

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>NORTH DAKOTA</b>	
COUNTY: <b>BENSON</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER <b>71.12.38.0001</b>	DATE <b>12/8/71</b>

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**FORT TOTTEN HISTORIC SITE**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
 **Fort Totten**

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Section 16, Township 152 North, Range 65 West**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Fort Totten vic. (south)**

STATE: **North Dakota** CODE: **38** COUNTY: **Benson**

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNERS NAME:  
**State Historical Society of North Dakota, State of North Dakota**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Liberty Memorial Building**

CITY OR TOWN: **Bismarck** STATE: **North Dakota** CODE: **38**

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Office of Register of Deeds**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Benson County Courthouse**

CITY OR TOWN: **Minnewauken,** STATE: **North Dakota** CODE: **38**

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **9.81**

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**State Historical Society Historic Sites Registry, N. D. Century Code, Ch. 55-10-03**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1967** Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**State Historical Society of North Dakota**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Liberty Memorial Building**

CITY OR TOWN: **Bismarck,** STATE: **North Dakota** CODE: **38**

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

**FORT TOTTEN**

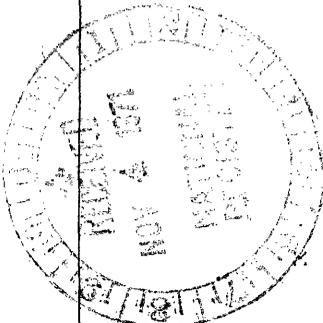
The Fort Totten State Historic Site, administered by the State Historical Society of North Dakota, is one of the best preserved military posts of the Trans-Mississippi West dating back to the Indian hostilities era. Most of the buildings comprising the square surrounding the center of the post, remain intact.

Originally the drill and parade area enclosed by the square of buildings was a center of activities for the fort. On the east side of the square were four company barracks, behind which were located two mess halls, a well house and the guard house. Opposite the company area on the west side was Officer's Row, centered by the commanding officer's quarters. Flanking his quarters were a pair of Captain's and First Lieutenant quarters and two Second Lieutenant's quarters. Standing on the north side was a hospital, surgeon and chaplain's quarters, magazine and quartermaster's storehouse. A dead house stood outside the northwest corner of the square. The south side included a commissary storehouse, baker's shop and adjutant's office. Outside of the square were the stables and quartermaster storehouses, sinks, bath house and other service buildings.

Excluding one company barracks, the square proper is complete as it appeared when the post was closed in 1890. One of the barracks was razed by fire, and all but half of one mess hall, the dead house, well house and guard house were eliminated during the Bureau of Indian Affairs occupancy. A gymnasium was constructed for the Indian school, roughly covering the former boundaries of the gutted barracks and one mess hall. Also an addition connecting two of the company barracks, and two of the officers quarters were made.

The State Historical Society site includes roughly the area designated as the fort square. Those buildings outside the square, on land still owned by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, have long been removed. Major alterations have been made to the interiors of the existing structures, as classroom and vocation training facilities were needed for the Indian school. The extent of these modifications can only be determined by further investigation.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century   
 15th Century       17th Century       19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

**FORT TOTTEN**

Fort Totten located on the south shore of Devils Lake was established on July 17, 1867 by order of General Alfred H. Terry. It was one of a series of forts established for the protection of an overland route extending from southern Minnesota into western Montana. The post was named in honor of Brevet Major General Joseph Gilbert Totten, late Chief Engineer of the U. S. Army.

The original construction in 1867 was of a temporary nature, with crude log structures comprising the post. Surrounding the outpost was a stockade of oak logs, 18 feet tall. On April 6, 1869 a joint resolution of Congress authorized the Secretary of War to construct a more permanent facility, however, construction had already begun in 1868 prior to congressional authorization. Built 800 yards south of the original post, the buildings were constructed of brick made in the vicinity. This 1868-1871 development is the Fort Totten which stands today. It has been called the best preserved military post in the Trans-Mississippi West for the Indian Wars period.

In the 1870's the buildings at the fort included officers quarters, hospital, office, magazine, storehouses, company barracks, mess hall, commissary, baker shop and guard house. The post was constructed at an approximate cost of \$100,000.00. A corral and stables were added to accommodate the cattle and horses kept at the fort. Nearby a sutler's store and even a small brewery appeared to serve the occupants.

Up until 1873 Fort Totten was used as an infantry garrison. At this time Cavalry troops were added with the assignment of Companies D and I of the 7th Cavalry. Generally, until the closing of the military post in November 1890, there were two or three infantry companies and one or two cavalry companies manning the post.

Fort Totten was closely related to Indians and the Agency that adjoined the post. A treaty in 1867 with the Sisseton-Wahpeton, and Cut-Head Sioux brought small bands into the area. In 1874 a school called St. Michael's Mission, near the fort was established. When Fort Totten was abandoned in 1890 Congress approved the transfer of the plant to the Department of Interior for the establishment of an Indian Industrial School.

In 1960 Fort Totten was turned over to the State Historical Society of North Dakota by the Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs for preservation as a historic site.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

DeNoyer, Charles. "The History of Fort Totten". Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota, Vol. III, 1910.

Wertemberger, Mildred. "Fort Totten, Dakota Territory, 1867". North Dakota History, Vol. XXXIV, No. 2 (Spring, 1967).

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY				
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds			
NW	°	'	"	47°	58'	39"	98°	59'	35"
NE	°	'	"						
SE	°	'	"						
SW	°	'	"						

NO  
USM  
CO

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**James E. Sperry, Superintendent**

ORGANIZATION: **State Historical Society of North Dakota** DATE: **10/28/71**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Liberty Memorial Building**

CITY OR TOWN: **Bismarck** STATE: **North Dakota** CODE: **38**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**      **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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 James E. Sperry

Title State Liaison Officer, North Dakota

Date October 28, 1971

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

Ernest A. Conrath  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date Dec. 9, 1971

ATTEST:

William J. Mumtag  
Keeper of The National Register

Date Dec. 7, 1971

Limits of property owned by the State Historical Society of North Dakota

**FORT TOTTEN HISTORIC SITE  
BENSON COUNTY,  
NORTH DAKOTA**

- A. Adjutant's Office
- B. 2nd Lieut. Qtrs.
- C. Capt. and 1st Lieut. Qtrs.
- D. Comman's Officer
- E. Surgeon and Chaplain
- F. Hospital
- G. Magazine
- H. Quartermaster
- I. Company Barracks
- J. Company Mess Hall
- K. Guard House
- L. Commissary
- M. Bakery Shop

