

film  
RG502

## **Fort Atkinson, Nebraska**

Records: 1819-1957

Cubic ft.: 1.5

Approx. # of Items: 4 boxes of c.100 items  
and 10 reels of microfilm

### HISTORICAL NOTE

Fort Atkinson, Nebraska, on the Council Bluffs, was the most remote U.S. military post on the western frontier from 1819-1827. In 1819, John C. Calhoun, Secretary of War, dispatched the Yellow-stone Expeditionary force under Col. Henry Atkinson as part of a plan to construct a chain of fortifications west of the Mississippi River. These forts were to serve as a warning to the British trading companies and to protect the fur trade along the Upper Missouri. The expedition had reached the Council Bluffs, when winter forced them to construct a camp. This camp was named Cantonment Missouri. In 1820, Congress abandoned the plan for the series of forts, leaving only the new post at the Council Bluffs. When floods destroyed this camp in the spring of 1820, a new site was selected on top of the Bluffs. The newly constructed post was known simply as Council Bluffs until 1821 when it was officially designated Fort Atkinson.

Fort Atkinson was garrisoned by the Rifle Regiment and the Sixth Infantry Regiment. In 1821, as part of a military cutback, the two regiments were combined and some of the troops were discharged. The troops at the fort saw almost no military operations with the exception of the brief Arickara War of 1823 after a party of fur traders were attacked by Indians.

Fort Atkinson was to survive as an active military post only until 1827 when it was abandoned. However, during the period of its active operation, the fort was a valuable outpost in the opening of the west.

### SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists mainly of ten reels of microfilm of official records of Fort Atkinson, Nebraska. Also included are four boxes of manuscript material. The collection is arranged into five series: 1) Court Martial Records, 1819-1827; 2) Correspondence, 1819-1957; 3) Manuscripts; 4) Records of the Sixth and Rifle Regiments, 1819-1827; and 5) Miscellany.

The collection relates to military affairs and activities at Fort Atkinson, Nebraska, 1819-1827, and to later historical research and interpretation. The bulk of the collection consist of copies of official documents, correspondence, and manuscripts utilized in the compilation of Fort Atkinson Records, 1819-1827, illus., by A. E. Sheldon in 1915.

The reels of records concerning Court Martials contained in Series One, were microfilmed by the Historical Society. Reel #1 was filmed from photostat records contained in the National Archives Collection RG153, Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General. Reel #2 containing a court martial record, 1824-1825, was microfilm by our agency in 1991 from an original volume in the possession of Fort Atkinson State Historical Park, and loaned to us for copying by John Slader, Superintendent of the park.

Reels #2 and #3 of Series Four are microfilmed copies of the Fort Atkinson orderly books transcribed by A. E. Sheldon in 1915. These six volumes were microfilmed by the Historical Society in 1956. Reels Eight and Nine of this Series were microfilmed by the National Archives for the State Historical Society in April of 1987. They include fourteen volumes of letters sent and orders received.

The Clothing Estimates, 1821-1822, of Series Five, are xerox copies of originals in possession of James Seacrest of North Platte, Nebraska.

The reel of post returns appearing on reel #4 of Series Five, Miscellany, was purchased from the National Archives in June of 1972. Post returns are monthly lists of officers by name with number of men under their command. A remarks section lists names of all soldiers who enlisted, deserted, those on special duty, etc. The Meterological Register, 1822-1830 appearing on reel #7 was formerly shelved with RG500, U.S. Dept of War. This volume was microfilm by the Historical Society in 1956. It was more properly moved to this collection in June of 1972.

## DESCRIPTION

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SERIES ONE COURT MARTIAL RECORDS, 1819-1827

Roll #1 #17,372	Court Martial records, Fort Atkinson, 1819-1827 includes trials of Lt. Charles Pentland, 1823, and Capt. James Gray, 1925.
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Roll #10 #24,726	Court Martial Record, 1824-1825 Index at end of volume
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SERIES TWO CORRESPONDENCE, 1819-1957

- B.1 f.1 General Atkinson to Colonel Hamilton, Dec. 21, 1825  
Copy from Magazine of History, March, 1905
- f.2 John C. Calhoun to General Atkinson, 1819-1821, 1824  
Copies from U.S. War Dept. records.
- f.3 John C. Calhoun to Brown, Jesup, and Long, 1819-1820  
Copies from U.S. War Dept. records
- f.4 General Atkinson to John C. Calhoun, 1820-1824  
Copies from U.S. War Dept. records
- f.5 Research letters, 1905-1957
- f.6 Correspondence of Lt. Reuben Holmes, 1824-1831  
(Copies of original)
- f.7 Letter re remains of soldiers of Fort Calhoun,  
1905-1906  
Circular, Gen. F. C. Ainsworth to Harvey Reid,  
Maquoheta, IA, Jan. 1910 re Ft. Atkinson
- B.5 f.8 Correspondence of Maj. William S. Foster, 1820-1821  
(Copies of original)

SERIES THREE MANUSCRIPTS

- B.1 f.1 Journal of General Atkinson's Treaty Expedition,  
1825 (copy)
- f.2 Address by B. W. Atkinson, Oct. 11, 1919, Fort  
Calhoun, Nebraska  
Reminiscences in Nebraska from 1821-1827, by  
Capt. Benjamin Contal  
Brief Resume of Fort Atkinson, prepared from Fort  
Atkinson by E. E. Blackman, September 1919
- f.3 Fort Atkinson, by Raymond Latrom  
Old Fort Atkinson, by W. H. Eller, 1892; paper  
given before members of Nebraska State  
Historical Society.  
Why Fort Atkinson Was Established, by Albert  
Watkins; Nebraska History Magazine, Vol. 2,

#3, July-Sept 1919

- f.4 Fort Atkinson, by William H. Woods.
- f.5 Miscellaneous manuscripts, anonymous & not dated.
- f.6-9 Fort Atkinson Records, 1819-1827, illus., by Addison E. Sheldon, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1915 (typed manuscript volumes)

B.2 Fort Atkinson Records (cont), Orderly Books, 1818-1820

NOTE: Above Sheldon material may be duplicated in rolls #2 & #3, Series Four

NOTE: See also call number 978.2 Sh4f in the library for published A.E. Sheldon Fort Atkinson materials

B.3 Fort Atkinson--Guardian of the Western Frontier, 1819-1827, by Col. Virgil Ney, 1973, 707 pages of correspondence and manuscript.

B.5 f.10 Diary of William S. Foster, 1820-1824, not complete (Copies of original)

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SERIES FOUR OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THE SIXTH INFANTRY AND RIFLE REGIMENT, 1819-1827

- B.5 f.1 Misc. Roster data and copy, Listing of The Military Biographies of the Officers of the U. S. Rifle Regiment, The Artillery, and the Sixth U.S. Infantry Regiment, 1819-1827, compiled and edited by Col. Virgil Ney.
- B.4 f.2 Clothing Estimate, year ending 10/31/1822 (copy)
  - v.1 Manuscript Orders, p.1 - Martin Cantonment, June 1, 1819 thru p.562, Ft Atkinson Detail Order, November 19, 1821
  - v.2 Manuscript Orders, p.563 (#70), March 6, 1822 thru p.1087, Letter, H. Leavenworth to Don Bart. Boca, Gov. of New Mexico re deserters, Sept 7, 1824
  - B.5 v.3 Manuscript Orders, p.1102 (#156), June 23, 1822 thru p.1566, Detail Order, March 5, 1824.

pp.1567-end of volume, Miscellaneous material re Council Bluffs including list of officers and enlisted men, 1812-1828, and historical notes.

NOTE: Above volumes are copies of originals

NOTE: Rolls #2 & #3 duplicate material found in boxes 1 & 2.

f.3 Health Report of Garrison, Feb. 8, 1820

Roll #2 Records of Fort Atkinson, 1819-1827, compiled and  
#12,814 Edited by A. E. Sheldon, 1915

NOTE: See also call number 978.2 Sh4f in the library for published A.E. Sheldon Fort Atkinson materials

Roll #3 Sheldon work, 1915, cont.  
#12,815

Roll #4 Post Returns, July 1821 - May 1827  
NARS Microcopy 617, Roll #49

Roll #5 Muster Rolls, Sixth U.S. Infantry,  
#20,331 Companies A thru K, 1819-1821  
Muster Rolls, Sixth U.S. Infantry,  
Companies A thru D, 1821-1827

Roll #6 Muster Rolls, Sixth U.S. Infantry  
#20,332 Companies E thru K, 1821-1827  
Muster Rolls, U.S. Rifleman, 1819-1821  
Companies A thru K and Miscellaneous

Roll #8 Letters Sent and Received, 1817-1824  
#21,908 v.1 Jan. 28, 1817 - Feb. 02, 1824  
Letters Sent, 1824-1827  
v.2 Nov. 02, 1824 - Jan. 18, 1828  
v.3 Oct. 01, 1824 - Jan. 18, 1828  
Orders Issued and Received, 1818-1823  
v.4 Adjutant Gen., Nashville, Division  
order #3, Nov. 02, 1818 thru  
Regimental Order, Cantonment Missouri,  
Jan. 10, 1820

v.5 Regimental Order, Plattsburgh,

Apr. 29, 1818 thru  
Regimental Order, T. Stanford, on board  
the "Expedition," July 10, 1819

v.6 Regimental Order, T. Stanford, ibid,  
Aug. 03, 1819 thru  
Regimental Order, Cantonment Council  
Bluffs, Dec. 31, 1820

v.7 Regimental Order, Jan. 01, 1821 thru  
Order #69, Ft. Atkinson, Mar. 07, 1822

v.8 Order #156, Ft. Atkinson, June 23, 1822  
thru  
Order #281, Ft. Atkinson, Oct. 11, 1822  
and Detail Order, Oct. 13, 1822

v.9 Order #70, Ft. Atkinson, Mar. 06, 1822  
thru  
Order #160, Ft. Atkinson, Sept 08, 1823

Roll #9  
#21,909

Orders Issued and Received, 1819-1827

v.9 (cont), pp. 307-319  
Order #161, Sept 09, 1823 thru  
Order #184, Oct. 06, 1823

v.10 Plattsburgh, Mar. 11, 1819 thru  
U.S. Barrack at Carlisle, Apr. 19, 1819

v.11 Order #7, Jan. 01, 1826 thru  
Order #131, Camp Jefferson, Oct. 19, 1827  
pp.370-382, Index to Orders  
p.386 (continued from p.269)  
p.387-end of volume  
Order #132, October 21, 1827 thru  
Order #169, Jefferson Barracks,  
December 27, 1827

Orders Issued, 1823-1827

v.12 Order #185, Ft. Atkinson, Oct. 08, 1823  
thru  
Order #278, Ft. Atkinson, Oct. 24, 1824  
Index, pp. 279-end of volume

v.13 Order #165, Ft. Atkinson, Sept 12, 1823  
thru  
Order #177, Ft. Atkinson, June 13, 1824

SERIES FIVE MISCELLANY

B.5	f.1	Map of Fort Atkinson, n.d. Sgt. Floyd Monument plan, Lewis and Clark Historical Association, Sioux City, Iowa, 1957 Broadside--Fort Atkinson Day, August 5, n.d.
	f.2	Letter re weather diaries, Ft. Atkinson, 4/23/1920
	f.3-4	Weather Reports, 1820
	f.5	Weather Reports, 1824
OD122		Sketch of Fort Atkinson 1819. Sketch made 1919 Copy of Blueprint obtained from National Archives
	Roll #7 #13,679	Meteorological Register, Fort Atkinson and Council Bluffs, 1822-1830 From RG500, Roll #50

END OF INVENTORY

ADDED ENTRIES:\*\*

Atkinson, Henry, 1782-1842  
Calhoun, John C (John Caldwell), 1782-1850  
COUNCIL BLUFFS  
COURT MARTIALS  
UNITED STATES. ARMY--MILITARY LIFE  
United States. Army. Infantry. Sixth Regiment  
United States. Army. Infantry. Riflemen Company  
MILITARY POSTS--NEBRASKA  
Holmes, Reuben, c.1800-1833  
Sheldon, A. E. (Addison Erwin), 1861-1944 \*  
WEATHER (FORT CALHOUN, NEB.) \*  
FORT CALHOUN (NEB.)--WEATHER \*  
COUNCIL BLUFFS--WEATHER  
WEATHER--COUNCIL BLUFFS  
Atkinson, Benjamin W. (Benjamin Walker), \*  
Contal, Benjamin, 1819-1903  
Blackman, E. E. (Elmer Ellsworth), 1863-1942 \*  
Eller, William H., 1842-  
Woods, William H. (William Henry), 1839-1927 \*  
Ney, Virgil, dec.1979 \*  
Watkins, Albert, 1848-1923  
Leavenworth, Henry, 1783-1834  
Latrom, Raymond J  
Foster, William Sewell, -1839  
Chronological Index - 1

JEP/kj 9/12/1980

JEP/pmc 6/15/1972

DDS 8/30/1979

AIP/pmc 10/07/1991

SRW/srw 7/14/1993