

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

Fort Randall (South Dakota)

Fort Randall was established by General W. S. Harney in June 1856 and is located on the south side of the Missouri River just below the present site of Fort Randall Dam. The fort included numerous buildings such as a hospital, guard house, store houses, magazine, pump house, and church. Perhaps the most unique building was a combination chapel, library, and Odd Fellows lodge that was constructed in 1875. It was made from chalkstone and shaped like a cross. Fort Randall was officially abandoned in 1892.

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)

Fort Randall Chapel Photographs, 1922 (H90-027)

Consists of three black and white photographs of the ruins of the Fort Randall chapel, taken in 1922. (Box 05516 B)

Fort Randall Commanding Officer's Home Postcards, undated (H2010-010)

Consists of two postcards and one negative of the commanding officer's home at Fort Randall. The caption reads: "Commanding Officer's Home at old Fort Randall, erected 1854. Interior of red cedar logs, exterior remodeled for the late home of Major McLaughlin." (Box 08535 C)

Fort Randall Papers, 1892

After the fort was abandoned in 1892, a group of officers met at Fort Randall to determine the value and conditions of the buildings on the post. This report, dated November 14, 1892, includes a description of each building. (MF 3240).

Fort Randall Quartermaster Records, 1876-1882 (H77-034)

This collection contains Fort Randall Quartermaster Horace Baxter Quimby's papers which describe the provisions, men, and buildings during his service at the fort. (Box 03570 B)

General Photograph Collection - Fort Randall (P95)

Includes the following images: Company A of the 15th U.S. Infantry; barracks, 1882; officers' quarters, 1882; battalion parade of the 25th Infantry, 1880; dug way; bird's eye view of the fort, ca 1860s; officers and families of the 25th U.S. Infantry; Company B of the 25th Infantry with Capt. Bentzoni, 1882; map of the fort, 1879; six images looking at the site of Fort Randall from Whetstone Creek, 1962; Sitting Bull's camp at Fort Randall; old headquarters with Mr. McLaughlin and Ed. A. Fry, 1904; and numerous images of the church, 1947-1973.

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. Includes information on Fort Randall. (Boxes 05058 B-C)

Historic American Buildings Survey Drawings - Fort Randall Church, 1947-1949 (SC-70)

Consists of architectural drawings of the old Fort Randall Church showing construction, floor and framing plans, elevations, and sketches of the entire building. (MD 66)

Charles L. Hodges Letter, 1882 (H2021-068)

A letter written by 1st Lieutenant Charles L. Hodges on July 17, 1882 while stationed at Fort Randall. The letter primarily discusses the Hodges family and other acquaintances, but also mentions that Sitting Bull and his band were currently prisoners at the fort.

Hogan Family Letters, 1871-1874 (H57-003)

Letters from Lieutenant Martin E. Hogan and his wife Kate describing the living conditions on the military posts of Fort Randall and Fort Sully. (Box 03650 B)

William Johnson Hurlbut Papers, 1871 (H68-003)

This collection consists of diaries and 34 pen-and-ink sketches, from 1871, written and drawn by Mr. Hurlbut while surveying along the Missouri River in Iowa and Dakota Territory, and while on a government surveying party through Dakota led by Edward B. Palmer in 1874. The pen-and-ink sketches contain scenes of camp life, landscapes, Indian scenes and frontier towns. The diaries and sketches were published in South Dakota History, Volume 1, No. 1, pages 1-32. (Box 06646 C, MD 66)

Stanley J. Morrow Photograph Collection (P194-198)

Photo #152 in this collection shows soldiers issuing annuity goods at Fort Randall in 1882.

National Park Service Photograph - Fort Randall (89-172)

Collection contains photographs of historic sites along the Missouri River taken in the 1940s. (Box 05719)

Native American Photographs (H89-068)

Images of Sump-kin and a camp scene near Fort Randall in 1882. (Box 05516 A)

Timothy Nowak Collection (H2010-094, H2017-060)

This collection consists of maps, photographs, archaeological research materials, and microfilm on the history of Fort Randall compiled by Timothy Nowak, an archaeologist with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. (Box 05608 A - 05612 A, 06595 A, 06596 A, 06652 B; FB 631; MD 73, 119, 273, 326; MF 6162-6180).

Returns from U.S. Military Posts

Post returns for Fort Randall from June 1856 to November 1892. Returns include the names of enlisted men and commissioned officers, ranks, regiments, companies, remarks, and a record of events for that month. (MF 1628)

U.S. General Land Office. Abandoned Military Reservations - Fort Randall Papers, 1856-1897

These papers include correspondence, reports, maps, drawings, a brief printed history, and acts of Congress related to the abandonment of Fort Randall. (MF 1592, 1768)

U.S. Office of the Adjutant General. Regimental Returns of the Seventh U.S. Cavalry, 1874

These returns include the names, ranks, dates, and absences of Seventh U.S. Cavalry soldiers stationed at Fort Randall in 1874. (MF 1637)

U.S. Office of the Adjutant General. Muster Rolls of the Fourth U.S. Artillery, 1860-1862

Consists of a list of the names, rank, enlistment and pay of members of the Fourth U.S. Artillery in companies E, G, H, I, and M. Begins in August 1860 and ends in February 1862. (MF 1637)

William Waldron Letter, 1862 (H75-088)

William Waldron was with the Fourteenth Regiment of the Iowa Volunteers and was assigned to duty at Fort Randall. In this letter he describes the 500-mile march from Iowa to Fort Randall and the arrest of Captain Pattee by Major Lyman. (Box 03541 B)

Maps

[Lt. C. D. Anderson's Route from Fort Laramie to Fort Randall, 1857](#) (#1860-1861 - MD 43, Folder 2)

Lt. Davis Letter and Description of Trip from Fort Randall to Mitchell, 1884 (MF 1846)

[Lt. Davis Sketch of Route from Fort Randall to Mitchell, 1884](#) (#243 - MD 24, Folder 4)

Fort Randall Map, 1873 (MF 3240)

Fort Randall Map by Lieutenant Cusick, undated (MD 32, Folder 2)

Fort Randall Historic Site Maps, compiled in 1985 (MD 32, Folder 2)

[Fort Randall Reservoir, Historic and Archaeological Resources, 1952](#) (#1380 - MD 39, Folder 2)

Captain W. M. Gardner - Route of Second U.S. Infantry, Fort Randall and Fort Abercrombie, 1860 (MF 1846)

Captain W. M. Gardner - Route of Fort Randall to Fort Abercrombie, 1864 (MF 1846)

[Map of Fort Randall, Dakota, Showing Drainage, by Lt. William N. Blow, undated](#) (MD 90)

[Sketch Map Showing Lt. C. D. Anderson's Route from Fort Laramie to Fort Randall, 1857](#) (#220 - MD 24, Folder 4)

Publications

Claims of Settlers on Fort Randall Reservation: Letter from the Secretary of War, relative to the Claims of Certain Settlers on the Fort Randall Military Reservation in Dakota. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1872.

Fort Randall Reservoir: Archeology, Geology, History. Omaha, NE: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1960.

Greene, Jerome A. Fort Randall on the Missouri, 1856-1892. Pierre, SD: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2005.

Historic American Buildings Survey No. SD-4. Old Fort Randall Church, Gregory County, South Dakota. Omaha, NE: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1949.

Letter of the Secretary of War Communicating in Compliance with the Resolution of the Senate of June 13, 1870, A Copy of the Report of Lieutenant Colonel Samuel B. Holabird, of a Reconnaissance Made by Him in the Department of Dakota in 1869. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1870.

Mills, John E. Historic Sites Archeology in the Fort Randall Reservoir, South Dakota. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1960.

Pope, Dennis C. Sitting Bull, Prisoner of War. Pierre, SD: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2010.

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

Fort Randall: Vol. 1, page 116, 120, 129, 288-294, 298, 303, 311, 327, 365, 428; Vol. 2.2, page 29, 447; Vol. 3, page 155; Vol. 5, page 276-282, 289-291, 320; Vol. 6, page 104, 272; Vol. 8, page 31, 77, 84-86, 104, 537-538, 546; Vol. 9, page 260-267; Vol. 10, page 185-193; Vol. 11, page 202-203, 237; Vol. 12, page 187-188, 378; Vol. 16, page 258; Vol. 18, page 4; Vol. 22, page 414-420; Vol. 23, page 266-269, 275-277, 280-283, 287-293, 305-306; Vol. 24, page 481-487, 546-547; Vol. 27, page 262-263; Vol. 29, page 77; Vol. 30, page 354; Vol. 36, page 151, 170, 221; Vol. 38, page 183

Fort Randall Military Reservation: Vol. 20, page 247-249; Vol. 23, page 275-276, 283-284

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

Fort Randall: Vol. 2, page 156-159, 165, 168; Vol. 4, page 26, 56, 58-59, 148-149, 188, 283; Vol. 5, page 245-265; Vol. 7: page 245-247, 294, 296, 299, 307; Vol. 8, page 122; Vol. 14, page 119, 132, 241, 261; Vol. 16: page 245; Vol. 17, page 187; Vol. 19, page 518; Vol. 21, page 279, 281-282, 286, 292, 306-308; Vol. 26, page 9; Vol. 28, page 82; Vol. 31, page 197, 200, 220, 235-236; Vol. 32, page 1-27; Vol. 35, page 155, 169; Vol. 36, page 136, 140, 142, 153, 168; Vol. 37, page 224-255; Vol. 38, page 84; Vol. 40, page 136, 140, 144, 146, 178, 184, 338, 343

Fort Randall Military Reserve: Vol. 29, page 3

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

Fort Randall: Vol. 7, No. 4, page 5; Vol. 9, No. 6, page 7; Vol. 16, No. 11; Vol. 20, No. 4; Vol. 22, No. 1

Vertical Files

“Fort Randall”