

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

Fort Meade (South Dakota)

Fort Meade is located in Meade County, just east of Sturgis and near Bear Butte. The site had been used as a military camp as early as August 1876, but it was first established as a U.S. military post in August 1878 under the name of Camp Ruhlen. The area surrounding the site was declared a military reservation on December 18, 1878. Fifteen days later, the military post changed its name from Camp Ruhlen to Fort Meade, in honor of Major General George G. Meade. Fort Meade continued to serve as a military post until 1944, when it transferred to the Veterans Administration to serve as a hospital.

Collections

Charles Edmund DeLand Papers, 1890-1935 (H69-005)

DeLand, a lawyer, historian and author, corresponded with Major Frederick T. Wilson with the Adjutant General's Office about the location of Fort Tecumseh, Fort Pierre, Fort Sully, Fort Meade, Fort Randall, and Fort Thompson. (Box 03339 A)

Eighth U.S. Cavalry Veterans Association Roster History, 1936 (H82-062)

The Eighth U.S. Cavalry was organized in 1866 shortly after the Civil War. After serving in New Mexico Territory and Texas, they were headquartered at Fort Meade from 1888 until the start of the Spanish American War in 1898. This booklet, printed in 1936, lists the names of officers, enlisted men, and their troop. (Box 03600 A)

Fort Meade Granary Construction Report, 1882 (H2014-061)

Collection consists of one letter titled "Report of Buildings in process of construction at Fort Meade, D. T. during the Quarter." The letter discusses the construction of a granary building, which began in April 1882 and was completed in June 1882. The letter was sent on June 30, 1882. (Box 06612 A)

Fort Meade Photograph and Thanksgiving Day Menus, 1905-1907 (H96-033)

This collection contains a photograph of Bear Butte with Fort Meade in the distance, and the fort's Thanksgiving Day menus from 1905 and 1906. (Box 06074 A)

Fort Meade Photographs of Troop A of the Sixth U.S. Cavalry, 1905-1907 (H95-044)

Collection consists of black and white photographs of Fort Meade and members of Troop A of the Sixth U.S. Cavalry. (Box 06026 B)

Fort Meade Prisoner of War Papers and Negatives, 1945, 1988 (H92-126)

Sergeant Royal Draime was assigned to Fort Meade in 1945 and oversaw the activities of twenty German prisoners of war. This collection contains photographic negatives of the POWs, a copy of Draime's orders, a copy of a letter Draime wrote to Mr. Tom Buecker at the Nebraska State Historical Society in 1988, and a copy of a letter from Mr. Buecker to the Fort Meade Museum also written in 1988. (Box 00216 A)

Fort Meade Sergeant Major's House Blueprints, 1945 (2015-156)

Collection consists of copies of blueprints showing the original design and layout of Building 71 at Fort Meade, known historically as the Sergeant Major's House. The original drawings were created in 1945 and are stored at Fort Meade. (MD 40F, Folder 3)

General Photograph Collection - Fort Meade (P94)

Includes the following images: fire engine, 1897; Eighth Cavalry buglers, 1894; magazine; cavalry stables; officer's quarters, 1892-1900; cutting and packing ice, 1897; snow plow, 1897; blacksmith and wheelwright shops; sawmill; reservoir; bird's eye views, 1882, 1894, and 1912; military exercises, 1897; ordnance storehouse; whist party of Eighth Cavalry officers, 1892; band quarters; barracks; subsistence storehouse; color guard, 1897; firing the national salute on July 4th, 1897; interior views of the Fort Meade Museum; headquarters building; commanding officer's parlor, 1895-1897; guard mount; new guard house; subsistence root house; Troop I of the Thirteenth Cavalry; photo of Fort Meade with Bear Butte in the distance by Grabill, 1888; three color postcard views of Fort Meade and Bear Butte; Troop A of the Fourth Cavalry; Troop B of the Fourth Cavalry Cossack riding at Fort Meade; barrack interior; quartermaster's stable; cavalry stable; carpenter and tin shop; hospital steward quarters; bakery; wagon shed; commissary; Sergeant's quarters; granary; decoration day, 1897; H Troop and band of the Eighth Cavalry, 1897; officers' quarters and bird's eye view take by photographer W. R. Cross; school house; library, reading room, and exchange; bath house; chapel; guard house; Black Horse Troop at the Black Hills Roundup in 1931; George W. Scott image of C Troop at Fort Meade; grindstone rock near Fort Meade; and eight images taken by Albert Pollock of the officers' quarters, Fort Meade looking west, Bear Butte, a bird's eye view of Fort Meade from 1879, Fort Sturgis near Bear Butte, and camp in 1878.

John C. Grabill Photograph Collection, 1876-1891 (P191)

In October 1886, John Grabill set up a photography studio in Sturgis, Dakota Territory, where he worked until early 1891. His most memorable photographs are those taken at Pine Ridge Agency shortly after the Wounded Knee massacre in December 1890. Other images in this collection include Company O of the Third U.S. Infantry posed to take aim, 1890; Company C of the Third U.S. Infantry; General Miles and staff viewing the largest Indian camp in the U.S. near Pine Ridge, 1891; General Taylor and 70 Indian scouts, 1891; U.S. officials viewing an Indian camp; Comanche, 1876; Paul Wernert and the gunners of Battery E of the First Artillery, 1891; officers of the Ninth U.S. Cavalry, 1891; Fighting Seventh Officers formal portrait; Fort Meade, 1888; "Grand Review" of U.S. troops; officers' quarters at Fort Meade, 1889; and Fort Meade with Bear Butte in the distance, 1888.

Fred Greguras Collection, ca 1890s-1950s (H2018-049)

This collection consists of brochures, manuals, booklets, and photographs of various military-related locations throughout South Dakota. The heart of the collection is photographs, dating from the late 1940s to the early 1950s, of military forts and ghost towns in South Dakota. Also included are photographs of the grounds at Fort Meade taken in 2001; two manuals owned by Private James McAdam who served at Fort Meade titled Infantry Drill

Regulations (1911) and Soldier's Hand Book USA (1908); and an "Old Post Cemetery" booklet for Fort Meade. (Boxes 05058 B-C)

Photograph of Troop C of the Fourth U.S. Cavalry, 1941 (H91-114)

Consists of a negative and photocopies of an original photograph of Troop C of the Fourth U.S. Cavalry taken in 1941. This is a group photograph of the troop in uniform at Fort Meade. The names and ranks of those pictured are listed on the reverse of the photo. (Box 05483 B)

Photograph of Troop H of the Sixth U.S. Cavalry, 1906 (H91-091)

Contains a photograph of a group of twenty-nine soldiers seated around a fire. The back reads "H Troop 6th Cavalry in Camp two miles west of Sturgis, S.D. and Troop H 6th U.S. Cavalry field against Ute Indians, Nov. and Dec. 1906." (Box 05518 B)

Robert Lee Manuscript, 1970 (H75-145)

This manuscript deals with the two trials of Major Marcus Reno and includes incidental information on the establishment of Fort Meade. (Box 03542 B)

James Defrees Mann Letters, 1879, 1891 (H78-026)

This collection consists of two letters. One was written by Seventh U.S. Cavalry officer James DeFrees Mann, in which he describes an expedition against the Indians. The other letter was written by Mann's mother. (Box 03571 B)

Returns from U.S. Military Posts

Post returns for Fort Meade from August 1878 to December 1891. Returns include the names of enlisted men and commissioned officers, ranks, regiments, companies, remarks, and a record of events for that month. (MF 1625)

Publications

Fort Meade, D. T., S. D., 1878-1978: 100 Years of Service. Fort Meade, SD: Veterans Administration Hospital, 1978.

Lee, Bob. Fort Meade and the Black Hills. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1991.

Lee, Bob. Fort Meade: The Peace Keeper Post on the Dakota Frontier, 1878-1944. Fort Meade, SD: Old Fort Meade Museum and Historic Research Association, 198-.

Old Post Cemetery: Fort Meade, South Dakota. Fort Meade, SD: Old Fort Meade Museum and Historic Research Association, 1989.

Sago, Roberta and Lee Stroschine. Fort Meade: Peacekeeper of the Black Hills. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2018.

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

Camp Sturgis: Vol. 1, page 134

Fort Meade: Vol. 1, page 133-134, 140-141, 379; Vol. 16, page 258; Vol. 24, page 8

Fort Meade Military Reservation: Vol. 20, page 250

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

Camp Sturgis: Vol. 14, page 241; Vol. 25, page 114

Fort Meade: Vol. 4, page 73, 79; Vol. 7, page 245-248; Vol. 9, page 239, 241, 244-246; Vol. 11, page 6; Vol. 14, page 122-123, 131, 238-261; Vol. 17, page 239; Vol. 19, page 401, 423; Vol. 20, page 87, 296; Vol. 21, page 263, 285-286, 290, 293, 295-296, 301, 311-314; Vol. 22, page 240; Vol. 25, page 114-115; Vol. 31, page 13, 15, 125; Vol. 35, page 139, 338, 346; Vol. 37, page 2; Vol. 38, page 84; Vol. 40, page 71-72

Mentions in Wi-lyohi. Pierre, SD: South Dakota State Historical Society.

Fort Meade, Vol. 24, No. 5, page 8

Vertical Files

“Camp Sturgis”

“Fort Meade”