

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

Fort Totten (North Dakota)

The original military post of Fort Totten was located at the southeastern edge of the present-day town of Fort Totten, North Dakota. It was built between 1868 and 1873 to police the surrounding military reservation, guard overland mail and transportation routes, and oversee the Dakotas living on the Devils Lake Indian Reservation. Sixteen of the fort's original structures are still standing and viewable at the Fort Totten State Historic Site. The military post was decommissioned in December 1890, and Fort Totten became an industrial boarding school for Native American children. It remained a functioning school until 1959, when a new school was built just east of the site. From 1935 to 1939 the school also served as a tuberculosis preventorium, an experimental program to house and educate children at high risk for contracting tuberculosis. Fort Totten became a state historic site in 1960.

Collections

General Photo Collection - Fort Totten (P97)

Images include a bird's eye view of the fort from 1870; sketches of the fort; the Indian Agent's home; parade grounds; chaplain's and surgeon's quarters; and pioneer cabins.

James McLaughlin Papers, 1855-1937

Microfilm publication of Major James McLaughlin's correspondence, personal business records, notebooks, vouchers, checkbooks, employee lists, Standing Rock Indian Census (1891-1892), and Indian family histories. McLaughlin was an Indian Agent at Devil's Lake and Standing Rock. Collection contains 39 reels of microfilm, two of which are indexes for the rest of the collection. (MF 1390-1428)

Stanley J. Morrow Photograph Collection (P194-198)

Photos #125 and 126 in this collection are images of Fort Totten taken in 1870.

U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. Fort Totten Indian Agency Census, 1906-1939

Census rolls for the Fort Totten Indian Agency taken from 1906 to 1939. (MF 9656-9658)

Maps

Proposed Military Reservation, Devils Lake Agency, 1883 (MD 90)

Publications

Fort Totten: Military Post and Indian School, 1867-1959. Edited by Kathleen Davison. Bismarck, ND: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 2010.

Fort Totten: Military Post and Indian School, 1867-1959. Edited by Larry Remele. Bismarck, ND: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1986.

Foughty, Helen. Fort Totten: History, Legends, Points of Interest. Devils Lake, ND: Devils Lake Branch of the American Association of University Women, 196-.

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

Fort Totten: Vol. 1, page 128; Vol. 14, page 350; Vol. 26, page 232

Fort Totten Indian Agency: Vol. 29, page 314-315; Vol. 38, page 108

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

Fort Totten: Vol. 14, page 117, 130-131; Vol. 26, page 110; Vol. 35, page 159

Fort Totten Agency: Vol. 28, page 154, 157

Fort Totten Indian Reservation: Vol. 13, page 39, 42; Vol. 21, page 31

Vertical Files

“Fort Totten”