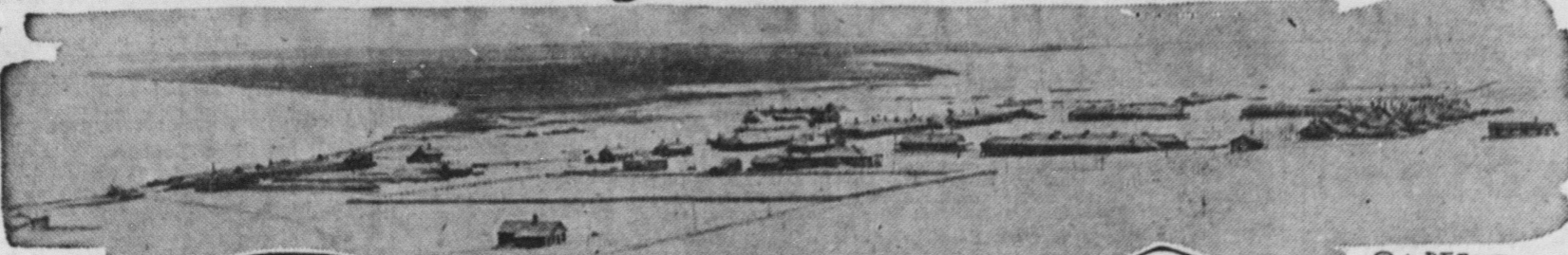


Our Old Forts — Shall They be Preserved?



Fort Abraham Lincoln, N.D.

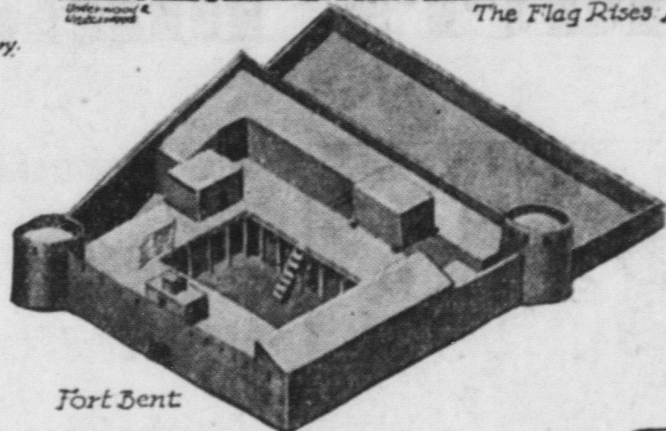
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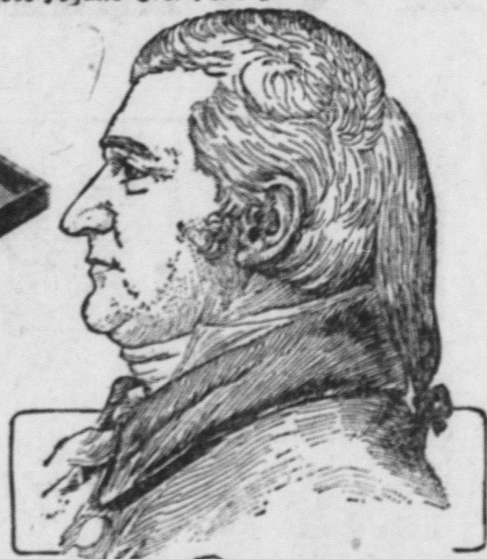
Mrs. George A. Custer
Photo taken in 1876



The Flag Rises Again Over Fort Dearborn



Fort Bent



H. Dearborn

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON
EARLY this summer the secretary of war announced that, in the interests of economy and because they had outlived their usefulness, some fifty army posts were to be dismantled and abandoned. Soon afterwards Mrs. George A. Custer, widow of the famous Indian fighter, was quoted in press dispatches from her home in New York as saying: "It does seem as if some of the old frontier forts should be saved. We ought not to allow every vestige of that period to die. We should preserve what history we have." Almost immediately her statement was linked with the fact that Fort Abraham Lincoln near Bismarck, N. D., was one of the army posts marked for dissolution and the suggestion was made that the post from which Custer rode away to his death on the Little Big Horn in Montana in 1876 should be preserved as a memorial to him and his gallant men of the Seventh cavalry.



As a matter of fact the present Fort Abraham Lincoln has no connection with the old Indian fighting days. The original Fort Lincoln was built early in the seventies a few miles south of the present city of Mandan, N. D. It was first named Fort McKean but that name was soon changed to the one which honored the memory of our Civil War President. As usual the Sioux Indians resented the building of an army post in their territory which they regarded as a violation of the treaty with the government made at Fort Laramie in 1868 and began a series of attacks on the post.

As a result of these attacks and further evidence that the Sioux were on the point of an outbreak, Gen. Phil Sheridan, commanding the Military Division of the Missouri, decided that a cavalry regiment which could pursue and punish the hostiles when the need arose should be assigned to the Department of Dakota. So the Seventh cavalry, commanded by Custer, was ordered up from New Orleans in April, 1873, and was stationed at Fort Abraham Lincoln. From that fort Gen. George A. Forsyth went on his exploring expedition up the Yellowstone in 1873 and in the same year Gen. A. H. Terry mobilized at Fort Lincoln and Fort Rice another expedition which was to escort and guard the surveyors who were to make the preliminary survey for the Northern Pacific railroad through the Yellowstone country. Custer's Seventh cavalry was a part of this expedition and had its first taste of fighting with the Sioux. In fact, on one occasion the Seventh narrowly escaped the fate which was to overtake it three years later.

From this post, also, Custer started in 1874 on his exploring expedition in the Black Hills which gave to the world the news of the discovery of gold in that region, resulted in a mad rush of whites into the Sioux's beloved Pah-sah-pa (Black Hills) and eventually precipitated the Sioux war of 1876-77. And on the morning of May 17, 1876, Custer and his Seventh marched gallantly away from Fort Abraham Lincoln to the stirring strains of "The Girl I Left Behind Me" and rode away across the prairie toward the west. The next scene in the story of Fort Lincoln is told in the final paragraphs of Mrs. Custer's book, "Boots and Saddles," thus: "On the 5th of July—for it took that time for the news to come—the sun rose on a beautiful world, but with its earliest beams came the first knell of disaster. A steamer came down the river bearing the wounded from the battle of the Little Big Horn, of Sunday, June 25th. This battle wrecked the lives of twenty-six women at Fort Lincoln, and orphaned children of officers and soldiers joined their cry to that of their bereaved mothers. From that time on the life went out of the hearts of the women who weep and God asked them to walk on alone and in the shadow."

After the Indian wars were over Fort Abraham Lincoln gradually fell into disuse and by 1902 all of the buildings, shown in the photograph above, except two had been torn down. During the World War a large modern post bearing the same name was built on the opposite side of the river just below Bismarck. It is this fort for which there is no apparent use that is to be dismantled along with others, none of which, according to a government official, "has the slightest historical significance."

The agitation produced by the War department's announcement and the wide publicity given to the case of Fort Abraham Lincoln has served the useful purpose of recalling to Americans the part played by forts in our history and it has also brought forth the fact that more of them are being preserved in one form or another than is generally realized. In some cases their ruins are being preserved as memorials or are being used as the basis for reconstruction work; in other cases exact replicas of the original fortifications have been built and in still others monuments or great boulders bearing appropriately engraved bronze tablets have been erected on their sites. The list is so long that only a few examples can be given.

Perhaps the outstanding example of reconstruction of a historic fort is that of Ticonderoga on the shores of Lake George in New York. The preservation of this place, so rich in its memories of colonial and Revolutionary war history, is due to the patriotic spirit of an individual, Stephen H. P. Pell of New York, in whose family the land upon which Ticonderoga stands has been owned for many years. Much has been done to restore Ticonderoga to its original state and the work is still going on.

Illinois' contribution to preserving the memory of her frontier outposts was the dedication last summer of a replica of Fort Dearborn, which is to be one of the buildings for the Century of Progress exposition in Chicago in 1933. Skyscrapers now stand on the original site of Fort Dearborn so the replica was built along the lake shore on "made land" which is pushing the shore line out into Lake Michigan. The little palisaded structure, which offers such a striking contrast to the tall buildings of stone and steel which make up Chicago's skyline, stands not far from the scene of the historic Fort Dearborn massacre of 1812 when the garrison of the fort was attacked and most of them killed by hostile Indians after they had evacuated the fort and started on their fateful retreat to Fort Wayne, Ind.

This replica not only recalls the most thrilling incident in the history of America's second largest city but it also preserves the memory of the man whose name it bears, an important figure in the early days of the republic who is little known to most Americans—Gen. Henry Dearborn. Born in New Hampshire in 1751, Dearborn studied medicine and became a doctor but abandoned his profession at the outbreak of the Revolution to raise a force of volunteers. He fought at Bunker Hill, accompanied Arnold on the expedition to Quebec where he was captured. After being exchanged he entered the service again, fought at Monmouth, accompanied Sullivan on the expedition against the Iroquois and was present at the surrender of Cornwallis. After the war he was twice elected to congress and in 1801 Jefferson made him secretary of war, a position which he held for eight years. At the outbreak of the War of 1812 Colonel Dearborn was again in military service and was commissioned a major general in the American army. He captured York in Upper Canada and Fort George and after the war commanded the military district of New York. Monroe made him minister to Portugal and after two years he resigned and returned home, dying in Massachusetts in 1829.

Out in the West where pioneer history was a more recent affair than it was in the East and Middle West, there are many evidences of a desire to preserve the historic forts and reconstruct them while some vestiges of them still remain. In Kansas there is agitation to reconstruct Fort Aubrey, one of the pioneer sod forts on the Arkansas river, and make it a public park. Colorado is busy with its plans for the reconstruction of Bent's fort near Lamar, the post whose history is a veritable summary of the historic Santa Fe Trail.

The Bent brothers and Ceran St. Vrain began trading on the Upper Arkansas in the early twenties. The famous adobe fort, at first called Fort William, was begun in 1828 and completed in 1832. The inclosure was 180 feet by 135 feet. The walls were four feet thick and fifteen feet high. Bastions thirty feet high rose from two corners and were provided with loopholes for musketry and cannon. Fort Bent was for twenty years the most important trading post on the frontier and to name all the men who were connected with it—Fremont, Kit Carson, Dick Wootton and a host of others—is to call the roll of all the outstanding men in the earliest Wild West.

What Bent's fort was to the Santa Fe Trail, Fort Laramie was to that other famous transcontinental highway, the Oregon Trail. So it is especially appropriate that a movement should now be under way in Wyoming for the purchase of old Fort Laramie from its present owners (it forms part of a cattle ranch) and convert it into a state monument. The last legislature appropriated \$15,000 for this purpose and Fort Laramie may soon be restored to some of its former glory.

The history of Fort Laramie goes back to 1833 when Robert Campbell and William Sublette, trappers and fur traders, established a camp on the North Platte river a few miles west of what is now the state line of Wyoming. Here were erected a few cabins and this frontier outpost was first named Fort William, then Fort John and finally named Fort Laramie after Jacques La Ramie, a French Canadian trapper whose exploits made him a noted figure in that region.

From the beginning the fort did a prosperous business in pelts and furs, trading principally with the Ogalalla bands of the Sioux, the Cheyennes and the Arapahoes. In 1835 it became the property of the Rocky Mountain Fur company, composed of Milton Sublette, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Jim Bridger, Henry Fraeb and John Baptiste Gervais.

Later in the same year the post passed into the hands of Lucien Fontanelle for the American Fur company, which had been founded several years earlier by John Jacob Astor. Business was so good that the American Fur company felt justified in spending \$10,000 on improvements. These included enlargements, improved fortifications and increased facilities for handling furs and trading with emigrants and trappers.

The American Fur company sold Fort Laramie to the government in 1840 and for many years under national control it served as a principal depot for emigrants and a base of operations against Indians. It was rebuilt and enlarged, and sun-dried brick was used in strengthening the fortifications. Walls 20 feet high and 4 feet thick were built around it, enclosing a space 250 feet long by 200 feet wide. Within this enclosure there were more than a dozen buildings, chucked squarely against the walls.

Fort Laramie played a stirring part in the Indian wars of the sixties and seventies and was finally abandoned as a military reservation in 1890. It then passed into private hands and has had three different owners. Some of its buildings have been remodeled and put to various uses, but others have crumbled into the dust of oblivion from which it is now proposed to restore this historic outpost.

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Polish Leader Hailed as Savior of Europe

Lord d'Abernon's tribute to Pilsudski as the real savior of Europe in 1920 has aroused much comment. The praise of the Polish leader appeared in the Gazeta Polska on the tenth anniversary of the Polish victory against the Bolsheviks. Lord d'Abernon declared that contemporary history includes few events as important as the battle of the Vistula in 1920 and not one which has been less appreciated. If the Bolsheviks had won the day the battle would have marked a turning point in European history, for Central Europe would have been thrown open to admit a flood of Bolshevik propaganda. The Bolsheviks had much vaster plans than the occupation of Poland. Many German towns were ready to proclaim a Bolshevik regime as soon as Warsaw fell. Pilsudski's strategic genius, adds the author, saved Poland, and in saving Poland saved Europe.

Lake Superior Relic of Ice and Glacial Ages

Lake Superior is now the shrunken remnant of a large Lake Algonquin that was left in the same area by the melting ice of the great Ice ages. It has been proved by excavations for a dam of the Algoma District Power company, on the Michipicoten river that empties into northeastern Lake Superior.

Dr. E. E. Moore, geologist of the University of Toronto, told the Royal Society of Canada that his examination of this engineering work confirms the idea that there was a much larger prehistoric lake filling the Superior basin. As he followed the ups and downs of the geological history of this most northern of the Great Lakes, Doctor Moore found also that during the glacial era there was a smaller lake where Lake Superior now lies.

A thin man worries, but a fat man, happy fellow, only sweats.

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Japan Has Earned Name, "Cherry Blossom Land"

Many tourists visited Japan during April, especially in order to see the cherry blossoms. Japan's cherry blossom season is like that of no other land. It lasts for only a few weeks in April, but during that short period the whole country seems a delightful garden. Japan, indeed, has been given the name of "Cherry Blossom Land." Japanese are trying to cultivate a type of cherry tree which will blossom three times a year instead of only once. In this way it is hoped that Japan may be made even more popular as a holiday resort. They are passionate lovers of natural beauty, and the cherry trees seen in every garden are grown for flowers and not for fruit.

Human Interchange

"Hiram," said Mrs. Cornstossel, "what is the new hired man complaining about?" "He isn't really complainin'," replied Farmer Cornstossel. "Talkin' about his troubles is just a hired man's way of bein' sociable and friendly."

Sleeps During an Operation

For many years medical men have been searching for new anesthetics as complete in their effects of deadening sensation, but more free from the possibility of undesirable consequences. A wonderful new anesthetic called avertin is proving successful. Avertin is given internally, and the

patient simply falls into a deep sleep. He may be roused sufficiently to answer questions or even to converse on a subject, but he feels no pain. Avertin has no adverse effects upon the lungs. On regaining consciousness, the patient breathes quite normally.

Odd Drinking Vessels

Steins for drinking Tibetan beer are equipped with permanent straws, or have mouthpieces in their handles, a collection of drinking vessels put on display at the Field Museum of Natural History, in Chicago, revealed. Other cups are made from the horns of wild yaks. Tibetans use them for drinking arak, a liquor similar to beer.

Movable Set

"My dear sir," said the doctor, "your physical troubles are due entirely to your defective teeth. Now let me examine them." "All right, doctor," muttered the patient, "hold out your hand."

Cock-a-Doodle-Do!

Van Husen—I say! Why are you putting chicken feathers in those goblets?

New Butler—Didn't you tell me to serve cocktails?

Nowhere is there any word that Adam repented.

A poor man won't honestly make fun of money.

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