

Historic Fort Riley

The buildings that encompass Fort Riley's Main Post historic district were, for the most part, constructed from limestone quarried in the area. The first construction at this post began in the summer of 1853 and within five years the basic outline of "old" Fort Riley took shape around a central (today's Cavalry) parade field. Three sets of officers' quarters stood on the north and south side of the field with three sets of enlisted barracks on the east and west sides. A post hospital (today's U. S. Cavalry Museum) was built to the east side of the parade field. To the south and west of this field were constructed stables and other buildings to be used for quartermaster storage and other support. A flagpole stood in the center of the parade field. This remained the basic lay out of the fort until the mid-1880s when the Army decided to establish the Cavalry and Light Artillery School at this post.

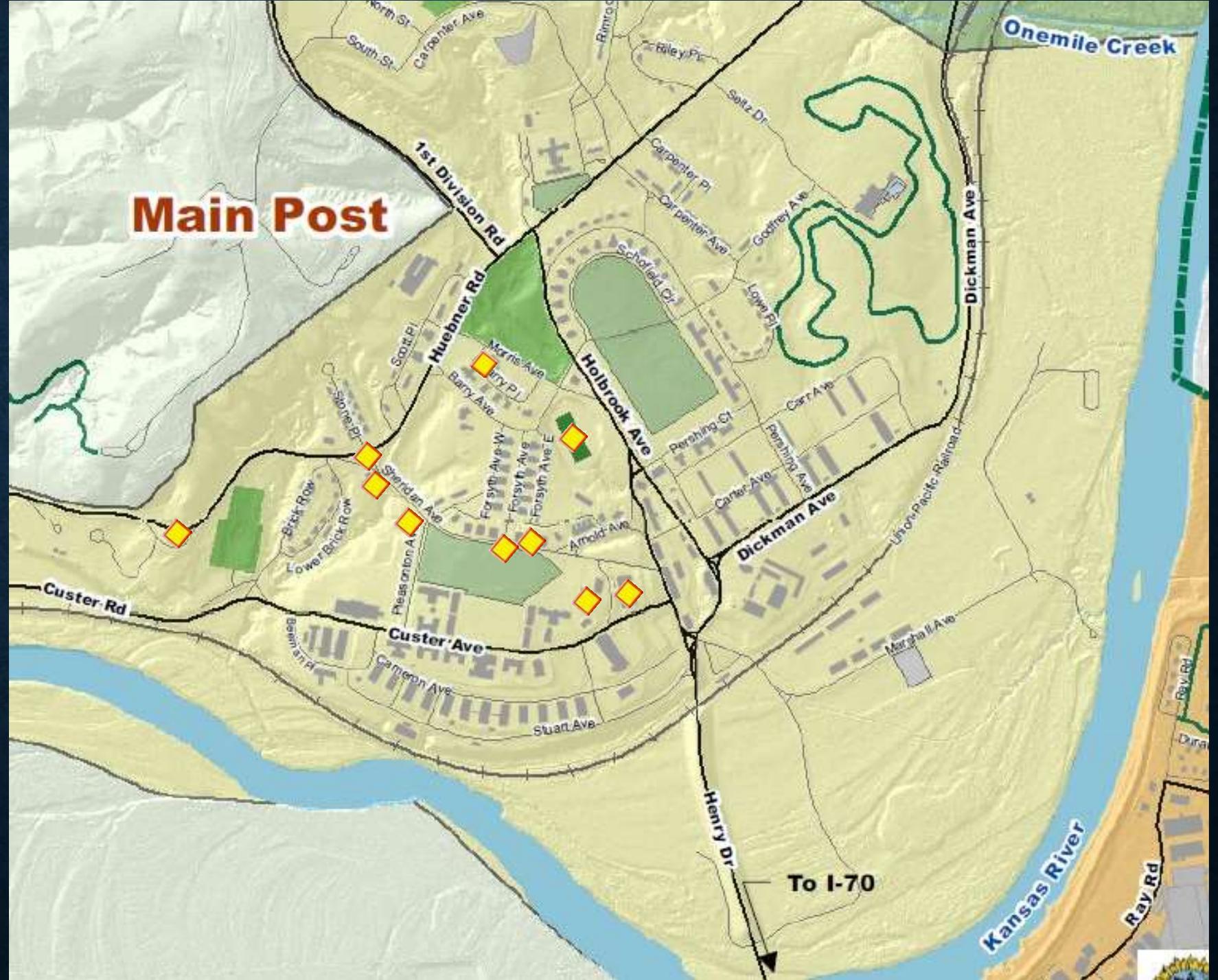
The buildings followed basic quartermaster designs and the stone was cut in a style known as a "pasture cut". This is characterized by a smooth surface.

Beginning in 1885 and continuing for the next three decades – as funding was available – the quarters and buildings that make up the historic Main Post were constructed. The buildings' exteriors are different in that the stone is a "rough" edge, which is sometimes referred to as a hammered stone.



[Main Post](#)

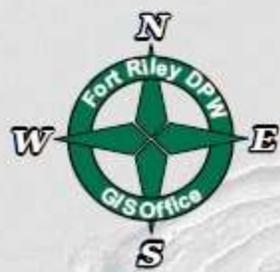
[Funston/Whitside](#)



Main Post

Beginning

Funston/Whitside



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Custer House

(24-A Sheridan Avenue)

The home surrounded by a white picket fence is Quarters 24-- also known as Custer House. This building was constructed in 1855 at a cost of \$3500 and is the only surviving set of officers' quarters dating from the fort's establishment.

At one time, it was believed Lieutenant Colonel George Custer^[1] and his wife lived in the A-side of these quarters. Subsequent research revealed that Custer actually occupied Quarters 21A which has undergone extensive renovation and is still used as quarters today.

Contrary to some stories about Custer, he did not leave from Fort Riley and go to the Little Big Horn.

The Custer House, Quarters 24-A, was officers' housing until March 1974. It is now part of the U.S. Cavalry Museum and is open daily from Memorial Day to Labor Day and on weekends during early May and September. Special group tours may also be arranged through the Public Affairs Office. The quarters are furnished to reflect the lifestyle of the late 1870s and early 1880s.

^[1] LTC George A. Custer (1839-1876) was the flamboyant and controversial commander of the 7th U. S. Cavalry Regiment. Along with 266 of his men, Custer died at the Battle of the Little Big Horn on 26 June 1876. The Custers lived at Fort Riley from November 1866 to the summer of 1867.

Old Trooper Monument and Chief's Grave (Sheridan and Forsyth Avenues)

At the intersection of Sheridan Avenue and Forsyth^[1] Avenue stands the “Old Trooper” monument, which was dedicated in 1961. An untitled pen and ink sketch drawn by Western artist Frederick Remington in 1898 inspired the statue. The life-size horse and rider were built of chemically treated plastic, using materials supplied by the Historical and Archaeological Society of Fort Riley. The original sketch is part of the U. S. Cavalry Museum’s art collection and is displayed in the Cavalry Museum.

Chief, the last cavalry mount registered to the U.S. government, is buried upright in front of the monument. The bay gelding was foaled in 1932 and entered the Army eight years later at Fort Robinson, Nebraska. He arrived at Fort Riley on April 3, 1941, and served with the 9th and 10th Cavalry units. In June 1942 he was transferred to the Cavalry School and retired in July 1953. He died on May 24, 1968, symbol of a bygone area.

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[1] Named for Colonel James A. Forsyth (1836-1906) who commanded the 7th U. S. Cavalry in the late 1880s and was the first commandant of the Cavalry and Light Artillery School.



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Sturgis Stadium and Tuttle Park

Sturgis Stadium and Tuttle Park are located on Barry Avenue. Sturgis Stadium was named in honor of the Sturgis family which boasted three generations of Army officers. It was originally used as a training area for the 1936 U. S. Olympic Equestrian Team and in more recent years has been converted to a football field.

Tuttle Park is named for Colonel Hiram Tuttle who served at Fort Riley during the 1930s and trained Army officers. In this area, horse shows were held. Still visible are several of the horse jumps.

Wyman^[1] Park and Locomotive #6072 (The Intersection of Huebner Road and Dickman^[2] Avenue)

This pleasant wooded spot was a picnic grounds and recreational area long before its official dedication as a park. The Fort Riley Non-Commissioned Officers Association bought the recreation equipment for the park which was dedicated in the summer of 1958. It is named for General Willard G. Wyman, a former 1st Infantry Division assistant commander who landed with the troops during the D-Day invasion of Normandy.

Locomotive #6072 symbolizes the importance of the railroads in the development of the West. The railroad arrived at Fort Riley in the fall of 1866. The Union Pacific Railroad donated this 110 ton locomotive to Fort Riley in February 1958. The engine was built as a coal steam engine in 1908 and converted to an oil-burner in 1941. The engine was used on mid-western rail lines for nearly a half century before coming to Fort Riley.



^[1] General Willard G. Wyman (1898-1969) was assistant commander of the 1st Infantry Division on D-Day and later commanded the 71st Division in World War II, and IX Corps in the Korean Conflict. Wyman established the Big Red One's forward command post beyond Normandy Beach with the code-name "Danger Forward".

^[2] Named for General Joseph T. Dickman (1857-1927) who was one of the first students at the Cavalry and Light Artillery School in 1893. In World War I he commanded the 3rd Division and later IV and I Corps.



**First Territorial Capitol of Kansas
(18-Huebner Road)**

The first Kansas Territorial Legislature met in this building from July 2-6, 1855. The settlement was originally called Pawnee. How this settlement came to be within the boundaries of Fort Riley is a long and twisted tale. Military and civilian officials were involved in land speculation, hoping the site would become the state capital. But the legislators who came here were divided over the question of how to organize the territory and adjourned never to return. This brief meeting was but a foreshadowing of the bitter power struggle that would simmer and eventually erupt between pro- and anti-slavery forces during the Civil War.



Great War Memorial (Huebner Road)

This memorial honors the soldiers who trained at Camp Funston for World War I. The monument was erected within a month following Armistice Day in November 1918. Major General Leonard Wood ordered the monument to be built to the memory of the soldiers who trained at this camp. The monument's inscription reads, "To the men who trained at Camp Funston for the Great War 1917-1919".

The 89th Division was organized here in August 1917 and was shipped overseas in May 1918. They won streamers for St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne and Lorraine campaigns. More than 7,000 of the division's men were killed or wounded. The 92nd Division was organized in October 1917 and earned battle honors for campaigns in the Meuse-Argonne and Lorraine.

The 10th Infantry Division was also formed here, but was still in training when the war ended. This division demobilized in February 1919 without ever seeing combat.



Major General Leonard Wood Headquarters (18-Huebner Road)

Stone foundations are all that remain of the quarters used by Major General Leonard Wood when he commanded Camp Funston in World War I. From atop this hill, a grand view of the camp awaits the visitor who has the energy to climb the steps.

A bronze plaque is affixed to the fireplace of the old headquarters and commemorates Wood's leadership. The plaque reads simply: "Headquarters Site, Major General Leonard Wood, Commanding General Camp Funston, 1917-1918."

St. Mary's and Main Post Chapels (Barry Avenue)

Two chapels are located on Barry Avenue, the larger structure is the the Main Post Chapel, constructed in 1897-98. This building was erected to better serve the religious needs of the soldiers assigned to Fort Riley as part of the Cavalry and Light Artillery School. Chaplain Thomas Barry secured donations and funding for completion of this chapel which was formally dedicated on July 4, 1897.

The smaller chapel behind the Main Post Chapel is known as St. Mary's Chapel and was completed in 1861. This is the first stone chapel erected in Kansas. Lieutenant James Ewell Brown "Jeb" Stuart^[1] probably helped raise money to construct this church. St. Mary's saw use as a depot during the Civil War and later a school. The chapel was re-consecrated in 1938 as a Catholic Chapel.



^[1] Lieutenant "Jeb" Stuart (1833-1864) served at Fort Riley in the late 1850s with the 1st U. S. Cavalry Regiment. During his assignment here, he married Flora Cooke, daughter of LTC Philip St. George Cooke, commander of the 2d U. S. Dragoons. The marriage took place on 14 November 1855 which may have been attended by Joseph Johnston and Robert E. Lee who finished court-martial duty at the fort only two days prior to the wedding.



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Ogden Monument (Huebner Road)

This monument honors Brevet Major Edmund A. Ogden, who oversaw the construction of Fort Riley. Ogden was born in Oswego County, New York on February 20, 1811. As a youth, he desired to pursue a military career and devote himself to the service of his country. He accomplished this goal by being appointed to the United States Military Academy and earning a commission as an infantry officer in 1827. In the following two decades, Ogden served at remote frontier posts ranging from Wisconsin and Illinois to Minnesota and Missouri. He also saw service in the Seminole War and the Canadian Border disturbances in the late 1830s. He transferred to the Quartermaster Department and after the Mexican War was stationed on the frontier. In this capacity, he oversaw the initial planning and construction efforts at Fort Riley.

Ogden, along with approximately seventy other people, died in the cholera epidemic which occurred at Fort Riley in the July and August 1855.

The first Ogden monument stood on the hill above what is now Huebner Road -- about 300 yards north of the present monument. Weather and vandalism damaged the first monument and was replaced after the Civil War. The second monument, which stands in front of the U. S. Cavalry Museum, was restored in 1887 by order of Colonel James Forsyth. This is the third monument and was placed here in 1923. At one time, it was believed this marked the geographical center of the United States.

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Post Cemetery (Huebner Road)

The Fort Riley Cemetery is the final resting-place for soldiers, veterans, service family members and two mass graves of those who perished in the cholera epidemics of 1855 and 1867. The cemetery covers 8.3 acres with the first recorded burial occurring in August of 1854.

Among the early burials are approximately 75 men, women and children who died in the 1855 cholera epidemic. The dead included, Cornelia Armistead, the wife of Major Armistead who later became a Confederate Major General and was killed at the Battle of Gettysburg.

Her grave is marked with a simple stone marker but a plaque was placed next to this by the Historical and Archaeological Society of Fort Riley. Many of the cholera victims were interred in a mass grave located in the southeast corner of the cemetery.

Other interments include three Medal of Honor recipients and other service members from all of America's major conflicts since the Civil War. There are graves of Confederate soldiers captured during the Battle of Glorietta Pass in 1862 who were brought to Fort Riley during the summer of that year. These soldiers were from the 2nd, 4th, 5th and 7th Texas Mounted Volunteers. In addition, victims of a second cholera epidemic, which occurred in the summer of 1867, as well as victims of the 1918 influenza outbreak rest in this quiet setting. German and Italian prisoners of war who died here during World War II are also buried here.



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Waters Hall (Sheridan Avenue)

Mose Waters was the last post sutler^[1] at Fort Riley. He built this structure in 1888 as a general store and recreation center.

Fort Riley's first canteen opened in the building's basement on February 1, 1890. Soldiers gathered at this building to socialize and purchase the necessities of life. In 1897 the canteen became the Post Exchange. In the first decade of the 20th century it was used by students of the Cavalry and Light Artillery School for horse-shoeing classes. It was later converted to apartments for Non-Commissioned officers and their families. In 1897, Waters Hall became the first Post Exchange. The building was converted to living quarters in 1930. Today it is used as guest quarters.

^[1] A sutler was someone who sold food and drink to soldiers.

**Trolley Depot
(Intersection of Sheridan &
Pleasanton^[1] Avenues)**

The small building at the intersection of Sheridan and Pleasanton Avenue was a trolley depot in the early 1900s. It was one of several stations on a route between Fort Riley and Junction City and served as a waiting station and baggage room.



The Army built the station in 1901 and the first streetcar ran in August of that year. In 1908, the trolley line was moved farther north and extended toward Ogden. The spur leading to this station was abandoned, and the track was pulled up. The trolley line was extended to Manhattan in 1914 and continued operation until February 1934. The station was later used as a warehouse and workshop.

^[1] A sutler was someone who sold food and drink to soldiers.

^[1] Named for General Alfred Pleasanton (1824-1897), graduated from West Point in 1844 and served in the Mexican War with the 2nd Dragoons. During the Civil War he served in the eastern and western theaters of the war.



**Patton Hall
(Custer Avenue)**

Patton Hall was constructed in 1940. This building was originally called the Academic Building and was built to handle the ever expanding curriculum and personnel assigned to the Cavalry School in the late 1930s. In 1946, the building was renamed Patton Hall in honor of General George S. Patton, Jr.^[1], who had served at the school.

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U.S. Cavalry Museum and the 1st Infantry Division Museum (Building 205 & 207 – Henry Avenue)

The U.S. Cavalry Museum and 1st Infantry Division Museum document the storied history of American Cavalry and the “Big Red One”. Appropriately, the museums stand next to each other in the heart of Fort Riley’s historic Main Post.

The Cavalry Museum’s south wing was built in 1855 and originally was the post hospital. The flat limestone identifies it as one of the four surviving buildings from the post’s initial construction. The building was renovated and a clock tower added in 1890, when it became the Cavalry School Administration Building.

In September 1957, the building became the home of the Fort Riley Historical Museum. Five years later, it was renamed the U. S. Cavalry Museum and today tells the history of the mounted branch of service from the Revolutionary War to 1950. The building directly to the rear of the Cavalry Museum is the 1st Infantry Division Museum. This building was constructed in 1905 for use as a barracks. In later years it was used as offices for the Cavalry Board which tested and reported on new equipment. During the 1960s and 1970s, it was used as the post library before being opened in June 1992 as the 1st Infantry Division Museum. Today, visitors may view exhibits that relate the rich and colorful history of the Big Red One from 1917 to the present.

