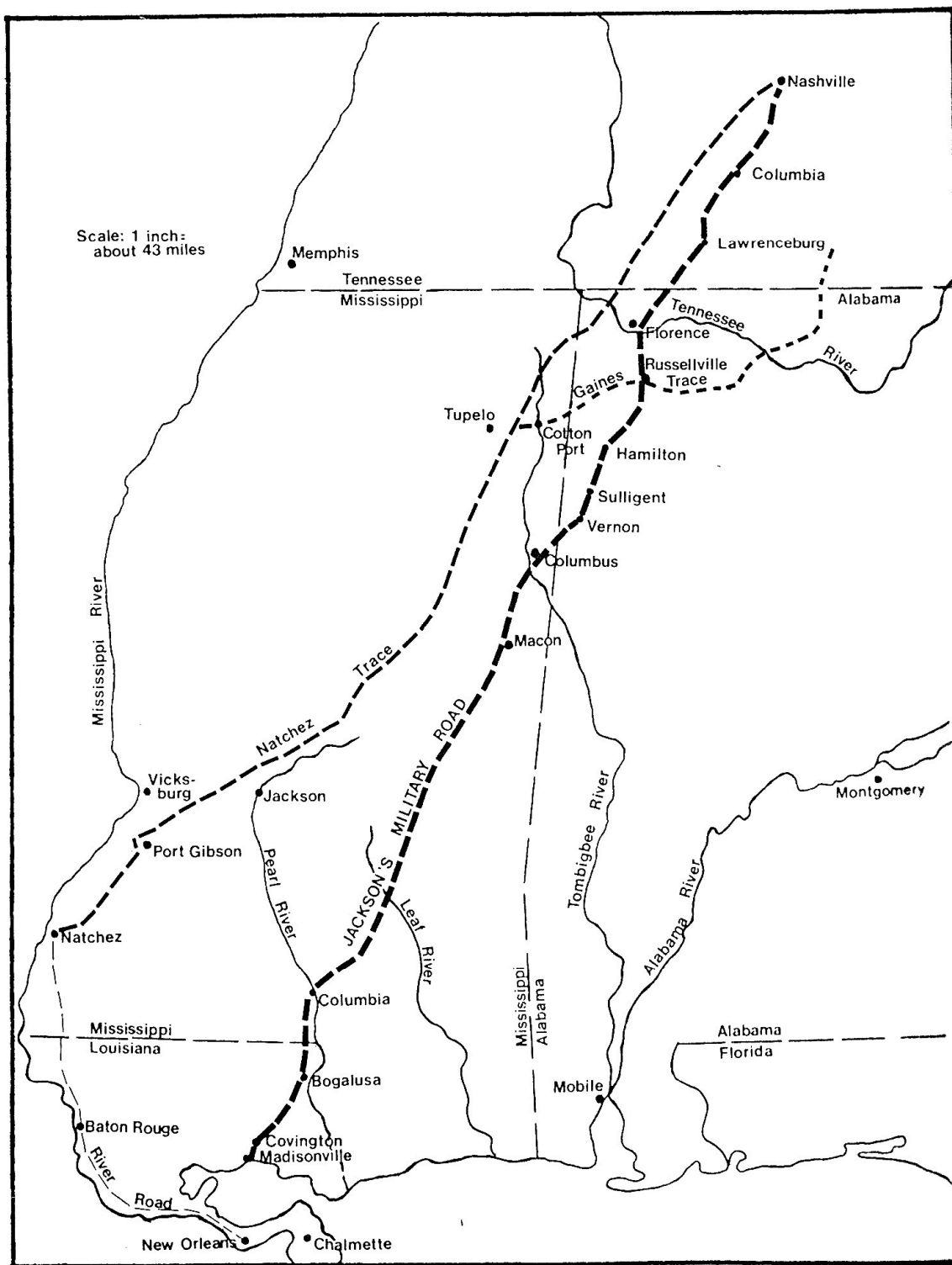


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JACKSON'S MILITARY ROAD

By Yancey M. Quinn, Jr.*

In the battle of New Orleans, fought January 8, 1815, approximately 2,500 men from Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Kentucky defeated the 15,000 British troops on the plains of Chalmette south of New Orleans. Three months later General Andrew Jackson marched the men from the latter two states up the River Road from New Orleans to Natchez, then up the Natchez Trace to Nashville. He arrived in Nashville on May 15, 1815.¹

After the war with Great Britain, General Jackson was assigned to the command of the Military Division of the South on May 17, 1815, with headquarters at Nashville, Tennessee, and he continued in command until May of 1821, when the division was discontinued.² The War of 1812 had shown him the need of a shorter route and better transportation facilities between New Orleans and Nashville, as well as between New Orleans and Washington. The interruption of communications on the Natchez Trace and the important part played by the militia of Mississippi, Tennessee, and Kentucky in the defense of New Orleans were to him sufficient evidence of the necessity of an improved route between Nashville and New Orleans. Consequently he recommended a new road in the following letter, dated December 12, 1815, to the Secretary of War William H. Crawford in Washington:

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¹*Natchez Trace Parkway Survey, 1940* (United States Printing Office, 1941), 85.

²"Military Roads in Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana and Tennessee (1812-1820). . . .," General Information Index, "Andrew Jackson," 3, Record Group 94, "Records of the Adjutant General's Office," National Archives and Records Service.

As closely connected with the defense of the most part of my division, I must take this occasion to recommend the propriety of facilitating the intercourse with that district of country which on any great emergency must supply the means for this defense. A road leading from Nashville (which is the proper point it should commence at) to New Orleans may be constructed over much better ground than that which is at present traveled, with a saving of more than 300 miles. A passage thus shorting the distance for transportation of supplies as well as men from that country which on such occasion must furnish both may be of incalculable consequence in our future operations. Let me add also as a consideration deserving great weight, that this road will scarcely touch upon land to which the Indian title has not been extinguished. The designation, however of this road should be entrusted only to some one in whose honor and honesty the Government has the highest confidence. The opening of it may be of very little expense.³

As a result, Congress enacted the following legislation:

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, that the sum of ten thousand dollars be and hereby appropriated, and payable out of any moneys in the treasury not otherwise appropriated for the purpose of repairing and keeping in repair the road between Columbia, on the Duck River in the State of Tennessee, and Madisonville, Louisiana, by the Choctaw Agency, and also the road between Fort Hawkins, in the State of Georgia and Fort Stoddard, under the direction of the Secretary of War. Approved April 27, 1816.⁴

This act of legislation was transmitted to General Jackson by Secretary of War Crawford in the following letter:

War Department
September 24, 1816

Sir:

An appropriation of ten thousand dollars was made during the last session of Congress for repairing and keeping in repair a road from Columbia, in Tennessee to Madisonville, in Louisiana and another road

³Andrew Jackson, *The Letters of Andrew Jackson*, John Spencer Bassett, ed., (Washington, D. C., 1926), 222.

⁴United States *Statutes at Large III*, Fourteenth Congress, First Session, Act of Congress April 27, 1816, p. 315.

from Georgia to Fort Stoddard. Half of this sum will be expended upon the first road. I have received no information on the length of the road, the nature of the country through which it passes, or its present state.

If there are many bridges to be erected the appropriation may be inadequate to the object. In that event the employment of a part of the troops may be necessary.

All the information which you possess upon the subject will be acceptable to the Department. If more is necessary to be obtained to enable you to furnish what is necessary to the due execution of the law in question, as little time should be lost in collecting it as possible.

The necessary instructions will be given as soon as the information required shall be transmitted.

I have the honor, etc.
William H. Crawford

Major General Andrew Jackson
Nashville, Tennessee⁵

With appropriations made and approvals secured, General Jackson had difficulty in procuring a surveyor for the military road⁶ and was advised by the War Department that no topographical engineer would be able to join him in time to lay off the road contemplated. Authority was therefore given to employ a surveyor to aid Lieutenant James Gadsden of the Engineer Corps.⁷ Jackson replied he would proceed forthwith to engage a surveyor and direct an experimental line to be run.⁸ On August 15, 1816, the War Department gave General Jackson authority to appoint an assistant topographical engineer and to procure equipment needed for opening the contemplated road.⁹

⁵Secretary of War to General Jackson, summarized in "Military Roads," 5. The "Military Roads" document will direct interested scholars to the full letters contained in Record Group 107, "Records of the Office of the Secretary of War," "Letters Sent" and "Letters Received."

⁶General Jackson to Secretary of War, June 24, 1816, "Military Roads," 5.

⁷Chief Clark, War Department, to General Jackson, July 11, 1816, "Military Roads," 5.

⁸General Jackson to the Secretary of War, July 30, 1816, *ibid.*

⁹Chief Clark to General Jackson, *ibid.*

Jackson appointed Major William O. Butler to superintendent the new road.¹⁰

On October 6, 1816, Major Butler, in a letter written from Levi Colbert's (near Florence, Alabama, on the Tennessee River) advised that he had progressed with the survey of the line 86½ miles from Campbell Ferry.¹¹ At this point, some 12 to 15 miles from the Tombigbee River, he became ill and was compelled to discontinue the survey.¹²

Captain Hugh Young, assistant topographical engineer from Nashville, replaced Major Butler, and was ordered to complete the survey to Madisonville, Louisiana.¹³ Captain Young assumed his survey duties on December 14, 1816, and completed them on March 12, 1817.¹⁴ In his detailed report to General Jackson dated September 30, 1817, written from Shoal Creek (near Florence, Alabama) he described in great detail the topography along the route between the Tennessee River and Madisonville, Louisiana. This forty-three page letter indicates that Captain Young was a well-educated man and a very capable civil engineer.

The opening page of the forty-three-page handwritten report to General Jackson begins as follows:

Shoal Creek, Sept. 30, 1817

Major General Andrew Jackson
Com. of Division South

Sir:

Having completed the duty assigned to me in laying out the Military Road from Madisonville, Louisiana to the Tennessee River, it becomes necessary to furnish such a narrative of my operations and sketch of the country as will enable you, as well to judge how the work

¹⁰General Jackson to the Secretary of War, August 18, 1816, *ibid.*

¹¹Major General William O. Butler to General Jackson, October 8, 1816, *ibid.*

¹²General Jackson to Secretary of War, October 18, 1816, *ibid.*

¹³Captain Hugh Young to General Jackson, September 30, 1817, Record Group 77, "Office of the Chief of Engineers," No. 10214, National Archives and Records Services.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 3.

has been executed as to form an opinion of the character of the route—For information on the first of these heads, I take the liberty of referring to my letters, and the journal of the survey, herewith transmitted—to accomplish the second, by submitting such general news of the country as occurred to me during the route, with minute topographical description, particularly of the road line is the aim of this communication.

The report, then is naturally divisible into two parts; the first to contain a particular description of the country as ascertained by personal observations and the second, to be devoted to topographical details of the country as I have marked it with such sketches of the country as may be necessary to explain the different courses, and the causes of variation from the traverse line.¹⁵

The object of the new road, according to Captain Young, was to form as direct a route as would be practicable between the central part of the western country and New Orleans, both for civil and military purposes. The course adopted by Major Butler was on a line south 16 degrees west; he had continued on this bearing from Campbell Ferry on the Tennessee River for 86 miles until sickness compelled him to stop. Captain Young completed the unfinished survey, observing the same course.

Young left Nashville on November 19, 1816, with a party consisting of seven privates of the 8th Regular Infantry, on woodsman, and himself, together with five horses. Owing to bad weather and other difficulties, he did not reach the line until December 14, 1816. He completed the survey of the entire line March 12, 1817.

Nineteen pages of Young's report contain details and data pertaining to rivers and creeks, swamps, types of trees and undergrowth, and make-up of soil. He started at the point where Major Butler stopped and continued 22½ miles to the Tombigbee River. The river was 150 yards wide and 18 feet deep

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 1.

the point where it crossed the line. Young describes the 25-mile stretch between the Tombigbee and the Noxubee rivers as very level, with mostly pine timber, and with prairies and swamps extending to the Noxubee, a considerable stream, which divides into two branches not far above the crossing place of the road.

The route traverses 60 miles between the Noxubee and Chunley Creek, west of present day Meridian, which forms the Chickasawhay River. Prairie country extends, with timbered intervals, up to the hills, which in some parts have almost a mountainous character. From the top of one knob Young could see for 15 or 20 miles over the flat country northward. After leaving the ridge, along which the line ran for three miles, he crossed several creeks which form the Bogue Tuggello, one of the largest western branches of the Tombigbee River. Although little good land is found on its banks, the excellence of its waters attracted many Indian settlers. Along the upper part of its course were scattered at intervals many Choctaw cabins and small plantations. These Indians and their farms extended from the head of the Leaf River to the Chickasawhay River. According to Young, these Indians could have had the finest settlements in the nation, yet their laziness and dependence for supplies on hunting and limited corn crops for winter consumption prevented their growth. From the Chunkey River Young went 14 miles to Tallahala Creek, then 23 miles to Leaf River. The Leaf River was 38 yards wide at the point where he crossed, a sandy-bottomed river with a rapid current and high bluff on the north side. The south side of the bank was low and the land was swampy for about a mile.

The distance from the Leaf River to Black Creek was 29 miles, then 23 miles to the Pearl River; the line struck the Pearl River 200 yards above Ford's (formerly Ard's Ferry), and 5½ miles above the Florida boundary. This would be approximately 10 miles south of Columbia, Mississippi. The Pearl River remained navigable to Brashears on the Natchez Trace. From this crossing of the Pearl River it was 25 miles to Bogue Loosa

(Bogalusa, Louisiana), where Young observed and described a resort:

A few years ago a spring was discovered on the banks of this creek and good effects accompanying the external and internal use of the water, it attracted some notice, and induced an attempt to form a public establishment at the spot. During the summer of 1816 several hundred visitors from New Orleans, Natchez and other parts of the country enlivened the place in spite of bad accommodations, and this year several buildings have been erected, with the hopes of similar encouragement for the future. To this little place the proprietors have given the name of Jacksonville. The line ran within a few hundred yards of this spot.

It was eight miles to Bogue Chitto River, and then fifteen miles to Bogue Falia at Covington, Louisiana. He described Covington as follows:

Covington, formerly called Wharton was laid out in 18____, and by the exertions of the proprietor, joined to the natural advantages has prospered rapidly. Latterly, it has taken the lead of Madisonville; and from its greater proximity to the products of the country—joined to nearly equal facilities of navigation it seems likely, at least for some time, to retain its superiority. However, when the country becomes thickly settled, and a regular West India trade is set on foot the business of Covington must be subordinate to that of Madisonville, the latter affording, obviously, a more convenient and natural Port of entry and delivery.

Those familiar with the area around Covington and Madisonville will know how wrong Captain Young was in his predictions for Covington is much the larger of the towns, and has been since it was founded.

Madisonville was the terminus of the Military Road, being located at the mouth of the Tchfuncte River, which flows into Lake Ponchartrain. At the time of Captain Young's survey there were four roads leading from different parts of the country to Madisonville: the road from Natchez; the road from the Pearl River settlements; the old road from Baton Rouge to Fort Stoddard; and the main road from Tennessee, which left the Natchez

Trace at Brashears, located just east of Ridgeland, Mississippi, north of Jackson.

As mentioned earlier Captain Young's letter to General Jackson was divided into two parts, the first part a general description of the country, summarized in preceding paragraphs; and the second, topographical details of the route proposed for the new military road. This second part describes the route from Madisonville, Louisiana, to the Tennessee River in great detail, including the physical features of the region, the configuration of its surface and the position of the various streams.

Young recommended the old road between Madisonville and Covington; it was on high ground and could not be improved upon. From the Bogue Falia River at Covington to Bogue Chitto near present-day Bush and Sun, Louisiana, and on to Bogue Loosa (Bogalusa) the countryside was flat, but generally good, according to Young. A rolling, sandy country presented no difficulties of any kind. From Madisonville to the Pearl River, a distance of about 50 miles, there were only two obstacles: a wide gum swamp extending some distance on the north of Madisonville and a swamp of great width at Bogue Chitto. As previously mentioned, Young recommended crossing the Pearl River at Columbia, Mississippi, as the ford at this point was passable at all times of the year.

Between the Pearl River and the Leaf River he found a Choctaw trail, which on inspection ran on such good ground and was so nearly in the true course that he marked this off for the road. He corrected only its unnecessary windings. Continuing the report, he said, "Well knowing the skill of the Indians in choosing good ground for their trading paths, I felt certain that the general course of this trail would be as direct as the country would admit." The road from the Pearl River to the Leaf River, a distance of 52 miles, was of very uniform character—the country rolling and sandy, with scarcely any other timber than pine.

From the Leaf River to the Noxubee River, the distance was approximately 97 miles. Before reaching the Leaf River, the military road crossed present-day Highway 49, northwest of Hattiesburg, near Seminary, Mississippi. A highway sign near this location today reads as follows: "Jackson Military Road, completed Nashville to New Orleans 1820. Suggested by and named for Andrew Jackson. Road forded Okaloma Creek 8 miles N.E., crossing Bowie Creek near New Hope Church 4.2 miles S.W." The crossing of the Noxubee River was made near Macon, Mississippi; nearby Young visited the Indian Village called Six Towns, where he was fortunate enough to discover a person well acquainted with the woods and creeks who politely offered Young assistance in exploring the more difficult parts of the country. Twelve miles from the Noxubee River the route went through another Indian settlement (existing at that time) called Old Hickory Town, then two miles to the St. Stephens Road. The Tombigbee River, a distance of 25 miles from the Noxubee, was crossed at the point the Indians used, near Columbus, Mississippi. The depth at this point was nine feet, with a general current. Young mentions that the Tombigbee River was navigable to the Cotton Gin Port, 50 miles above the road crossing. Cotton Gin Port was the terminus of the Gaines Trace, a trace from the Tombigbee River running through north Alabama to the Tennessee River.

Captain Young's letter continues with the description of the road and country from the Tombigbee River to the Tennessee River, the distance of about 112 miles, with country of a greater variety than any of equal extent to the south. From the termination of the flat grounds in eastern Mississippi to Russellville, Alabama, 19 miles from the Tennessee River, he found the country uniformly broken, exhibiting, to the south of Bear Creek, and on the waters of the Buttahatche, a confused succession of narrow, broken ridges running in every direction, which seemed to defy all those seeking among them a practicable route. The

30-mile stretch between Bear Creek and Russellville before reaching the Tennessee River, a distance of 12 miles, revealed similar topography. From Russellville to the ferry on the Tennessee River, the road was good, running over ground tolerably rough for a few miles on the spurs of a large ridge, and through beautiful open barrens, nearly level and entirely free from obstructions.¹⁶

The survey thus completed between the Tennessee River and Madisonville, Louisiana, work could begin on the proposed road. In regard to the use of United States troops in building the road, Secretary of War Crawford wrote General Jackson as follows: "The employment of troops in opening military roads and constructing fortifications has been determined upon by the President after due deliberation. It is believed to be no less necessary to the discipline, health and preservation of the troops than useful to the public interest."¹⁷

On May 9, 1817, Colonel Robert Butler, Adjutant General on Jackson's staff, wrote Major General E. W. Ripley, commanding the Eighth Military Department, that the two companies of the First Infantry would be detained to commence the road immediately, and a third company would be detained for the work if it could be judiciously employed. The crew was to lay the road over easy ascents and declivities, saving all distances possible, and to construct the road itself thirty feet wide, the causeways and bridges twenty feet wide. He also stated that the officer commanding the troops should not vary the course marked by the engineers unless he could find better ground without lengthening the distance.¹⁸

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁷Secretary of war to General Jackson, *Letters of Andrew Jackson*, 235.

¹⁸Colonel Robert Butler, adjutant general, to Major General E. W. Ripley, May 9, 1817, "Military Roads," 6.

General Jackson wrote the acting secretary of war on May 13, 1817, that he would immediately begin opening the contemplated military road from the northern boundary of the Mississippi territory to Lake Pontchartrain with one company of troops. He also advised that two companies had been ordered to commence cutting at the southern extremity of the road under Captain Young, topographical engineer. On May 29, 1817, Jackson proceeded to the Tennessee River for the purpose of setting the troops to work on the Military Road.¹⁹

As previously mentioned, Major William O. Butler surveyed the proposed road from the Tennessee River to within twelve miles of the Tombigbee River. From this point Captain Young surveyed the road to Madisonville, Louisiana. Major Perrault of the United States Topographical Department, and James Brown, a civilian surveyor, laid out that portion of the military road between the Tennessee River to Columbia, Tennessee, in Maury County. They were ordered to continue the line through Maury County, as this portion of the route was not under the direction of the United States Army.²⁰

The actual work of constructing the new road by United States troops began in May, 1817. On November 29, 1817, Colonel A. P. Hayne, inspector general, stated in a letter to the War Department that "a portion of the troops in the 8th Military Department are employed in cutting the military road from the Tennessee River to New Orleans. In a national, commercial and military point of view, this road will be of utmost importance."²¹

On August 11, 1818, the secretary of war wrote General Jackson and asked for a progress report before the next meeting

¹⁹General Jackson to acting secretary of war, May 13, 1817, *ibid.*

²⁰Lieutenant J. M. Glassell, A.D.C., to Major Perrault, Topographical Department, *ibid.*

²¹Colonel A. P. Hayne, inspector general, to adjutant and inspector general, November 29 1817, *ibid.*

of Congress,²² and on September 19, 1818, Colonel Robert Butler, adjutant general on Jackson's staff, advised the secretary of war:

Fifty miles of the military road now opening from Columbia, Tennessee to Madisonville, Louisiana have been completed by the troops on the lower part of the road, making many causeways and bridges of the most durable material, and the detachment on this end (north) have progressed about forty miles south of the Tennessee River, making in like manner many bridges and causeways. The most laborious part of the road has been completed. An increase of men has been afforded to the detachment south of the Tennessee River, which will enable it to progress more rapidly.²³

On June 30, 1819, Captain R. Humphreys of the Eighth Infantry advised the Headquarters, Eighth Military District, that "seventy five miles of the north end of the Military Road south of the Tennessee River had been completed."²⁴ In another report dated November 15, 1819, General Jackson advised the secretary of war:

Captain Humphrey's detachment now 15 miles north of the Tombigbee River, country broken and mountainous, by pursuing dividing ridges between the water courses many obstacles to the road have been avoided. The swamps have been causewayed and every stream bridged except Butterhatchey River; road to be completed to Tombigbee and ferry established by end of the month.²⁵

On November 9, 1819, the commanding officer of the Eighth Military Department informed the authorities that clothing and supplies were being sent from Mobile up the Tombigbee River to where the military road crosses the river. He also urged completion of the road.²⁶

Lieutenant Colonel Zachary Taylor was ordered March 20,

²²Secretary of War to General Jackson, August 11, 1818, *ibid.*

²³Colonel Robert Butler to the secretary of war, September 19, 1818, *ibid.*

²⁴Captain R. Humphreys, Eighth Infantry, to Headquarters, Eighth Military District, June 30, 1819, *ibid.*

²⁵*Ibid.*, 10.

²⁶Colonel Butler to commanding officer, November 19, 1819, *ibid.*

1820, by the Headquarters, Eighth Infantry, to join his regime on the south end of the road, assume command of the troops constructing the road, and try to complete the work as soon as practicable.²⁷ On May 17, 1820, General Jackson advised the secretary of war that the military road had been completed. I was to leave that day with a view to examine it and take measures for its improvement and for repairing certain bridges and causeways.²⁸

Under date of July 7, 1820, Lieutenant James Scallan, Fifth Infantry, wrote General Jackson a report on the condition of the road between Madisonville, Louisiana, and its northern extremity in Tennessee:

About 120 miles of the southern end passes through a level country and crosses in that extent 24 streams, over which well constructed bridges of durable materials are thrown. In that space there are about 1200 feet of causewaying, the remainder of the road passes over broken country with firm soil and has required but few bridges and causewaying. The road is now open and free from obstructions from its northern extremity to Madisonville, making the route from Nashville there 483 miles.²⁹

On July 8, 1820, General Jackson wrote the secretary of war forwarding Lieutenant James Scallan's letter along with his remarks:

The military road is now complete, and the government can, if it pleases, run the mail stages from the seat of general government to New Orleans in 17 days, it being only 483 miles from Nashville to Madisonville on Lake Ponchartrain, nothing now remains to be done but establish stands for the accommodations of travelers on that part of the road which passes through the Choctaw Nation. This will become the most important road in America.³⁰

²⁷Lieutenant Colonel Zachary Taylor, Eighth Infantry, to commanding officer, March 1820, *ibid.*, 11.

²⁸General Jackson to the Secretary of War, June 15, 1820, *ibid.*

²⁹Lieutenant James Scallan to General Jackson, July 7, 1820. *ibid.*

³⁰General Jackson to the Secretary of War, July 8, 1820, *ibid.*, 12.

Thus, the actual work of constructing this new road was begun May, 1817, and completed in May, 1820. The road traversed portions of the four states of Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, including the settlements of Columbia and Lawrenceburg, Tennessee; Florence, Russellville, Hodges, Hamilton, Sulligent and Vernon, Alabama; Columbus, Macon and Columbia, Mississippi; and Bogalusa, Covington and Madisonville, Louisiana.

On H. L. Tanner's New Map of Mississippi, dated 1836, the road is plainly marked throughout Mississippi and Alabama from Madisonville to the Tennessee River. South from the Tennessee River the road passes through Sheffield, Alabama, past the Big Springs in Tuscumbia and on up the Tuscumbia Mountain, past Colbert Heights subdivision, on through Littleville, and then follows Highway 43 to Russellville, Alabama. A highway marker three miles north of Russellville reads as follows:

Jackson's Military Road. Built by Andrew Jackson 1816-1820. Shortened by 200 miles the route from Nashville to New Orleans. Provided much needed road to Gulf for supply wagons and artillery. Built with U.S. funds and troops. Jackson Road served as model for 11 such roads built in 1820's. This road replaced narrow Indian trails. Lack of supply roads had hindered Jackson in Creek Indian War and campaigns against Spanish Florida and British at New Orleans.

From Russellville the road continues in a southwesterly direction to Isbelle, then past the Quinn Memorial Church of Christ, and crosses Little Bear Creek north of the community of Lawler. A work camp was located on this creek during the construction period. The road in this section is gravel and passes over rough country. From Hodges the road continues to Hamilton, Sulligent, and Vernon and crosses the Tombigbee River at Columbus, Mississippi. The Caledonia Church known as Military Chapel is located about eight miles northeast of Columbus on Highway 12. After crossing the Tombigbee the road continues through Lowndes and Noxubee counties and crosses the

Noxubee River just west of the town of Mason, Mississippi. From Mason it continues southwest through Kemper County, the northwest corner of Lauderdale county, and crosses Interstate 20 between Newton, Mississippi, and the Chunky River, about 18 miles west of Meridian. Luzon Lake is in proximity to the Chunky River crossing. This lake is named after a half-blooded Indian who ran an inn on the Military Road. Colorful legends about the area include stories of buried treasure and Luzon's unusual innkeeping methods—that he murdered some of his guests, took their money, and threw the bodies into the lakes.

The road continues southwest through Newton and Jasper counties, enters Smith County about three miles west of Bay Springs, and follows Highway 531 to the Leaf River crossing at Taylorsville. It then extends south near Seminary in Covington County and crosses Highway 49 about 15 miles northwest of Hattiesburg. Another highway marker is located at this point. The road then continues to Sumrall in Lamar County, then southwest along Highway 44 to Columbia where it crosses the Pearl River. There it follows Mississippi Highway 35 south to where it joins Louisiana Highway 21 at the state boundary, and continues on this highway through Bogalusa and Covington to Madisonville.

This old road remained under the jurisdiction of the federal government until 1861 and was never used to repel foreign invasion. The following article appeared in the *Tuscumbian* of Tuscumbia, Alabama, on November 12, 1824:

This road leading from Madisonville to Nashville, was projected by General Jackson, commenced in May 1817, and completed at immense labor and expense in May 1820 by troops of the United States. The line was run by a distinguished officer of Topographical Engineers, and the result of survey made since its completion denotes its course N.35° E. distance by actual measurement 486 miles, which adding 30 miles across Lake Ponchartrain, gives 516 miles as the distance between Nashville and New Orleans, being shorter by 208 miles than the old route through Natchez. No deviation was made from

the direct line, except to gain preferable ground, whenever the distance would not be materially increased thereby.

There were an average of 300 men continuously employed on the work, including sawers, carpenters, blacksmiths, etc., who were amply furnished with oxen, traveling forges and all tools and implements necessary to its perfect execution. Thirty five neat and substantial bridges, each measuring from 60 to 200 feet were erected, and 20,000 feet of causeway laid. On a calculation of the pay, provisions and clothing of the soldiery thus engaged and making a moderate allowance for the deterioration and loss of public property, we find that the government disbursed on the occasion at least \$300,000.

The causeways were laid over all marshy spots by placing small timber close together and in a latitudinal direction to the road; ditches three feet deep and four feet wide were cut on each side of the causeways, and earth strewed over the timber. A few days exposure to the sun made these places equally firm as the most elevated parts of the road. Of this work there are 45 miles within the state of Louisiana, 120 miles in the Choctaw Nation and the remainder in Alabama and Tennessee. It is 40 feet wide throughout, exclusive of the space allotted to receive fallen trees, which being cut into convenient lengths, were rolled to either side. The axe was applied as near to ground as practicable and directed so as to leave the upper part of the stumps concave, thereby accelerating their decay by retaining rain and moisture.³¹

The road is still used in many places and can be seen in several towns and cities in the four-state area. It is the main street in Mt. Pleasant and Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, and in Littleville and Russellville, Alabama. In Columbus, Mississippi, it was known as Military Street, now Second Avenue North, and in Bogalusa and Covington, Louisiana, as Military Road. The road played an important part in the development of the four southern states and probably many settlers came to this section of the Old Southwest over this old road.

³¹Alabama Department of Archives and History.