

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Fort Snelling

AND/OR COMMON

Same as above

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER across Mississippi River from St. Paul at 7th Street Bridge

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

St. Paul

X VICINITY OF

STATE

Minnesota

CODE

27

COUNTY

Hennepin

CODE

053

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE(S)
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**ACCESSIBLE**

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Minnesota Historical Society (current: Donn Coddington)

STREET & NUMBER

Building 25, Fort Snelling

CITY, TOWN

St. Paul

X VICINITY OF

STATE

Minnesota 55111

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, Hennepin County Courthouse  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

5th Street and 4th Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Minneapolis

STATE

Minnesota

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Historic Sites Survey

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Historic Sites Survey Division, National Park Service

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED	reconstructed (Old Ft. Snelling)	

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Fort Snelling complex consists of the buildings of the old fort (see sketch map A), the buildings of the new fort (see sketch map C), and numerous sites associated with the early history of Minnesota (see sketch map B). There are two sections to the landmark divided by a freeway interchange. To the north along the Mississippi River bank are the old walled fort, two artillery barracks (1904) now used as a Veterans Administration out-patient clinic, and four horse barns at present housing some of the offices of the Minnesota Historic Society. To the south of the highway complex lies "new Fort Snelling" (1879-1945), the buildings associated with the Department of Dakota.

Old Fort Snelling (1820-1858) has been reconstructed by the State of Minnesota to its 1824 condition with the exception of the Officers Quarters (Bldg. 14) which has been returned to its 1840's condition. The Officers Quarters of 1824 was a wooden structure matching the long barrack (Bldg. 12); in the 1840's it was reconstructed of stone. Over the years additions were made including a second story and porches. When the restoration was under consideration the State decided not to destroy the stone building, settling for returning it to its original 1840's condition.

All of the buildings, with the exception of the Commanding Officer's Quarters, are of similar long, one story design, constructed of native limestone, except for the long barrack (Bldg. 12), which is of clapboard. The only real difference in the buildings is the number of rooms. The barracks (Bldgs. 11 & 12), the officers quarters (14), the hospital (16), the school (17), the suttler's store (10), and the quartermaster's warehouse (15) have hipped roofs and interior chimneys, the number of fireplaces in the quarters buildings depending on the number of paired rooms. The officers quarters has 14 sets of quarters (one large room, one small room, with kitchen in the basement), the hospital had ten rooms, the short barracks had ten rooms, and the large barracks has 16 rooms. The shops (5) and guard house (7) have gabled roofs, the magazine (8) has a gable roof extended out from the building to form a porch. The officers quarters (14) appears as one story from the parade ground, but the rear (south) side is two stories, the kitchen for each set of rooms being the first story in the rear. A wooden porch runs along the south side of the building. The Commissary Warehouse (15) is one story on the north side and four stories on the south side, the lower three stories going down to bedrock and the whole built into the south wall of the fort. The rest of the buildings are all one story.

The Commandant's House, at present under restoration, is a one story limestone building with quoins, having a hipped roof and two interior chimneys at each end. A stepped stone parapet rises from the lower edge of the roof directly over the door. A semi-circular fanlight is over the door. The interior is a central hall plan, with two large rooms (to the left the dining room, to the right the parlor) in front and two small bedrooms in the rear. A wide and handsome dog-leg staircase rises to the left in the central hall. The dog-leg leads to a small entrance to the storage area in the attic. Kitchen, offices, and storage space are in the basement.

(CONTINUED)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1819-1858; 1861-1946

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Col. Josiah Snelling

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Commanding the bluff overlooking the confluence of the Minnesota and the Mississippi Rivers, Fort Snelling, the first American fort in modern Minnesota, was of continuous significance in the security and development of the northwest region and in the transformation of the United States Army from a small frontier force to that of a major modern army.

## HISTORY

Lieutenant Zebulon Pike bought the site for the future fort from the Sioux in 1805 while he was on his expedition to find the source of the Mississippi River. For a tract of land on both sides of the Mississippi River for a distance of nine miles from below the mouth of the St. Peters (Minnesota) River to above the Falls of St. Anthony, he paid Chief Little Crow and his tribe a few baubles, a quantity of rum, and the promise of \$2000 or its equivalent in trade goods. From that time until the end of the War of 1812 Minnesota history lies in shadow. The traditional enmity between Sioux and Chippewa continued unabated. The fur trade continued in British hands despite an abortive attempt by John Jacob Astor to break into their monopoly. The sudden collapse of United States western posts in the early part of the war encouraged the Indians and arrayed them in alliance with the British. At war's end both the British and the Indians hoped that the northern country might become a neutral Indian buffer state, but the treaty of Ghent confirmed the northern boundary of the United States at the line set in the 1783 Treaty of Paris.

The expansion of American military posts onto the northern frontier was prompted by the need to assert sovereignty over the area, particularly in Indian relations and in the fur trade. For the moment the restless surge of settlement was of minor importance. In the summer of 1817 Major Stephen H. Long, of "Great American Desert" fame, inspected the sites that Pike had purchased of the Sioux and recommended the bluff overlooking the two rivers for a "military work of considerable magnitude." In February 1819 the Fifth United States Infantry under Lieutenant Colonel Henry Leavenworth (1783-1834) was sent from Detroit to build the fort. Along with them went Indian Agent Lawrence Taliaferro to pay the promised \$2000 in goods. Leavenworth and his 200 men built a temporary camp of log cabins and a palisade on the south side of the Minnesota River near Mendota, calling it Camp New Hope. Hope proved illusory, for the site was unhealthy and the troops' winter diet brought scurvy that carried off at least 40 men. In the spring Leavenworth shifted the camp and the men lived in tents about a mile north on the west bank of the Mississippi near a fresh spring at a site called Camp Coldwater.

(CONTINUED)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c, 300

UTM REFERENCES

A	15	48,62,6,0	49,7,0,6,7,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
c	15	48,42,8,0	49,7,0,0,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B	15	48,49,4,0	49,6,9,6,1,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D	15	48,43,8,0	49,7,2,5,4,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Marilynn Larew, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey Division, HCRS

DATE

3/15/78

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20240

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

Landmark Designated: Dec 16, 1960  
LOCAL DATE

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act (Public Law 89-665) I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

George T. Lanning  
DATE Mar. 23, 1978

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

[Signature]

DATE

4/5/78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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The towers at the corners of the ten foot high limestone wall each have different shapes and roof lines. The semi-circular battery and the round tower have flat roofs. The pentagonal tower and hexagonal towers have roofs rising to points with a corresponding number of roof faces. The round tower is topped by a flag-staff with a wooden crow's-nest observation platform half way up. Entry into the fort is through a gate in the middle of the west wall with a gate house to the right as you go in. The guard house to the left on the gate has cells for civilian and military prisoners and a room for the officer of the day.

Outside the walls to the west are two brick artillery barracks (1904), now used as a Veterans Administration Out-patient Clinic. These two and a half story, I shaped buildings are on raised foundations of rusticated stone. The flanking wings have modified Palladian windows in the gable ends.

Continuing west one comes upon a long rectangular stone building with a hipped roof--the Quartermaster Stores building (1878). Quite plain in appearance, the building has alternating groups of three--window, door, window, or three windows--the center opening having a semi-circular arch at the top and the flanking openings having flat stone lintels.

West of the Quartermaster Stores building are four long brick buildings, two with gable roofs and two with monitors. These were the horse or mule barns. The easternmost now houses offices of the Minnesota Historical Society.

South of the freeway exchange lies an area known as new Ft. Snelling. During the active years of the "old" fort's history, Taylor Avenue and the Parade Ground were grazing land, post gardens, and a small portion of the government's Indian agency, traversed by a cart track running southwest from the fort gate. By the late 1870s, the stone buildings of the original fort and the wooden sheds of the Civil War were no longer adequate for a fort acting as headquarters and supply base for the Department of Dakota. In 1879, Taylor Avenue was laid out along the old cart track and a brick post headquarters and officers' quarters were erected. During the next decade new brick barracks, hospital, guardhouse, bachelor officers' quarters, and post exchange/gym were added as military policy continued to close small one and two company western forts and consolidate troops into a few large regimental posts near transportation centers. As a result of the Dick Act army reorganization, a few new barracks and officers' quarters were built in the Taylor Avenue area in 1904; one more brick building and a baseball bleacher section were added in the late 1930's, by which time the street had been surfaced and curbed.

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Thirteen of twenty-three quarters and three of six barracks on the south end of Taylor Avenue were destroyed by airport expansion in the 1950s; in recent years a freeway has severed the avenue from the "old" fort area. The remainder of Taylor Avenue, though truncated, contains some forty buildings and retains its pre-World War II atmosphere. It is the best preserved and most representative area of this major military post which played an important national role from the 1880s through 1945.

Individual structures have not been greatly altered beyond replacement of some wooden porches, and more importantly, the integrity of the avenue as a whole is still intact. The unbroken parallel rows of quarters and barracks appear much as they did when men of the Spanish-American War, World War I, or World War II marched past them. The headquarters buildings north of the row were the administrative hub of the fort. The parade was the geographical center and the site of drills and special ceremonies.

Buildings of Interest

1. Department of Dakota Headquarters (Bldg. 67; 1884). Built to house the Department of Dakota, this two story yellow brick building stands on a raised foundation of rusticated stone. Severely plain save for the bracketed cornice and the entrance tower with its own bracketed cornice and mansard roof pierced by pedimented dormers which hold clocks, the building is very reminiscent of the "Old Main" buildings at the land grant colleges which were constructed in the same period.
2. Barracks (Bldgs. 101, 102, and 103; 1889). Three of the four matching barracks along the east side of Taylor Avenue still stand. They are long, yellow brick, two and a half story structures on raised foundations of rusticated stone. The central block and flanking wings are connected by transverse wings, giving the buildings the shape of a modified E. The hipped roofs are pierced by jerkin-head dormers. The transverse wings each carry two ventilating cupolas on the ridge of the roof. Separate kitchen buildings were built in back between the long wings and the center block. They are now connected.
3. Officers' Quarters (Bldgs. 152-161; 1879-1905). Along the west side of Taylor Avenue facing the barracks are ten yellow brick buildings, all but one of which (Bldg. 157) are two or two and a half story single family dwellings. The center building (157) is a duplex. Large, irregular in shape, and vaguely Victorian, these quarters have differing roof lines, porches, dormers, and ornamental trim. Some have bay windows. Altogether they form a solid and visually pleasing integrated group, although they bear a sad aspect today because they have had no maintenance for some years. One of each type is illustrated in the accompanying photographs.

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4. The Married NCO Quarters (Bldgs. 70-75; 1879). These frame duplexes are among the earliest married NCO quarters the Army built; tragically, they are scheduled for demolition. They are very simple in construction and look like any American Gothic farmhouse, with gable roof and dormer gable centered in front. The double entry signifying two family occupancy where a porch should be is the only thing that distinguishes them from their country cousins. This group of buildings forms an educational contrast to the officers' quarters.

5. BOQ (Bldg. 63; 1879). Again exceedingly plain, this rectangular, two story yellow brick building with enclosed entrances is illustrative of the lives of the "dashing lieutenants" who once lived there. All of the quarters buildings offer firm evidence that the frontier has passed Minneapolis and that the Army was becoming an increasingly complex organization.

6. PX and Gym (Bldg. 53; 1903). Built of a darker brick than most of its neighbors, this turn of the century building shows signs of Beaux Arts influence. Although simplified in form, it resembles some of the Ernest Flag buildings at the Naval Academy. It is scheduled for removal.

Taken together, the old and new fort areas offer a cross section of the history of American military construction. The old walled fort comes from the period of construction designed to defend against a mobile enemy with no artillery or seige machines and little experience in seige warfare. But the wall illustrates the isolation of the small, pre-Civil War frontier army in the midst of an occasionally powerful and fearsome adversary. The spacious layout and the size of the buildings in the new fort show two things: one, the increasing size of the post-Civil War army, and, two, the increasing confidence of Americans that the Indians were no longer the severe threat they once were. In fact, the Department of Dakota oversaw the subjugation of the northern tribes. From that time on, the army would need no defensive walls.

The old fort area has been reconstructed and is used to interpret the 1820-1858 frontier army. The future of the new post is in doubt.

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Before construction had begun on the permanent fort, Leavenworth's place was taken by Boston-born vertern Colonel Josiah Snelling (1782-1828) who arrived in September 1820. Snelling selected the present site and designed the fort which was built under his direction. Snelling was red-haired and hasty, but was highly regarded by his men.

The fort was built entirely by the men. Limestone was quarried nearby and lumber for the roofs and floors came from logs cut in the Rum River region, floated down the Mississippi and sawn at a mill established for that purpose by Snelling. All this labor was done by the men of the Fifth Infantry who received 15¢ a day extra in addition to their usual pay of \$5.00 a month. Largely complete by 1824, the fort was diamond-shaped to accommodate itself to the contours of the bluff it occupied, two sides commanding the rivers and two sides the prairie beyond. The limestone wall was ten feet high, each corner furnished with a tower, to the east a semi-circular battery which commanded both rivers, to the west a round tower with a platform for canon and slits for musketry to command the prairie, and to the north a pentagonal tower commanding both the Mississippi and a portion of the prairie. Inside the fort were a large house for the commanding officer, officers' quarters, three barracks (one used as a hospital), shops, a guardhouse, school, sutler's store, quartermaster's warehouse, and a parade ground.

The post was named Fort St. Anthony, but General Winfield Scott was so pleased with it when he made the first inspection that he recommended that the name be changed to Fort Snelling "as a just compliment to the meritorious officer under whom it has been erected." The name became official in 1825. As a measure of the fort's proper design, it was never attacked, although its troops marched out many times over the years against the Indians.

Since Fort Snelling was at the end of a long and perilous supply line, the rations which finally got there were often bad, particularly the salt meat, from which the boatmen often drained the brine to make the casks lighter, and during the winter the river was often closed to transportation. In order to prevent the disease of the first year and to provide his troops with better food, Colonel Snelling put them to farming on some 90 acres of bottom land near the fort. He had bad luck with his wheat crops, but the troops managed to provide potatoes and other vegetables which varied their diet. A herd of beef cattle was also maintained, and experiments were made with swine, to try to free the soldiers from the monotonous diet of salt pork. Hay and firewood cutting also added to the troops' non-military duties.

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Fort Snelling immediately became an island in the wilderness--the germ from which modern Minnesota developed. Around the security of the limestone walls clustered the Sioux who had used the area for years, after having been driven from the Mille Lacs region in the latter part of the 18th century, and they continued to camp, feast, and play ball there. A quarter mile to the west of the fort were the Indian Agency buildings where Lawrence Taliaferro served the Sioux and Chippewa with such distinction (1819-1839) that both tribes loved and trusted him. His attention to the rights of his charges kept him in constant conflict with powerful fur trading interests including Astor's American Fur Company in nearby Mendota, as well as with the military authorities at the fort. The buildings consisted of a six-room council house, the agent's house, and a log armorer's shop.

The first settlers in the area began to filter in 1821: five Swiss families from Lord Selkirk's colony at Pembina (Winnepeg). They were allowed to squat on the military reservation and were joined by more refugees from the north, run out by Indian troubles, the fur trade wars, bad weather, and crop failures. Their cabins were eventually clustered around the B. F. Baker Fur Post (see below). In 1840 they were expelled from the post grounds; they moved across the Mississippi, went a few miles downstream, and founded St. Paul (Pig's Eye). By 1845 there were about 30 families there.

Fur traders had met Indians in the area from the earliest times. Once the fort was built the trade settled down in the vicinity. Besides the American Fur Company post (Mendota), there was the large stone post of B. F. Baker which stood about 3/4 of a mile north of the fort on the Mississippi River bluff. Valued at \$6000 in 1841, the building was sold to Kenneth McKenzie who added to it in 1853 and used it as a hotel. About a mile up the Minnesota from the fort was the Lands End Fur Post of Joseph R. Brown, another independent trader.

Not only was the fort the center of early settlement, it was the focal point of the early tourist trade. When painter George Catlin visited the fort in 1835, he suggested that the scenery was so sublime that it was worth a trip on a river steamboat just to see it. Thus was born the "Fashionable Tour" that visitors made in the next quarter century. The St. Louis Hotel, built to accommodate the tourists, was situated about a half mile above the fort, south of Baker's Fur Post, near where the squatters had lived.

As the "cradle of Minnesota," Fort Snelling saw a number of firsts: the first school (1823), the first Protestant congregation (Presbyterian, 1835), the first doctor (1819) and hospital, the first steamboat arrival (the Virginia, 1823), the first circulating library, theatrical productions, and post office.

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Here at the fort men and women from the east, wayfarers in a strange land, attempted to re-create the civilization they had known and in doing so brought the first culture to a raw country.

In military terms, Fort Snelling was for a quarter of a century the farthest northwest post of the "Permanent Indian Barrier." The post was so well designed that it was never attacked by the Indians, although troops were dispatched again and again to enforce peace between the Sioux and Chippewa, and to repress the Winnebago. Fort Snelling troops patrolled the Canadian border to prevent illegal buffalo hunting by French-Canadians, and throughout the 1830's and 1840's the troops were busy with Indian troubles in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa, but as the frontier moved toward the Great Plains Fort Snelling's importance declined and in 1858 the post was sold to sutler Franklin Steele, who had built his home near the Indian Agency in 1838. Steele used the grounds as a sheep ranch.

When the Civil War broke out, Minnesota was the first state to offer troops to President Lincoln. That regiment, the First Minnesota Infantry, went to Fort Snelling, re-activated and newly designated by the Governor as an induction and training center for Minnesota Volunteers. The First Minnesota reached the east in time to participate in the First Battle of Bull Run. Ten other regiments were given brief training before being sent to the front. The old fort area being too small, "temporary" structures were built and training spilled out into the area south and west of the former Indian Agency.

During the Sioux Uprising of 1862 the post was a base of operations against hostiles. Altogether some 22,000 troops were raised in Minnesota for Civil War service and the Sioux Uprising, and all of them funneled through the fort.

After the war even though there were reductions in the army, troops continued to be stationed at Fort Snelling because of Indian troubles. In 1866 General Alfred H. Terry brought the headquarters of the Department of Dakota to the fort, thus making the post the staging area for the most important period of development in North and South Dakota and Montana and for the last of the major Indian battles in the area. In the winter of 1869 many of the buildings at the old fort were damaged by fire, forcing the troops into the temporaries built for the Civil War induction center. In 1879 after the worst part of the plains war was over General Terry began the construction of a handsome new yellow brick fort complete with parade and polo ground south and west of the old fort. The Department of Dakota occupied these buildings until 1886.

The year 1898 saw three state regiments, one federal regiment, and supporting units assembled for service in the Spanish American War, while in the autumn the Chippewa rose at Leech Lake and several companies were rushed to the area

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to engage them. In the battle six men were killed and many more wounded; the fight has been called the last Indian battle in the United States.

Between the Spanish American War and the First World War Minnesota National Guard units were trained at the fort, and regulars continued to be stationed there. In 1916 troops were raised for service on the Mexican border. Beginning in early 1917, when it became clear that the United States was going to be involved in the European War, troops were recruited and trained at Fort Snelling before embarkation for France. An Officers' Training Camp there during the war graduated 3,500 officers, and most of the 118,500 Minnesotans who were in military service during World War I were processed at Ft. Snelling.

Between the wars the first federally recognized Air National Guard unit, the 109th Aero Observation Squadron, was based at the fort (1921-31). The air field is now a part of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport. The fort was the home of the Third Infantry Regiment ("The Old Guard" which is now stationed at Ft. Myer, Virginia, and performs ceremonial duties in the nation's capitol), as well as the ROTC, the Army Reserve, the Minnesota National Guard, and the Citizen's Military Training Corps. From 1928 to 1930 re-enactments of World War I battles were staged there.

During World War II the fort served as a regional processing center for upper mid-western troops. The post was decommissioned in 1946 after 127 years of service to the nation from the Indian wars to the nuclear age.

Among the famous who served at or visited at Ft. Snelling were Henry Leavenworth, Josiah Snelling, Zachary Taylor, Seth Eastman, Winfield Scott Hancock, Simon Boliva Buckner, T. W. Sherman, John Pemberton, Henry Thoreau, Captain Frederick Marryat, George W. Featherstonhaugh, and the Count von Zeppelin. Anybody traveling in the northwest stopped off there. Dred Scott married his wife Harriet, a former slave of Indian Agent Taliaferro there, and it was partly his residence at Ft. Snelling on which he based his famous suit for freedom. Perhaps the most historic event ever held at the fort was the Chippewa Treaty of 1837, by which the tribe surrendered all their lands between the Mississippi and the St. Croix Rivers.

Fort Snelling is a rare exception among frontier posts, most of which had brief periods of service to the nation only to fade as the frontier passed them by. Fort Snelling continued to be an active post, with the exception of the years 1858-61, as the frontier passed and the army moved into the modern world.

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Three sites connected with the earlier history of Fort Snelling still maintain a substantial degree of historic integrity and are included in the boundaries of the landmark site. These are: the old Camp Coldwater site, due east of the VA Hospital and on the Mississippi River, the Steamboat Landing Site, below Fort Snelling and across from Pike Island, and old Fort Snelling, at present undergoing restoration. These sites are connected by Mississippi Park. Many modern structures presently within the boundaries are due for demolition and do not contribute to the national significance of the landmark. The boundaries provide an unobtrusive setting in a generally obtrusive area.

The later Fort area is discontinuous from the earlier Fort area, separated by a complex system of highways and office buildings. The later Fort area boundaries include the remaining section of Taylor Avenue and the parade grounds, the polo field and several dozen Army buildings. Most of these date from the twentieth century, but several noteworthy structures, including the Headquarters for the Department of Dakota, date from the 1880's.

Old Fort Snelling: Post on Upper Mississippi

Beginning at a point at the junction of the Mendota Bridge and the west bank of the Minnesota River (abandoned channel), thence northerly and northwesterly along the west bank of the Minnesota River (abandoned channel) and the south bank of the Mississippi River a distance of approximately 3000 meters to the point of intersection with the extension of 54th Street, thence westerly a distance of approximately 300 meters along the previously described extension of 54th Street to the 800' contour line as indicated on USGS 7.5 minute series, Saint Paul West Quadrant, 1967, thence southerly along this 800' contour line a distance of approximately 800 meters to the northern right-of-way of Minnesota Highway 55, thence southeasterly along this northern right-of-way line of Minnesota Highway 55 a distance of approximately 1600 meters to the point of beginning.

Old Fort Snelling: Department of Dakota

Beginning at a point at the junction of Bloomington Avenue and the northerly property line of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport as defined by a chain link fence, thence northeasterly a distance of approximately 1000 meters along the westerly right-of-way of Bloomington Avenue to its intersection with Minnesota Highway 5 Fort Snelling Exit road, thence easterly a distance of approximately 270 meters along the southerly right-of-way of this

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exit road to its intersection with western right-of-way of Minnesota Highway 5, thence southerly a distance of approximately 1100 meters along the western right-of-way of Minnesota Highway 5 to its intersection with a line which is the extension of the northerly property line of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport as described above, thence northwesterly a distance of approximately 820 meters along this described line and the northerly boundary of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport as defined by a chain link fence to the point of beginning.