

HISTORY QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Who provided the land for the fort in Union and how much land was given?

ANSWER

In 1853, "Jehu (John) Cox gave ten acres of his farming land for a fort site, around which a wall 12 ft. high and 6 ft. thick at the bottom, tapering off to 1 ft. thick at the top, was built. This was built of cobblerock, clay and adobes. Watch holes were made a few yards apart around the wall, and bastions or lookout towers were built on two corners. The northeast corner, however, which ran along the top of a steep hill, with the creek at the bottom, evidently furnished enough protection, for about thirty feet of the wall on the brow of the hill was never finished. One bastion was on the southeast corner and the other on the northwest corner. There were two streets, two rods wide, running east and west with gates at each end, which were kept locked. One alley ran through the fort north and south, with a gate at either end, which was kept locked." "[A]bout twenty-two families lived in the fort of many nationalities." "There were a few families who did not move inside the fort. Among them were: Richard Morgan Charles Nowlan, Charles Williams, William P. Smith, Rufus F. Forbush, Alonzo Knight, William MCGuire, and Foster Greenwood. There was one clock inside the fort."

The fort was built to protect the settlers from Indians. A few years after the "Indian difficulties were over, the fort walls were gradually torn down....." source Union First Ward History (1849-1978)

According to Wikipedia, "The fort was near the modern intersection of North Union and 1000 East Street. The most visible remnants of this era are the old preserved Jehu Cox house (moved from its original location and now used as a shop), about a block north of North Union Avenue in an area that is now largely a parking lot, and a historic marker at the side of the fort."

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