

Touring Fort Laramie

In 1888 Fort Laramie looked almost like a frontier town (*illustration*). But for many years its unadorned military buildings occupied a stark

and treeless setting. Like most frontier posts, it had no palisades or walls. Early plans for a log or stone wall with blockhouses were never funded.

- Restored structure
- Ruins or foundation



Fort Laramie Today

Fort Laramie's riverside setting on the approaches to the Rocky Mountains looks much like it did when the post was active. Buildings from its military period, some dating to 1849, survived intact because homesteaders bought and lived in them and public agencies later worked to preserve them.

Eleven structures are now restored and refurnished to their historic appearances.

The national historic site is three miles southwest of the town of Fort Laramie, WY, off US 26. There are no camping facilities. Nearby towns offer RV parks, motels, and restaurants.

Accessibility: We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. Call or check our website.

The visitor center in the old Commissary Storehouse (tour stop 1) is open 8 am to 4:30 pm daily except Thanksgiving, December 25, and January 1, with longer hours from early June to Labor Day. (The parking lot and walkway do not appear on this historical illustration.) The visitor center offers historical information and literature, or visit our park website (*below*).

Safety and Management Concerns Don't let an accident spoil your visit. Be careful on footpaths and stairs and stay alert to hazards. Your safety is your responsibility. Historic ruins are fragile. You can help us preserve them by not walking or climbing on them. Possession, removal, or disturbance of any artifact is prohibited. For firearms regulations check the park website or ask a ranger.

More Information
Fort Laramie National Historic Site
956 Gray Rocks Road
Fort Laramie, WY 82212
307-837-2221
www.nps.gov/fola

Fort Laramie is one of over 390 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about national parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities, please visit www.nps.gov.

Touring the Fort

- 1 **Commissary Storehouse (1884)** This lime-concrete building served as a food warehouse for the army. It now houses park offices and the visitor center.
- 2 **Old Bakery (1876, left) and New Bakery Ruins (1883)** Bread was a staple of the soldier's diet. Here, in big double-brick ovens, bakers made up to 700 18-ounce loaves daily.
- 3 **Infantry Barracks Foundation (1867)** This one-story frame building housed three companies, with mess halls and kitchens for each in the back.
- 4 **New Guardhouse (1876)** After many complaints by the post surgeon this new guardhouse replaced an unhealthy, overcrowded older one. It held both major and minor offenders.
- 5 **General Sink (Latrine) Ruins (1886)** To protect the post's drinking water supply, a privy or general sink was built for four companies, with sewage channeled to the Laramie River.
- 6 **Two-Company Infantry Barracks Foundation (1866)** Ruins are all that are left of this big adobe barracks building.
- 7 **Old Guardhouse (1866)** Fort Laramie's second guardhouse, built to house 40 pris-

oners, often held more. The upper story had quarters for the guard and the Officer of the Guard. The first floor had the general confinement area and two small solitary-confinement cells. Prisoners had no furniture, heat, or light.

- 8 **Administration Building Ruins (1885)** Headquarters and the post school were moved here in 1885. Concerts, religious services, dances, plays, and lectures were held here in the post theater.
- 9 **Captain's Quarters (1870)** Planned as the Commanding Officer's quarters, this building became a duplex for company-grade officers.
- 10 **Fort John Site (1841-62)** The American Fur Co. built Fort John here of adobe brick reinforced with wooden beams. It had 15-foot walls and blockhouses on two corners. Abandoned and in ruins by 1858, it was demolished in 1862.
- 11 **Officers' Quarters Ruins (1881)** These large buildings, two duplexes and the Commanding Officer's quarters, were additions to smaller 1855 adobe buildings.
- 12 **"Old Bedlam" (1849)** Built to house bachelor officers, "Old Bedlam" is Wyoming's oldest documented building. The right side is restored to bachelor officers'

- 13 **Officers' Quarters Ruins (1882)** The first building south of the Surgeon's Quarters on "Officers' Row," a mix of frame, adobe, concrete, and stone, was built from an existing powder magazine.
- 14 **Magazine (1850)** The stone magazine, restored to 1850-62, held post weapons and ammunition, except large field pieces.
- 15 **Post Surgeon's Quarters (1875)** Post Surgeon Louis Brechemin and his family normally lived in half of this duplex from 1885 to 1889. His study held his scientific collections, and most patients were treated there before being sent to the hospital to recuperate.
- 16 **Lt. Colonel's Quarters (Burt House, 1884)** Lt. Col. Andrew Burt, a 7th US Infantry officer, and his wife Elizabeth lived in the home 1887-88. They liked relatively plain furnishings rather than the ornate decor used in most officers' houses during the Victorian period.
- 17 **Post Trader's Store (1849) and Complex** Built and run by a civilian licensed by the army, the post trader's store did a profit-

- 18 **Post Trader's (Sutler) House Foundation (1863)** Owned by the post trader/sutler at Fort Laramie, this house was among the more ornate at the post.
- 19 **Cavalry Barracks (1874)** Fort Laramie's largest building was built to add housing during the Indian Wars. Soldiers slept in two large squad bays upstairs. The kitchen and mess room were downstairs.
- 20 **Hospital Ruins (1873)** The 12-bed facility had a dispensary, kitchen, dining room, isolation rooms, and surgeon's office. This was the first lime-concrete building at Fort Laramie.