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# Review of *Forts of the Northern Plains: Guide to Historic Military Posts of the Plains Indians Wars* By Jeff Barnes

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*Forts of the Northern Plains: Guide to Historic Military Posts of the Plains Indians Wars.* By Jeff Barnes. Foreword by Senator Ben Nelson. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2008. xix + 220 pp. Map, photographs, bibliography, index. \$19.95 paper.

Jeff Barnes's book presents brief histories and the historical importance of about fifty military forts in Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, and Wyoming. Only sites that played roles in the "Indian Wars" of the West, roughly from 1820 to 1890, are included. Each entry describes the post and its significance, and offers good suggestions for further reading. Barnes also provides a sidebar offering directions to each site, its hours of operation, admission costs, special events, and available amenities to help visitors plan their trips.

Barnes offers updated information on posts that have been treated in a number of previous publications, such as those by Herbert M. Hart, who published several guides to military posts decades ago. The forts include sites under municipal, state, and federal jurisdictions, and some that are found on private land. Some sites, such as the "Council Bluffs Blockhouse" in downtown Council Bluffs, Iowa, no longer exist but are commemorated by markers. In many of the entries, Barnes suggests other related sites to visit in the same vicinity. A few abandoned or obliterated sites are commemorated by markers placed at interstate highway rest stops.

Since military fort tourism is an important feature of modern recreational travel in

the Great Plains, interested readers will find Barnes's book quite useful. Well written and researched, it offers a handy, carefully organized summary of many important military sites in the West, illustrated by numerous historic and contemporary photographs. Travelers will benefit from the readings Barnes refers to, since his volume is not meant to be a definitive study of the army's role in the West.

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