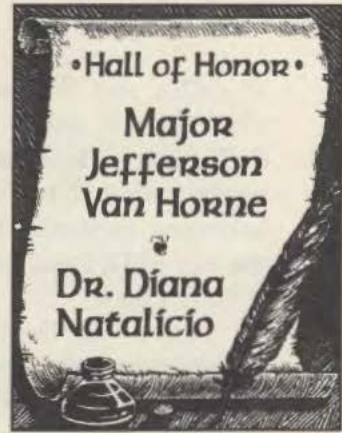


Jefferson Van Horne (1802-1859)
Photo courtesy United States Military Archives

• Hall of Honor •
1998

Tribute to Major Jefferson Van Horne

By Evan Haywood Antone



A climatic event in the celebration of the Fort Bliss Sesquicentennial will be the Hall of Honor Banquet of the El Paso County Historical Society on November 1st, 1998. At this time, Major Jefferson Van Horne, the founder of the military post to the north of El Paso del Norte that was to become Fort Bliss, will be inducted into the 38th Hall of Honor according to Frank Gorman, president, who will preside at the banquet at the Camino Real Hotel in El Paso. "The committee unanimously decided that Van Horne should be recognized for his outstanding accomplishments that merit recognition especially on this occasion," Gorman added.

Major Van Horne, who graduated from West Point in 1827 and was a veteran of the Mexican War from 1846-1848, was the army officer chosen to lead the march from San Antonio across Texas "... in the direction of El Paso, put on route for that post." War Department General Orders No. 53 made this assignment on 7 November 1848.

Their departure from San Antonio began on the morning of Friday, 1 June 1849. A total of 275 wagons, pulled by 1,500 oxen, mules, and even some horses, were assembled. Three months were required to traverse the lower route which was more direct and provided water for livestock. Averaging twelve miles per day, the march came to a successful conclusion on Saturday, 8 September 1849, when the area opposite El Paso del Norte was reached.

When Van Horne and his troops arrived, there were five scattered settlements in the area: Magoffinsville, built by James Wiley Magoffin in the area that is now the intersection of

Magoffin and Willow Streets; Hugh Stephenson's Concordia, which is still called Concordia, but is now a noted cemetery; El Molino, a flour mill belonging to Simeon Hart which is the newly reopened restaurant, La Hacienda; the mercantile store belonging to Benjamin Franklin Coons, now the very heart of the city of El Paso; and T. Frank White's Frontera, to the north of Hart's Mill.

Major Van Horne became acquainted with these men who were so important to the development of the city of El Paso. The arrival of his military force marked the beginning of the close association and friendship between the city of El Paso and the military at Fort Bliss which continues to this day.

GENERAL ORDERS, }
No. 58. }

WAR DEPARTMENT,
ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, Nov. 7, 1848.

1... Brigadier General *D. E. Twiggs*, Major General by Brevet, is assigned to the command of the 6th Military Department. He will, without delay, repair to St. Louis and enter upon the duties accordingly.

2... Colonel *W. J. Worth*, Major General by Brevet, is assigned to the command of the 8th and 9th Military Departments, according to his brevet of Brigadier General. He will report by letter to Major General Taylor, commanding the Western Division, and also report in person to that General on his route to Department No. 8.

3... The 8th Regiment of Infantry will immediately repair to Texas, *via* New Orleans, where the commanding officer will receive further instructions from Major General Taylor.

4... The 3d Regiment of Infantry is assigned to duty in Department No. 9. The four companies now at New Orleans Barracks, will repair to Jefferson Barracks, and there receive the further orders of Major General Taylor. The six companies of the Regiment now in Texas, will, as soon as the necessary reconnoissance can be made in the direction of El Paso, be put en route for that post.

5... Companies B and D 2d Artillery, under orders for Department No. 9, will immediately be put en route for Jefferson Barracks, there to receive the further instructions of Major General Taylor.

BY ORDER :



Assistant Adjutant General.