Probably, too, the building was secured by the association of Northern and Southern Democrats, some of whom were Senator Henry M. Rice and Henry T. Welles, of Minnesota; John C. Breckinridge and Beriah Magoffin, of Kentucky; Robert Toombs, of Georgia; George B. Clitherall, of Alabama; Jefferson Davis, of Mississippi, and probably Dr. Archibald Graham, of Virginia. Some of the operations in Minnesota of these gentlemen are noted elsewhere.

But in July, 1859, the fort was temporarily abandoned. On the 25th Capt. N. H. Davis, Second U. S. Infantry, with one company of that regiment, abandoned the post, leaving it in charge of a military storekeeper. The reason assigned was that there was no longer any danger to Americans or American interests in that quarter. The abandonment was not for very long. In June, 1860, it was re-occupied by three companies of the Second Infantry, under Capt. Gardiner and was garrisoned thereafter until in 1877, when it was discontinued as a military post.

The establishment of Fort Abercrombie was of great assistance in the development of Polk County and all of the other portions of the Red River Valley. Settlers were induced to come to the country in the belief that the fort would be a refuge and a rendezvous in case of Indian trouble, and that no serious danger need be feared from the savages. It was due largely to the representations of Henry T. Welles, through Senator Henry M. Rice, that a garrison was ordered re-established in the summer of 1859. The association which he represented had laid out the town of Breckenridge and wanted to sell lots therein, as well as to dispose of their lands in the vicinity, and the occupation of the fort by 300 soldiers would give confidence in the situation to would-be investors and speculators. (For a good and authentic sketch of Fort Abercrombie see Part 2, Vol. 2, No. Dak. Hist. Soey. Coll.)

Creation of Polk County.

The creation of Polk County was brought about by a strange set of influences and circumstances. In 1856-57, while Henry M. Rice was in Washington, as delegate in Congress from Minnesota Territory, he formed a sort of business alliance, as he had some time before formed an intimate friendship with certain prominent Southern men, the most of whom were members of Congress. Some of these men were Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War in 1856; John C. Breckinridge, Vice President; James Buchanan, President, both from 1857 to 1861; Robert Toombs, of Georgia, U. S. Senator, and Beriah Magoffin, later Governor of Kentucky.

Mr. Rice had long possessed great influence and control over a faction of the Democratic party in Minnesota Territory. Through his control of the Territorial Legislatures he succeeded in having Minnesota counties named from time to time in honor of his Southern friends and associates. Davis County (now partly Swift County) was named for Jeff. Davis; Toombs County (now Wilkin) for Robert Toombs, and Breckenridge (now Traverse, etc.) for the Vice President, all ultra pro-slavery men. Then two counties, Polk and Pierce, were named for ex-Democratic Presidents, and one for the existing President, James Buchanan. All of these Southern statesmen, except President Polk, had been of valuable personal service to Mr. Rice and were greatly pleased at the rare compliment involved in the naming of counties for politicians of others. It is probable that Mr. Rice lost nothing by his courtesy.

But the bestowal of the name of James Knox Polk upon a Minnesota county was proper and befitting. It is understood that his last official act as President, at 11:45 P.M., March 3, 1849, was his signing of the bill creating Minnesota Territory; he died at his home, Nashville, Tennessee, June 15 following. When Gen. Sibley, who was Delegate in Congress from what by courtesy was called "Wisconsin Territory" and was pushing the bill for the creation of Minnesota, it was understood that all along he had the sympathy of President Polk. It was unfortunate that he did not live to see the Territory which he helped to create become a magnificent commonwealth of the Union. He