

M2162

ORDERS AND CORRESPONDENCE OF
FORT PHILIP KEARNY, WYOMING,
1866–1868

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INTRODUCTION

On the single roll of this microfilm publication, M2162, are reproduced orders and correspondence from the headquarters records of Fort Philip Kearny, Wyoming, for the period 1866–1868. These records are part of Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1821–1920, Record Group (RG) 393.

BACKGROUND

On July 13, 1866, four companies of the 2nd Battalion, 18th U.S. Infantry, under the command of Col. H. B. Carrington, established a military post eight miles north of Fort Reno, at the forks of the Big and Little Piney Creeks. Before the troops had reached the new site, General Order 7, Department of the Platte, June 28, 1866, had officially named the post Fort Philip Kearny, after Maj. Gen. Philip Kearny, who was killed at Chantilly, Virginia, September 1, 1862. The post, usually known by the name “Phil Kearny,” was constructed on the Bozeman trail between Virginia City, Montana, and the Oregon country, and served—along with Forts Reno and C. F. Smith—to protect wagon trains from hostile Cheyenne attacks. Bvt. Lt. Col. William J. Fetterman and his command were massacred by Cheyenne Indians on December 21, 1866, near this post. The fort was abandoned on July 31, 1868, in compliance with Special Order 80, Department of the Platte, dated March 16, 1868, and the Fort Laramie Treaty of April 29, 1868. It was burned soon afterwards by the Cheyenne.

RECORDS DESCRIPTION

PROCEEDINGS OF BOARDS OF SURVEY, SEPT. 1866–JULY 1868 (National Archives Identifier 301850),* are loose, unbound records generally arranged chronologically. Boards of officers were convened to investigate the circumstances and assess responsibility for the losses, damages, destruction, deficiencies, and other discrepancies involving public property such as clothing, camp equipage, and subsistence stores.

REGISTER OF WAGON TRAINS PASSING THROUGH THE POST, JUNE–AUG. 1868 (National Archives Identifier 301851), is an unpaginated volume whose cover reads “Provost Record.” It begins with 20 pages headed “List of Citizens Employed at Post, Fort Philip Kearny, D. T.” or similar language, and gives the names and occupations of those persons employed at the fort in 1868. Next there are 10 pages of a wagon train register that gives the dates of arrival and departure of each train, along with the names of the wagon master, assistant wagon master, teamsters, and fort from which it arrived; and the number of wagons, ambulances, mules, horses, carbines, breech loading muskets, and rounds of ammunition. Both government and private wagon trains are included. On

* Online Public Access (OPA) is available for research online at www.archives.gov. Fort Philip Kearny records were described as entries (series) 347–1 thru 347–9 in Robert Gruber, et al., comps., Preliminary Inventory 172, *Preliminary Inventory of the Records of United States Army Continental Commands, 1821–1920, Vol. 5, Military Installations* (National Archives and Records Administration, 1999), 453.

the microfilm, the target (information) sheet that precedes this series reads, "List of Citizens Employed, 1868."

ENDORSEMENTS SENT, DEC. 1867–JULY 1868, are in a single paginated volume. The endorsements are numbered 1–127 on pages numbered 2–45. Each entry includes the date received, name of writer, brief summary of contents, the endorsements (comments made in forwarding the letter to another recipient), and remarks. For example, the inventories and inspection reports by 1st Lt., 27th Infantry, and Adjutant A. H. Bowman, submitted to Headquarters, Fort Kearney, July 31, 1868, were forwarded to "Depot Commander" by Col. John E. Smith, 27th Infantry. These records constitute the second of two volumes of ENDORSEMENTS SENT, JULY 1866–JULY 1868 (National Archives Identifier 301845). The first volume is reproduced later in this microfilm publication.

COPIES OF GENERAL ORDERS AND SPECIAL ORDERS, 1867–68 (National Archives Identifier 301849), are copies sent from Fort Kearny to the Department of the Platte and were among the records kept by the Department of the Platte. The orders are arranged as follows: General Orders (1868), Nos. 1–12; Special Orders (1868), Nos. 1–94; General Orders (1867), Nos. 1–64, arranged in reverse numerical order; and Special Orders (1867), Nos. 1–219, arranged in reverse numerical order. There is minor disarrangement, and a few orders are missing; see the table below for specifics. The target (information) sheet preceding these records incorrectly identifies the date span as 1866–68.

General Orders (1868), 1–12
Special Orders (1868), 1–45, 45 [<i>sic</i>], 47–60, 62–71, 73–77, 61, 72, 83, 78, 79, 82, 80, 81, 84–94
General Orders (1867), 1–58, 61–64
Special Orders (1867), 1–26, 28–39, 43, 45–90, 92–138, 140–157, 159–219

General orders deal with subjects deemed of sufficient importance to be promulgated to the garrison as a whole, including acts of Congress; War Department orders and regulations; and such information as the time and order of marches, hours assigned to different beats and signals, the assembling of guard mounts and detachments, the appointment of courts-martial, police regulations, and the strength and composition of units assigned to perform various duties.

Special orders consist of issuances deemed not of sufficient import to warrant promulgation to the garrison as a whole. The special orders convey instructions to individuals or small groups in such matters as the assignment or relief of soldiers from duty, their transfer to other positions, assignments to special duties, and the granting of leaves of absence.

ENDORSEMENTS SENT, JULY 1866–DEC. 1867, are numbered 1–395 in an unpaginated volume. There is no target (information) sheet preceding this volume. These records constitute the first of two volumes of ENDORSEMENTS SENT, JULY 1866–JULY 1868 (National Archives Identifier 301845).

REGISTERS OF LETTERS RECEIVED, JULY 1866–FEB. 1867 (National Archives Identifier 301846), consists of two overlapping volumes. Only those pages with information were microfilmed.

The first volume, covering July 1866–Feb. 1867, includes index pages followed by pages with summaries of letters. Index entries indicate the name of the letter writer and the page upon which a summary of the letter was recorded. The summaries were recorded in rough alphabetical order by first letter of the sender's surname, then by date. Index pages 2, 4–21, 24–56, and letters summaries pages 57–59, 62–63, 68–69, 74–75, 86–87, 92–93, 98–99, 120–121, 126–127, 144–145, 162–163, 168–169, and 186–187 were microfilmed.

The second volume, covering July–Aug. 1866, has relatively few letters. Pages 1–3, 13–16, 29–32, 41–44, 53–56, 65–68, 77–80, 89–92, 101–104, 107–110, 113–116, 119–122, 131–134, and 218–219 were microfilmed.

GENERAL REMARKS

These records were filmed by the National Archives in June 1961 for the reference purposes of its "Civil War Branch (NNWC)." This film was assigned the number M2162 in 2012 in order to issue it as a National Archives Microfilm Publication. Target (information) sheets on this 1961 film refer to this record group as RG 98, which at that time included records from a broad time span. By the early 1970s, however, RG 98 was designated Records of United States Army Commands, 1784–1821, while RG 393 was designated Records of United States Army Continental Commands, 1821–1920.

RELATED RECORDS

Additional records in RG 393 created at Fort Philip Kearny, include Letters Sent, July 1866–July 1868 (National Archives Identifier 301844); Letters Received, Aug. 1866–July 1868 (National Archives Identifier 301847), General Orders and Special Orders, July 1866–July 1867 (National Archives Identifier 301848), and Guard Reports, Aug.–Sept. 1867 (National Archives Identifier 301852).

ROLL LIST

Proceedings of Boards of Survey, Sept. 1866–July 1868

Register of Wagon Trains Passing Through the Post, June–Aug. 1868, including a list of citizens employed at the fort, 1868¹

Endorsements Sent, Dec. 1867–July 1868, pages 2–45, endorsements 1–127

Copies of General Orders and Special Orders, 1867–68²

1868

General Orders, 1–12

Special Orders, 1–94

1867

General Orders, 1–64

Special Orders, 1–219

Endorsements Sent, July 1866–Dec. 1867, endorsements 1–375

Registers of Letters Received

July 1866–Jan. 1867

1866 (a few)

¹ The target (information) sheet preceding these records reads, “List of Citizens Employed, 1868.”

² The target sheet preceding these records incorrectly identifies the date span as 1866–68.