

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Nebraska
COUNTY: Douglas
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE MAR 27 1974

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: Fort Omaha Historic District
AND/OR HISTORIC: Sherman Barracks

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 30th St. between Fort St. and Laurel Ave.			
CITY OR TOWN: Omaha		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Second Congressional District	
STATE Nebraska	CODE 31	COUNTY: Douglas	CODE 055

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>surplus</u>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

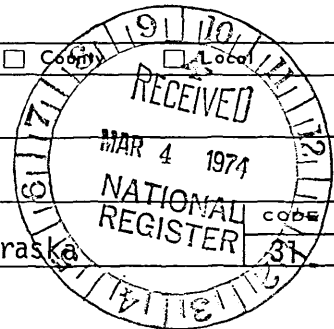
OWNER'S NAME: <del>General Services Administration</del> <i>Dept. of the Navy</i>	STATE: Nebraska
STREET AND NUMBER: 1500 East Bannister Road	
CITY OR TOWN: Kansas City	STATE: Missouri
	CODE: 29

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: County Clerk, Douglas County Courthouse	
STREET AND NUMBER: 1700 Farnam Street	
CITY OR TOWN: Omaha	STATE: Nebraska
	CODE: 31

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic Preservation in Nebraska	
DATE OF SURVEY: 1971	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Nebraska State Historical Society	
STREET AND NUMBER: 1500 "R" Street	
CITY OR TOWN: Lincoln	STATE: Nebraska



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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The first troops to arrive in Omaha to carry out the duties of headquarters for the newly created Military District of Nebraska in 1862 were all housed in rented buildings. All military functions were carried out from temporary rented quarters until late 1864.

In October of 1864, with a scarcity of rentable buildings and the prospect of permanency for the company-sized unit assigned to Omaha, a "Post at Omaha" was authorized to be constructed near present-day 24th and Cuming Streets (south of present-day Fort Omaha and the center of the business district today). The buildings were all constructed of wood and first occupied in early November.

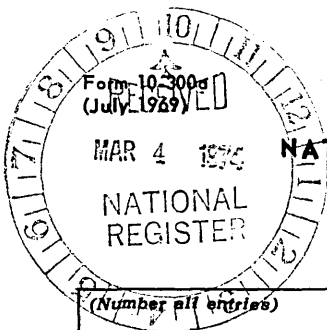
With the end of the Civil War, the Army returned to the use of rented buildings, and in October of 1865 the original post buildings were sold. The lumber from these buildings was either incorporated into new structures or complete structures were moved to new locations.

The post continued to function in rented buildings until 1868, when Army Chief of Staff General William T. Sherman of Civil War fame approved construction of "cheap barracks for one regiment."

The site for the new post was selected by Major General C. C. Augur and personally inspected by General Sherman. The post was to be located four miles north of the city on forty-two acres of land purchased by Omaha citizens and leased to the Army (later sold to the Army in 1882). Forty additional acres were purchased from Augustus Kountze, a prominent Omaha banker. The eighty and one-half acres of the post formed a parallelogram.

Construction began in September, 1868, and by mid-November the barracks had been completed. The new post was named "Sherman Barracks" in

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Nebraska	
COUNTY Douglas	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAR 27 1974

7. Description (cont.) page 2

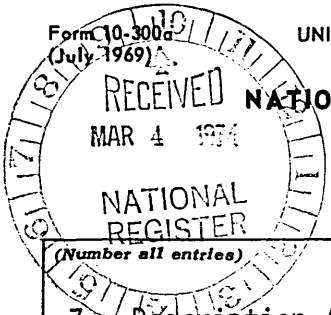
honor of the General. This was disapproved and the post was re-named "Omaha Barracks."

The structures at the post were all frame and faced inwards around a rectangular parade ground of approximately thirty acres. On the east side were located the post headquarters, guardhouse, bakery, storehouses, and sutlers store. There were ten company-sized barracks, five on each side of the parade ground. A hospital was built in the northwest corner. By 1871 a band barracks, ice house, quarters for laundresses and married enlisted men had been added.

In 1878, the Army required Department Commanders and officers to live on the post. As a result, three new brick buildings were erected at the post. The first structure to be completed was the commanding general's home, occupied first by General George Crook, who was stationed at Fort Omaha as commander of the Department of the Platte from 1875-82 and again from 1886-88. The house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Two additional brick buildings were completed in 1879, a headquarters building and a storehouse. Also, a number of frame buildings which had been used as officer's quarters were repaired and enlarged.

In December of 1878 the name of "Omaha Barracks" was changed to Fort Omaha.

By 1886 the fort comprised thirty-eight buildings used as "residences by officers, places for the transaction of regimental business, storehouses and manufactories of all kinds requires for local repair." However, time



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

*(Continuation Sheet)*

STATE Nebraska	
COUNTY Douglas	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAR 27 1974

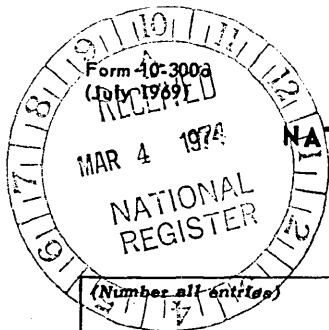
7. Description (cont.) page 3

had finally caught up with the "cheap barracks" constructed in 1864, and in 1896, when it was determined that the facilities at Fort Omaha were inadequate for Army needs, the fort was abandoned. When the government was unable to sell the structures for what it considered a fair market price all of the original frame buildings were either moved or demolished. Brick buildings that were built prior to 1896 have survived. The three brick buildings erected for the Department of the Platte have also survived. The post remained unoccupied between 1896 and 1905 except for the staging of the 2nd Nebraska Regiment during the Spanish-American War of 1898.

In 1905 troops again arrived at Fort Omaha to protect the construction of new buildings to house the Army Signal Corps. Between 1905 and the end of W.W.II, all of the early "cheap barracks" were replaced by brick structures built in an Italianate style. In 1909 the Signal Corps added a Balloon School to their facilities at the post. A balloon plant was installed in 1909 and the first balloon ascension occurred that year.

In October of 1913 the post was again deactivated but was reopened in 1916 as a training school for observation balloon crews. Additional quarters and balloon houses were built and a center for hydrogen production and experimentation with lighter-than-air craft was added.

During the 1920's and the depression of the 1930's the fort was continuously occupied. Since 1935 the fort has been largely used as a residence post for officers on duty at Seventh Corps area headquarters. During W.W.II it served as a support installation for the 7th Service Command.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Nebraska	
COUNTY Douglas	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAR 27 1974

7. Description (cont.) page 4

In 1947 the Army declared the fort surplus property and it was taken over by the Navy as a reserve training center. In 1973 the Defense Department declared Fort Omaha "excess" to their needs and in 1974 the Fort has been declared "surplus" and will soon be offered to the State or political subdivision thereof for possible adaptive uses.

The following 19th century buildings still stand on the grounds.

Building numbers are those currently used for identification:

Bldg. #1 Quarters No. 1 (General George Crook House). Built in 1879

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Bldg. #4 Department Headquarters. Built in 1879. After the Department of the Platte moved back to Omaha in late 1881 it was used as post headquarters, chapel, and hospital. Recently it has been used as officers' quarters.

Bldg. #15 Storehouse. Built in 1879. This building has been transformed into married enlisted men's quarters.

Three other buildings erected in 1884 remain today.

Bldg. #6 and #10 Guardhouse. Originally one building. After reactivation of the post in 1905 the rear or east wing of the guardhouse was used as a hose house until 1914. In ca. 1914 the corridor joining the wing to the building was removed. The main part of the guardhouse has been converted into officers' quarters and the wing has become a garage.

Bldg. #9 Magazine. Recently used to store Navy's small-arms ammunition.

Few changes over the years.

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

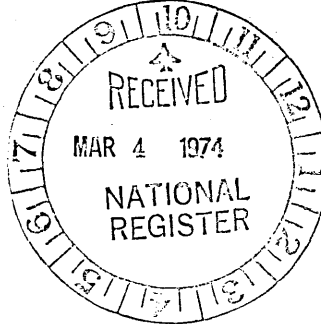
*(Continuation Sheet)*

STATE Nebraska	
COUNTY Douglas	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
MAR 27 1974	

*(Number all entries)*

7. Description (cont.) page 5

Bldg. #2 and #3. Double set of officers' quarters. Built at a cost of \$4,000. The first building north of the Crook House. The building has undergone few architectural alterations.



**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Ever since troops were first stationed in Omaha in 1882, Fort Omaha has played a major role in the history of the state and the nation.

Soldiers were first assigned to the area temporarily to protect supplies and frontier supply routes. When Omaha was made the headquarters for the newly created Department of the Platte in April, 1866, Fort Omaha was assured a permanent role in frontier history.

Soldiers from the Fort were used to protect the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad and later the completed line was used to carry troops to railheads as necessity demanded. They had a major influence on the Indian Wars of the 1870's and 1890's. Troops from the Fort were used to protect settlers in the Republican and Loup Valleys during the 1870's. The Yellowstone Expedition was assembled at the Fort in 1873. Fort troops were used to pursue the Cheyenne during the Outbreak of 1878 and were in the Pine Ridge area in 1890.

Fort Omaha soldiers were used to patrol the streets of roistering frontier Omaha; they also drew duty on such occasions as the Olive-Fisher trial in Hastings in 1879, a prison riot in Lincoln, the Omaha courthouse riot, and the Pullman Strike of 1894.

The roster of notable commanders of the Fort include Brigadier

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Federal Writer's Project, Nebraska: A Guide to the Cornhusker State (New York: Viking Press, 1939).

Archival records and files, Nebraska State Historical Society.

O.I.C. Publication, History of Fort Omaha (Omaha: \_\_\_\_\_, 1918).

Greguras, Fred, The Military Posts of Nebraska (forthcoming).

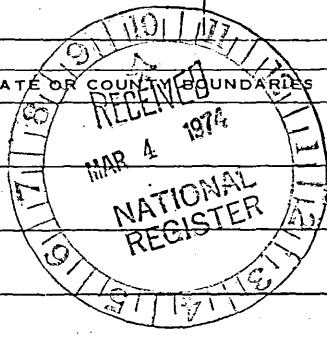
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	41° 18' 44"	95° 57' 40"		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	41° 18' 44"	95° 57' 23"				
SE	41° 18' 15"	95° 57' 40"				
SW	41° 18' 15"	95° 57' 23"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 82½ acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Persijs Kolberg, Curator II of Historic Sites

ORGANIZATION: Nebraska State Historical Society      DATE: 2/23/74

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1500 "R" Street

CITY OR TOWN: Lincoln      STATE: Nebraska      CODE: 31

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: Marvin T. Knelt

Title: Director, nebr. Hist. Soc.

Date: Feb. 22, 1974

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

AR MacIntyre  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 3/27/74

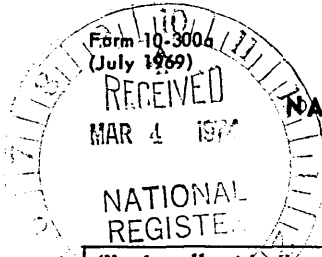
ATTEST:

Charles A. Bennett  
Acting Keeper of The National Register

Date: 3-27-74

SEE INSTRUCTIONS  
NW 15/252 510/4577 400  
SE 15/252 490/4576 520  
SW 15/252 100/4576 540





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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Nebraska
COUNTY	Douglas
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
MAR 27 1974	

(Number all entries)

8. Significance (cont.) page 2

General Edward O. C. Ord (1871-75); General George Crook (1875-82 and again in 1886-88); Brigadier General O. O. Howard (1882-84). Later commanders included Brigadier Generals Edwin W. Sumner (1898-99); Fitzhugh Lee (1900-01); Camillo C. C. Carr and Francis Moore (1904); and Major General Leonard Wood (1919-20).

One of the most important events to occur at the Fort was the trial of Ponca Chief Standing Bear in 1879. As a result of the trial the courts decided that Indians were citizens with constitutional guarantees of personal liberty.

During the middle 1880's the Fort was also a social center for the city of Omaha. The Omaha "400" regularly held their dances and outings at the Fort. The completion of the commanding officer's house in 1879 was "inaugurated with one of the most notable social gatherings ever assembled in Omaha." During its early years the Fort served as host to Ex-President and Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant in 1879 and in 1880 to President Rutherford B. Hays.

During W. W. I Fort Omaha, the fountainhead for all balloon activities in the United States, trained about 16,000 men who attended school there. The Fort was probably the largest center for balloon crews in the nation. In addition, it was a center for hydrogen production and experimentation with lighter-than-air craft.

Troops have been stationed at Fort Omaha almost continuously since 1862. The Fort has played a major role in the history of the frontier and early

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

*(Continuation Sheet)*

STATE Nebraska	
COUNTY Douglas	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER MAR 27 1974	DATE

*(Number all entries)*

8. Significance (cont.) page 3

aviation. It has had a major impact on the Indian population as well as the civilian population in the area. As headquarters for the famed 19th Century Department of the Platte a preserved Fort Omaha will recall the important chapters it contributed to United States military history.

