

Collection #
P 0558

FORT BENJAMIN HARRISON PHOTOGRAPHS, CA. 1917

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Processed by

Barbara Quigley
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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 10 small photographs in one folder

COLLECTION DATES: Ca. 1917

PROVENANCE: Separated from the Francis Edward Stewart Papers, 1866–1938 at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and donated to IHS in September 2015
(<https://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/9911124985002121>)

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2015.0278

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Fort Benjamin Harrison was a U.S. Army installation established on 28 June 1904 in the Lawrence Township of Marion County, nine miles northeast of downtown Indianapolis. Earlier that year, the War Department had purchased the 1,994 acres of land for \$279,238.01. The base was dedicated by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906. Secretary of War Elihu Root included Fort Harrison among the new military posts responsible for maintaining an expanded national army of nearly 100,000.

Fort Harrison was constructed to garrison one regiment of infantry, but during World Wars I and II it became one of the nation's largest training and mobilization sites. Due to its location near major highways and railroads, it was easily accessible for troop units and individuals called to duty from the Midwest. During World War I, the base hosted three large officer training camps and became the training ground for hundreds of medical and engineering specialists.

Fort Benjamin Harrison served as a troop reception center and classroom and soldier support facility during all major military conflicts from World War I to Desert Storm in early 1991. In April 1991 the Department of the Army included the post as one of many military bases across the country to be decommissioned as part of the Base Realignment and Closure process.

Today most of the site is Fort Harrison State Park, but a military presence still exists there. The Defense Finance and Accounting Services Center, which was completed in 1953 near the base across 56th Street, is the city of Lawrence's largest employer with more than 4,000 workers. The Army Air Force Exchange Service built a post exchange and commissary at the former post in 2007 and the Indiana National Guard Lawrence Armory opened its Readiness Training Center there in 2011. Under construction is a new Armed Forces Reserve Center, with the 310th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, where more than 1,200 reservists will participate in drill each month. The Fort Harrison Reuse Authority, established by the state upon closure of the base, is leading the efforts to redevelop the fort as a mixed-use village town center for Lawrence.

Sources:

Bower, Stephen E. "Fort Benjamin Harrison." In *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, edited by Bodenhamer, David J. and Robert G. Barrows. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994: 592-94. General Collection: F534 .I55 E4 1994

City of Lawrence, Indiana. "City History" (<http://www.cityoflawrence.org/life-in-lawrence/history>). Accessed 8 October 2015.

National Park Service. "Fort Benjamin Harrison Historic District" (<http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/indianapolis/ftbenjaminharrison.htm>). Accessed 8 October 2015.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of ten small (2 1/2" x 3 1/2") black-and-white photographs of Fort Benjamin Harrison around 1917. The photos show buildings, tents, mealtime, and unidentified soldiers.

The photographs, which were sent to the Indiana Historical Society after being removed from the Francis Edward Stewart Papers at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, arrived in an envelope with this note written on it: "Photographs of Scenes at Camp Benjamin Harrison, Indianapolis, given me by four of our Phila. Col. Pharmacy Boys in Hospital Corps during Alumni Dinner / 1917." The printed return address on the envelope was: Scientific Department, The H.K. Mulford Company, Philadelphia.

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Row of buildings seen at a distance.

Tents seen at a distance.

Tents and soldiers.

Soldier by cot with tents in background.

Tables between rows of tents with soldiers seen in background.

Soldiers at an outdoor table during what appears to be mealtime. Tents and other soldiers can be seen in the background.

Soldier holding plate and cup; tents in background.

Soldier seated outside a tent, holding what appears to be a magazine.

Two soldiers seated on a cot in tent; one holds a cigarette and the other has a pipe in his mouth.

Two soldiers seated on a cot in tent; appears to be the same two men as in the photo described above.

CONTAINER

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