

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

Fort Sully (South Dakota)

The first Fort Sully was a military post built in 1863 on the east bank of the Missouri River opposite the north end of Farm Island (about 4.5 miles southeast of present-day Pierre). This site was abandoned in 1866 and the post moved to a new location on the same side of the river but about 30 miles upstream, and about 20 miles below the mouth of the Cheyenne River. The new Fort Sully was one of the main military forts in Dakota Territory until its abandonment on October 20, 1894. The site of the first Fort Sully is now part of the Farm Island State Recreation Area. The site of the second Fort Sully was inundated by the construction of the Oahe Dam in 1968.

Collections

Burkholder Photograph, ca 1885-1889 (H2016-010)

This is a sepia-tone photograph mounted on a stereocard that shows a number of military personnel in camp circa the mid to late 1880s. There are thirty-four uniformed men in the photo, some standing and some sitting in the camp. Tents can be seen in the background with a number of rifles stacked together, making a pyramid shape with the muzzles leaning against each other. The image is attributed to a photographer with the last name Burkholder, who operated in the Fairbank/Okobojo area from 1885-1886, so this phot may be connected with the soldiers stationed at the second Fort Sully. (Box 06561 A)

Henry and Mattie Craig Photograph Collection, ca 1890s-1940s (H2017-047)

The collection consists of two photo albums and numerous photographs and postcards mainly associated with the Pierre area which were compiled by Henry and Mattie Craig. The second photo album includes images of the Fort Sully historical markers and dedication ceremony. (Box 06570 A)

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)

Howard W. Derby Letter, 1928 (H75-275)

Howard W. Derby wrote a letter to the Secretary of the State Historical Society, Doane Robinson, on March 16, 1928, about his grandfather William Shaver. Shaver was with the 30th Wisconsin and accompanied the Sully Expedition in 1864. Shaver wrote letters to his wife during this time and described the construction of old Fort Sully. (Box 03548 B)

Henry Falvey's Soldier's Handbook, 1883-1887 (H74-155)

Henry Falvey served with Company E of the Eleventh U.S. Infantry. This book kept by Falvey at Fort Sully contains army regulations, personal clothing accounts, marksmanship records, and enlistment records. (Box 03475 A)

Fort Sully Account Book, 1880-1884 (H99-016)

This collection consists of one volume of accounts including names, amounts, services, and goods for military officers, soldiers, civilians, and stage lines.

Fort Sully Drawings, 1867, 1877, 1893 (H79-022, SC-62)

Consists of three drawings of Fort Sully, two of which show the layout of the fort while the third is a sketch of the buildings. (MD 62)

Fort Sully Letters, 1872-1888 (H75-012, H84-127)

Includes bound volumes of letters sent from 1872-1888 and letters received from 1877-1887. Some of the individual volumes are indexed. (MF 1645, Box 03626 B)

Fort Sully Promotion Party Photograph, 1884 (H2015-062)

This collection consists of two (identical) reprint images of a group of nine soldiers who received promotions from Company A, Eleventh Infantry, taken at Fort Sully on August 19, 1884. Soldiers pictured include Grant Wilkerson, Edward McLarney, Schaun O'Sullivan, Timothy O'Malley, Bruce Sutherland, William Massey, Ronald Johnson, Richard Smith, and Kenneth Rockford. The Eleventh Infantry was headquartered at Fort Sully from 1879 to 1887. (Box 06490 A)

General Photo Collection - Fort Bennett (P93)

An image of the second Fort Sully is included in the Fort Bennett section.

General Photo Collection - Fort Sully (P97)

Includes the following images: officers in front of quarters, 1879; bird's eye views of the fort in 1875, 1883; a pen sketch looking across Fort Sully Creek from the east; fort trader's store, 1869; officers quarters, 1867, 1880, 1890; map of the fort, 1867, 1893, 1923; hospital, 1912, 1950, 1951, 1976; monument erected by residents of Sully County marking the site of the fort; burnt corral, 1885; Sully's Camp on Peoria Bottom, 1863; gravestone of Charles H. Gage, Joseph Johnson, and Edward Neal; sketch by W. S. Peck of the fort from the north side hills; cemetery, 1948; marker on Fort Sully Reservation, 1959; looking across Fort Sully Creek valley where stables were located, 1948; looking over basement ruins, 1952; officers of the Eleventh Infantry, 1884; barracks showing Stanley Morrow's tent set up as a dark room, 1869; barracks; Seventh Infantry officers, 1890; W. R. Cross image of the fort taken from the south end; ruins of the commissary storehouse and ice house, 1947; and the monument dedication ceremony, 1929.

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 Sully. (Boxes 05058 C)

Betty Gutch Map Collection (H2010-087)

This collection consists of eleven maps collected by Betty Gutch. The maps mainly cover the area around Pierre and Fort Pierre along the Missouri River. Includes two 1947 maps of the Missouri River by the Corps of Engineers that show Fort Sully. (MD 116, Folder 5)

Martin E. and Kate Hogan Letters, 1871-1874 (H57-003)

In their correspondence, Lt. Hogan and his wife describe 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)

Javan Bradley Irvine Letters, 1859-1902 (H72-003)

Irvine, an army officer, served in the Civil War and at Fort Rice, Fort Thompson, and Fort Sully. This collection includes letters written in 1867-1874 while Irvine was stationed at Fort Sully. (Box 03346 A - 03347 A)

Javan Bradley Irvine, Jr. Diaries, 1870-1873 (H75-016)

Irvine kept diaries while accompanying his father, who was stationed at Fort Sully. The diaries contain day-to-day listings of events and chronicle life at the fort. (Box 03536 B)

John H. Millett Collection, 1867-1893 (H80-020)

Drawings showing the layout of the fort as well as sketches of the buildings. (MD 62)

Stanley J. Morrow Photograph Collection (P194-198)

Includes one photograph of Fort Sully (#124).

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

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

Pvt. William S. Peck Drawing of Fort Sully, ca 1864-1865 (H88-069)

This sketch of Fort Sully was drawn by William S. Peck of Company D, 30th Regiment of Wisconsin Volunteers. The sketch shows buildings and an Indian encampment. (FB 278)

Photograph of Fort Sully Hospital, 1978 (H2012-010)

Consists of a color photograph of the Fort Sully hospital taken around 1978. The caption on the photo notes that the hospital was located on the Steffens Ranch north of Pierre in Sully County. When the second Fort Sully was abandoned in 1894, a number of local farmers purchased and moved buildings from the fort. The photo documents the hospital's architectural details, but by 1978 the building was in a dilapidated condition. (Box 03648 D)

Pierre-Fort Pierre Miscellaneous Materials (H75-347)

This collection contains miscellaneous material on Fort Sully. (Box 03551 A-B)

Returns from U.S. Military Posts

Post returns for Fort Sully in Dakota Territory from June 1864 to October 1894. Returns include the names of enlisted men and commissioned officers, ranks, regiments, companies, remarks, and a record of events for that month. (MF 1630)

Riggs Family Collection (H91-088)

This collection includes an 1872 list of chiefs at Fort Sully. (Box 04086 A)

Lawrence Howard Riggs Papers, 1899-1988 (H90-056 to H90-059)

Lawrence's father, Thomas L. Riggs, came to Dakota Territory in 1872 as a missionary to the Indian tribes near Fort Sully. Lawrence's mother, Margaret Louisa Irvine Riggs, was the daughter of Javan Bradley Irvine who was an officer at Fort Sully. This collection consists of Lawrence's educational records, the Oahe Mission School and Chapel records, biographical data, correspondence, club affiliations, and records of his teaching career. (Boxes 03992-03995, FB 80, MD 16)

Doane Robinson Papers, 1880-1946 (H74-009)

This collection includes one folder with a letter from E. E. Row dated February 8, 1908, discussing the weather monitoring equipment at Fort Sully and the weather on July 4, 1886. (Box 03361 A, Folder 77)

Harold H. Schuler Papers, 1989-1993 (H93-053 and H95-010)

This collection contains Schuler's research materials on Fort Sully that he used to write the book Fort Sully: Guns at Sunset. (Boxes 05973-05974, 05557 B)

James Howard Snyder Reminiscences, ca 1880s (H2007-077)

This collection consists of two photocopied reminiscences written by James Howard Snyder entitled "Homesteading in the 1880 Ties," and "Memories of Homestead Days." Snyder's parents homesteaded in Sully County in 1883. Their homestead was located ten miles east of Fort Sully. The reminiscences offer a detailed view of 1880s Dakota Territory and homesteading, particularly in and around Sully County. Part of the writing offers a small history of Fort Sully. (Box 03624 C)

South Dakota Photograph Collection, ca 1880s-1949 (H2018-072)

This collection includes one cabinet card taken by Pierre photographer R. L. Kelly of the second Fort Sully's parade grounds in the 1890s. (Box 05052 C)

Sporting Club Record Book, 1871-1874 (H23-001)

Record book for the Fort Sully officers' sporting club. The book includes financial records, minutes, hound pedigrees, and records of game caught. Captain Javan Bradley Irvine was the secretary. (Box 03649 B)

Township of Peoria Road Records, 1886-1893 (H69-007)

Collection contains descriptions of roads around Fort Sully, including surveyor's notes and sketches. (Box 03342 B)

Upper Missouri Sioux Agency Records, 1863-1870 (H72-004)

This collection contains correspondence concerning events at the Upper Missouri Sioux Agency (also known as the Crow Creek Indian Agency). (Box 03644 B, MD 89)

U.S. Office of the Adjutant General. Floor Plan of First Floor of Fort Sully Hospital, 1887 (91-147)

Consists of a photocopied map showing the first floor rooms and dimensions of the Fort Sully Hospital. A note at the bottom states that the Secretary of War authorized \$10,000 for a new post hospital on August 12, 1887. The original drawing is located at the National Archives and Records Administration. (MD 62)

Wakpa Sica Historical Society Collection (H92-058)

This collection contains historical site maps, photographs, and photocopies of the Fort Pierre area, including Fort Pierre Chouteau, Fort LaFramboise, Fort Tecumseh, Teton Post, Fort Galpin, Fort Sully, and the American Fur Company store. (Box 05496 B)

Maps

Dakota, 1868 - shows Fort Sully southeast of Fort Pierre (MF 1846)

Map of Fort Sully, South Dakota, by the Chief Quartermaster for the Dept. of Dakota, U.S. Army, 1889 (MD 32, Folder 3)

Plat of Roadman Park (Site of Fort Sully), 1937 (MD 31, Folder 1)

Survey of Townships Along the Missouri River Near Old Fort Sully, 1898 (MD 32, Folder 2)

Publications

Hoekman, Steven. The History of Fort Sully. Vermillion, SD: University of South Dakota, 1951.

Indian Treaties: Fort Sully, 1865. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1865.

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.

Ruple, Steven D. Analysis of Artifacts from a Test Excavation at the Site of Fort Sully I (39HU52), Hughes County, South Dakota. Omaha, NE: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, 1984.

Schuler, Harold H. Fort Sully: Guns at Sunset. Vermillion, SD: University of South Dakota Press, 1992.

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 Sully, first (1863-1866): Vol. 1, page 51, 122-123, 280-281, 310-311, 370-372; Vol. 4, page 115-117, 269, 415-416; Vol. 5, page 301, 346, 248-249; Vol. 8, page 87, 147; Vol. 11, page 355-357; Vol. 12, page 184-185; Vol. 25, page 219; Vol. 26, page 223, 230-231, 233-234, 236-242, 250-251, 274-277; Vol. 27, page 41-42; Vol. 31, page 128, 270-271

Fort Sully, second (1866-1894): Vol. 1, page 122-123, 372; Vol. 6, page 118; Vol. 8, page 39-40, 77, 87-89; Vol. 11, page 357; Vol. 20, page 244; Vol. 24, page 116; Vol. 26, page 238, 240-248, 251-274; Vol. 27, page 41-45; Vol. 33, page 239-240; Vol. 37, page 129; Vol. 41, page 32-33

Fort Sully Military Reservation: Vol. 20, page 250; Vol. 26, page 247, 272; Vol. 27, page 42

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

Fort Sully: Vol. 4, page 151; Vol. 7, page 409-410, 412, 415; Vol. 14, page 2, 117, 132; Vol. 21, page 280-281, 306-307, 309-310, 312; Vol. 22, page 70; Vol. 26, page 6; Vol. 28, page 82-83, 122; Vol. 31, page 197, 220; Vol. 35, page 4, 155, 158, 161; Vol. 37, page 127, 130, 132, 161, 163, 170, 172; Vol. 38, page 84; Vol. 39, page 137; Vol. 40, page 131

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

Fort Sully I and II: Vol. 2, No. 6

Vertical Files

“Fort Sully”