The Travels and Botanical Collections of Dr. Melines Conkling Leavenworth

Rogers McVaugh

The pages of the classic Flora of North America, (1838-1843), by John Torrey and Asa Gray, contain approximately 200 references to plants from Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas, collected by a certain Dr. Leavenworth. The cruciferous genus Leavenworthia, named for the same individual, was established by Torrey in 1837. Students of the American flora are familiar with Carex Leavenworthii, Vicia Leavenworthii, Eryngium Leavenworthii, Coreopsis Leavenworthii, and Solidago Leavenworthii, but few know anything of the life or work of the botanist whose name they perpetuate. None remembers now that Leavenworth was a correspondent of Elliott, Nuttall, Wray, Boykin, Hale, Short, and Torrey, or that in 1817, at the time of his graduation from Yale, he was considered one of the rising stars of the botanical firmament. He was indeed the author of a number of botanical papers, but the promise of his early years was never fulfilled. His work is of interest to modern students chiefly because of the material from the then inaccessible "West" and "Southwest", which he contributed to Torrey. He spent about five years at frontier posts in western Louisiana and what is now southeastern Oklahoma, and more than two years in northern Florida, and doubtless collected and turned over to Torrey considerably more than the 200 specimens that are singled out for individual mention in the Flora.

It is possible to summarize Leavenworth's active life quite adequately from his own letters to Torrey, now preserved at the New York Botanical Garden, and from his reports and other records in the War Department Archives in Washington, D. C. His early history and the genealogical matter presented below are taken chiefly from the history of the Leavenworth family published in 1873.

The subject of the present sketch was born in Waterbury, Connecticut, January 15, 1796, the oldest child of Mark and Ann [Cook] Leavenworth. His paternal grandparents were

---

Jesse and Catharine [Conkling] Leavenworth. He was named for his uncle, his father's oldest brother, Melines Conkling Leavenworth (1762-1823). Another uncle, General Henry Leavenworth (1783-1834), whose name is perpetuated by that of the town of Leavenworth, Kansas, was associated with the younger Melines for a time in the Army, and was the father of Jesse H. Leavenworth (1807-1885). The latter, Melines' first cousin, served in the Union Army during the Civil War and later in the Indian Service; he has an indirect connection with botany in that he was the officer immediately in command of Dr. Edward Palmer in Colorado in 1861 and 1862, and in the Indian Territory in 1868.

Melines Conkling Leavenworth, according to the compiler of the Genealogy (who quotes from an obituary in a Waterbury paper), "after receiving an academical education, graduated from the Yale Medical College about the year 1818, with high honors. Having a passion for the study of Botany, he was selected by the Faculty, with the late Dr. [James Gates] Percival, the poet, to make a tour South to obtain specimens, and develop the rich floral and herbal treasures of that sunny clime. Having discharged his mission, the doctor concluded to remain south, and entered into practice in Alabama, and afterwards, in Ga...."

From Melines' own writings and those of the genealogist we can amplify this to some extent. Apparently he graduated from Yale in 1817. He is said to have been placed in charge of the Botanical Garden attached to the Medical College at New Haven, and to have collaborated with Ives and Tully in the preparation of a list of the local flora. His published and unpublished writings are full of references to plants collected in the southeastern states from 1818 to 1821 ("Carolina, 1818", "Augusta, 1819", "Mobile, 1819", "Montgomery County, Ala., 1819", "Tuscaloosa, 1821"), and it seems most likely that the "tour" for which he was selected by the Yale faculty took place about as

---

Footnote:

"Catalogue of the phenogamous plants and of the ferns growing without cultivation, within five miles of Yale College, Connecticut." (In Ebenezer Baldwin, Annals of Yale College, 1831, pp. 264-302.) On p. v. (pref.) of this work is the statement: "The valuable botanical sketch, is the joint production of Doctors Eli Ives, William Tully, and Melines C. Leavenworth." The "Catalogue of phenogamous plants, &c." was reprinted with changed pagination and without indication of authorship (New Haven, 1831, pp. 1-58). Baldwin also states (Annals, p. 263) that Leavenworth was engaged by the authorities at Yale "to make a collection of indigenous [living] plants" for the Botanical Garden, but does not give the date of this engagement. See, also, statement in Catalogue of the Flowering Plants and Ferns of Connecticut, by C. H. Graves et al., Hartford, 1910, p. 11.
described above. According to his own account he spent "some years" in Alabama. The *Genealogy* says he settled at Cahawba, Alabama, "but his health suffering, he removed to Augusta, and became a druggist, and remained four years." His own reports to the War Department state that he attended lectures at the Medical College of New York during the winter of 1824-25; this was evidently after his residence in Alabama. In 1824 and 1825, respectively, he published two papers in Silliman's Journal, both having to do with the Alabama flora. The later is dated at New York, December 25, 1824, doubtless when Leavenworth was attending the Medical College. In these papers are specific references to "Coneucah" [Conecuh], Green, Jefferson, Montgomery, and Perry counties, Alabama, and to several towns: Cahawba, Demopolis, Mobile, Monroe, Tuscaloosa. From these references one may suppose that the young man botanized rather extensively in west-central Alabama, in the area southwest of Tuscaloosa.

It has not been possible to assign a definite date to Leavenworth's residence in Georgia. According to the quotation given above, he was a druggist in Augusta for four years; according to his own account he "practiced" in Augusta for more than three years, and joined the medical association there, after living in Alabama for "some years". A letter of recommendation, written for Leavenworth in 1831, states that he has lived in Georgia for the "last 8-10 years"; this suggests that he returned to Georgia to live after attending the Medical College in New York, in 1824-25. We have additional scraps of information about his activities between 1825 and 1831: In one of his own papers he tells us that the original plants of *Tullia pycnanthemoides* were found October 22, 1830, "when I was descending the Paint Mountain in Eastern Tennessee", and in the same paper, published probably in midsummer of 1831, his address is given in the title of the paper as Augusta. It is possible that he lived

---

4 Cahawba, or Cahaba, was then a considerable settlement at the junction of the Cahawba and Alabama Rivers, southwest of Selma in what is now Dallas County.


6 Description and history of a new plant, Tullia pycnanthemoides; by Melines Conklin [sic] Leavenworth, M.D. of Augusta, Ga. *Amer. Jour. Sci.* 20: 343-347. 1 fig. (frontisp.). Jl. 1831. The paper is dated, evidently by the author, at Waterbury, Conn., May 17, 1831. The "Paint Mountain" probably was in Cocke or Greene County, Tennessee.
Dr. Melines Conkling Leavenworth (1796-1862)
Early American Botanist [1861]

(From the Leavenworth Genealogy, 1873)
in Augusta most of the time between his departure from Alabama and his return to Waterbury in 1831.

Returning to firmer ground than these speculations, we know definitely that in the summer of 1831 the young medical man, at the age of 35, applied for a commission as Assistant Surgeon, United States Army. He was highly recommended by the Yale Medical Faculty (represented by William Tully, Eli Ives and Jonathan Knight) and by various individuals, including his uncle, Gen. Henry Leavenworth. The latter, then stationed at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, cautiously admitted that Melines was a “distant relation”. The application was approved, and Melines began his Army career September 22, 1831, probably at Jefferson Barracks. He accompanied a detachment of troops from Jefferson Barracks down the Mississippi and to Camp Jesup, Louisiana, where he began a period of almost exactly nine years spent in one frontier post after another. His salary at first was $100 a month.

From October, 1831, to May, 1833, he was stationed at Camp Jesup as Acting Assistant Surgeon. During his stay there he seems not to have corresponded with botanists to any extent, and I know nothing of his activities except as detailed in nine letters to the Surgeon General.

In June, 1833, Leavenworth met the Medical Examining Board at Jefferson Barracks, and finally received his appointment as Assistant Surgeon. He seems to have spent most of the rest of the summer at Opelousas, La., then was again at Ft. Jesup until the end of April, 1834, when he was transferred to duty at Ft. Towson, Arkansas. We know from a letter of May 7 that he left Ft. Jesup on April 29 and reached Ft. Towson May 6, after a delay caused by the lameness of his horse. Apparently he left Ft. Towson the very same day, May 7, “on detached service” at a camp near the mouth of the False Washita. In a report some years later [January 23, 1840] Leavenworth wrote as follows: “Proceeded to Fort Towson under orders & on my arrival there remained one night & immediately relieved

Camp [or Fort] Jesup [or Jessup] was in Sabine Parish, Township 7N, Range 10W, southwest of Natchitoches on the road to Gaines Ferry on the Sabine River, and to Nacogdoches, Texas. It was established not long before Leavenworth’s early service there, and persists at least in name on many modern maps. Its location in the 1830’s is confirmed by contemporary published maps, including the map of Louisiana in Senate Exec. Doc. 2, 36th Congress, and a manuscript map in the War Department Archives (Maj. de Russey’s sketch, April 14, 1856).
Dr. Hogan who was doing field duty & was on field duty from 15th May 1834 to 15th Oct 1834 most of which time was spent either at the Cross Timbers or in [word “tents” crossed out] near the mouth of the False Washita. In Oct 1834 I returned to Fort Towson where I remained until relieved by Dr. Wells in Novr 1835.”

During the summer of 1834 the United States Army undertook to establish “friendly” relations with the Pawnees and Comanches who, if not actually hostile to all whites, were independent and uncooperative. In an attempt to convince them of the wisdom of making friends with the whites, a cavalry force was sent from Fort Gibson across country to the junction of the Red and Washita Rivers, under the personal leadership of Gen. Henry Leavenworth, who at this time was in charge of the Army on the southwestern frontier. Here this detachment joined an infantry detachment from Fort Towson, and a joint foray was made into what was acknowledged Indian country, to the westward, as far as the “Cross Timbers”, where the death of Gen. Leavenworth took place on July 21. We are indebted to the narrator and artist, Catlin, for a picture of the Army’s activities during this campaign. Catlin’s letter number 39 (pp. 45-48) is written from the camp at the mouth of the Washita, where Gen. Leavenworth’s dragoons from Ft. Gibson “found encamped two companies of infantry from Fort Towson”. It may be supposed that Melines Leavenworth had accompanied these troops from Fort Towson, which he had left about May 7. Catlin describes the bivouac on the Washita: “on the banks of the Red River, having Texas under our eye on the opposite bank. Our encampment is on the point of land between the Red and False Washita rivers, at their junction;...”. It is clear from this that the 1834 encampment was not on the site of Fort Washita, later an active post on the Washita River, several miles from its junction with the Red.

General Henry Leavenworth became seriously ill, about the time of his arrival at the mouth of the Washita, with a “fever” which was very prevalent among his troops. Catlin believed that the immediate cause of the General’s disability...
and ultimate death was a fall which he had sustained while hunting, on the way from Fort Gibson. In spite of his condition, the General pushed westward with a party of troops as far as the Cross Timbers, where he succumbed (according to most biographers, including Catlin, who was at the time with another party in advance of General Leavenworth’s). At least one compiler (W. J. Ghent, *Dict. Amer. Biog.* 11: 80, 1937) states that the General’s death occurred at the camp at the mouth of the Washita (which he calls "Camp Smith").

The Leavenworth *Genealogy* states that Melines was with his uncle at the time of the latter’s death at the Cross Timbers. The exact locality is unknown to me; the “Cross Timbers” are of course the well known post-oak woodlands which extend in a tongue southward across the Red River into Texas, on the sandy soils west of the blackland prairies. They are described and located by Melines himself, in a published paper. According to him the distance beyond the mouth of the Washita was about 35 miles; according to Catlin the distance was “fifty or sixty miles”.

The route followed by the troops, according to Catlin's account, led westward from the mouth of the Washita along the high ground between the Red River and the Washita. Presumably the farthest point reached by Leavenworth (accepting either his own estimate of the distance, or that made by Catlin) was somewhere in present Love or Carter County, Oklahoma.

In his paper of 1845 (quoted above) Dr. Leavenworth mentions *Sophora affinis* as having been “found by myself and Mr. Beyrich in the Red River prairies.” This suggests some hitherto unpublicized meeting and perhaps collaboration between Leavenworth and the Prussian collector, who spent some months in the United States in 1833 and 1834. More convincing evidence is found in the *Flora of North America* where under *Psoralea linearifolia* (v. 1, p. 300) appears the following citation: “Arkansas, Beyrich. Communicated by Dr. Leavenworth.” Evidently the two men did meet; presumably they exchanged interesting specimens, and some of those given to Leavenworth found their way...
eventually to Torrey. From Catlin's *Letters* we learn that Beyrich, accompanied by his servant and driving his own wagon, had come to Fort Gibson with the troops from St. Louis, presumably in the spring of 1834. He had gone on to the False Washita and the Cross Timbers, and returned to Fort Gibson, there to die of fever and what Catlin diagnosed as pulmonary consumption. Urban says that his death occurred on September 15, 1834; and we may surmise that his trip to the False Washita and the Cross Timbers took place at least several weeks before this, most probably in June or July. It seems highly probable that Leavenworth and Beyrich met and collected together somewhere along the Red River, at or west of the Washita, at this time.

After his summer on the False Washita, Dr. Leavenworth returned to Fort Towson, as mentioned above, and spent the next thirteen months there. Apparently he was able to find a considerable amount of time for botany, for there were no very active Army movements during this period. In his paper of 1845, referred to above, he notes the occurrence of *Sanguinaria canadensis* at Fort Towson, on a bluff near Gale's [i.e., Gates'] Creek. This species was re-collected at Leavenworth's locality in 1947, at what appears to be its southwestern limit of distribution. The correspondence between C. W. Short and Torrey provides additional evidence that Leavenworth was interested in the flora around Fort Towson. On October 13, 1834, Short asks that Leavenworth be sent a copy of Torrey's report on James' plants collected on Long's Expedition, since this report includes many of the species found along the Red River. On December 13, 1835, Short says he has received some good specimens from Leavenworth, and it may be supposed that these were collected in 1835 in the vicinity of Ft. Towson.

In a letter to the Surgeon General, March 25, 1836, Leavenworth requested that he be allowed to return from his post (then in Florida) to Fort Towson, where he had been obliged to leave behind, "from want of transportation[,] one of the most valuable collections of the Plants of the fa[ls]e Wash[ita] that has ever been made by any individual, containing many manuscript species & genera". Apparently

---

10In 1834 an active post on Gates Creek, shown on contemporary maps about six miles north of the Red River, and six miles east of Kiamichi Creek. This is approximately one mile northeast of the modern village of Fort Towson in eastern Choctaw County, Oklahoma.
the request was not granted; we can imagine the feelings of his superiors in the Army at his request to be relieved from a post in a theater which was then an active seat of war (and a losing war into the bargain!) to go to the rescue of some bundles of dried plants! In spite of this Torrey received and cited enough "Arkansas" plants from Leavenworth to make it clear that at least a good part of the collection eventually came through safely. About 75 species from "Arkansas" [i.e., Oklahoma] are cited in the *Flora of North America* on the basis of Leavenworth's collections, or half again as many as from any other state or region.

In October, 1835, Leavenworth was ordered to Florida, which he reached by travel overland to Natchitoches, then by Red River steamer to New Orleans, where he was held awaiting assignment until about the end of January, 1836; then by steamer to Tampa Bay, Florida, where he reported to Fort Brooke, at the head of Hillsboro Bay. His first assignment in Florida was at Fort King, which he reached February 22, apparently with General Gaines' forces. Following this he spent seven months at temporary posts, mostly in what are now Alachua and Marion Counties, following the active campaigns of the troops.

In 1836 the principal roads in northeastern Florida were those between St. Marks, Tallahassee, and St. Augustine, and the military road from Tampa Bay northward to Fort King, Micanopy, and the junction with the St. Augustine Road. Micanopy was located just northwest of Orange Lake [now Alachua County]. Fort King (one of the more permanent and important of the military posts in use during the Seminole campaigns) was about 20 miles south of Orange Lake [i.e., southeast of Ocala]. From February to August, 1836, Leavenworth divided his time between Fort King and Fort Drane, which was a little south of west from Orange Lake, about 10 miles south of Micanopy and 22 miles (25 miles according to Leavenworth) from Fort King. Since active and none-too-successful engagements with the Indians were in progress during this season, I judge that not too

---

11A full account of the ill-fated Florida campaign of 1836 may be found in *Senate Document 224, 23rd Congress, 2nd Session* (Serial no. 299). The information in the present paper, relative to the location of military roads and posts, and other place-names in Florida, is taken chiefly from the maps accompanying this paper and from the even better map accompanying *Senate Exec. Doc. 1, 26th Congress, 1st Session* (Serial no. 354), entitled "Map of the Seat of War in Florida," 1839.
much time was available for botany. Fort King was abandoned by the troops late in May [letter to Surgeon General May 28], and Fort Drane was similarly abandoned on August 8 [letter, August 11], Leavenworth moving with his command to Fort Defiance at Micanopy and thence moving on the 11th to Newnanville [now Alachua], 20 miles north-northwest of Micanopy. On September 17 he left Newnanville for New Orleans and Fort Jesup, via Tallahassee.

With his arrival at Fort Jesup on October 14, 1836, Leavenworth began an active phase of his botanical work. For the next three years he corresponded actively with Torrey, sending him approximately 25 letters that have been preserved, as well as several long seasonal lists of the plants of Florida and Louisiana. The first letter to Torrey is dated November 4, 1836; in this the botanist-doctor is evidently introducing himself, and sends a long account of his career to date. It seems likely that it was at this time he sent to Torrey whatever specimens of dried plants he had accumulated, for Torrey's paper published the following year referred to specimens sent him by Leavenworth in the autumn of 1836. The specimens Torrey had in mind (those of his new Amphianthus pusillus) most probably were collected before 1830, during the period of Leavenworth's residence in Georgia, for the species is a restricted endemic of the Georgia Piedmont, which the Doctor had little or no opportunity to visit during his Army service. Apparently the original specimens of Leavenworthia were also sent to Torrey in 1836, for in a letter of November 22 of that year Dr. Short promised to write to Leavenworth for "more" material of a puzzling cruciferous plant from Texas in which Torrey was interested.

After a short stay at Fort Jesup, Leavenworth was transferred in January, 1837, to Camp Sabine, Louisiana, for a stay of about 16 months. Here he found opportunity to compile at least five long floral calendars—each a list of 100 to 150 species found in the vicinity. Among the Torrey papers are preserved lists for February-March, April, June, July and September-October. He also found time to make at least three botanical collecting trips into Texas during the summer of 1837; more of these anon. Camp Sabine was not

12An account of several new genera and species of North American plants. Ann. Lyc. N. Y. 4: 80-94. 1837. The date of this paper is usually given as 1837, but in Amer. Jour. Sci. 34: 214-215. [Spring] 1838, it is noted as having "recently appeared."
far from the road between Natchitoches and Nacogdoches, and it was along this road that he seems to have made some of his excursions into Texas.\(^\text{13}\)

In a letter to Torrey, May 3, 1837, the collector included a list of “Plants found in Texas in 1834—during a trip from Fort Jesup to Nagadoches in April”; this list comprises 9 species. The most interesting plant recorded is what the collector called *Ribes rotundifolia*, from “Rock St. Augustine”, Texas. This is one of the very few reports of any native currant or gooseberry from Texas; the specimen was cited by Torrey and Gray in the *Flora* as *Ribes gracile*, and presumably the reference to Texas in the *North American Flora* under *Grossularia curvata* (N. Amer. Fl. 22: 222. 1908) is taken from the same specimen.

Possibly this trip to Nacogdoches in April, 1834, was Leavenworth’s first visit to Texas, although of course he may have made others during his stays at Fort Jesup from 1831 to 1833. Soon after this trip [i.e., April 29] he was transferred to Fort Towson, and it may be supposed that he made at least brief visits to the Texan side of the Red River during his two summers in what is now Oklahoma.

In May, 1837, according to his letters, he “spent sometime in Texas.” He penetrated into the state at least as far as Nacogdoches, where he collected a number of specimens, including what he thought was an interesting composite, *Tetragonotheca*. On August 3 he writes: “I have lately made the acquaintance of Dr. Veatch living near Zavala\(^\text{14}\) Texas—who has a taste for botany”, and adds: “During the past month I have travelled 4 days in Texas—embracing a circuit of 120 miles, \(\frac{3}{4}\)ths of this distance in the region of the long leafed pine.”

Probably this “circuit of 120 miles” was a trip from Camp Sabine to Jasper and Zavala, and return possibly by some slightly different route. Assuming that Leavenworth crossed the river at Sabine Town, as seems most likely, he would have had to travel almost exactly 120 miles to make this trip (judging from modern highway distances), and his allusion to the “long leafed pine” [*Pinus palustris*]

---

\(^{13}\)Camp Sabine was in what is now Sabine Parish, roughly northeast of Sabine Town, Texas, and east of Gaines Ferry, where the Nacogdoches road crossed the Sabine River. According to Leavenworth it was 6 miles from the river and 21 miles from Fort Jesup. Apparently it was a very temporary post, as I have not been able to locate it on any map of the period except that published with *House Doc. 365, 25th Congress, 2nd Session* (Serial no. 330). The map was probably compiled in 1837 and is entitled: “Sketch of the Sabine River Lake and Pass from Camp Sabine to the Gulf.”
suggests that most of the journey was indeed in the area between San Augustine and Zavala, where this species abounds.

On October 4 Leavenworth wrote again to Torrey, mentioning another 5-day trip to Texas, to [unspecified] places not previously visited. He sent for Torrey's inspection what must have been a species of *Cooperia* collected "early in September" near San Augustine, Texas. I suspect that he visited Dr. Veatch again at this time, and that this visit in September, 1837 was the one mentioned by Dr. Geiser\(^\text{14}\) under date of September, 1840; in September, 1840 he appears to have been at Fort Gratiot, Mich.

The last reference to Texas in Leavenworth's letters was on May 22, 1838, when he was about to sail from New Orleans to Florida; he was sending Torrey "a small collection" from Texas, including, as he said, specimens of *Cacalia tuberosa*.

The *Flora of North America* includes about 30 references to Texan collections made by Leavenworth, and about 12 species and varieties described for the first time in this work are based wholly or partly on these collections. Now when so much more is known about the flora of Texas, it is hard to realize that these 30 collections were relatively important ones in 1838; only Drummond, of all the early field workers, had collected more Texan material that was available to Torrey and Gray!

After being stationed at Camp Sabine from January, 1837, until mid-May, 1838, Leavenworth was transferred again to Florida. He left New Orleans by boat about May 23, 1838, and reached Fort Micanopi June 16. His early letters to the Surgeon General indicate that he has charge (presumably of the health only) of 265 men. During the summer he was also in charge of the medical work at a new post, Fort Walker, 12 miles distant at Kanapaha. In one letter he describes to Torrey a 35 or 40 mile circuit with scouting parties to Orange Lake and to Kanapaha, and implies that he has been also to Fort Heileman, on Black Creek.

Soon after the first of November he was sent to Camp

---

\(^{14}\)John Allen Veatch a naturalist of early Texas. For a sketch of his career see S. W. Geiser in *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 48: 169-173, 1942. Zavala (not to be confused with the modern Zavalla, Angelina County) was in Jasper County. Gregg's map published in Hughes' *Memoir* of 1846 and again in *Diary & Letters of Josiah Gregg* 1: facing p. 204, 1941, shows Zavala on the east bank of the Neches, at its junction with the Angelina, just north of west from Jasper.
Taylor, with orders for Fort Frank Brooke, which he finally reached about December 10, 1838. In January, 1839, he mentions a few localities he has visited recently: He has spent 3 weeks in the "oaky woods" 30 miles east of Tallahassee, and alludes to the bluffs of the Santa Fe at Fort White, and to Blue Spring, 10 miles from Fort White. In March and again in mid-May, Leavenworth sent to Torrey long catalogues of the native plants in the vicinity of Fort Frank Brooke, and it is reasonable to suppose that a majority of his Florida collections were made here. It appears from his letters to Torrey that at this time he was also in correspondence with Dr. A. W. Chapman, who lived at Marianna, Florida, some 60 miles west of Tallahassee, and who also contributed very largely to the Flora of North America by his collections of Florida plants. Approximately forty of Leavenworth's Florida collections were cited in the Flora.

Early in May he announced that he had been granted a furlough, and about May 20 he left Fort Frank Brooke to accompany a detachment of the sick to Tampa and thence to New York. In view of his later medical record it seems no more than fair to record that when he arrived in New York, on June 20, he could note in his letters that not one of the sick men had died on the journey.

So ended the years of Leavenworth's work in the South and Southwest, and so apparently ended as well his work as a botanical collector, for the Flora of North America contains not a single reference to any plant collected by him at Fort Gratiot, Michigan, to which he was assigned for duty later this same year [1839], after a furlough in Connecticut. He reached Detroit October 13, and Fort Gratiot on October 28. He spent the winter of 1839-1840 at this post, and also the spring and summer months of 1840, excepting only the period in which he travelled to New York and Philadelphia. Here tragedy struck suddenly. The middle-aged medical man, counting heavily upon his long practical experience, arranged to take an examination for promo-

---

15One cannot be sure of the order in which he has visited these places. Perhaps he stopped at Fort White enroute from Micanopi to Tallahassee. At this time Fort White was south of and overlooking the Santa Fe River, in the abrupt bend which now forms the northern tip of Gilchrist County. Fort Frank Brooke, as located by Leavenworth and confirmed by many contemporary maps, was "on the [west side of] the Stenahatchie 4 miles from Dead Mans Bay" or about on the site of the modern Stephensville, Taylor County. See the large map accompanying Sen. Exec. Doc. 1, 26th Congress, 1st Session (Serial no. 364), for the locations of these posts and the connecting roads. Leavenworth's "Camp Taylor" I have been unable to locate.
tion, before an Army Medical Board. The examination was held in Philadelphia, and Leavenworth returned to Fort Gratiot about June 20, only to learn soon after his arrival that during his nine years on the frontier, Army medical standards had been raised to such a level that his own knowledge was not even enough to qualify him, in 1840, for the post to which he had been certified in 1831 and again in 1833. His resignation from the Army was accepted as of September 30, 1840, and he retired to his home in Waterbury to live until called forth by the Civil War.

In the first year of that struggle our retired practitioner, at the age of 66, volunteered for service and was accepted in this emergency by the Army that had rejected him twenty years before. He was attached to the 12th Regiment of Connecticut Volunteers and was enrolled December 31, 1861, as Assistant Surgeon. According to the account in the Genealogy he accompanied his regiment “first to Ship Island, then to New Orleans in Gen. Butler’s expedition”, and was later appointed “Superintendent of the Hospital for Contrabands”, at New Orleans. The War Department Archives show that he was stationed at Camp Parapet, near Carrollton, Louisiana17, during May, June, and July, 1862, and that he died there November 16 [not November 20 as stated in the Genealogy], 1862, and was buried in front of the breastworks at the fort. The brief medical report stated that he “had been much reduced by diarrhoea”.

We who follow botanical paths today must pause a moment to salute such men as this Doctor Leavenworth, not only as in this case when they die as heroes, but for their hard and dangerous pursuits of their avocations in botany, on the frontiers of America. These travelers and surgeons and lieutenants, who must have loved the lives they lived, fed the genius of the Torreys and Grays who wrote the history and science of botany; without them and their devotion to botany we should have fared poorly before travel became the easy thing it is now.

17Fort Gratiot, St. Clair County, Michigan, was at the head of the St. Clair River, on the site of the modern city of Port Huron. This site has been intermittently occupied since the 17th century. Its history as a fort is summarized in “A Report on Barracks and Hospitals with Descriptions of Military Posts” (War Dept., Surg. Gen. Ofg., Circ. 4, xxxiii, 494 pp. Washington, 1870).