



# A North Omaha History Guide



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**WITH PHOTOS BY MICHAELA ARMETTA**

*A North Omaha History Guide to Fort Omaha*

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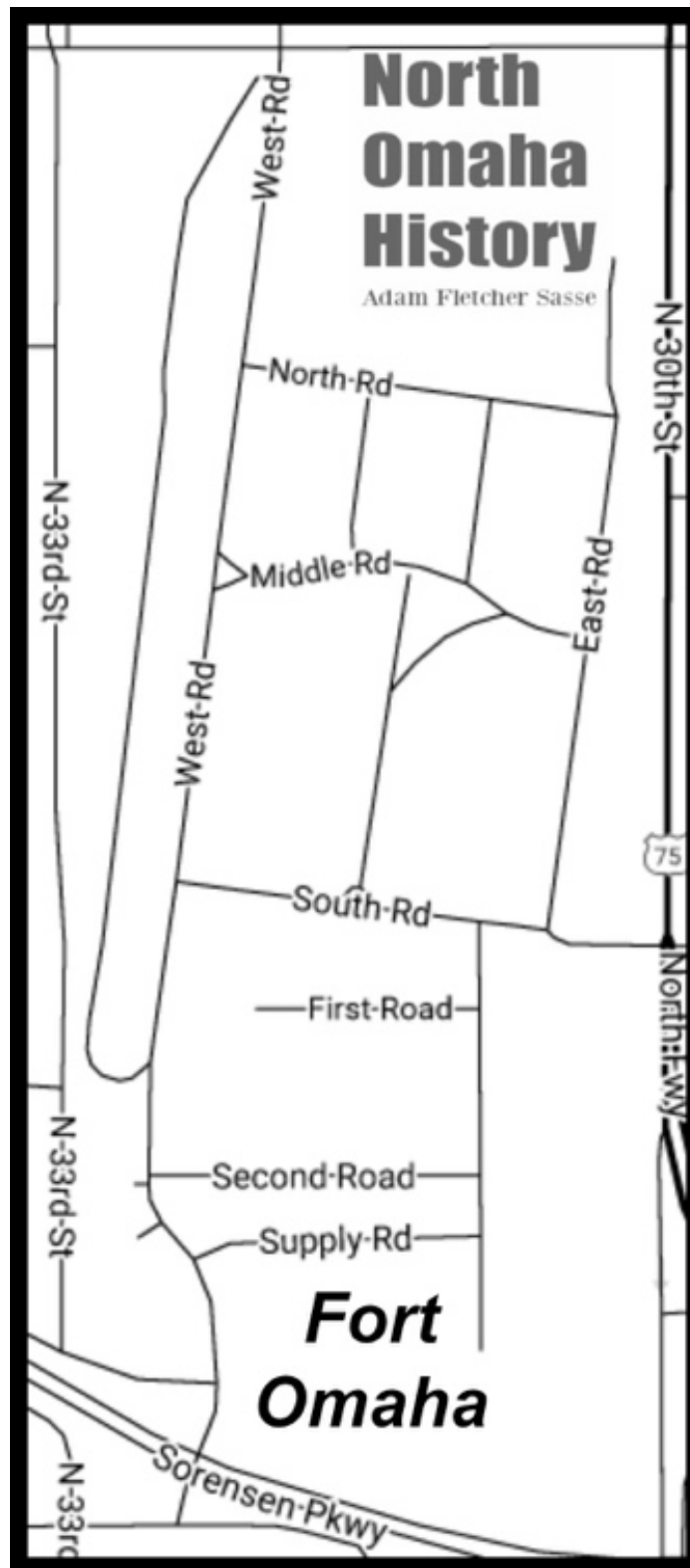
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*Image 1: Fort Omaha is bound by Laurel on the north and Sorenson Parkway on the south; North 30th on the east and North 33rd on the west. Image adapted from Google Maps.*



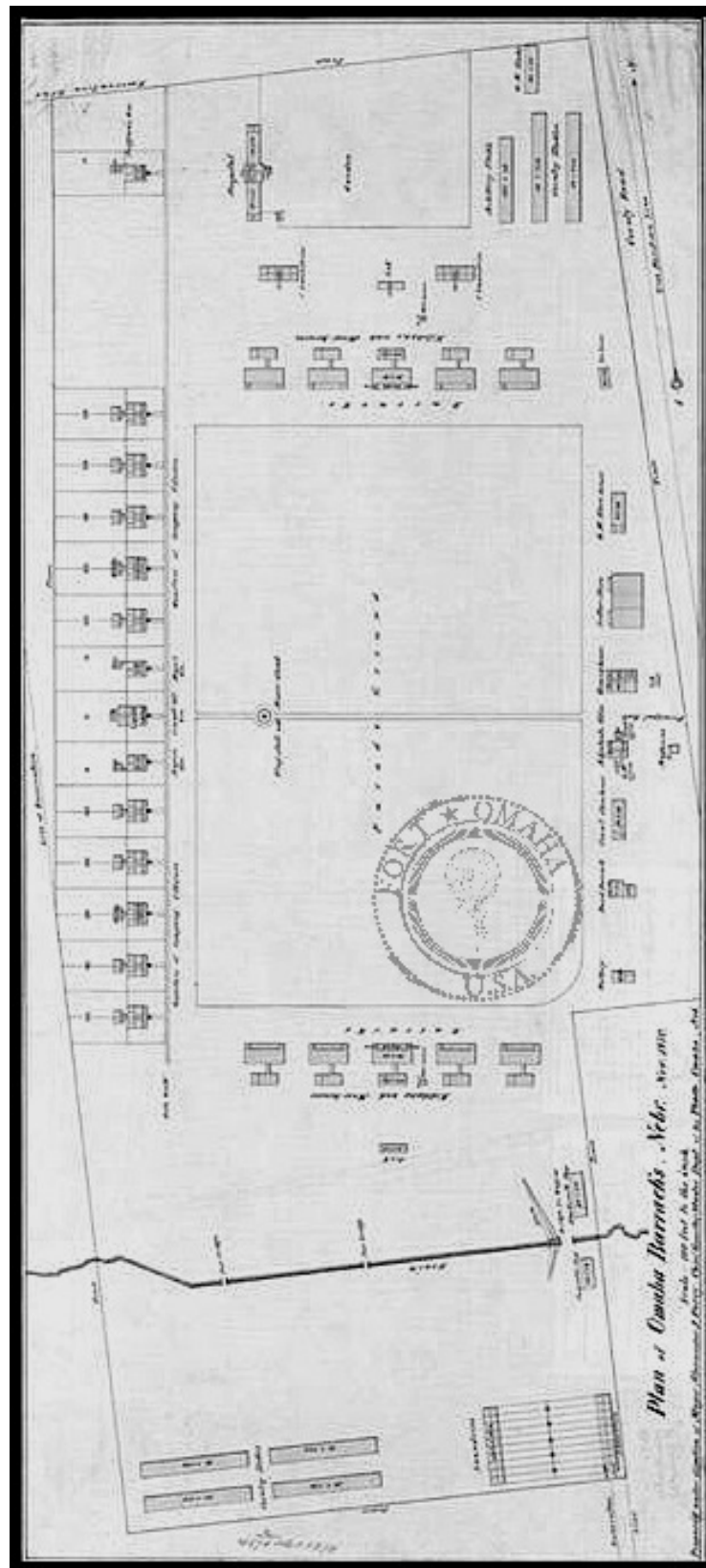


Image 2: Fort Omaha is bound by Laurel on the north and Sorenson Parkway on the south; North 30th on the east and North 33rd on the west. Image from the National Archives and Research Administration.

# My Story



*Image 3: Image by Michaela Armetta.*

**N**estled between the Miller Park neighborhood and Sorenson Parkway is a 150-year-old institution that's been a powerhouse, a prison, a balloon school and a neglected surplus.

As a whole, Fort Omaha is a beautiful place with a wonderful history. In the 1980s when I was a kid I'd ride my bike through the campus and imagine things that happened there. When my friend Josh first invited me to visit his house I was amazed. With a dad that was a professor there, his family lived in one of the houses on campus. Josh and I walked around campus, exploring the roads and peeking around abandoned places. He told me about ghosts and soldiers, and helped spark my imagination about this humungous, strangely different place in my neighborhood. My fourth grade class at Miller Park Elementary School sang at Fort Omaha during the River City Roundup, too. I realize how little we all know about the vast military outpost in North Omaha, so here is a basic history.

# About Fort Omaha



*Image 4: Image courtesy of the Douglas County Historical Society.*

**E**stablished by an act of the United States Congress in 1879, North Omaha's beautiful Fort Omaha campus of the Metropolitan Community College history. The Fort is located at North 30th and Sorenson Parkway, and its address is 5730 North 30th Street.

Built as a supply fort for the northwest territories of the United States, Fort Omaha's roles expanded and contracted greatly throughout the years. However, it was always

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for supplying other forts and never defending Omaha. Over almost 140 years, Fort Omaha has served as...

- A supply depot
- Command center for the Indian Wars
- Balloon training school
- Signal corps headquarters
- A WWII prisoner of war camp
- US Naval and Marine Corps Personnel Center, and
- Today is a campus for the Metro Community College (MCC).

It was abandoned by the military at least three times during its existence, too.

This is a short history of Fort Omaha. It isn't an exhaustive academic examination. Instead, I want to fill in the blanks, answer questions and address some rumors I heard growing up. For more complete histories, see "More Info" at the back of this booklet.

Please send any questions, comments, concerns or inquiries to [info@northomahahistory.c](mailto:info@northomahahistory.c)



# Fort Omaha Timeline



*Image 5: Image by Michaela Armetta.*

The history of Fort Omaha began before the Fort was established. With base commanders moving in and out, regiments and troops coming and going, and the Fort being closed and opened again, it has been part of a lot of Omaha history. Here are some of the most important dates from the history of Fort Omaha.

- **1862** - Omaha is designated the headquarters for the Military District of Nebraska Territory
- **1866** - Omaha was made headquarters for the US Army Department of the Platte
- **1868** - Sherman Barracks established at present-day North 30th and Fort Streets ; renamed shortly afterwards as Omaha Barracks
- **1878** - Omaha Barracks renamed Fort Omaha
- **1879** - The Trial of Standing Bear held at Fort Omaha
- **1896** - Fort Omaha declared surplus property and abandoned
- **1898** - Spanish-American War

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- **1907** - US Army established a dirigible training program at Fort Omaha
- **1908** - US Army establishes a balloon training program at Fort Omaha
- **1909** - US Army closes the dirigible training program at Fort Omaha
- **1909** - US Army establishes their Signal Corps School at Fort Omaha
- **1913** - US Army closes their Signal Corps School at Fort Omaha
- **1916** - US Army Air Service, 9th Naval District, Balloon and Airship Division opens at Fort Omaha
- **1917** - United States enters WWI
- **1917** - US Army leases Florence Field, 119 acres of land about one-mile north of Fort Omaha along Martin Avenue
- **1918** - WWI ends
- **1919** - Fort Omaha declared surplus property and abandoned
- **1921** - US Army moves all balloon operations from Fort Omaha
- **1935** - US Army 7th Corps Area Headquarters established at Fort Omaha
- **1941** - United States enters WWII
- **1941** - US Army 7th Service Command uses Fort Omaha as a support facility
- **1945** - WWII ends
- **1946** - Fort Omaha declared surplus property and abandoned
- **1947** - US Navy assumes control of Fort Omaha and designates in a reserve training center
- **1947** - US Navy designates Fort Omaha as a Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Center
- **1951** - The US Navy officially designates Fort Omaha the US Naval Personnel Center
- **1974** - Fort Omaha declared surplus property and abandoned
- **1975** - Metro Community College moves to Fort Omaha.

# Omaha Never Needed Protection from Indians



## MULE BARN

Supply Road and Saratoga Street

*Image 6: Image courtesy of Douglas County Historical Society.*

Originally built as the Sherman Barracks in the early 1860s, an early garrison was first established in rented buildings in downtown Omaha. The Army built a new barracks near North 24th and Cumming Streets in 1862. After the Civil War ended, everyone believed the surrounding tribes were no problem, so the Barracks became a supply depot for the forts located throughout the Great Plains.

Catching wind that the Army was planning to build a huge new outpost, Omaha's business leaders wanted to pitch the city as a great location. They made a deal with local banker Augustus Kountze to sell them a chunk of his land holdings four miles north of the city.

Making an offer to the government, the leaders bragged about the Union Pacific railroad and Missouri River, both ideal for troop and supply movement. They also bragged about having already established businesses to provide support the Army needed. The Army accepted Omaha's offer.



# Making Money on the Military



## PARADE GROUNDS

At Fort Omaha

*Image 7: Image by Michaela Armetta.*

Omaha had an early banking mogul named Augustus Kountze. He and his brother Herman Kountze were determined to make their riches in their adopted boom town, and set out by doing it through loaning money and providing a place for savings to be held. Their banking eventually allowed them to buy land, which they did across Omaha. Their holdings focused on North Omaha, including the areas that eventually held the posh Kountze Place suburb and Fort Omaha.

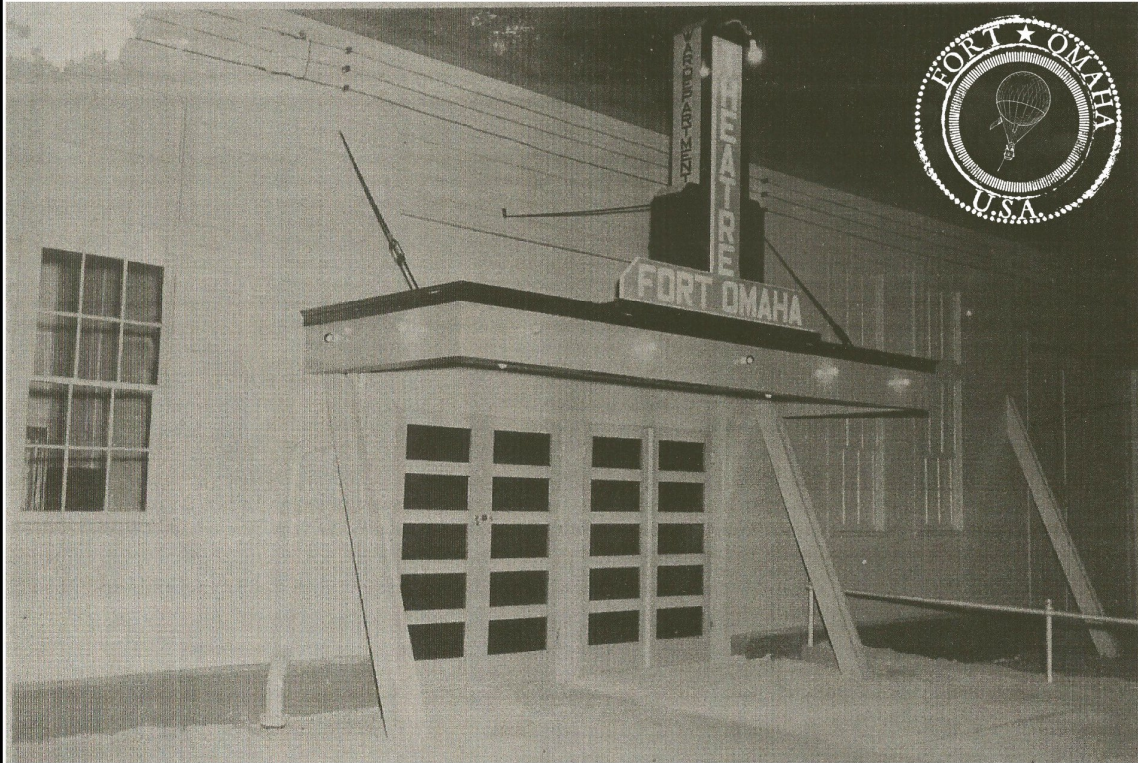
As soon as the fort was built in the 1870s, Kountze's holdings around the military reservation started to sell. His pockets got swollen and those of his friends were filled, too. Good investment!

When Fort Omaha became the Headquarters for the Department of the Platte in 1878, it covered land from the Missouri River into Montana and from Canada to Texas and dozens of forts. Staffed by gentlemen officers and volunteer soldiers for decades, when these men mustered out of service from



the Fort, they bought lots and houses in Omaha. This meant more of Omaha's land became valuable, and Kountze's other holdings throughout and beyond North Omaha developed, too.

Fort Omaha was built to make money because of the railroads. As the United States pushed west, they dotted the land with forts to suppress the Indian tribes and protect the settlers from one another. The Fort made money for the government by protecting the product emerging from the West that they taxed. It made money for the speculators who, like Kountze, needed young Omaha to build, grow and expand so they could get wealthy. It worked.



## **FORT OMAHA THEATRE**

Located on Fort Omaha by South Road and West Road

# The Place to Be



*Image 8: Image courtesy of Douglas County Historical Society.*

Fort Omaha originally covered almost 83 acres. Located outside the Omaha city limits on the Florence Road, the Fort became the home of the US Army Department of the Platte. This department controlled forts and their units in the states of Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming Territory and parts of Utah and Idaho.

In 1871, the *Trans-Continental Tourists' Guide* said the Omaha Barracks was the place to go for the "fashionable pleasure seekers of Omaha." Starting with its opening in 1868, Omaha's upper class would travel along the excellent Saunders Street and then west along Fort Street on Sundays, which were drills led by the post commander. The tree-lined parade grounds were soon crowded every weekend for decades in a row, while horses and carriages were tied up and families set picnics in the shade.

It was here that General George Crook led the Department, from 1875 to 1882 and again from 1886 to 1888. In 1879, he spoke on behalf of Chief Standing Bear and the Ponca tribe during the trial of *Standing Bear vs. Crook*. It was during this trial that a federal judge affirmed that Standing Bear had some of the rights of US citizens.

That same year, construction on Crook's new home was finished. Today it is called the General Crook House, and it houses the offices of the Douglas County Historical Society. The neighboring house is home to the Society's archives, as well.

Other buildings throughout the campus have been repurposed and preserved, too.



# Omaha Needed Protection from Itself



**POST FILTRATION PLANT (1912); POST EXCHANGE (1923)**

Located in Fort Omaha at South Road and East Road

*Image 9: Image by Michaela Armetta.*

Because the US Army officers and soldiers there weren't racing out to fight battles or bracing for invasions, Fort Omaha became a site for lavish social gatherings. Omahans would carriage out to the Fort for balls and cotillions, military parades and troop reviews. A favorite Sunday gathering for Omaha's socialites was sitting in the lawns picnicking while the troops performed marches and more.

It shouldn't be surprising then that Fort Omaha was mustered out of service to the Army at least five times during its existence. However, it never completely faded away. When Omaha's hoards grew out of control, US Army troops from the Fort were frequently called in to provide crowd control and protection. In 15 riots throughout the city's history, soldiers carried weapons against Omahans who were rioting, protesting, or picketing. This started in the 1880s, with the most recent example being the 1969 riots in North Omaha.

For instance, in 1882, troops were sent to the Camp Dump Strike in downtown Omaha by the present-day Durham Museum. In this action, US Army troops were pitted union laborers who were on strike. Reportedly the first

Omaha riot to receive national attention, on March 12 the Nebraska governor called in troops with Gatling guns and a cannon for defense. The event supposedly ended soon afterwards.

5,000 South Omaha laborers walked off their jobs in solidarity with general laborers whose salaries were cut across the board in July, 1885. The next month, South Omaha stockyards bosses asked Fort Omaha to protect trainloads of strikebreakers traveling into South Omaha in order to keep them safe. After production plants in South Omaha were forced to close for several weeks in August and September, the strike was broken.

In 1894, a group of 2,000 homeless men traveling from California to Washington DC to protest the ongoing recession. Called "Kelly's Army," they were stopped by resisting protesters near Omaha. When US Army soldiers from Fort Omaha stopped the homeless men from stealing a train, Kelly's Army kept moving across Iowa on foot.

Troops from Fort Omaha were also called to duty in September 1919 after the lynching of Will Brown. The following day, angry white mobs began ransacking the Near North Side neighborhood, beating African Americans on the street and raiding houses. US Army soldiers brought large weaponry and established secure stations in order to keep the Black citizens safe. These troops' maps of the neighborhood became the basis for redlining in Omaha starting immediately after the rioting.

While its role supplying forts across the US West was certainly invaluable and necessary, the history of US Army troops from the Fort clearly demonstrate that Omaha needed protection from itself.

# A Place in American History



*Image 10: Image from Wikimedia Commons.*

**F**ort Omaha was the first place in the United States of America that Native Americans were recognized as human beings by the law.

In 1879 the Ponca chief Standing Bear defied the United States' orders that he move with his tribe to Oklahoma. After being given terrible land in that state in exchange for their claims in northeast Nebraska, Standing Bear led a band of Ponca back to their old land to reclaim what was theirs.

Ordered to imprison Standing Bear as a sign to other Indians, General Crook arrested the chief and locked him up at Fort Omaha. General Crook ended up surprising everyone though.

During the subsequent trial at the Fort, Crook wore his full military uniform, proceeding to testify on behalf of Standing Bear and his tribe. Standing Bear won the case, was given some of his tribe's land back, and was addressed as a human for the first time in American history. That's why Fort Omaha has a vital place in this nation's history.

# Experimental Technology



**QUARTERMASTER OFFICE AND COMMISSARY (1878)**

Located at Fort Omaha at North Road and East Road

*Image 11: Image by Michaela Armetta.*

**D**rifting high above North Omaha for 12 years, dirigibles and balloons that were lighter than air showed how Fort Omaha was central to US Army experimentation. This article shares the short history of the balloon school that showed so much promise early on...

The history of the US Army's Signal Corps at Fort Omaha is mentioned occasionally in Omaha history. However, few people understand the extent of the work done in North Omaha, what effects it had on the community and beyond, and the role of Fort Omaha in the history of the US Army and beyond.

The US Army began experimenting with hot air balloons for high height surveillance since the early 1890s. In 1905, their Signal Corps moved into Fort Omaha. The first location for all military airplane use in the United States, the US Army Signal Corps logically launched their work with hot air starting in 1904.

In 1905, the Signal Corps Companies B and D were sent to Fort Omaha to start a balloon school for the instruction of enlisted men and the ballooning activities. According to the 1905 Field Service Regulations, a division would include a signal company comprising 4 officers and 150 enlisted men. These



men would be divided into detachments to provide corps level communications, visual signaling, and the construction, operation, and repair of telegraph and telephone lines.

The Signal Corps completed its new balloon facilities in 1908, including a plant to generate hydrogen. A balloon hanger was built in 1909, and with the United States entry into World War I, Fort Omaha became a observation balloon training school. More balloon hangers were built and a hydrogen production plant was built. Another building to house experimental lighter-than-air vehicles was built, too. Soon, Fort Omaha was the main and largest ballon school, training approximately 16,000 men.

In 1911, the US Army established a "Military Aviator" rating and began handing out badges to pilots soon afterwards.

The US Army's presence in North Omaha proved remarkable to the community on March 23, 1913. That was the day the Easter Sunday tornado struck, demolished a wide swath of the community and killing more than 100 people. Troops from the fort swept into the city immediately afterward, bringing soldiers, doctors and others to help with search and rescue missions, doctoring and clean-up efforts. Although their efforts weren't very important, the community was truly appreciative.

In October 1913, the Corps abandoned its post at Fort Omaha, and the Army transferred the balloon facilities to the Agriculture Department for use by the Weather Bureau in the making of balloon explorations of the upper atmosphere. Meanwhile, the Corps moved the signal companies stationed at Omaha to Leavenworth.

However, their departure was short-lived and in 1917 they were back. Instruction of officers in balloon service began at Fort Omaha in March 1917. In April 1917, the United States entered World War I. The Signal Corps set up the first weather station in the United States at Fort Omaha that year. However, Company A of the 1st Balloon Squadron left Fort Omaha in September 1917.

But... On October 1, 1917 the US Army began leasing Florence Field, 119 acres north of Fort Omaha. The City of Omaha built fire hydrants, sewage lines and two miles of roads free of charge, while crews from Fort Omaha constructed red slate-roofed wood frame buildings that included a headquarters, barracks and mess halls, all painted sage green with ivory trim. The entire Florence Field was surrounded by a wire fence. There were gates at North 30th and Martin Avenue, and another set at Redick Avenue and North Ridge Drive.

Three balloon school squadrons were operating in Florence Field by December 1917. In these schools, the flight officers learned a variety of skills, including mapping, aerial photography, parachuting, communication techniques, and balloon care. Noncommissioned soldiers learned hydrogen balloon inflation, techniques of controlling the balloon, care of communications systems, and balloon care. Cordage, knots, gas making and care of the cable and winches holding the balloon were all taught.

All of the units departed from Fort Omaha for the last time between 1917 and 1918. Their departures included...

- First Balloon School Squadron left Fort Omaha for Fort Sill, Oklahoma in September 1917
- Second Balloon School Squadron left for Europe in November 1917
- Third Balloon School Squadron left for Europe in January 1918
- Fourth Balloon School Squadron left for Europe in February 1918
- Fifth Balloon School Squadron left for Europe in March 1918

Other squadrons soon left. In September 1918, the US Army established another camp further north of Omaha near Fort Calhoun. In November 1918, the Armistice was signed and WWI was finished.

Army aviation remained within the Signal Corps until 1918, when it became the Army Air Service.

In 1919, the balloon equipment and troops were withdrawn from Fort Omaha and in 1921 the Fort Omaha Balloon School and all relocatable equipment were moved to Fort Scott, Illinois. The balloon hangar was probably demolished after the school was relocated.

In the early 1920s Florence Field was sold to a few developers, including George Martin and a man named Dillon. Together, they planned a neighborhood there and subdivided it. Martin's name graced the main western roadway, and Dillon named his subdivisions after himself. Today, Florence Field blends seamlessly into the rest of North Omaha's fabric.



# An Internment Camp



## BALLOON HOUSE, GASOMETER AND HYDROGEN GENERATING PLANT

At Fort Omaha North Road and Metro Tech College Road

*Image 12: Image from US Army CECOM Historical Office.*

During World War II, Fort Omaha was home to a supply battalion and was used as a work camp for prisoners-of-war. They were mostly Italian prisoners, and were assigned to military duties only at Fort Omaha with no off-post labor so were not visible to the general public.

# Local Racists Hated Black Troops



**NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICERS BARRACKS**  
Located at Fort Omaha on South Road between East and West Road

*Image 13: Image by Michaela Armetta.*

According to the *Omaha World-Herald*, a regiment of Black soldiers was stationed at Fort Omaha. White people in the surrounding neighborhood protested a lot, writing letters to the newspaper and their elected officials.

African American community leaders and politicians took it upon themselves to sound out loudly on behalf of the troops. Nebraska State Legislator John Singleton worked with Gene Thomas, a past commander of the Legion Post of Spanish War Veterans, and others to promote the inclusion of the troops there. The neighborhood eventually shut up.

# Did Anyone Actually Care?



## SIGNAL CORPS PHOTO LAB

Formerly at Fort Omaha behind Officer's Row

*Image 14: Image courtesy of the Douglas County Historical Society.*

**F**ort Omaha was built for the Indian Wars and was largely forgotten by the 1890s. It was abandoned in 1896. At the turn of the century it became a muster point for troops to ship out for the Spanish American War.

In 1907, Fort Omaha had hangers built for a few dirigibles, but that program was abandoned two years later. In 1908 though, the Fort Omaha Balloon School was opened. That facility was taken from Fort Omaha and moved to Texas in 1917. In 1909, the Fort became the Army's Signal Corps School; in 1913 it was abandoned.

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By the 1920s, the Fort had fallen quiet again. However, it buzzed again when it became a supply base and internment camp for prisoners of war during World War II.

In 1947, command of the Fort was given to the Navy and soon after the Fort was named a Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Center. In 1951 Fort Omaha was designated the U.S. Naval Personnel Center, a role it continues to play today. In 1974, the Fort was given to Metro Community College, with eight acres set aside for the military's usage. The rest is history!



# Deaths at the Fort



## FORT OMAHA BURIALS

At Prospect Hill Cemetery, North 33rd and Parker Streets

*Image 15: Image by author.*

**F**ort Omaha was opened in 1878. Home to thousands of US Army troops over a century of service, many people lived and died at the Fort. Today, some of the buildings that still survive on the campus include the General Crook House and the Commissary, both built in 1878; the Ordnance Magazine, built in 1883; the Guardhouse, built in 1884; and the Mule Barn, built in 1887.

Ghost stories have been told about the place since it opened.

For instance, in 1890, a 60-year-old inmate at the Douglas County Poor Farm named Peter Gronwold was the servant of a Lieutenant Wilson who lived in officer's quarters at the Fort. One day while he was doing his work, he had a psychotic episode and started throwing objects around. He flung plates into the wall and broke a glass window. When Lt. Wilson attempted to subdue him, Gronwold suddenly died. Gronwold's ghost has haunted Fort Omaha ever since.

When the Fort had regular US Army troops stationed there in the 1880s, it was popular for Omaha's elite to come out for a fancy day watching the troops do their exercises. More than once though, séances and psychics drew out specters and ghouls for the fancy people to see. According to a 1918 newspaper report, the troops thought one psychic was a charlatan when he conjured a ghost on command. However, they were shocked when the ghost kept returning night after night for a week.

On the south end of the parade grounds, where the World War I balloon school was located, in 1918 there was an explosion in some of the gas storage tanks that killed two soldiers and wounded several others. One of them ended up in the Fort's hospital where he died during surgery. Apparently all three ghosts still haunt the campus today.

In 1945, a soldier at the Fort became violent towards a nurse in the Fort's hospital and murdered her in the presence of doctors and other nurses. Stories say you can see her staring longingly out the windows of that building late some nights.

According to a former office staff from Metro Community College, in the 1970s one of the original officers' houses was being renovated. While they were working, builders said they would hear knocking on the opposite side of a wall they were working on. At first they thought it was other workers, until they learned there were never other workers on the other side when they heard the knocking sounds. They also complained about tools mysteriously disappearing and showing up days later in entirely different rooms.

In other stories, a young girl, a Native American warrior, and a nicely dressed middle aged man are seen in different places around the campus. When the night is right and you're feeling a fright, you might also find yourself in the presence of a young soldier.

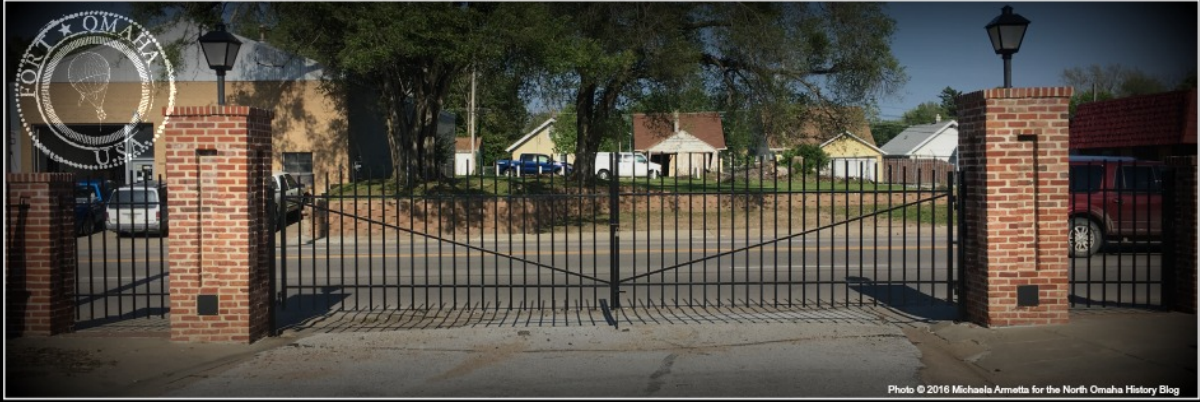
Here is the list of names I've compiled of some people who have died at Fort Omaha:

- Judge T. H. Duval, 1880
- Sergeant John Wright, 1882
- Reverend George Allen England, 1883
- Major Joseph Taylor, 1885
- Mrs. Brown, wife of Major Brown, 1888
- Peter Gronwold, civilian, 1890
- Sarah Iowa, infant daughter of Lieutenant Abercrombie, 1890
- Little Bear, "an Indian soldier of Company I", 1894
- Lieutenant Colonel Parke, 1894
- Lieutenant Otto Grimm, 1908
- Private William Sauers, 1918
- Sergeant Bob Weigel, 1918
- Private Roy Imboden, 1918

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- Private Zell S. Killingsworth, 1918
- Private Walter P. Peterson, 1918
- Private Stuart Heintzelman, 1935
- Martha V. Thomas, 1945

# The Fort in Modern Times



## BOURKE GATE (1896)

Located in Fort Omaha at South Road and North 30th Street

*Image 16: Image by Michaela Armetta.*

Fort Omaha quieted down after World War I. The balloon school was moved to Illinois, and life went on. In 1929, the Fort's headquarters building became the Seventh Corps Staff Officer's Headquarters. Between 1933 and the end of World War II, the building was both a barracks and the Commissary for Fort Omaha.

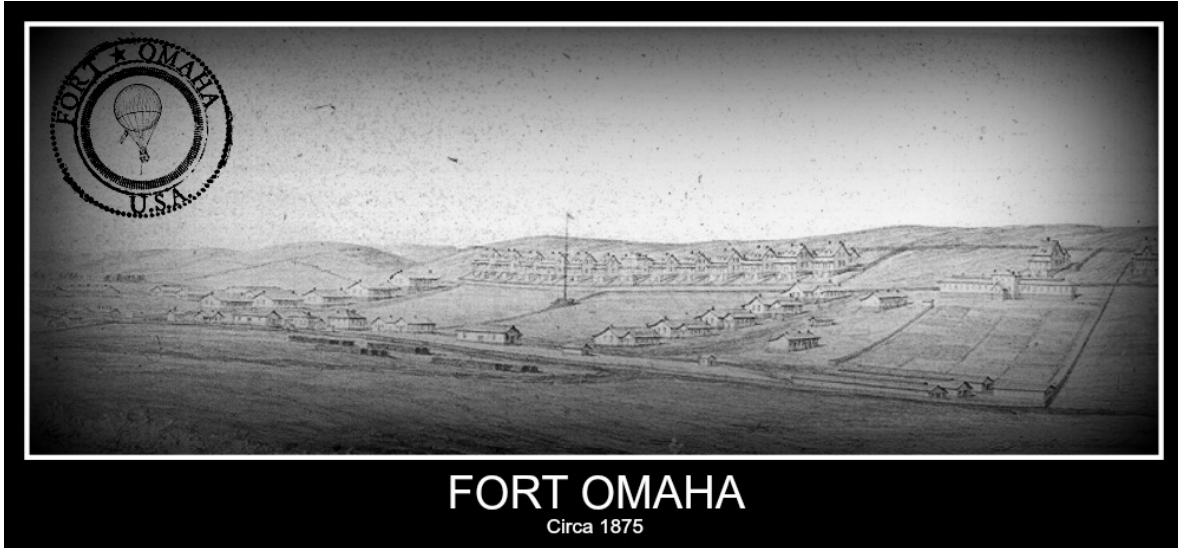
The Fort was mustered out of service after WWII. However, from 1947 to 1974, it served as a U.S. Navy personnel center and as the headquarters for the Naval Reserve Training Command. The Army transferred command of Fort Omaha to the Navy in 1947. Starting that year, the Navy used the Fort as a training base for local members of the Navy and Marine Corps Reserve.

In 1956, the Navy established a nationwide Naval Reserve Command. For Omaha became the headquarters for a Rear Admiral and his staff, with his two-star flag and the bell of the Navy cruiser USS Omaha on display. Today, they are still at the Fort Omaha Headquarters Building entrance as a unique testament to the Navy's presence at a former Army fort in the middle of the United States.

In 1974, Fort Omaha was transferred to use for civilian educational purposes. Since then, the facility has been maintained and used by Metropolitan Community College. In the mid-2010s, MCC began a massive expansion program that significantly increases the size of the college and its offerings to students. Fort Omaha is a beautiful place today, abuzz with the sounds of learning and rich with a wealth of history.



# All Brick Buildings



*Image 17: This circa 1875 drawing shows the wood frame buildings originally occupying Fort Omaha.*

The Fort Omaha Historic District spans from Fort Street on the South to Laurel Avenue on the North; North 30th Street on the east to North 33rd Street on the west. In 1979, the Fort Omaha Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Cruising through Fort Omaha today, it's fun to soak up the regal looking red brick buildings and tall, stately trees that make the campus so beautiful. However, it wasn't always that way. The original 1868 buildings were all made of wood, and they were laid out on a barren prairie.

The original 1868 buildings at Fort Omaha included a post headquarters, guardhouse, bakery, storehouses, and sutler's store. There were five company barracks on the north and south sides of the parade ground, which was 30 acres big. A hospital was located in the northwest corner of the fort. By 1871, a band barracks, ice house and launderess's quarters were added, as well as quarters for married enlisted men.

The first brick buildings were constructed when officers were ordered to live on post in 1878. They were built on the western edge of the fort, and included General Crook's House and two houses flanking it. In 1879, a headquarters building and a storehouse were built of brick. Continuing in this way, almost all of the wood frame buildings were demolished and replaced by 1905.

Over the years, other buildings were built and demolished, too. For instance, the Signal Corps Photography Laboratory was built around 1905 and demolished by 1923. The Fort Omaha theatre was utilized only during World War II, and demolished by the 1960s. Another lost feature of the Fort is the swimming pool, which was built with a fine pergola and a small pool house in the 1940s. Located between Metro Tech College Road and Building 10, the pool was filled in during the 2000s. However, the pergola and pool house still stand, and a garden is located in the pool.

New construction continues at Fort Omaha today.



# Building Directory



*Note: **Current Purpose in Bold** – Past Purpose, Location, Construction Date*

1. **Bourke Gate** – Built in 1896 at South Rd and North 30th St
2. **Shiverick Gate** – Built in 1932 at Middle Rd and North 30th St
3. **Parade Grounds** – Built in 1868 at Middle Rd and East Rd
4. **Site of Florence Field** – Built in 1908 at North 30th St and Martin Ave
5. **Building 1: Student Affairs** – Built in 1906 at South Rd and East Rd; became the Post Filtration Building in 1912; Post Switchboard, 1920; Post Exchange, 1923; Post Fire House, 1928; Post Commander's House, 1933; Officer Housing, 1947; Plumbing Shop, around 1950
6. **Building 2: Contact Center** – Built in 1907 along East Rd north of South Rd as the Post Gymnasium and Post Exchange
7. **Building 3: Administrative Computing** –
8. **Building 4: Help Desk** – Built in 1884 as the Guardhouse at Middle Rd and East Rd
9. **Building 5: Business & Training Services, International Students, Records** – Built in 1906 at Middle Rd and East Rd as Enlisted Double Barracks

10. **Building 6: Graphic Communication Arts** – Built in 1878 at North Rd and East Rd as the Quartermaster's Office and Post Commissary
11. **Building 7: Secondary Partnerships** – Built in 1914 at North Rd and East Rd as the Knights of Columbus Assembly Hall
12. **Building 8: Library** – Built in 1879 at Middle Rd and Metro Tech College Rd as the Headquarters of the Department of the Platte; Post Headquarters, Chapel and Hospital, 1884
13. **Building 9: Adult Education** – Built in 1884 along Metro Tech College Rd between North Rd and Middle Rd as officer quarters
14. **Site of the Dirigible Hanger** – Built in 1907 on site of current Building 10
15. **Building 11A: Douglas County Historical Society Archives** – Built in 1884 on Officer's Row as officer quarters
16. **Building 11B: General Crook House**, Built in 1879 on Officer's Row at West Road and Middle Road, it was the commanding officer's house for many years; then converted into bachelor officer quarters and an officer's club; then restored to period style to house the Douglas County Historical Society
17. **Building 12N: Guest Housing** – Built in est 1880 as an officer's duplex on Officer's Row
18. **Building 12S: Foundation Office, Alumni Center** – Built in est 1880 as an officer's duplex on Officer's Row
19. **Building 13: President's House** – Built in est 1905 on Officer's Row as officer quarters, this building was restored in 2005
20. **Building 14N: Campus Planning & Sustainability** – Built in est 1905 as Officer Duplexes on Officer's Row
21. **Building 14S: Dean of English, (IFEX) Institute For Faculty Excellence** – Built in est 1905 as Officer Duplexes on Officer's Row
22. **Building 15N: Equity & Diversity, Intercultural / International** – Built in est 1905 as Officer Duplexes on Officer's Row
23. **Building 15S: Education, Upward Bound Math & Science** – Built in 1905 (est) as an officer's duplex
24. **Building 16: Information Technology Services** – Built in est 1905 as Officer Duplexes on Officer's Row
25. **Building 17: Instructional Design Services, Great Plains Theatre** – Built in 1906 as the Post Hospital on Officer's Row
26. **Building 18: Events Services** – Built in est 1905 on Officer's Row
27. **Building 19: Guest Housing** – Built in est 1905 on Officer's Row
28. **Building 21: MCC Boardroom, Instructional Facility** – Quartermaster's Mule Barn, Supply Road and Saratoga Street, 1887
29. **Building 26: Welding Instructional Facility** – Between First and Second Road and along East Road, its next to the unnumbered Ordnance Magazine built in 1883; served as Signal Corps Radio Monitor, 1917
30. **Building 30: Administration & Public Safety** – Built in 1906 on South Road between East and West Roads as a noncommissioned officer's barracks, in 1916 this became South Post Headquarters for the balloon



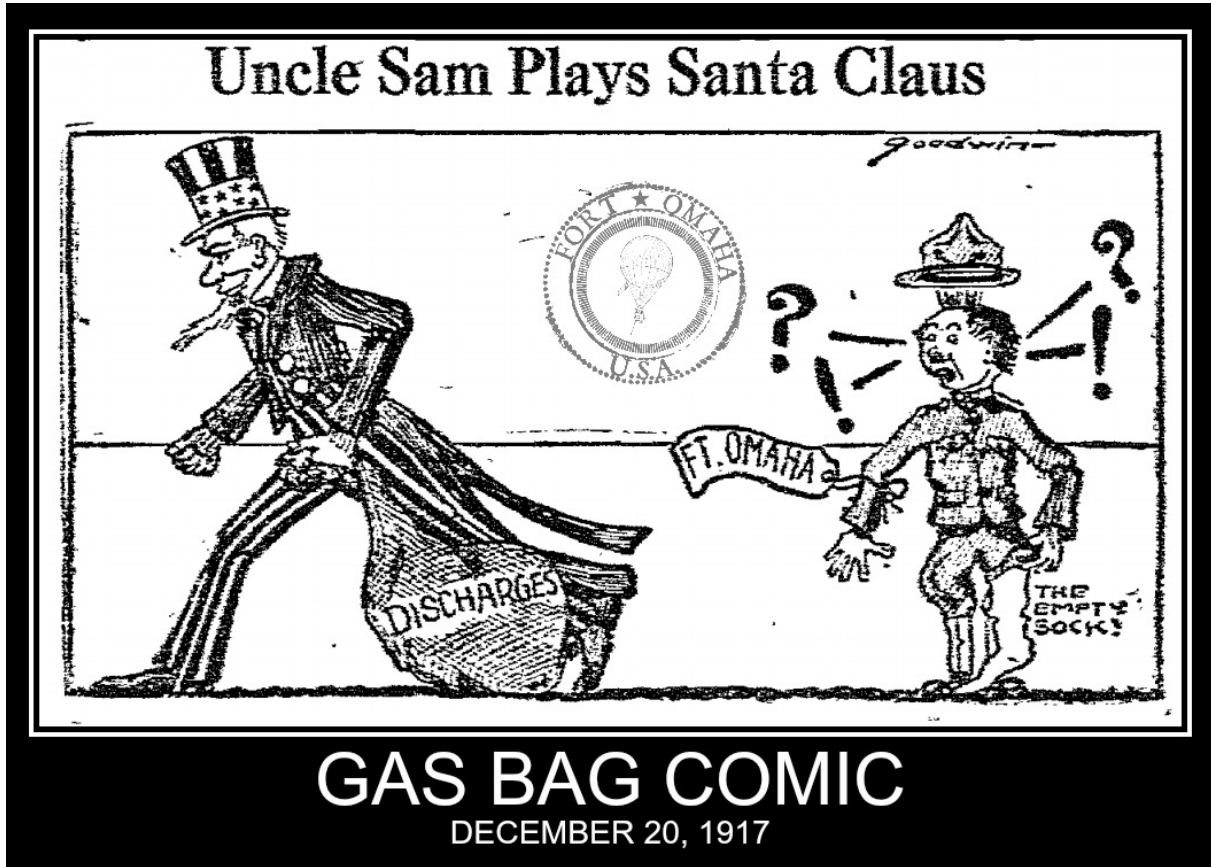
training school; in 1929 it became the Staff Officer's Headquarters of the Seventh Corps Area; between 1933 and the end of World War II it was a barracks and the Post Commissary; in 1947 it became a US Navy Rear Admiral's headquarters

31. **Building 32: Human Resources** – Built in 1908 at South Road and East Road as a Bakery; by 1933 it was an Officer's Quarters
32. **Swimming Pool** – Built around 1915, it is west of Building 10 and has been filled in with a garden. The pergola and pool engine plant building are intact.



*Image 18: Image by author.*

# Historical Markers



*Image 19: Image courtesy of the Douglas County Historical Society.*

Looking at historical sites around Fort Omaha can make a visitor's head spin because there is so much to see. Luckily, over the years a variety of historical markers have been planted throughout the Fort.

Word to the wise: Some of the following markers are hard to find and others may have moved, so good luck!

- **Fort Omaha Marker** – N. 30th and Fort Streets
- **Fort Omaha Marker** – N. 30th and Fort Streets
- **Crook House Marker** – N. 30th and Fort Streets
- **Bourke Gate Marker** – N. 30th and South Rd
- **Fire Station Marker** – Building 1
- **Post Exchange and Gymnasium Marker** – Building 2

- **Guardhouse Marker** – Building 4
- **Knights of Columbus Assembly Hall Marker** – Building 7
- **Headquarters Building Marker** – Building 8
- **Balloon School Marker** – Building 9
- **Observation Balloon Training Marker** – Building 10
- **President's House Marker** – Building 13
- **Officer's Row Marker** – Between Buildings 15 and 16
- **Hospital Marker** – Building 17
- **Quartermaster Depot Marker** – Building 21
- **Ordnance Magazine Marker** – Building 26
- **Headquarters Building Marker** – Building 30
- **Fort Omaha Marker** – East Rd and North Rd
- **Crook House Marker** – West Rd and North Rd
- **Shiverick Gate Marker** – N. 30th St and Middle Rd
- **Standing Bear Memorial Marker** – North Rd and East Rd
- **History of Fort Omaha Marker** – Middle Rd and East Rd

These markers were either installed by Metropolitan Community College, Historical Society of Douglas County, and Nebraska Committee for the Humanities; the Nebraska State Historical Society; or the Daughters of the American Colonists Historical Land Mark Council. Much of this information is from the [Historical Markers Database](#).

# Links

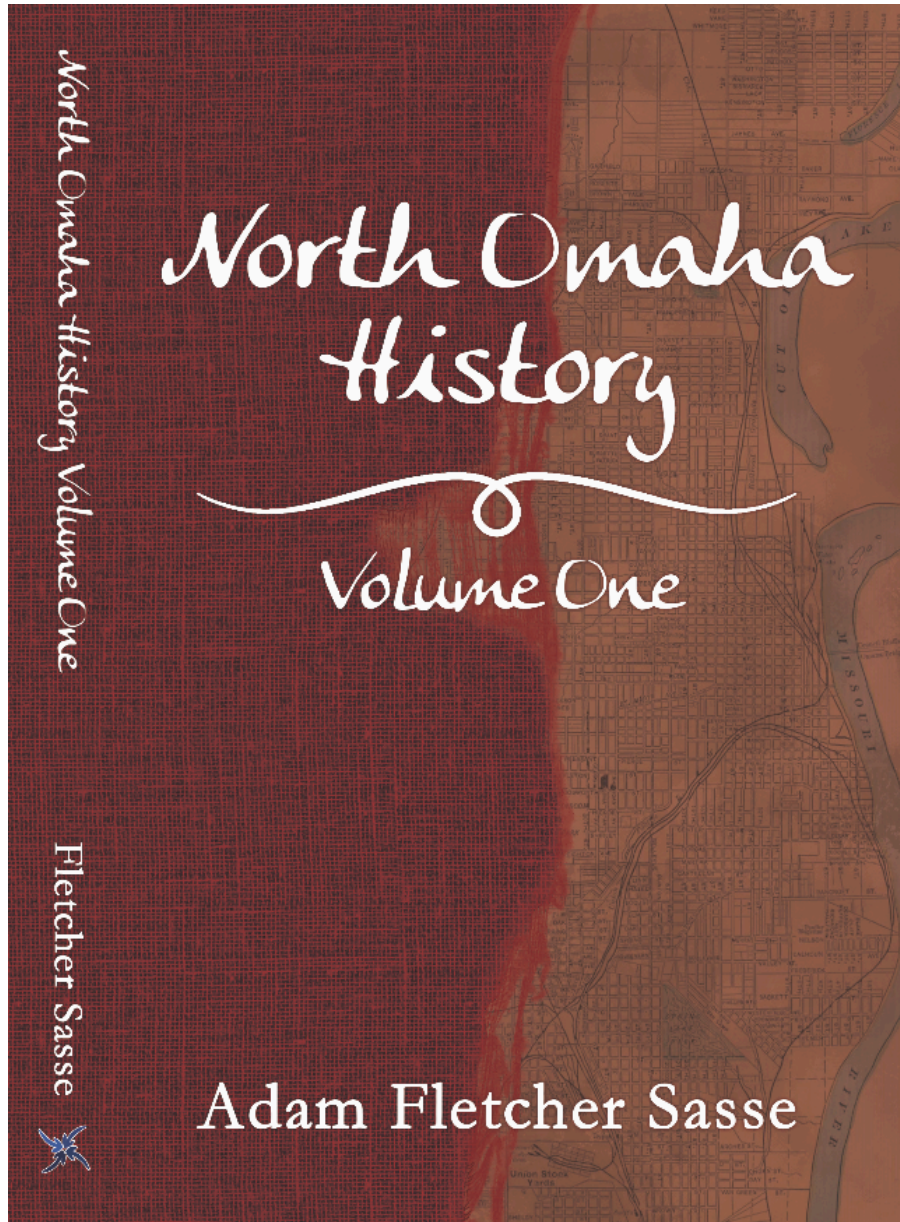
- North Omaha History [northomahahistory.com](http://northomahahistory.com)
- North Omaha History Facebook [facebook.com/NorthOmahaHistory](https://facebook.com/NorthOmahaHistory)
- "Fort Omaha Campus History" by Metropolitan Community College [mccneb.edu/About-MCC-Nebraska/About-MCC/History-of-MCC/Fort-Omaha-Campus-History.aspx](http://mccneb.edu/About-MCC-Nebraska/About-MCC/History-of-MCC/Fort-Omaha-Campus-History.aspx)
- "Historic Fort Omaha" by Douglas County Historical Society [douglascohistory.org/fort\\_omaha.htm](http://douglascohistory.org/fort_omaha.htm)
- "Omaha, Nebraska: Command and Support Center; The History of the Post of Omaha, Fort Omaha, Fort Crook and the Quartermaster Depots" by Fred M. Greguras [usgennet.org/usa/ne/topic/military/omaha\\_mil\\_history/pg1.htm](http://usgennet.org/usa/ne/topic/military/omaha_mil_history/pg1.htm)
- "Fort Omaha" Fort Wiki [fortwiki.com/Fort\\_Omaha](http://fortwiki.com/Fort_Omaha)
- The Durham Museum Photo Archive [durhammuseum.contentdm.oclc.org](http://durhammuseum.contentdm.oclc.org)
- Forgotten Omaha [facebook.com/groups/ForgottenOmaha/](https://facebook.com/groups/ForgottenOmaha/)



**FORT OMAHA SWIMMING POOL, PERGOLA AND POOL HOUSE**  
Located at Fort Omaha between Metro Tech College Road and Building 10



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