

Fort Totten State Historic Site
12 miles southwest of Devils Lake City
off Route 57
Devils Lake Vicinity
Benson County
North Dakota

HABS No. ND-17

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

FORT TOTTEN STATE HISTORIC SITE

ADDRESS: 12 miles southwest of Devils Lake City off
Route 57, Devils Lake Vicinity, Benson County,
North Dakota.

PRESENT OWNER AND OCCUPANT: State Historical Society of North Dakota.

ARCHITECTS: Office of Quartermaster, Department of Dakota.

BUILDERS: Smyth and Nash; Dale and Stead.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The Fort Totten State Historic Site, administered by the State Historical Society of North Dakota (State Historical Board), is one of the best preserved military posts of the Trans-Mississippi West of the Indian War period. The site consists of approximately 9.81 acres located within the boundaries of the Fort Totten Indian Reservation.

Originally, the drill and parade area enclosed by the square buildings was a center of activities for the Fort. This is the area presently owned by the State of North Dakota. Other portions of the Fort are still on land administered by the Bureau of the Indian Affairs. On the east side of the Square were the four Company Barracks (enlisted men's quarters); behind them were located two mess halls, a well house. Opposite this company area on the west side was the "Officers' Row," centered with the Commanding Officer's Quarters. Flanking these quarters were two Captain and First Lieutenant's Quarters and two Second Lieutenant's Quarters. Standing on the north side was the Hospital, Surgeon and Chaplain's Quarters, Magazine, and Quartermaster's Storehouse. A dead house stood outside the northwest corner of the Square. The south side included the Commissary Storehouse, Baker's Shop and Adjutant's Office. Outside the Square were the stables and Quartermaster Storehouses, sinks, bathhouse, and other service buildings.

Excluding one company barracks (enlisted men's quarters), the Square proper is exactly as it appeared when the post was closed in 1890 and as described above. One of the barracks was razed by fire and all but half of one mess hall, the dead house, well house and guard house were eliminated during the Bureau of Indian Affairs occupancy. An Indian school gymnasium was constructed in the area once occupied by the gutted barracks and one mess hall. Among subsequent additions to buildings are connections between two of the company barracks and two of the officers quarters.

The area owned by the State of North Dakota includes nearly all the area designated as the "Fort Square." The early buildings outside the Square have

long been removed. Major alterations were made to the interior of the existing structures when classrooms and vocational training facilities were needed for the Indian school, but the extent of these modifications can only be determined by extensive research and investigation. In general, the buildings are in good condition even though considerable repair and maintenance work is needed to prevent further deterioration.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

Fort Totten, located on the south shore of Devils Lake, was established for the protection of an overland route extending from southern Minnesota into western Montana. The post was named in honor of Brevet Major General Joseph Gilbert Totten, late Chief Engineer of the U. S. Army.

The original construction in 1867 was temporary; crude log structures comprised the post. Surrounding the outpost was a stockade of oak logs, 18 feet tall. On April 6, 1869, a joint resolution of Congress authorized the Secretary of War to construct a more permanent facility; however, construction had already begun in 1868 prior to congressional authorization. Built 800 yards south of the original post, the buildings were constructed of brick made in the vicinity. This 1868-71 development is the Fort Totten which stands relatively intact today. It has been called one of the best preserved military posts in the Trans-Mississippi West of the Indian War period.

In the 1870s the buildings at the fort included the officers' quarters, hospital, office, magazine, storehouse, enlisted men's quarters, mess hall, commissary, bakery shop and guard house. The post was constructed at an approximate cost of \$100,000.00. A corral and stables were added to accommodate the cattle and horses kept at the fort. Nearby, a sutler's store and a small brewery appeared, to serve the occupants.

Up until 1873, Fort Totten was used as an infantry garrison. At that time cavalry troops were added when Companies D and I of the 7th Cavalry were assigned. Generally, until the closing of the military post in November, 1890, there were two or three infantry companies and one of two cavalry companies manning the post.

Fort Totten was closely related to the Indians and the Agency that adjoined the post. A treaty in 1867 with the Sisseton-Wahpeton and Cut-Head Sioux brought small bands into the area. In 1874, a school called St. Michael's Mission near the fort was established. When Fort Totten was abandoned in 1890, Congress approved the transfer of the plant to the U. S. Department of the Interior for the establishment of an Indian Industrial School.

In 1960, Fort Totten was turned over to the State Historical Society of North Dakota by the U. S. Department of the Interior for preservation as historic site.

THE STRUCTURES

The following descriptions cover all surviving buildings and sites of the buildings within the confines of the property owned by the State of North Dakota. The original descriptions, present condition of each and its present use are discussed briefly.

Building 1. Second Lieutenant's Quarters

This building was constructed by the contractors Dale and Stead and was completed in 1871. The structure is one of two similar buildings on the site. The following description applies to both buildings:

The quarters for second lieutenants consists of two buildings, each made up of a main portion 46 by 32½ feet, one story and a half in height, or 17 feet from the eaves to the ground. To this is attached a rear portion, one story high, containing a kitchen and dining room; it is 26¼ by 28 feet. The outer walls of the main portion are 12 inches thick; those of the rear are 9 inches. In the dimensions given above these thicknesses are included. Each building being designed to furnish quarters for two officers, is divided by a brick wall, 9 inches thick running from front to rear, into two symmetrical halves, each being entirely distinct from the other. The front entrance to each half leads into a hall, 30½ feet long by 6 feet wide and 10 feet high. Doors open from this into two rooms, each 15 feet square and 10 feet high. These rooms connect by folding doors; the front one contains a fire-place, and each is lighted by two windows. At the farther end of the hall is a door opening into the dining-room. This room, 15 by 11 feet, contains three windows. Adjoining this is a pantry or closet, 7¼ by 3½ feet. The kitchen in rear of the dining room is 13 by 10 feet. It contains one window. The dining-room, pantry, and kitchen are 9 feet in the clear between the floor and ceiling. A staircase fronting the entrance leads to the upper story, which consists of passage and two rooms corresponding in area with those immediately beneath. The upper hall is lighted by a small window. The room in front has two windows, and the back room three. The ceiling on this floor is only 4½ feet high at the walls owing to the slant of the roof. These quarters are not provided with either cistern or cellar. (Report of the acting surgeon, James B. Ferguson, 1875).

This building has had numerous interior modifications. A connecting structure joins it to building number two. Detailed research and architectural examination of the structure must be made to determine the extent of modifications. The building is presently vacant except for use of several rooms for supply storage.

Building 2. Captain's and First Lieutenant's Quarters

It is one of two identical buildings. The original construction of this

structure is as follows:

The captains' and first lieutenants' quarters consist of two buildings, one each side of the above (the commanding officers quarters No. 3), each of which is 90 feet long by 32 feet wide, and two stories high. Each set of quarters consist of two rooms on the first floor, and two on the second, with a small hall-room or pantry. The rear wings of this building have each a dining-room and a kitchen, with a cellar beneath. A cistern is to be placed under the dining-room. The water closets are attached to the wings; they are separated from the cellar under the kitchen only by a wall, 18 inches thick, constructed of stone and lime. The close proximity of the privy to a wall that in time may become permeable appears to be objectionable, as it may at some future day prove a source of annoyance. The rear wings of the center building are under one roof; those of the outer quarters are separate. These buildings are heated by means of stoves, and are well-lighted by windows. Their ventilation is affected as described for the company quarters. (Report of the acting surgeon, James B. Ferguson, 1875).

This structure is joined to building number 1 by a connecting structure of recent date. Several non-historic additions have been made to the rear, but interior modifications appear to be minor in comparison to the other identical building. The building is presently vacant.

Building 3. Commanding Officer's Quarters

The foundation of this structure was laid in 1868 by contractors Smyth and Nash and the structure was completed by contractors Dale and Stead in 1869. The following describes this building:

The commanding officer's quarters is a two-story brick building, 41 feet front by 32 feet deep, with a one-story wing to the rear. The main portion contains two large rooms on the first floor, and four rooms on the second floor, divided on both floors by halls running from front to rear. The wing contains the kitchen and dining-room, a cellar beneath, with a place for cistern. The floor in this building are laid double, of one-inch boards, and the principal rooms and halls on the first floor have two coats of mortar and hard-finish. (Report of the acting surgeon, James B. Ferguson, 1875).

This structure is in the process of restoration. All non-historic additions have been removed and restoration to its original 1870's appearance is nearing completion. The interior will be refurnished as the commanding officer's quarters.

Building 4. Captain's and First Lieutenant's Quarters

This building was completed in 1869-1870 by contractors Dale and Stead. Refer to description of Building 2 for 1875 description. The interior of

this structure was extensively remodeled during its use as an Indian school facility. This building is presently vacant.

Building 5. Second Lieutenant's Quarters

This building was completed in 1871 by contractors Dale and Stead. Refer to the description for Building 1. This structure contains much of the original fabric on the interior and shows few signs of modification. Half of the building is presently used by the Devils Lake Art Association as a gallery in the summer months. The other half is utilized for temporary staff use by the State Historical Society of North Dakota.

Building 6. Chaplain and Surgeon Quarters

This structure is a duplex officers quarters. It was completed in 1870 by contractors Dale and Stead. The description is as follows:

Quarters for the surgeon and chaplain, double building. Brick building, two stories. Main building, 4 rooms on first and 4 rooms on second floor, with closets, size 31 by 46 feet. Back or rear wing to same, embracing 2 dining rooms and 2 kitchens with pantries, size 25 feet 6 inches by 27 feet. Porches in front. Wood and coal sheds in rear. Cisterns under dining rooms, size 10 feet by 10 feet 4 inches each. Condition fair. (Letter from the Secretary of War to the Senate, an extract from annual report inspection, March 31, 1890).

This building retains much of its original fabric, although some modifications have been made and one stairway has been removed. The downstairs of both duplexes is utilized for displays and library by the Devils Lake Chapter of the Pioneer Daughters.

Building 7. Hospital

This structure was completed in 1869 or 1870 by contractors Dale and Stead. A description of the building is as follows:

The hospital is constructed on the plan described in Circular No. 4, Surgeon-General's Office, 1867, having a central administration building, with two wards arranged as wings. The center building is 36 by 37 feet, two stories high. To this is attached a rear building, 21½ by 14 feet, one story high. Both stories of the main building are 12 feet in height from floor to ceiling; the rear wing is 10 feet in height in the clear. The wings, each 44 by 24 feet, are one story, 15 feet from floor to ceiling in height. Each is divided into a ward, 33 by 24 feet, a bathroom, 11 by 9 feet, a water closet of the same size, with a passage, 6 by 11 feet, leading to an end door between them. All the walls and ceilings in the hospital are lathed and plastered. The floors are composed

of inch boards, laid double. The wards are heated by two large box-stoves with drums attached, placed one on each side of the ward; from these the pipes lead to smoke-flues in the wall of the main building. This gives a large surface for radiating heat, and even in winter these rooms are very comfortable. Only one ward has been used for hospital purposes. The west wing was formerly used as a chapel, but has recently been taken by the post quartermaster for a carpenter-shop. The ward in use contains ten beds. . . . The building is well ventilated, the wards being each provided with two registers, side by side, in the center of the ceiling, immediately over which is a louvered opening in the ridge. Beneath the kitchen is a cistern, capable of holding four hundred barrels, and under the mess-room is a large, dry cellar. (Report of the acting surgeon, James B. Ferguson, 1875).

Hospital: Brick building. Main building, 4 rooms on first and 5 on second floor, size 36 by 37 feet 6 inches. Back or rear wing to same, embracing kitchen and pantry, size 13 by 20 feet 6 inches. Two wings to main building, embracing 1 ward and 2 small rooms each, size 26 by 47 feet. Porch in front, wood shed in rear. Cellar under main building, size 12 by 30 feet. Condition good. (Letter from the Secretary of War to the Senate, an extract from annual report inspection March 31, 1890).

This building has been modified to some extent, especially in the roof lines of the wings. It is one of few surviving examples of 19th Century army hospitals and is built on a plan which reveals a great deal about the status of medicine at this time. The building is presently utilized as a museum by the Devils Lake Chapter of the Pioneer Daughters.

Building 8. Dead House

This structure no longer survives.

Building 9. Magazine

This structure was completed in 1870 by contractors Dale and Stead. Ferguson describes the 1875 appearance as follows:

The magazine is a small building, 18 by 15 feet, on the north side of the parade. The walls are of brick, 18 inches thick, resting on stone foundations.

This structure is in relatively good condition. Some modifications may have been made in the floor to utilize it for storage purposes. The building is presently used for storage.

Building 10. Quartermaster Warehouse (Quartermaster Storehouse)

This structure was completed in 1868 by contractors Smyth and Wash. It

is one of two such structures at the site. The following description of its original appearance applies:

Each storehouse is to be 100 feet by 30 (the buildings have all a uniform width) and divided into three compartments with a fire-proof wall between; communicating with each one only by the outside. The subsistence store-house to have a cellar under each end compartment and the quartermaster's storehouse to have a cellar under one end. A large cistern will be placed under the middle of each building. These buildings can be driven around and through as will be seen by the drawings and will have lofts for storing light and dry articles. (Memoir, S. B. Holabird, March 1868). RG 92

I have the honor to report of having directed the contractors to construct cisterns to contain five hundred barrels of water each under both storehouses, and two for each company quarters. (Letter from Capt. Furey to General Holabird, 20 September 1868). RG 92

The storehouses should have new gutters and be repaired accordingly to original plans,--which required the back part to be the same as the front. You may see fit to change this in regard to the doors. (Letter from S. B. Holabird to Colonel G. A. Williams, April 26, 1870). RG 92

Storehouse - Two storehouses, one for subsistence stores, and one for quartermaster's stores, were erected under the superintendence of Captain Furey. Each one was 30 feet from the position called for in the plan, and only one side of these buildings, as to openings and doors, conformed to the plan. Upon the outside of each building but one door is placed, and no other opening. These buildings are poorly constructed in some respects the foundations constructed under the direction of this officer are defective. A careful inspection developed the fact of great improvement thus far under the contractor. (Letter to the Senate from the Secretary of War with a copy of a report of S. B. Holabird in 1869). RG 92

Quartermaster's storehouse: Brick building, one story, 3 compartments, size 31 by 100 feet 6 inches. Cellar under each compartment; size 29 feet 10 inches by 31 feet 6 inches. Condition fair. (Letter from the Secretary of War to the Senate, an extract from annual report inspection March 31, 1890).

This structure has undergone considerable interior and exterior modifications. The building is presently used as storage.

Buildings 11, 12, 13 and 14. Company Quarters (Company Barracks)

The first of these structures was completed in 1868, the second in 1869 and the last two in 1870. Contractors Smyth and Nash built the first and Dale and Stead the others. All were built on identical plans. The following descriptions apply to the original appearance of these structures:

To have 80 feet by 30 of clear space in four compartments, one of which may be divided by temporary partitions into store-rooms and first sergeant rooms. Building two stories high, entrance from outside into a hall and thence to the rooms of the men. This disposition being considered best for this latitude. These buildings can easily have added at any time double stoops in front and rear; such an addition would be a great comfort to the men in summer, but they are not regarded as indispensable. All these buildings to have beneath them large cisterns for fire and other purposes. (Memoir S. B. Holabird March 1, 1868, Company Quarters). RG 92

Barracks - Barracks for two companies, of brick, are in a condition so that they may be occupied this season. One of the buildings built under the superintendence of Captain J. V. Furey, assistant quartermaster last year, does not conform to the plan, the roofs being considerable lower, with less pitch than the specifications and plans call for the one built this season under the superintendence of Lieutenant P. M. Thorne, Twenty-second United States infantry, is much better. (Letter of the Secretary of War December 21, 1870 containing a copy of the report of S. B. Holabird of a reconnoissance made by him in the Department of Dakota in 1869). RG 92

The company quarters are alike in dimensions, finish, and etc. The buildings are 98 feet long by 32 feet wide, two stories high, the first story 11 feet, and the second story 10 feet in the clear from floor to ceiling. Both stories are traversed by two halls, 6 feet wide, extending through the building from front to rear, dividing it into four squad-rooms upon each floor, 30 by 20 feet. A staircase 3 feet wide in each lower hall leads to the story above. Every room is well lighted, and contains four windows. As these windows are placed opposite each other they furnish an excellent means of ventilation in warm weather when they remain open for many hours daily. The only means provided for ventilating these rooms in winter is a small register, about 6 inches square, inserted in the smoke-flue of each room, but this is entirely too small for the purpose intended. Ventilating ducts to admit cold air were placed beneath the lower compartments, but as no registers have been inserted in the floor over these, they do not assist in ventilating the building in any way. (Report of acting surgeon, James B. Ferguson, 1875).

The rooms are heated by large box-stoves with drums attached, and even in the coldest winter weather they are very comfortable. Single iron bedsteads are used throughout. When constructed each barrack was designed to accommodate one company; as occupied at present, however, the four companies comprising the present garrison are quartered in two and one half buildings; that is, each company of infantry is allowed four squad-rooms, or half a building, and each cavalry company remaining half, with two squad-rooms from the adjoining barrack. Two of the lower squad-rooms in each building occupied by the troops are used as orderly-rooms, leaving only six squad-rooms to be used by the enlisted men; this will give about ninety men to a barrack, or fifteen to a room, but as

there are always some men absent from each squad, on guard, escort, extra duty, etc., the number of occupants nightly will vary from ten to fifteen in a room, and the air-space from 400, the lowest, to 660 cubic feet, the highest, allowance to each man. The remainder of the company barracks are used as quarters for the Indian scouts, laundresses, married soldiers, and also as workshops for the company tailors, saddlers, etc. (Report of acting surgeon, James B. Ferguson, 1875).

Of the four identical structures, three survive. All have undergone varying degrees of modification. Buildings 11 and 12 are joined by a connecting structure.

Building 13 is missing, leaving the only gap in the original square of buildings around the parade ground. The site is presently occupied by a deteriorating frame gymnasium of the early twentieth century which is presently scheduled for demolition.

Building numbers 11 and 12 are vacant except for a wildlife display in one bay of building 11. Building 14 is utilized by the Fort Totten Little Theater for performances. A portion of the building contains an early store exhibit and concessions operated by the State Historical Society of North Dakota.

Building 15 and 18. Messrooms and Kitchens

These buildings were completed in 1871 by contractors Dale and Stead. There were two buildings, each serving a pair of company quarters. The following descriptions refer to their original appearance.

The company kitchens to be 20 feet in rear of company quarters, as per plan and it suggested, merely, that each building be extended for laundress quarters - at the outer ends wash-rooms, ration store-rooms, etc. (Memoir, S. B. Holabird, March 1, 1868). RG 92

The company kitchens, etc., are contained in two brick buildings, each building being so placed as to cover the open space between two barracks; thus arranged, nearly one-half of the building is thrown in rear of a company barrack, and this portion contains the kitchen, etc., used by the troops occupying the barrack immediately in its front. Both buildings are exactly alike, being one story high, and 120 by 25 feet, including the walls. They are divided in the center into two parts by a brick wall 12 inches thick; each half contains a kitchen, storeroom, pantry, wash-room, mess-room, and cellar. The kitchen occupies the end of the building, and is 16 by 23½ feet. The mess-room, 30 by 23½ feet, occupies that portion of the building nearest the center. It contains a fire-place, and is lighted by six windows. The height of the ceiling is 10 feet in the clear throughout. The cellar, 15 by 21 feet, with a depth of more than 6 feet in the clear, is immediately below the kitchen. It is both dry and warm, for although the mean temperature of some of the winter months falls below zero, yet with

a little care vegetables stored here do not freeze. The exterior walls of the building are 9 inches thick and all the rooms are lathed and plastered. (Report of acting surgeon, James B. Ferguson, 1875).

No. 15. Brick building, one story embracing 2 kitchens, 2 mess halls with pantries, and 2 wash rooms, size 25 by 120 feet; cellar under both kitchens, size 16 by 21 feet each. Condition fair. (Letter from Secretary of War to the Senate transmitting an extract from annual report of Inspection March 31, 1890).

No. 18. Brick building, one story, embracing 2 kitchens, 2 mess halls with pantries, and 2 wash rooms, size 25 by 120 feet. Cellars under both kitchens, size 15 by 21 feet. Condition fair. (Letter from Secretary of War to the Senate transmitting an extract from annual report of inspection March 31, 1890).

Of these two buildings, only half of one structure survives.

Building 16. Well House

This structure no longer survives. The site has been completely or partially destroyed by construction of the gymnasium.

Building 17. Guard House

This structure no longer survives.

Buildings 19-22. Sinks

These buildings do not survive. The locations of these structures are off the property owned by the state.

Building 23. Commissary Storehouse (Commissary)

This building was completed in 1868 by contractors Smyth and Nash. Refer to the description for Building 10.

One bay of the original three is missing. The building is presently used as a shop and garage by the site caretaker.

Building 24. Bake House (Bakery Shop)

This building has undergone remodeling and should be restored to its original appearance. The bake ovens are missing. The building is presently utilized as a woodworking shop by the caretaker at the site.

Bakery, two ovens: Brick building, one story, containing two rooms, size 20 by 28 feet. Condition fair. (Letter from the Secretary of War to the Senate, an extract from annual report inspection March 31, 1890).

Building 25. Adjutant's Office

Details about the original construction are not available at this time. The structure retains much of its original character even though the interior has been remodeled and additions made. The structure represents a somewhat unique survival among western military posts and would be of interpretive interest for depicting 19th century army administration. The building also served as a library for the post.

Offices, commanding officer, adjutant, and quartermaster. Brick building, one story, containing 4 rooms, size 28 feet by 39 feet 6 inches. Condition fair. (Letter from the Secretary of War to the Senate, an extract from annual report inspection March 31, 1890).

The building is presently being utilized as caretaker's living quarters.

Other Structures

All other structures are missing and their sites are not on the property presently owned by the state.

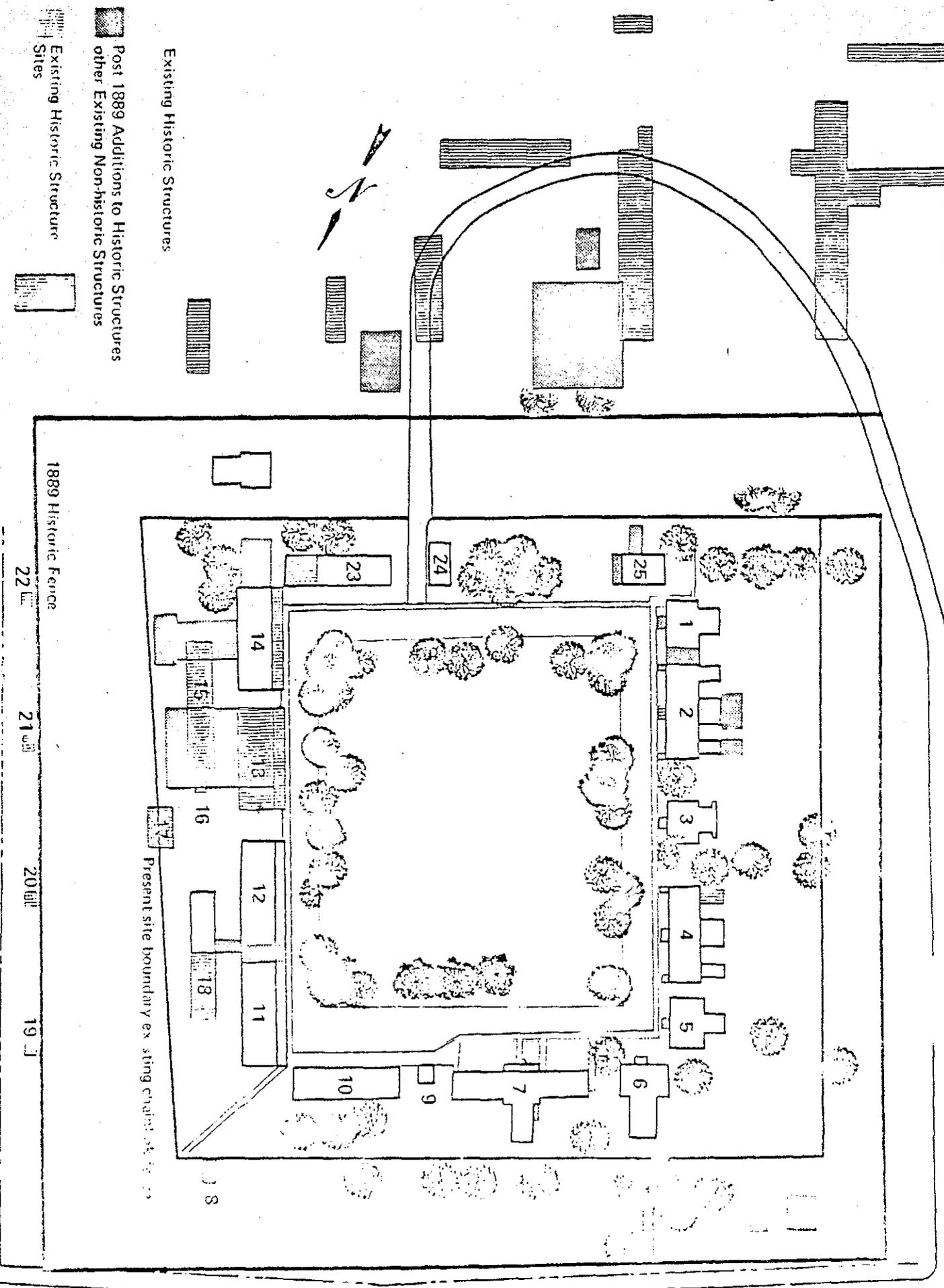
Existing Historic Structure
Post 1889 Additions to Historic Structures
other Existing Non-historic Structures

Existing Historic Structures

1889 Historic Fence

Present site boundary existing character

22 21 20 19



FORT TOTTEN LAND HISTORY

Fort Totten was established on the south shore of Devils Lake on July 17, 1867 by order of General Alfred H. Terry. It was one of series of forts built to protect the overland route from Minnesota to Montana.¹ A treaty signed the same year with the Sisseton, Wahpeton, and Cuthead bands of Yanktonais Sioux established the Devils Lake Indian Reservation. The boundary of the Indian reservation was described in the treaty as follows:

Beginning at the most easterly point of Devil's Lake; thence along the waters of said lake to the most westerly point of the same; thence on a direct line to the nearest point on the Cheyenne River; thence down said river to a point opposite the lower end of Aspen Island, and thence on a direct line to the place of beginning.²

The boundary of the Indian reservation underwent several extensive modifications in the course of its early history; but Fort Totten and part of the military reservation were always within its borders.

The military reservation was established by an order of the President of the United States on January 11, 1870. Its boundaries were defined in the recommendations made in General Order No. 55 from the Headquarters of the Department of Dakota dated June 30, 1869:

The initial point (of the boundary) is a post in the center of a pile of stones on the southern shore of Minnewaukan or Devils Lake, 5 miles and 300 rods west, 1⁰ north from the center of the permanent post; thence south 30⁰ east, 9 miles and 196 rods, to a post on the north bank of the Sheyenne river, thence southeasterly along the north bank of the river, 9 miles and 182 rods, to a post, also on the north bank of the Sheyenne river; thence 30⁰ north, 4 miles and 256 rods, to a post; thence north 30⁰ west, 10 miles and 192 rods, to a post on the southern bank of Devils Lake, in the center of a pile of stones; thence along the southern shore of Devils Lake 29 miles and 316 rods to the point of beginning.³

1. Charles DeNoyer. "The History of Fort Totten," Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1910, III, 178.
2. Charles J. Kappler. Indian Affairs, Laws, and Treaties. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904, II, 958.
3. DeNoyer, 184-185.

In 1872 William H. Forbes, who had assumed the duties of agent at the Devils Lake Indian Reservation the year before, notified the Interior Department that the military reservation contained most of the resources on the Indian reservation. This included "...all the best land, all the fresh water, and nearly all the timber, as well as the improvements of the Indians."⁴ An interim agreement made by the Indian Bureau and the War Department allowed the Indians to enjoy all the privileges they had enjoyed before the establishment of the military reservation, provided that the Indians made on further improvements on the land within the military reservation and provided that the acceptance of the agreement by the War Department would not be construed as a renunciation of the Army's claim to the land.⁵ The agreement was to be in effect until the Indian reservation had been surveyed and the land allotted to the Indians.⁶

On October 7, 1873, a presidential order added all the islands in Devils Lake to Fort Totten Military Reservation. The islands, which were not part of the Indian reservation, were added to supply the garrison with wood.

In 1876, the Judge Advocate's Office rendered the opinion that the Army could not establish military reservations on Indian reservations established by statute or treaty. Therefore, the Secretary of War directed that the boundaries of the military reservation at Fort Totten be determined in compliance with the recommendations of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.⁸ The area of the military reservation was progressively reduced from this time until 1890 when the fort was put under the authority of the Interior Department.

General Order No. 17, from the Headquarters of the Department of Dakota, dated August 28, 1876, reduced the military reservation to include only the following areas:

1. All the islands in Minnewaukan or Devils Lake.
2. The tract of land bounded, according to the survey of the Devils Lake Indian Reservation made in 1875 for the United States by Charles H. Bates, viz:

"On the east by the line dividing ranges 64 and 65 west; on the south by the Sheyenne river; on the west by the line dividing ranges 65 and 66 west; and on the north by Devils Lake."⁹

4. Ibid., 185.
5. Roy W. Meyer. History of the Santee Sioux. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967, 227.
6. DeNoyer, 185.
7. Ibid, 185

Subsequent changes in the level of Devils Lake made some of the islands referred to above into peninsulas, necessitating an additional definition of the borders of the military reservation. General Order No. 1 from the Headquarters of the Department of Dakota, dated March 21, 1881, redefined the military reservation to include:

1. All that portion of the peninsula known as Graham's Island, in Minnewaukan, or Devils Lake, which lies south of a line drawn due east and west across the neck of said peninsula, and one mile north of the southernmost point thereof.
2. All that portion of the peninsula known as Rock Island, in Minnewaukan, or Devils Lake, which lies south of a line drawn due east and west across the neck of said peninsula, and two miles north of the southernmost point thereof. ¹⁰

General Order No. 59, from the Headquarters of the Army, Adjutant-General's Office, dated July 5, 1883, further reduced the military reservation. The new boundaries were defined as follows:

Beginning on a point on the south shore of Devils Lake due north of the summit of 'Sully's Hill'; thence due south 2 miles; thence due west 1 mile; thence due south 5 miles; thence due west to the range line between ranges 65 and 66 (the present western boundary of the military reservation); thence north on said range line to a point due west from the southwest corner of the tract occupied by Devils Lake Agency buildings, etc.; thence due east to the said southwest corner; thence along the southern and eastern boundary of the agency tract aforesaid to the northeast corner thereof; thence north to Devils Lake; thence along the south shore of Devils Lake to place of beginning. ¹¹

The last change in the boundaries of the military Reservation was made by General Order No. 77, from the Headquarters of the Army, Adjutant-General's Office, dated December 16, 1887. The new boundaries of the reservation were:

Beginning at a point on the south shore of Devils Lake, due north of the summit of Sully's hill, and running thence due south 2 miles; thence due west 1 mile; thence due south 5 miles; thence due west to the range line between ranges 65 and 66; thence north on said range line to a point due west of the old southwest corner of the tract occupied by the Devil's Lake Indian Agency buildings, etc.; thence due east to the said old southwest corner; thence due south 1.575 chains; thence north $76^{\circ} 10'$ east 6.19 chains; thence north $31^{\circ} 33'$ east 1.32 chains to the old southeast corner of the tract occupied by the Devils Lake Indian Agency buildings, et cetra; thence north $31^{\circ} 33'$ east on the east boundary of the agency 11.70 chains to an elm tree; thence due north on

the east boundary of the agency to the meander corner on the south shore of Devils Lake 3.75 chains; thence along the southern shore of Devils Lake to the place of beginning.¹²

By 1890, Fort Totten was no longer needed as a military fort. The area had become settled and the maintenance of order was undertaken by the civil authorities. General Order No. 115, from the Headquarters of the Army, Adjutant-General's Office, dated October 4, 1890, transferred Fort Totten to the Secretary of the Interior for use as an Indian school "...so long as it may not be required for military occupation."¹³

The Department of the Interior administered Fort Totten until January 18, 1960. On this date, Fort Totten was transferred to the State Historical Society of North Dakota. The State Historical Society, acting as an agent of the State of North Dakota, was authorized to accept Fort Totten by a concurrent resolution of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Legislative Assembly, dated March 6, 1959.¹⁴ The transfer of Fort Totten by Glenn L. Emmons, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, was "...pursuant to the act of June 4, 1953 (67 Stat. 41; 25 U.S.C. 293a) and pursuant to authority delegated by the Secretary of the Interior in Order No. 2508, Amendment No. 8 (19 F.R. 4585; July 24, 1954)..."¹⁵

8. Ibid., 190.

9. Ibid., 190.

10. Ibid., 190-191.

11. Ibid., 191-192

12. Ibid., 192.

13. Ibid., 198.

14. Legislative Research Committee. Laws Passed At the Thirty-sixth Session of the Legislative Assembly of the State of North Dakota. Bismarck, N. D., 1959, 926-927.

15. Quitclaim Deed 138671 filed February 19, 1960, Benson County, North Dakota, Register of Deeds (Devils Lake), V. 33, 3708.

Bibliography

Official Records National Archives Microfilm

Various official records pertaining to Fort Totten and the surrounding military reservation were microfilmed for the State Historical Society of North Dakota on special order by the National Archives and Records Service in 1967. These fill three reels of 35-mm microfilm. The contents of these films and the record groups from which they were drawn, are as follows:

RG-92- Records of the Quartermaster General's Office.

Fort Totten: Historical Sketch with specifications of buildings; Narrative history; plans of buildings; consolidated correspondence file.

RG-94- Records of the Adjutant General's Office.

Fort Totten: Reservation file; General Information file.

RG-393- Records of U. S. Army Continental Commands.

1821-1920: Fort Totten: Letters received.

Published Source Material

U. S. Congress. Senate. "Letter from the Secretary of War to the Senate; an extract from annual report inspection, March 31, 1890." Senate Ex. Doc. 79, 53rd Cong. 3rd Sess., 1895.

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