



Jefferson Barracks, Missouri: Quartermaster's Ledger Book, March 1844-May 1850

Collection Summary

Title:	Jefferson Barracks, Missouri: Quartermaster's Ledger Book, March 1844-May 1850
Call Number:	MS 98-17
Size:	0.25 linear feet
Acquisition:	Purchased from Main Street Fine Books and Manuscripts, 5-1997
Processed by:	MLR, 5-17-1998; SMC, 1999; MN, 12-6-2011
Restrictions:	None

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Content Note

The Jefferson Barracks, Missouri: Quartermaster's Ledger Book is comprised of one volume containing entries dating between March 19, 1844 and May 25, 1850. The ledger provides a series of dated receipts for goods issued to be used by military units and other governmental entities. Goods shipped to the northwest and south from the Jefferson Barracks were of an essential nature. Many important military officers and historic steamboats are listed in the entries. The volume is not in its original binding.

Administrative History

Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, Missouri, was established in 1826 as the site for the first Infantry School of Practice in the United States of America. Originally known as Cantonment Adams, the post was designated Jefferson Barracks in October 1826. The site was selected by Generals Henry Atkinson and Edmund Gaines to replace Fort Bellefontaine, established 1805, which was located in an unhealthy area near the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. The Infantry School was closed by 1830. Jefferson Barracks, however, was to exist for 120 years serving as the primary training and gathering place of the Army of the West.

Captain Stephen Kearney was the first commandant. He oversaw the establishment of the St. Louis Arsenal, and in 1827, his 6th Infantry troops founded Fort Leavenworth.

In 1829, Jefferson Barracks' troops participated in the first armed escort of merchant trains on the Santa Fe Trail. Until the start of the Civil War, troops gathered at Jefferson Barracks to protect immigrants and merchants on the way west.

Prior to the Civil War, Jefferson Barracks served as base for the Black Hawk War (1832). Black Hawk was interviewed there by Washington Irving and had his portrait painted by George Catlin. During the Mexican War (1846-1848) a troop of Mounted Riflemen was organized at Jefferson Barracks and sent to Mexico. The base also served as a staging post for other units on their way to the conflict. An incident not directly related to the military function of the Barracks, but one that triggered a court case of national importance, occurred in 1853. The post physician, Dr. John Emerson, died, leaving as part of the estate his personal slave, Dred Scott.

By the start of the Civil War nearly every regiment in the army had been stationed at Jefferson Barracks. Military personnel who had visited or been posted at the base included Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, Phillip Sheridan, John C. Fremont among many others. During the Civil War Jefferson Barracks was designated for use by the Union Army's Medical Department. The Barracks served as a base for the Western Sanitary Commission, and by the War's end, it had become the Union Army's largest general hospital.

After the Civil War and the completion of western settlement Jefferson Barracks assumed a lower profile as a military installation. In 1912, Albert Berry made the world's first parachute jump at the Barracks. Activity increased as World War II approached, with the Barracks becoming by the War's end the Army Air Corps' largest technical training base. The conclusion of the Second World War ushered in an era of global militarization that had little use for a military installation like Jefferson Barracks. On June 30, 1946 the Army deactivated the Jefferson Barracks site. The National Park Service took over the administration of the base, and Jefferson Barracks now serves as a national cemetery.

Series Listing

Series 1 Box 1 FF 1 Quartermaster's Ledger Book, March 1844-May 1850.

Box and Folder Listing

Series 1 – Quartermaster's Ledger Book

Box 1 FF 1 Quartermaster's Ledger Book, March 1844-May 1850. This ledger book provides a series of dated receipts for goods issued to be used by military units and other governmental entities. 1844-1846 saw the majority of supplies being sent to military installations in the Northwest, goods went to Ft. Leavenworth, Ft. Snelling, and Ft. Laramie. Goods were also designated for transport to various Native American reservations including the Kickapoo, Mandan and Wyandot tribes. From 1846-1850, the direction of shipments shifted to the South. Ft. Scott and Ft. Gibson were frequent destinations. Far and away the most frequent destination during this period was New Orleans, point of departure for goods being sent by water to the military engaged in action in Mexico. Steamboats mentioned in the ledger include many of note in the history of river commerce, such as Archer, Amelia, Cora, Bertram, Brunswick, and Old Hickory. Officers whose signatures are found in the ledger include Lt. Wallace, Lt. Vilet, Capt. Seth Easton, Col. F. F. Hart, and Col. McKay. Goods shipped from the Jefferson Barracks were of an essential, if pedestrian, nature. These included supplies for communication, such as paper, sealing wax, blank books, and ink; clothing of all sorts applicable to military requirements; tools and hardware; supplies to maintain the calvary, saddles, tack, and forage for the animals; a variety of hospital and medical stores; tents; coal and coal oil.

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