

ARCHIVES RECORD

RG505 Fort Kearny, Nebraska
Records, Maps, papers, etc.
Cubic Ft. .5
No. of Items: 600

HISTORICAL NOTE

In accordance with an act of Congress passed July 2, 1836, Col. Stephen Watts Kearny selected a site for a military post at Table Creek, on the present site of Nebraska City in June of 1846. A blockhouse and various other buildings were then constructed and the post named Fort Kearny. Intended to provide protection for immigrants crossing the plains, it was found that the location of the fort was not properly chosen with regard to the overland trail.

In the fall of 1848, Lt. Daniel Woodbury of the army engineers selected a site for a new post at the point where the Overland trail joined the Platte River. First known as Fort Childs, the post was renamed Ft. Kearny on Dec. 30, 1848, and the installation at Table Creek was abandoned. The new Fort Kearny on the Platte was an important outpost for the thousands of immigrants who traveled through Plate Valley along the overland trail. In 1850, monthly mail service was established at the Fort, and the post offered the traveler a place to rest and refit prior to continuing his journey. Fort Kearny also served as a pony express, stagecoach and telegraph station, and troops from the Fort protected other stations and ranches along the trail.

Although Fort Kearny was never attacked by Indians, troops from the post saw service against hostile tribes during the Indian wars beginning in 1864. As settlement pushed farther west, and the Indians were subdued, the Army felt that Fort Kearny could be safely abandoned. On May 22, 1871, orders were issued to close the Fort. In 1875, the buildings were torn down, and the material removed to North Platte and Sidney Barracks.

In 1876, an act was passed by Congress, which transferred the Fort Kearny reservation to the Interior Department for settlement under the Homestead Act. In 1928, the Fort Kearny Memorial Association was organized and the site of the fort was purchased for a state historical park. The association then presented the title to the land to the State of Nebraska. On March 26, 1929, the state legislature accepted the land and designated Fort Kearny a state park.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of microfilm copies of official records and one box of archival and manuscript material arranged in the following series: (1) Official records on Microfilm; (2) Correspondence, 1848-1929; (3) Manuscripts; (4) Printed matter; (5) Fort Kearny Memorial Association; (6) Miscellany; and (7) Maps and Diagrams.

This collection relates to the history of Fort Kearny, Nebraska as an active military post, 1848-1871 and to later efforts in the preservation and restoration of the site as a state historical park. The official records on microfilm are from the National

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Archives and Records Service, RG94, RG49, RG153, and RG393. They include records of the office of the Judge Advocate General; records of the General Land Office relating to the military reservation; correspondence relating to Fort Kearny, Fort Childs and Table Creek; Post returns; and letters received by the Division of the Missouri. In addition, one roll of microfilm contains a quartermasters letterbook (1858-1862) filmed by the Nebraska State Historical Society.

The physical portion of the collection includes photo static copies of official War Department correspondence and papers relating to the history of Fort Kearny. Also included in the collection are manuscripts and printed matter regarding the history of the Fort Kearny Memorial Association. Additional items include reports of archeological excavations and maps, plats and diagrams.

The microfilm in the collection was purchased from the National Archives and Records Service and other material has been added to the collection as received.

DESCRIPTION

SERIES 1	OFFICIAL RECORDS ON MICROFILM
Roll 1	Records of the General Land Office relating to The Fort Kearny abandoned military reservation (.NARS RG49), 1960 Records of the Office of the Adjutant General, Reservation Div., outline index and historical sketch of Fort Kearny, 1845-1871. (NARS RG94)
Roll 2	Records of the Office of the Adjutant General Cont. NARS RG94, A60 Post Returns 1845-1867 Records of the office of the Quartermaster General, Consolidated file, Fort Kearny, Fort Childs, and Table Creek. (NARS RG 92) Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General, Reservation Files. (NARS RG153)
Roll 2A	Fort Kearny, Nebraska--Post Returns May 1846-April 1848 June 1848-December 1860

- Roll 3 Dept of the Missouri, Letters Received, Fort Kearny, 1865 (NARS RG393), Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands.

Post Returns 1867-1871
 - Roll 4 Quartermaster's Letterbook, Fort Kearny, 1858-1962 (filmed by Nebraska State Historical Society).
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- SERIES 2 CORRESPONDENCE, 1847 – 1929
- Box 1
 - Folder 1 Copies of Official War Dept. Correspondence (1847-1849)
 - Folder 2 Copies of Letters of Lt. Daniel Woodbury regarding military posts on the plains (1847 – 1851, 1856)
 - Folder 3 Correspondence relating to the history of Fort Kearny (1904 – 1929)
- SERIES 3 MANUSCRIPTS
- Box 1
 - Folder 1 Quartermasters Letterbook, Fort Kearny, 1858 – 1862 (filmed in Series 1)
 - Folder 2 *The History of Fort Kearny*, by William F. Willman, MA Thesis, University of Nebraska (1928)
 - Folder 3 *Preliminary report, Excavations at Fort Kearny*, by Roger Grange, NSHS, 1960.
 - Folder 4 Historical Data regarding Dobytown and Kearny City
 - Folder 5 Historical Notes on Fort Kearny
 - Folder 6 Handwritten excerpts of Post returns.
- SERIES 4 PRINTED MATTER
- Box 1
 - Folder 1 Clippings
 - Folder 2 Programs, Fort Kearny National Park Association
 - Folder 3 Programs and historical sketches, Fort Kearny Centennial 1948

SERIES 5 FORT KEARNY MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

Box 1

Folder 1 Correspondence 1928 – 1935

Folder 2 Manuscripts, legislative bills, clippings
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SERIES 6 MISCELLANY

Box 1

Folder 1 General and Special Orders, 1848-1871, copies

Folder 2 Incl. Description of Fort Kearny, 1869; Extract from journal of
Stansbury's exploration; Resolutions regarding the restoration of
Fort Kearny.

Folder 3 Proceedings of a Board of Survey, convened at Fort Kearney, N.T.,
1 March, 1865

SERIES 7 MAPS AND DIAGRAMS

Box 1

Folder 1 Archeological drawings, copies of original ground plans, plats.