

Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation Fort Lawton History Collection, 1862-1995

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Seattle (Wash). Dept. of Parks and Recreation
Title	Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation Fort Lawton History Collection
Dates	1862-1995 (inclusive) 1862 1995
Quantity	1 cubic foot, (3 boxes)
Collection Number	5801-04
Summary	Documents concerning the history of Fort Lawton and a reminiscence of a World War II German POW.
Repository	Seattle Municipal Archives Seattle Municipal Archives Office of the City Clerk City of Seattle PO Box 94728 98124-4728 Seattle, WA Telephone: 206-233-7807 Fax: 206-386-9025 archives@seattle.gov
Access Restrictions	Records are open to the public.
Languages	English
Sponsor	Funding for processing this record series was provided through a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Historical Note

The Department of Parks and Recreation maintains the City's parks, shorelines, and boulevards; and administers community centers, public golf courses, and other athletic and cultural facilities. Seattle's first park was established in 1884 after David Denny donated land to the City for that purpose. At that time, a three-member park committee, with limited authority, was created to manage the nascent park system. A Board of Parks Commissioners was established in 1890 with control over all public parks and authority to appoint a Parks Superintendent. In 1896, the City Charter created the position of Superintendent of Streets, Sewers and Parks. The Parks Department became a separate entity in 1904. In 1926, a City Charter amendment abolished the position of Superintendent, distributing its responsibilities between the Head Gardener and the Landscape Architect. A 1948 City Charter amendment required the Board of Park Commissioners to appoint a park superintendent to administer the department. In 1967, another City Charter Amendment reconstituted the Board as an advisory body to the Mayor and City Council, changed the agency name to Department of Parks and Recreation, and placed fiscal and operational administration under the superintendent. In 1902 the City hired the Olmsted Brothers, the country's premier landscape architectural firm, to design a parks and boulevards

system. Although not all of the plan was implemented, the Olmsted legacy is evident in many of Seattle's parks and boulevards. The City acquired significant amounts of property for park purposes following the turn of the 20th Century, but in 1926 further acquisition was limited by a City Charter amendment that stipulated only money in the Park Fund could be used for that purpose. However, in the 1970s the Forward Thrust Bond issue, along with federal grants and the Seattle Model City Program, supported the largest expansion of the Park system in Seattle history. These programs funded more than 70 new parks and park facilities. The Department manages over 6,000 acres of park land, over two dozen community centers, five municipal golf courses, the Aquarium, and many other recreational and athletic facilities.

534-acre Discovery Park occupies the northwestern part of Magnolia Bluff. The site was originally selected for the construction of an artillery battery in the late 1890s. Fort Lawton opened in 1900 and was soon converted to infantry use. During World War II the fort saw active duty as a staging center and prisoner of war camp, but was underused after the war. By the 1970s, much of the fort's land was turned over to the City of Seattle to become Discovery Park. The best preserved collection of early Fort Lawton buildings was declared a landmark district in 1988. Discovery Park is also home to a Native American center, the Daybreak Star Cultural Center, which opened in 1977.

Content Description

Copies of historical documents from the National Archives and other sources concerning the establishment and history of Fort Lawton. Also included is a written reminiscence by a former German POW who was incarcerated at Fort Lawton during World War II, together with copies of photographs taken during his incarceration.

Use of the Collection

Preferred Citation

[Item and date], Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation Fort Lawton History Collection , Record Series 5801-04. Box [number], Folder [number]. Seattle Municipal Archives.

Administrative Information

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

5801-04: Fort Lawton History Collection , 1862-1995

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		

Container(s)	Description	Dates
1/1	Wilhelm Muller Reminiscence re Fort Lawton, Including Letters	1946-1987
1/2	Wilhelm Muller's Photographs (Copies)	1943-1947
1/3	Letter, Edward J. Phillips, Fort Lawton, to Corpl H.C. Bush	1903
1/4	Letter From Lacey Historical Museum	1995
1/5	Letter, William H. Freeman to Fred Mann	1976
1/6	War Department Documents re Fort Lawton (NARA Copies)	1886-1895
1/7	War Department Documents re Fort Lawton (NARA Copies)	1896
1/8	War Department Documents re Fort Lawton (NARA Copies)	1897
1/9	War Department Documents re Fort Lawton (NARA Copies)	1898
1/10	War Department Documents re Fort Lawton (NARA Copies)	1900-1916
1/11	Fort Lawton Army Documents (Copies) - Exposed Points On Frontier	1862
1/12	Fort Lawton Army Documents (Copies) - Fortifications Of Puget Sound	1888
1/13	Fort Lawton Army Documents (Copies) - Otis Report	1895
1/14	Fort Lawton Army Documents (Copies)	1885-1886
1/15	Fort Lawton Army Documents (Copies)	1894-1895
1/16	Fort Lawton Army Documents (Copies)	1896
1/17	Fort Lawton Army Documents (Copies)	1897
1/18	Fort Lawton Army Documents (Copies)	1898
2/1	Fort Lawton Army Documents (Copies)	1900-1916
2/2	Fort Lawton Army Documents (Copies) - Annual Report, Secretary of War	1894-1916

Container(s)	Description	Dates
2/3	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Seattle Chamber of Commerce	1886
2/4	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Seattle Chamber of Commerce Minutes	1894-1899
2/5	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Seattle Chamber of Commerce, Seattle Army Post Fund Cash Book	1896-1897
2/6	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Miscellaneous Army Correspondence	1898-1912
2/7	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - General Land Office Field Notes	1886
2/8	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Title Information	1890-1896
2/9	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - USCGS Descriptive Report, Shilshole Bay to Alki Point	1899
2/10	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Report On Grounds	1907
2/11	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Chittenden	1980-1908
2/12	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Olmsted, John C.	1910
2/13	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Army Judge Advocate General re Title, Jurisdiction	1907
2/14	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Post Description	1900
2/15	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - History	1909
2/16	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Margaret Strachan Manuscript	undated
2/17	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Lawrence L. Pike History	1957
2/18	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Cowell and Anonymous, Histories	undated
2/19	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Walker History	1970
2/20	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Sound Defender, History of Fort Lawton	1970

Container(s)	Description	Dates
2/21	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - D. Sherwood Notes and Water Dept. History	undated
2/22	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Guides to Fort Lawton	1926-1963
2/23	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Kiley, Park Plan	1972
2/24	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Feasibility Study	1974
2/25	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Fort Lawton, A Record	undated
2/26	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - National Register and Site Survey Forms	1950-1984
3/1	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Donald Vorhees, Background Information	undated
3/2	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Historic Preservation and Fort Lawton Buildings	1978
3/3	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - League of Women Voters and Magnolia Community Club	1978
3/4	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - Seattle Community Development Comments re Fort Lawton Nomination	1978
3/5	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - NPS Preliminary Case Report	1978
3/6	Fort Lawton Reports (Copies) - William H. Freeman Dissertation (Excerpt)	1974
3/7	Deeds (Copies)	1897-1898

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Discovery Park (Seattle, Wash.)

Fort Lawton (Seattle, Wash.)

World War, 1939-1945 Prisoners and prisons

Corporate Names :

Seattle (Wash). Dept. of Parks and Recreation

Geographical Names :

Seattle (Wash.)

Form or Genre Terms :

Snapshots

Finding aid prepared by Janet Ness
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