

A BIT OF HISTORY

Fort Leavenworth became a major influence in the Mexican-American War by serving as an induction center and base from which soldiers deployed.

President James K. Polk needing troops, ordered the recruitment of a battalion of Mormon men in June 1846. Once the order was received by Brig. Gen. Stephen W. Kearney at Fort Leavenworth, he sent Capt. James Allen, a regular Army officer serving in the 1st Dragoons, to Iowa Territory to complete the task. Allen, in cooperation with Brigham Young, raised a battalion of more than 500 men in Kanesville, present day Council Bluffs.

Departing Kanesville on July 20, they marched the 180 miles along the east bank of the Missouri River, arriving at Fort Leavenworth Aug. 1, 1846, spending most of the day crossing the river on the military ferry. During its two-week stay, the battalion was bivouacked near Thomas and Pope Avenues. The battalion was outfitted with firearms and accoutrements, and the means to carry and maintain them, but was not issued uniforms. They were issued a clothing allowance, which many used to purchase clothing items and goods needed along the trail.

For the most part the soldiers went to war in civilian clothing. They were issued knapsacks, haversacks, and canteens. Tents, cooking gear and supplies were hauled in wagons.

Upon leaving the post in mid-August, 1846 the battalion headed southwest along the Santa Fe Trail. After arriving in San Diego the battalion completed a 2,000-mile march, one of the longest marches in U.S. Army history.

Some of the battalion's accomplishments were helping to open trails to the West, helping Kearney stabilize post conflict California, building Fort Moore in Los Angeles and providing support to local citizens in San Diego, or what we today call civil affairs missions.

Visitors are welcome at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. We are located northwest of the greater Kansas City metropolitan area, 15 miles north of Interstate 70 on Kansas Highway 7 / US 73.

THE MORMON BATTALION AT FORT LEAVENWORTH



Please Note

All vehicles are subject to search when entering the installation. All persons over 16 must have a photo ID available. Additionally, all drivers must provide a valid license, proof of insurance and registration.

There are several places to dine on post, to include:

- The EXchange food court (Anthony's Pizza, Charley's Steakery, Church's Chicken, Robin Hood, Taco Bell)
- Burger King, across the street from the EXchange
- Strike Zone Bowling Center (165 Fourth Street)
- Fairway Grille, Trails West Golf Club (306 Cody Road)
- 12th Brick Grille in the old United States Disciplinary Barracks (310 McPherson Avenue)

1. Frontier Army Museum

100 Reynolds Avenue

The museum preserves and interprets artifacts that tell the history of the Frontier Army 1804-1916 and Fort Leavenworth from 1827 to present. For current days and hours of operation, call (913) 684-3191. Closed Federal holidays.

2. The Sutler's House

611 Scott Avenue

During the battalion's stay on post, Hiram Rich served as the post sutler and built this home. The original cabin was simply expanded as the sutler's business improved. Rich was a contractor who sold items soldiers were not issued, such as civilian clothing, paper and pocketknives. One Mormon Battalion member's journal mentioned buying peach ice cream for five cents a bowl here.

3. Memorial Chapel (location of Sutler's Store)

Intersection of Scott and Grant

The location of the Memorial Chapel, built in 1876, was where the Sutler's Store operated during the Mexican-American War. Several journals also record this is where they purchased clothing and goods. Picnicking is available across the street at Zais Park.

4. The Landing

Riverside Avenue

The Mormon Battalion was ferried across the Missouri River near this point on Aug. 1, 1846. The Fort Leavenworth Landing was one of the starting points for the Oregon, Santa Fe and California Trails in Kansas; large stone markers at the top and bottom of the hill describe these trails. John Taylor, Orson Hyde, Parley P. Pratt and other church leaders landed here in a dugout canoe to visit the battalion.

5. Santa Fe Trail

Riverside Avenue

The battalion departed Fort Leavenworth in mid August as part of Brig. Gen. Stephen W. Kearney's Army of the West and marched southwest along the Santa Fe Trail. The route headed south-southwest toward Lawrence, Kan., following closely the present day Grant Avenue on Fort Leavenworth out the front gate of the installation, then to Broadway Avenue, Maple Avenue, Shrine Park Road, and Desoto Road.

6. Mormon Battalion Plaque

Kearney Avenue and Sumner Place

The Mormon Battalion Plaque at the intersection of Kearney Avenue and Sumner Place, adjacent to the parade field, discusses the unit's stay on post. The plaque was dedicated by Elder David B. Haight from the quorum of the Twelve Apostles, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, on Sept. 18, 1981.

THE MORMON BATTALION

A SELF-GUIDED TOUR



7. Main Parade

Kearney Avenue

Over the years Main Parade has played an important role in shaping the future for today's Army. Henry Leavenworth, the founder of the post, constructed buildings here in 1828.

8. The Rookery (circa 1834)

12-14 Sumner Place

Brig. Gen. Stephen W. Kearney lived in this home and was the post commander from 1836-1841. During the Mexican-American War he served as the commanding general of the Army of the West. The Rookery is the oldest home in Kansas.

9. Number 20-22 Sumner Place

Built in 1839 as the post commander's home. It is the oldest standing brick home in the state of Kansas.

10. Building 466

Corner of McPherson and Scott Avenue

Constructed about 1840, and within the walls of the old military prison, this building was part of the Quartermaster Depot. The Mormon Battalion would have drawn some of their equipment from this area.

11. West-End Parade Field

Thomas and Kearney Avenue

This is the location of the battalion's bivouac area, where more than 500 men, women and children lived during their stay at the post. West-End has traditionally served as the cantonment area for volunteers and not regulars. This is the site of the Fort Leavenworth Chapel Complex. See Wayside Marker 11 at the intersection of Kearney and Thomas as it mentions the battalion's stay here.

12. Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery

Along Hancock Avenue

In 1862, Congress passed legislation creating the National Cemetery system; Fort Leavenworth was among the first 14 of those cemeteries designated by President Abraham Lincoln. James Allen, the first commander of the Mormon Battalion is buried in Section A, Plot 189, and is the oldest known military burial here (1846). He was first buried in the Officer Burial Ground where Wagner Hall stands on Augur Avenue.

Find out more about Fort Leavenworth!

Visit:

<http://garrison.leavenworth.army.mil>

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