

MT. GREтна PA NATIONAL GUARD RESERVATION

BACKGROUND

The National Guard is a reserve military component of the United States Military composed of men who serve in the military while maintaining their civilian lives. Under the U.S. Constitution, each state's National Guard unit is controlled by the governor in time of peace but can be called up for federal duty by the President.

Robert Coleman invited the 3rd PA National Guard to conduct summer training in Mt. Gretna.

According to the Lebanon Daily News (June 3, 1885) Adjutant Milton Gherst declared the area suitable for training 3rd Brigade of the PA National Guard.

He (Adjutant Milton Gherst) found everything suitable for such an encampment, a plentiful supply of water, land well located, and above all, the section a healthy one, free of miasma, and sufficiently removed from the pernicious influence of cities, which heretofore was one of the greatest evils complained of.

Mt. Gretna encampment was used three times to muster PA National Guard troops into Federal service:

- 1898-Spanish American War
- 1916-Defense of the American Mexican border
- 1917-World War I

1885 THE RESERVATION

Reservation-a property that the United States Government has exclusive jurisdiction over. It is separate from the surrounding state in both jurisdiction and territorial sense.

1885 Mt. Gretna National Guard Reservation became an official PA National Guard summer training encampment (50 year tenure)

- Training in Mt. Gretna began as early as 1880
- 1880-Coleman cleared 120 acres for the encampment
- 1930-encampment grew to approximately 3,000 acres
- Extended from Mt. Gretna to Colebrook

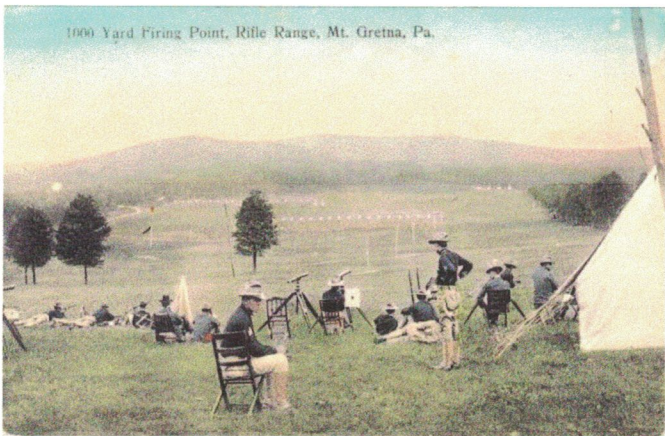


Mt. Gretna

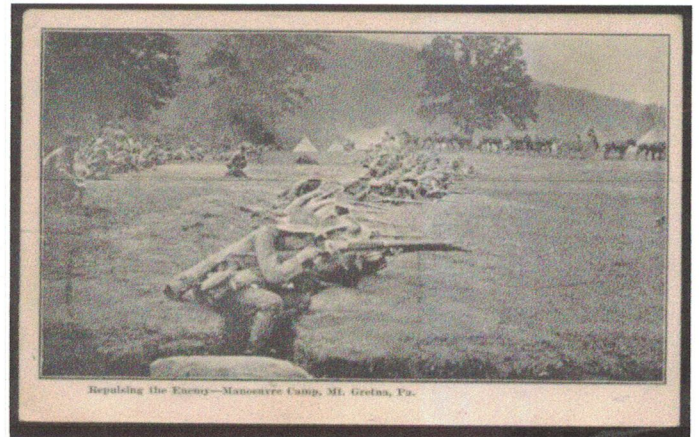


Colebrook

ARTILLERY



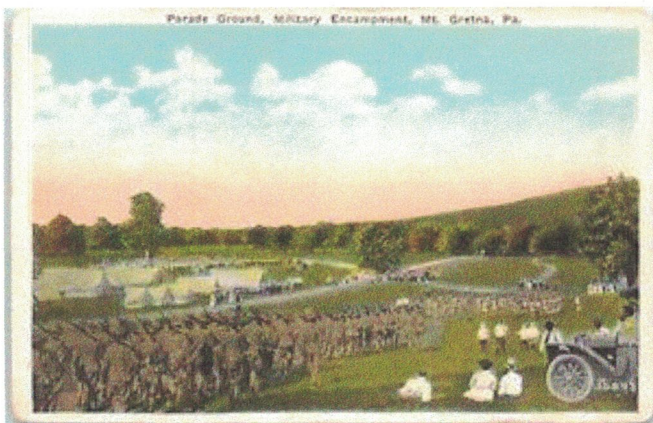
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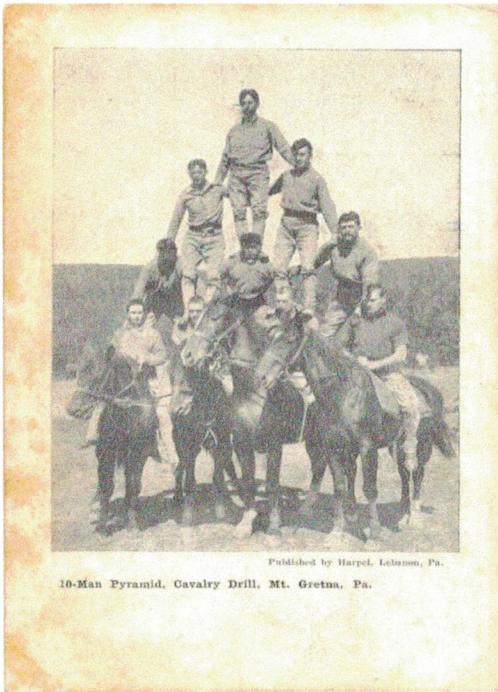
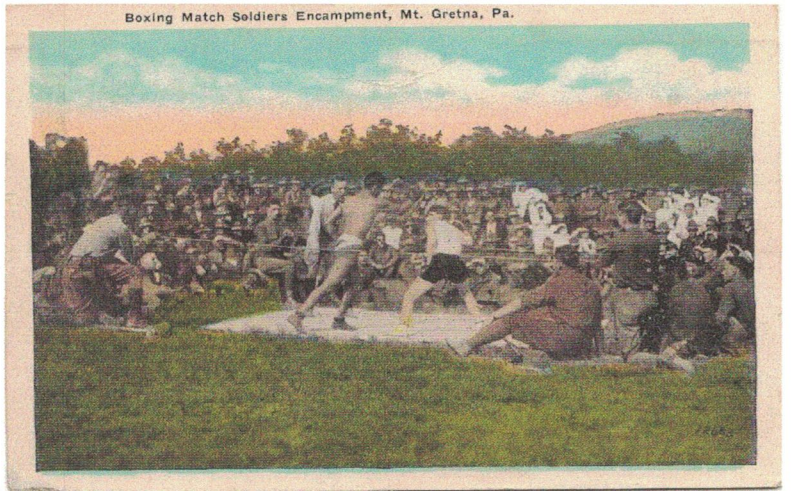
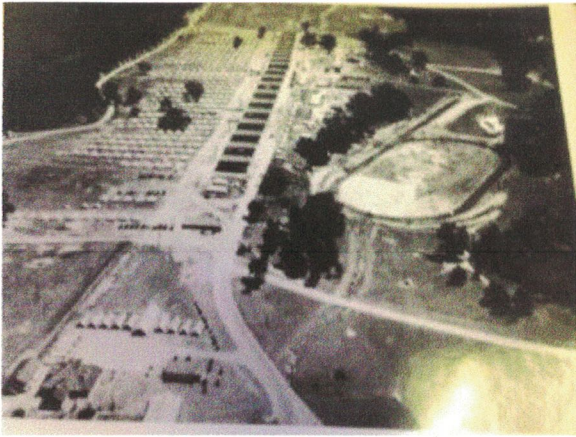


CAVALRY

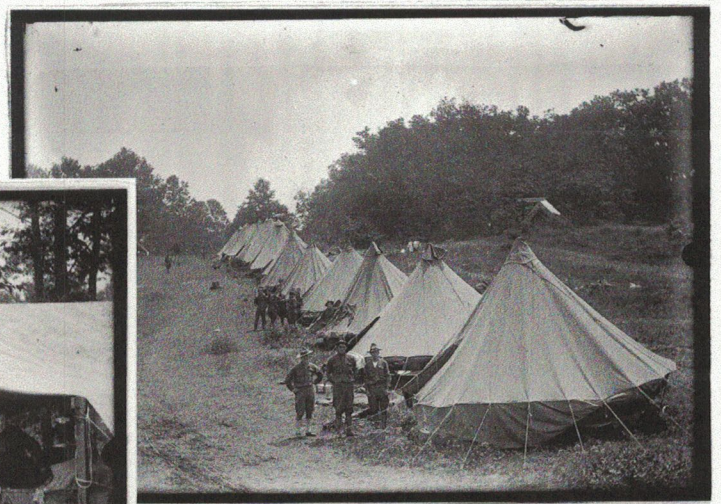


- Most Reservation employees lived in the Commonwealth's section of Colebrook
- Concrete highway-Lehigh Portland Cement Co. Frank Beary-Adjutant General of the Guard
- 1920-horse breeding started with French stallion, Recount, for the cavalry
- Athletic Bowl-field meets
- Lake Duffy-22,000 ton of ice annually
- Concerts, parades, review of troops by dignitaries





Published by Harpel, Lebanon, Pa.
10-Man Pyramid, Cavalry Drill, Mt. Gretna, Pa.



Mt. Gretna, 1912

CAMP ACTIVITIES

1898 MUSTER FOR THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

- 1898 Major troop staging ground for the Spanish American War
- 1898 - With the Declaration of War with Spain, Pennsylvania Governor Daniel Hastings ordered the National Guard to report to Mount Gretna on April 25, 1898. The camp would be called "Camp Hastings" in the Governor's honor.
- Troops began to arrive April 28, 1898 amidst snow, sleet and rain turning the camp into a cold, slippery, muddy mess.



Camp Hastings, just after the snow and rain

- The assembling of the division jammed the railroad.
- 175 coaches and sleeping cars
- 100 baggage, box, stock and flat cars
- Men arrived in civilian clothes, no winter clothing, expecting uniforms and shelter.
- Tents from the state arsenal had not yet arrived. (LDN Sept. 30, 1972 article)

When we reached Mt. Gretna it was raining to beat seven of a kind. We are quartered in the barracks without food, water or blankets. But we expect to get something to eat by next Tuesday. (troops arrived Thursday, April 28, 1898)

- Men were quartered in buildings in the area including cottages in Chautauqua. Others remained on their railroad cars. Bunks were set up in the auditorium.
- It was permitted for men to strip cottage of burnable materials for fires. Guard authorities maintained records in order to pay for damages
- April 29, 1898-8,994 officers and men were already present for duty. Camps and tents were finally pitched, and life rapidly began to settle into a routine.

Behind the scenes, intense negotiations were going on between the states and the Federal army. Across the country, National Guard units were not well-respected by the Federal Army, nor were they all well supplied. The Federal army did not want to have work with the guard.

- The men assembled at Mount Gretna were given the opportunity to enlist in the Federal service.
 - Men with families were allowed to avoid signing up.
 - Seventy percent of guardsmen present joined up.

Only about three weeks had past since the order to rendezvous at the camp had been given. By June 12, 1898 all that remained was the "Governor's Troop" cavalry, which was still recruiting. Prior to their leaving the camp, the men of this unit began creating a monument at the end of their street by stacking stones. This monument lasted until 1908, and was rebuilt in 1909. Later, other monuments were created for the "Sheridan Troop" cavalry and the 16th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry.



1916 MUSTER FOR DEFENSE OF THE AMERICAN MEXICAN BORDER

- June 1916-Mexican revolutionary commander Gen. Francisco "Pancho" Villa had crossed the border and raided several U.S. towns including Columbus, New Mexico and Boquilla, Texas.
- June 18, 1916, the secretary of War on behalf of President Woodrow Wilson issued a call to the governors to mobilize the entire National Guard.
- Pennsylvania Gov. Martin Brumbaugh authorized the Pennsylvania Guard to mobilize.
- June 23, 1916-Soldiers of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard began training in Mt. Gretna to protect the Mexican border

1917 MUSTER FOR WORLD WAR I

1930 MOVE TO INDIANTOWN GAP

- 1929 Approval given to look for new encampment location
 - Reservation laid out with little planning for the future
 - Valuable agricultural land nearby was too expensive for expansion
 - 100,000 people visiting Mt. Gretna yearly
 - Population density-dangerous for infantry to conduct combat firing; artillery firing prohibited
 - Roads improperly laid out and poorly constructed
 - Lack of proper drilling grounds
 - Underbrush too dense for maneuvers; expensive to remove
 - Most buildings were temporary structures

For more than fifty years, the Pennsylvania National Guard (PNG) had trained at the [State Military Reservation at Mount Gretna](#), a quaint little town that also hosted the Pennsylvania Chautauqua in Lebanon County. But by the 1920s, the PNG had outgrown Mount Gretna's 2,800-acre facility. Major technological advances in weaponry, including long-range artillery, aircraft, and motorized armored vehicles, had changed the nature and geographical range of modern warfare. And there were also growing concerns for the safety of the residents of the densely populated area immediately surrounding the post. So in 1929 the Pennsylvania State Legislature appointed a Military Reservation Commission, which soon concluded that the PNG needed more spacious accommodations for proper training in modern warfare.

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- 1931 - Gov. Gifford Pinchot signed the report of the State Military Reservation Commission to acquire 13,000 acres for the purpose of construction of a modern Military Reservation
- 1933-40 buildings constructed
- Relocation happened over time as facilities were ready for use
- 1936 - permission to move mess halls, latrines, and showers from Mt. Gretna to Indiantown Gap
- 1937 - military activity ceased
- 1937-1947 Boy Scouts annual camp summer

