

Military Records at the South Dakota State Archives - Forts and Posts

Fort Bennett (South Dakota)

Captain Edward P. Pearson and the 17th U.S. Infantry established Fort Bennett sixty miles north of Fort Pierre on May 17, 1870. Originally, the fort was known as the Post at the Cheyenne River Agency, but it was renamed Fort Bennett in 1878. It was abandoned in 1891. The site was inundated after the construction of the Oahe Dam and now lies under Lake Oahe.

Collections

Cheyenne Agency Military Station Records, 1870-1880 (H75-019)

This collection contains correspondence and records pertaining to routine matters at the post, and a bid to transport troops and supplies on the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers. (Box 03536 B)

Fort Bennett Letters, 1870-1891 (H75-714)

These records consist of a letters received book (1879-1885), letters sent (1879-1885), and books listing regular supplies and sales to officers (1888-1891). (Box 03626 A)

General Photo Collection - Fort Bennett, 1890 (H94-015)

Consists of three black and white prints that when pieced together make a panoramic view of the military compound of Fort Bennett along the Missouri River. Photos were taken in 1890. (Box 05719)

General Photo Collection - Fort Bennett (P93)

Miscellaneous photographs gathered of Fort Bennett and the surrounding area. Includes birds' eye views and images of the barracks, soldiers pitching camp, officers' quarters, blacksmith shop, signaling to Fort Sully from Fort Bennett, post office, the Episcopal Church and St. John's Mission located one mile from Fort Bennett, the proposed ground plan of the fort, and views of the abandoned fort taken in 1952. Also includes photographer C. H. Newcomb's images of American Indians and soldiers around Fort Bennett, and two R. L. Kelly images of Fort Bennett.

Returns from U.S. Military Posts

Post returns for Fort Bennett in Dakota Territory from May 1870 to December 1880. Returns include the names of enlisted men and commissioned officers, ranks, regiments, companies, remarks, and a record of events for that month. (MF 1622)

George W. Wroten Papers, 1887-1889, 1919 (H96-012 and H96-026)

A collection of letters written by George W. Wroten, who was the superintendent of the Cheyenne River Agency boarding school for Indian boys. The letters describe the school at Fort Bennett, weather conditions, Chief Hump, a murder at the agency, Crook Commission progress at visiting the agencies, and White Swan. (Box 06074 A)

Publications

Anderson, Harry H. A history of the Cheyenne River Agency and its military post, Fort Bennett, 1868-1891. Vermillion: University of South Dakota, 1954.

Survey Atlas of Townships Along the Missouri River from the Bad River to the North Dakota Border. Huron, SD: Surveyor General's Office, 1891-1898.

Mentions in South Dakota Historical Collections. Pierre, SD: South Dakota State Historical Society.

Fort Bennett: Vol. 27, page 46-50, 53-54; Vol. 28, page 478-479, 482-484, 492, 496-497, 506, 528-532, 546-551

Mentions in South Dakota History. Pierre, SD: South Dakota State Historical Society.

Fort Bennett: Vol. 4, page 335; Vol. 10, page 3-5, 7; Vol. 20, page 296; Vol. 21, page 281, 285, 293, 295, 310-313; Vol. 34, page 224; Vol. 37, page 66

Vertical Files

"Fort Bennett"