lands.” In addition to the funding, Congress appointed Arkansas pioneers Benjamin Moore of Crawford County, Morgan Maness of Independence County and Edward McDonald of Lawrence County as commissioners to survey and mark a road between Little Rock and Fort Gibson, Indian Territory.<sup>i</sup>

In early October, the commissioners outfitted an expedition to seek a route for the road, returning on December 17, 1825. The *Arkansas Gazette* reported that “the Commissioners are unanimously of [the] opinion that a good road can be obtained, and at a trifling expense, considering its length and its great usefulness not only to the military, but to our citizens on our western frontier, on the route which they have selected.” The selected route would travel south of the Arkansas River from Fort Gibson in modern-day Oklahoma to Dardanelle, Arkansas, at which point it would cross to the north of the Arkansas to continue on toward Little Rock, avoiding Petit Jean Mountain and its surrounding bayous. The total distance of the road was estimated at “208 miles, 7 chains, and 72 links.”<sup>iii</sup>

The commissioners’ report was duly sent to Washington, D.C., in the spring of 1826, and the *Gazette* reported on March 15 that Col. Matthew Arbuckle, commander of Cantonment Gibson, “has been ordered, by the Secretary of War, to employ a part of the troops under his command, in opening the road from Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson. The work is to be commenced immediately, and I hope, will be completed in the course of the next summer.”<sup>iii</sup>

Arbuckle, however, was still in the process of building the cantonment near the point where the Neosho and Verdigris rivers join with the Arkansas. He reported to his superiors that he lacked an officer to lead a road-building detail, a physician to accompany it, and enlisted men to provide a labor force, especially since their quarters at Gibson were

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still incomplete. Arbuckle also contended that the proposed road was of little use to the army, except where it linked Fort Smith with Cantonment Gibson. By November 16, 1826, however, Lt. James L. Dawson, an assistant quartermaster general, was sent to Cantonment Gibson where he reported that "the Commandant of the Post has notified me that he will be enabled by the advanced State of the Works, to detail the Number of Men, requisite for opening the road from this to Little Rock, in the Course of a few weeks, which will accordingly be commenced."<sup>iv</sup>

Both Dawson and Arbuckle stridently opposed the route between the two military bases as proposed by the commissioners, with Dawson reporting to Washington that "it is not only 10 Miles longer than is Necessary, but passes over exceedingly rough Country, and Crosses all the Water Courses So Near their outlets, as Not to admit of their being forded in Wet Seasons." A more sensible route selected by Dawson was approved, and soldiers from Cantonment Gibson commenced work in spring 1827 after Arbuckle received a blunt order directly from the General in Chief to start building the road. Dawson also received orders to seek proposals for contracts to construct the road between Little Rock and Fort Smith.<sup>v</sup>

Dawson placed a request for proposals in the *Arkansas Gazette* on July 3, 1827, asking that the proposals be made for 29 five-mile increments to link Little Rock and Fort Smith following the route laid by the commissioners. Arbuckle, meanwhile, reported to the Adjutant General in Washington that his troops "will, it is believed, finish the road as far as Fort Smith, in all the present Month; or early in the next."<sup>vi</sup>

On August 28, 1827, Dawson reported that he had completed contracts for the road between Little Rock and Fort Smith, that Arbuckle's troops had completed their section, and that a "Considerable part of this distance has been opened by the County of Crawford, and the remainder being principally prairie land, will render the Completion of the intermediate portion, a work of little difficulty. ... The whole route will be completed by the end of the Current year." The lieutenant estimated that \$4,900 would be needed to build six bridges along the route, nearly three times the amount predicted by the commissioners, and that the contracts for the five-mile increments would total \$6,096. Adding another \$1,250 for extra laborers, the construction job, minus the bridges, would cost \$7,346, using up the remainder of the Congressional appropriation for the road.<sup>vii</sup>

The Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road – Old Wire Road Segment was built by Joseph Henderson, who won a contract for \$2,250 to build 25 miles of road in Sections 11-15 at a cost of \$90 per mile.<sup>viii</sup>

On New Year's Day 1828, Colonel Arbuckle reported that the U.S. Army troops from Fort Gibson had completed their labors and the *Arkansas Gazette* reported a week later that the "whole of the road from this place to Cantonment Gibson is completed, with the exception of 35 miles, which will be immediately put under contract." Dawson reported on January 10 that the 35 miles in question was under contract and would "be under operation in a few days, to be completed on the 30 April." He did not, unfortunately, include the name of the successful contractor, nor did the *Gazette* report further on the road's construction. For all intents and purposes, the Military Road between Little Rock, Arkansas, and Fort Gibson, Indian Territory, was considered complete in early 1828.<sup>ix</sup>

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### Choctaw Removal Along the Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road

Between 1786 and 1825, the Choctaw Nation and the United States government negotiated eight different treaties in which the Choctaws ceded rights to their ancestral lands in what is now the State of Mississippi. On October 27, 1830, a ninth treaty, the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, surrendered remaining Choctaw claims in Mississippi, setting the stage for the tribe's removal to Indian Territory.<sup>x</sup> The first contingents of some 4,000 Choctaws set out under civilian leadership in November 1831, generally following land and/or water routes beginning from Memphis, Tennessee, or Vicksburg, Mississippi. While few of these traveled overland from Memphis, the *Arkansas Gazette* reported on December 14, 1831, that "a small part of 18 or 20 Choctaws, having in charge about 100 head of Indian horses, arrived on the opposite side of the river on Sunday evening last, and left there yesterday morning for Fort Smith" – a route that almost certainly would have taken them along the Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road – Old Wire Road Segment. By March of 1832, 3,749 Choctaws were registered at four stations in Indian Territory.<sup>xi</sup>

In an effort to cut costs and increase efficiency, the next removal contingents were placed under the authority of the U.S. Army, again departing from Memphis and Vicksburg.<sup>xii</sup> The Choctaws who rendezvoused at Memphis were split into two parties who would meet their fellow emigrants at Rock Roe on the White River. Though steamboats were available, many of the Indians were fearful of cholera and chose to travel overland under the command of Capt. William Armstrong. Following the Memphis to Little Rock Road, they entered a nightmarish landscape where fall flooding caused them to travel through knee- to waist-deep water for more than 30 miles. The parties consolidated at Rock Roe and by December 2, 1832, the last of the emigrants passed Little Rock. From Little Rock some of the Choctaws traveled north of the Military Road on a route through Erwin's Stand and Crossroads that rejoined the Military Road at Cadron, after which they would likely have traversed the nominated section of roadbed. On December 5 the *Gazette* reported that "about 1200 Indians and 80 wagons ... who came through the Mississippi swamp from Memphis, and who design locating in the vicinity of the Arkansas, are probably now within about 75 miles of Fort Smith." Another group of some 500 Choctaws crossed the Mississippi River at Memphis in late 1832 but became bogged down in the Mississippi swamp, where William Armstrong found them in mid-December and sent them on to Fort Smith along a route that likely would have crossed Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road – Old Wire Road Segment. By February 5, 1833, around 5,000 Choctaws were in Indian Territory at the conclusion of the second phase of removal.<sup>xiii</sup>

One small group from the final phase of removal in 1833 would use the Military Road. A party of some 800 Choctaws arrived at Memphis in late October, with some traveling by water to Rock Roe while others pushed through the Mississippi Swamp in eastern Arkansas to join them at Rock Roe. The party split into two groups at Mrs. Black's place in modern Prairie County, Arkansas, and a group of 176 led by John M. Millard would head to Fort Smith while the rest would head toward the Red River from Little Rock. The *Gazette* reported on November 13, 1833, that Millard's party "will proceed up, via the Cross Roads, 25 miles north of the place, to Fort Smith, and settle on the north side of the Arkansas River, above that place." This route would have led them across the Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road – Old Wire Road Segment, the last land-borne party to travel Arkansas during the Choctaw Removal.<sup>xiv</sup>



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### Creek Removal Along the Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road

Seven Creek chiefs signed a treaty in Washington, D.C. in March 1832, ceding all of the traditional Creek lands east of the Mississippi River to the U.S. government, thus culminating decades of negotiations and intratribal factionalism regarding ownership of the Creek homelands.<sup>xv</sup> It was reported that year that 2,500 members of the Creek tribe moved west, leaving 20,000 more to be removed.<sup>xvi</sup>

The first major contingent to move through Arkansas was a party of 630 Creeks under the command of Capt. John Page in 1834. The party originated in Alabama, but split in January at Memphis, with the majority boarding steamboats for transport via the Mississippi, Arkansas and White rivers while another party drove the group's pony herd along the Memphis to Little Rock Road, the eastern section of the Military Road that continued past Little Rock to Fort Smith and Fort Gibson. Poor boating conditions caused the riverine travelers to take almost three weeks to reach Little Rock, where they stopped on February 24, 1835. They camped north of the Arkansas River to await the overland group under William Beattie of the Sanford Emigrating Company. The reunited party left the Little Rock area on March 1, most likely along the Military Road, which would have led them through Cadron and on to the Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road – Old Wire Road Segment. Only 469 of the 630 Creeks in the Page party were alive when it reached Fort Gibson on March 28, 1835.<sup>xvii</sup>

In the summer of 1836, a large party of Creeks, most of them members of bands who had fought removal in their homeland, headed west from Alabama with the men and boys handcuffed and chained. Some were transported to Mobile, others to New Orleans where they were placed under the J.W.A. Sanford Emigration Company, put aboard steamboats, and sent to Rock Roe on the White River. The Indians stayed at Rock Roe from July 28 until August 8 while the contractors gathered wagons and livestock for the journey to Fort Gibson. A scarcity of wagons forced children, old women and sick people to walk most of the time. The 2,300 Creeks arrived north of the Arkansas River at Little Rock in August, then followed the Military Road (including the Old Wire Road Segment) to Fort Gibson, where they arrived on September 3.<sup>xviii</sup>

Several parties of Creeks headed west in the fall of 1836, and a lack of transport led to some 13,000 Creeks bottlenecked at Memphis in October. These groups were led by Capt. M.W. Batman, Lt. R. B. Screven, Marine Lt. John T. Sprague, Deas, and John A. Campbell. Sprague sought to steal a march on Batman and Screven, who had arrived at Memphis before him, to ensure his party received adequate measures of the scanty supplies set out for the Creek emigrants. Sprague put 1,300 people, mostly women and children, aboard the steamboat *John Nelson* and two flat boats and sent between 600 and 700 men with the group's horses along the Memphis to Little Rock Road through the Mississippi Swamp. Most of the overland group joined their river-borne companions opposite Little Rock on November 4, though many of the men stayed in the swamp to hunt bear. Most of the Creeks continued along the Military Road to Kirkbride Potts' place at Pottsville (Potts Inn, NR listed 06/22/70) as Sprague sent agents after these stragglers. These Indians were then to the camps opposite Little Rock in mid-November, then headed west along the Military Road. The Sprague party reached Fort Gibson on December 7, having lost only 29 people during the journey.<sup>xix</sup>

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Screven's party of 3,142 Creeks also split at Memphis, with most going to Rock Roe by boat while the horse herd followed the Memphis to Little Rock Road, arriving opposite Little Rock on November 20.<sup>xx</sup> The desperately hungry Creeks straggled from the main group, killing hogs and stealing food, and only 2,000 of those who traveled the Military Road from Little Rock arrived at Little Rock under Screven's command.<sup>xxi</sup>

Batman's party of 1,200 left Memphis aboard the steamboat *Farmer* on October 13, arriving at Rock Roe four days later. They took the northern route, traveled earlier by some of the Choctaw contingents, by way of Irwin's and Crossroads, in early November, almost certainly rejoining the Military Road at Cadron. Batman arrived at Fort Gibson on December 7.<sup>xxii</sup>

Campbell split his contingent of 1,170 Creeks at Memphis, with some leaving on boats for Rock Roe on November 5 while the rest drove their livestock through the Mississippi swamp. This group also apparently took the northern route above Little Rock before rejoining the Military Road at Cadron and heading west to Fort Gibson, where they too arrived in early December.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Deas party, which numbered 2,320 when it left Alabama, set out from Memphis on November 5, 1836, intending to split as had the earlier groups. A sizeable group of Creeks refused to board the boats, choosing instead to follow the horse herd along the Memphis to Little Rock Road under the leadership of a conductor who Deas appointed. The water-borne party waited at Rock Roe, but only a portion of the overland party arrived with the conductor. After waiting two weeks, Deas set back toward Strong's place on the St. Francis River to round up the stragglers. He found 300-400 starving, stranded Creeks, some of whom had been with the parties of Batman and Screven, scattered along the route and arranged for their escort to join the rest of his band. Deas's main group arrived opposite Little Rock on November 27 and stayed there until December 9, allowing most of the stragglers to rejoin them. After moving three miles along the Military Road, he learned that another large group was still a few days behind him, so he again encamped until December 17. The Deas party continued moving west along the Military Road, finally arrived at Fort Gibson on January 23, 1837.<sup>xxiv</sup>

A final party of Creeks followed the Military Road through Arkansas in late 1837. These were mainly the families of 776 Creek warriors who had been recruited to fight Seminole Indians in Florida. After spending months in camps in Alabama and Mississippi, a period in which nearly 200 of them died, the group was transported to New Orleans in October. After traveling by water to Rock Roe, some 3,000 Creeks traveled overland, bypassing Little Rock via the northern route through Cross Roads before continuing on to Fort Gibson. This would be the last major group of Creeks to traverse Arkansas by land.<sup>xxv</sup>

### Florida Indian Removal Along the Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road

While often grouped together under the name "Seminole," there actually were eleven individual tribes recognized in Florida at the time of the Removal. U.S. officials had tried through a variety of treaties and "talks" to convince these Florida tribes to relocate to the west in order to make it easier for white settlers to move into the area. The tribes had no desire to leave, however, which led to the Second Seminole War. Thus, while one group of Florida Indians

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voluntarily relocated to Indian Territory, the majority were removed as prisoners of war, creating intermingled groups representing different tribes.<sup>xxvi</sup>

On August 3, 1842, the *Arkansas Gazette* reported:

*Seminoles Coming.--We learn by a gentleman from Jefferson county, that the s. b. Swan arrived at Barraque's bar, below Pine Bluffs, on Sunday morning last, from New-Orleans, with 116 Seminole Indians on board, on their way to their new homes up the Arkansas.*<sup>xxvii</sup>

This small group of 100 Florida Indians, under the supervision of Lt. E.R.S. Canby, ran aground six miles below Little Rock and was forced to travel overland the remainder of the way to Fort Smith. Canby, who in addition to lacking authority to requisition land transport also had no cash, borrowed money from Gopher John (John Cavallo), a black Indian chief who was among those being removed. This group very likely would have followed the Military Road from Little Rock to Fort Smith. They were delivered to the Western Seminole agent at the Creek council ground on September 6, 1842.<sup>xxviii</sup>

### Chickasaw Removal Along the Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road

On October 20, 1832, representatives of the Chickasaw Nation, under pressure from the U.S. government and white settlers anxious to move into the Chickasaw homelands in northern Mississippi and Alabama, signed the Treaty of Pontotoc in which the tribe ceded its property for sale as public land. The government would hold proceeds while tribe members decided where they wanted to move in the West.<sup>xxix</sup> Negotiations with the Choctaw Nation to procure western Choctaw land failed, as did similar parleys in November 1835. Finally, in January 1837 the Choctaw Nation sold a large strip in the western part of Choctaw lands in the Indian Territory for the use of the Chickasaw, also allowing the tribe to enjoy most of the privileges of Choctaw citizenship.<sup>xxx</sup>

On March 9, 1837, A. M. M. Upshaw of Pulaski, Tennessee, was appointed superintendent of the Chickasaw removal. Upshaw established three camps in the Chickasaw Nation, and on July 4 he led a party of some 500 emigrants to Memphis.<sup>xxxi</sup> John M. Millard, assisted by W.R. Guy, Capt. Joe A. Phillips and Dr. C. G. Keenan, took over as the conductor of the party and crossed the Mississippi River to Arkansas.<sup>xxxii</sup> Millard, expecting additional Chickasaws to join his group and awaiting anticipated rations, tarried on the Arkansas side for three days before heading west on the Memphis to Little Rock Road. They arrived north of the Arkansas River opposite Little Rock on July 25, with 516 Chickasaws in the party. The party split up there, with Millard, Morris and Keenan taking 150 Chickasaws and all of the baggage on board the steamer *Indian* for transport to Fort Coffee in the Indian Territory, while Guy led a party of 30 Chickasaws, 100 horses and two wagons by land along the Military Road for the same destination, which likely would have led them along the Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road – Old Wire Road Segment.<sup>xxxiii</sup> The remaining Chickasaws, led by chief Sealy, headed southwest, “determined to go by Red River and stop, when and where they pleased.”<sup>xxxiv</sup>

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After arriving at Fort Coffee on August 2, Millard returned to Little Rock and set out in pursuit of Sealy's detachment, finding "many of them very sick" only 35 miles from Little Rock. After battling a lack of provender and the depredations of horse thieves, the frustrated Millard finally threatened the slow-moving Chickasaws with the prospect of a full military escort if they did not follow his instructions. After much hardship, the remaining Chickasaws finally arrived in the Indian Territory and Millard left the party on September 10, 1837.<sup>xxxv</sup>

Millard rejoined Upshaw in Memphis, where the latter had assembled some 4,000 additional Chickasaw emigrants, most of whom would travel west by steamboat. Millard led another party along the Memphis to Little Rock Road, leaving Memphis around December 3.<sup>xxxvi</sup> After arriving at Little Rock, Millard convinced some of his charges to take steamboats the rest of the way to the Choctaw Nation, while the remainder traveled overland with their horses and oxen, most likely following the Military Road.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

At least one other party of Chickasaws would have traveled the Military Road. In May 1838, a group of about 200 Chickasaws arrived opposite Little Rock, planning to cross the Arkansas and head toward Fort Towson. Millard arrived in town and talked most of them into heading back north of the river to the provision station. Around May 30, after buying wagons, he headed west on the Military Road with chief King Ishtehotopa and his party, leaving those south of the river to head southwest at their own expense.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

### Cherokee Removal on the Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road

The Cherokees who had signed the Treaty of New Echota traveled separately from their fellow tribesmen in a detachment that mixed-blood Cherokee John Bell conducted and for which U.S. Army Lt. Edward Deas was chief administrator. This detachment of some 660 Indians left the emigrating depot at Fort Cass near Charleston, Tennessee, on October 10, 1838. It was the only Cherokee Removal detachment that would take the Military Road from the Mississippi River to Little Rock and beyond.<sup>xxxix</sup>

Deas reported that the Bell Detachment had crossed the Mississippi by November 24, 1838, noting that he "shipped up the Arkansas River a considerable quantity of the Baggage, Potware &c. &c, on very low terms, which I think will result in a good deal of saving in time and expense."<sup>xl</sup> This report is the last known to survive from Deas during his travels with the Bell Detachment, but historian Duane King has assembled Deas's expense vouchers from the National Archives, providing an account of where and when the Bell Detachment traveled along the Memphis to Little Rock Road.

Deas's vouchers show that the party crossed Blackfish Lake on November 28, when he paid H.N. Ferguson to ferry the Cherokee across (The Blackfish Lake Ferry Site was listed on the National Register on 04/10/03). Four vouchers show that the party purchased supplies from William Strong. Voucher #98 shows that on November 29 & 30, Strong ferried 650 Cherokees across the St. Francis River. Voucher #34 shows that on November 30, 1838, Deas purchased 50.5 bushels of cornmeal at \$1 per bushel and 1,776 pounds of beef at 4 ½ cents per pound for a total of \$130.42. Voucher #99, also dated November 30, shows Strong sold Deas 59 bushels of corn at \$1 per bushel and 1,016 bundles

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of fodder at \$4 per hundred bundles for a total of \$99.64. Each of these vouchers was paid off on December 2. An unnumbered voucher dated December 1, 1838, reads: "Recd of Dr Eddington Four dollars for 1 gallon of French Brandy for the Cherokee Emigration." Based on these vouchers, it probably was between November 30 and December 4 (the date of the last voucher paid in St. Francis County) that the Bell Detachment traveled the well-established Memphis to Little Rock Road segment that now traverses Village Creek State Park (NR 04/11/03).<sup>xli</sup>

The next vouchers, dated December 5 and 6, were made out to John Cotton, who lived near modern-day Brinkley south of what is now Henard Cemetery Road. The Bell Detachment would thus have traversed this road segment between December 4 and 6 (The Memphis to Little Rock Road – Henard Cemetery Road Segment was listed on the National Register on 05/30/03). Vouchers dated December 8 and 9 show the party crossed the White River at the Mouth of Cache (modern-day Clarendon) on those dates, and others dated December 10 were paid to Daniel Wilder in "Munroe County" for corn and fodder. On December 12, Deas made a payment to Cy Harris in Pulaski County, indicating the party had crossed the county line.<sup>xlii</sup>

There are a number of receipts for people in Little Rock dated December 14-17, then two at Cadron on December 21 and 22. On December 23, Thomas Mather received a receipt for "ferrage" at Cadron, indicating the Bell Detachment had crossed the creek on that day. They thus would most likely have traversed the Military Road—Cadron Segment (NR listed on January 28, 2004) on December 22-23. They continued west, paying William Feris to ferry them across Point Remove Creek on Christmas Day. The next vouchers were paid at Horsehead Creek in Johnson County on December 31, so the detachment would have traveled across the Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road – Old Wire Road Segment somewhere between the 26<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of December.<sup>xliii</sup>

The Bell Detachment traveled 707 miles in 89 days and disbanded at Vinyard Post Office (present-day Evansville) in Washington County, Arkansas, on January 7, 1839. Twenty-one of the 660 Cherokee Indians who began the journey in Tennessee died en route.<sup>xliv</sup>

The Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road – Old Wire Road Segment is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A with Statewide significance by virtue of its status as one of few surviving segments of the Military Road west of Little Rock that were traversed in Arkansas by the Bell Detachment during the Cherokee Removal and that retain their integrity as nineteenth-century roadbeds. Its association with the earlier Choctaw, Creek, Seminole and Chickasaw Removals augments its importance. The property is being submitted for National Register recognition under the multiple-property listing "Historic and Archeological Resources Associated with the Cherokee Trail of Tears."

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### Verbal Boundary Description:

The property consists of a 30-foot wide strip of land running approximately 300 meters and connecting the following UTM points on the Morrilton West, Arkansas, quad map: A 15/513793/3896729; B 15/514130/3896665.

### Boundary Justification:

The property boundaries encompass the section of roadway meeting the registration requirements established in the multiple-property documentation form "Historic and Archeological Resources Associated with the Cherokee Trail of Tears: as determined through field survey and GPS documentation on October 10, 2002, by Mark Christ, Holly Hope, and Tony Feaster of the AHPP staff, including a 10-foot strip on either side of the road.

<sup>i</sup> Cheryl Nichols, *Construction of the Military Road Between Little Rock, Arkansas, and Fort Gibson, Oklahoma*. Research report for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, May 2003.

<sup>ii</sup> Nichols, p. 2-4.

<sup>iii</sup> Nichols, p. 5.

<sup>iv</sup> Nichols, p. 6-7.

<sup>v</sup> Nichols, p. 8.

<sup>vi</sup> Nichols, p. 9-10.

<sup>vii</sup> Nichols, p. 11-12.

<sup>viii</sup> Nichols, p. 13-14.

<sup>ix</sup> Nichols, p. 14-15.

<sup>x</sup> Arthur H. DeRosier, Jr. "The Choctaw Removal of 1831: A Civilian Effort" *Journal of the West* Vol. 6, April 1967, 237.

<sup>xi</sup> *Arkansas Gazette*, December 14, 1831, cited at

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<sup>xii</sup> Glenn, 27-29.

<sup>xiii</sup> Glenn, "Choctaw Colonization," 29-30; Amanda L. Paige, Fuller L. Bumpers and Daniel L. Littlefield, Jr. "The North Little Rock Site on the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail: Historical Contexts Report," June 15, 2003, p. 22-3; *Arkansas Gazette*, December 5, 1832, cited at [http://www.anpa.ualr.edu/FT\\_Indian\\_Removal/Newspapers/FT\\_IR\\_Choctaw\\_3.htm](http://www.anpa.ualr.edu/FT_Indian_Removal/Newspapers/FT_IR_Choctaw_3.htm), downloaded October 20, 2002.

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<sup>xiv</sup> Paige, et al., p. 23; *Arkansas Gazette*, November 13, 1833, cited at [http://www.anpa.ualr.edu/FT\\_Indian\\_Removal/Newspapers/FT\\_IR\\_Choctaw\\_3.htm](http://www.anpa.ualr.edu/FT_Indian_Removal/Newspapers/FT_IR_Choctaw_3.htm), downloaded October 20, 2002.

<sup>xv</sup> William J. Savage, Jr. "Creek Colonization in Oklahoma," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, vol. 54, Spring 1976, 39-41.

<sup>xvi</sup> Information from [http://www.anpa.ualr.edu/FT\\_Indian\\_Removal/Site%20Reports/NLR/nlr\\_creek.htm](http://www.anpa.ualr.edu/FT_Indian_Removal/Site%20Reports/NLR/nlr_creek.htm) downloaded January 16, 2003 (referred to hereafter as ANPA Creek Report).

<sup>xvii</sup> ANPA Creek Report.

<sup>xviii</sup> Paige, et al., p. 25-26.

<sup>xix</sup> ANPA Creek Report; Paige, et al, p. 27-28.

<sup>xx</sup> ANPA Creek Report.

<sup>xxi</sup> Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), p. 163.

<sup>xxii</sup> Foreman, p. 162.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Paige, et al., p. 29.

<sup>xxiv</sup> ANPA Creek Report.

<sup>xxv</sup> Paige, et al., p. 32.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Paige, et al., p. 34.

<sup>xxvii</sup> *Arkansas Gazette*, August 3, 1842, quoted at [http://anpa.ualr.edu/trail\\_of\\_tears/indian\\_removal\\_project/a\\_chronicle/seminole.htm#1842](http://anpa.ualr.edu/trail_of_tears/indian_removal_project/a_chronicle/seminole.htm#1842), downloaded Sept. 9, 2003.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Paige, et al., p. 40-41.

<sup>xxix</sup> Foreman, p. 197.

<sup>xxx</sup> *Ibid.*, p.202-203.

<sup>xxxi</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204-6.

<sup>xxxii</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Paige, et al., p. 45.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Foreman, 207-9.

<sup>xxxv</sup> *Ibid.*, 209-12.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> *Ibid.*, 213-4.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Foreman, 214; Paige, et al., p. 47.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Duane King, "The Emigration Route of the John A. Bell Detachment of Treaty Party Cherokees within the State of Arkansas November 25, 1838 – January 7, 1839," research report for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, October 12, 2001, p. 4.

<sup>xl</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>xli</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28-9; copies of vouchers from National Archives supplied by Duane King.

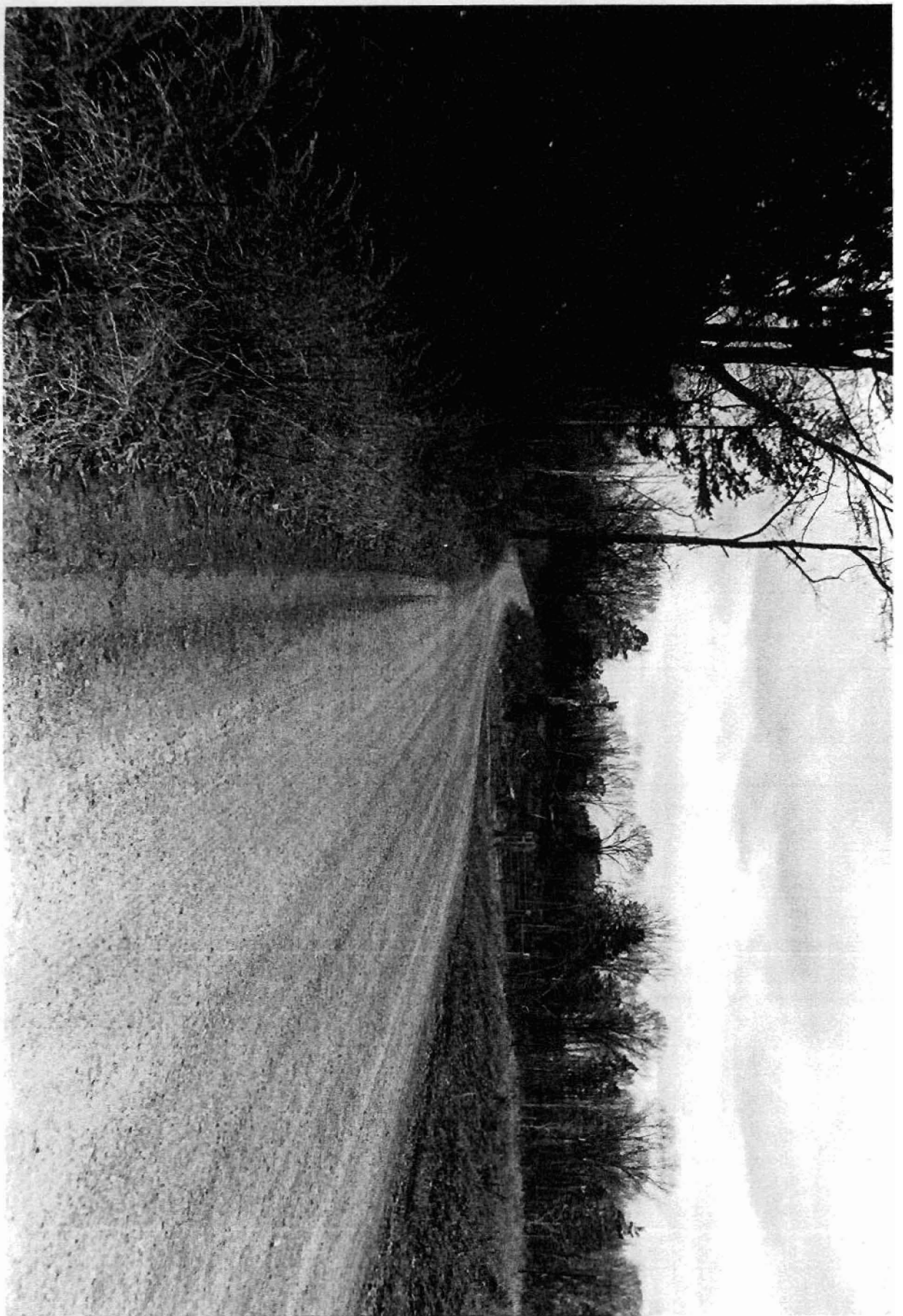


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<sup>xlii</sup> King, "Emigration Route," p. 16, 29.

<sup>xliii</sup> King, "Emigration Route," p. 29-30; information provided by Carolyn Kent, September 4, 2003.

<sup>xliv</sup> King, "Emigration Route, p. 4.









Rock to Cantonment Gibson Road - Old wire Road segment  
= the well vic. Conway Co, AR  
B: 15/514130/3896729 / 513793/3896729  
B: 15/514130/3896665

