

# FORT PIERRE – AN OFTEN OVERLOOKED TREASURE OF HISTORIC SITES AND ATTRACTIONS!

For travelers coming through Fort Pierre in the summertime or residents looking for something to do on a lazy summer day, Fort Pierre has many interesting sites to visit and explore. Plans are being made to expand and develop some of the locations in the following list of attractions. Save this article and keep it close to the checkout counter at your business. When customers ask what there is to see and do in Fort Pierre, you can simply pull out the article and tell them. Better yet, print extra copies of the article and give them one.

1. **Stanley County Rodeo Arena and Fairgrounds** hosts a summer long schedule of rodeos and 4H activities. Fort Pierre holds the record for having held the first 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration in the State. A tradition is the annual SDRA 4<sup>th</sup> of July Rodeo and fireworks. Horse races kick the year off at the end of April each year.
2. **Fischer Lily Park** was the location at the mouth of Bad River where Lewis & Clark had an encounter with several hundred Teton Sioux on September 25, 1804. Had this confrontation not been diffused, the Lewis & Clark expedition could have ended right here.
3. **Log Cabin Visitor Center** is owned and maintained by the Verendrye Museum and has served as a Visitor Center for the City of Ft. Pierre since 2000. Serving as an information center, visitors will find brochures and other information for Ft. Pierre and the surrounding area as well as displays and showcases depicting items from the area's pioneer history. The historic Sansarc School and Old Jailhouse are adjacent to the Visitor Center and be toured during Visitor Center hours 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
4. **Sansarc School** was built in 1910 and used actively as a school for grades 1 through 8 and a polling place until 1969. It was brought to Fort Pierre in 1975 and donated to the Verendrye Museum. It serves as an interpretive museum of country schools.
5. **Old Jailhouse** was built in circa 1910 and it is still in its original location. It was built next to the Stanley County Courthouse (1907) which was torn down in 1972.
6. **The Stockgrowers Bank** on the corner of Main Street and Deadwood Avenue was built in 1903. It is the single example of Romanesque Revival architecture in Ft. Pierre and represents a well-executed adaptation of the style to the needs of a small frontier community. It was the most important commercial building erected in Fort Pierre during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and symbolized the commercial development of Fort Pierre as the business center for much of western South Dakota's cattle raising activity. The building was constructed by James (Scotty) Philip, Gaylord E. Sumner and Millett and it began a chain of banks in the area.
7. **Verendrye Museum** is located in the old dance hall on Deadwood Avenue. Thousands of authentic early-day items make the Verendrye Museum one of the finest western memorabilia collections on the High Plains. Open Memorial Day through Labor Day with hours Monday – Saturday 9 am – 4 pm and Sunday 11 am - 4 p.m.
8. **Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center & Mattie Goff-Newcombe Conference Center**, across from the Verendrye Monument, are both a historical museum devoted to the sport of rodeo ranching history and a conference center with a fantastic view of the Missouri River.
9. **Verendrye Monument – National Historic Landmark** is the location where the Verendrye Brothers planted a lead plate in 1743, claiming this land for the King of France. The Verendrye Plate, now on display at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center, is one of the most significant artifacts in United States History. Fort Pierre school children discovered it in 1913.

10. **Cedar Hill Cemetery** is possibly as old as the town of Fort Pierre itself dating back to 1817. It is believed it was being used as a burial place even before it was platted in 1894. It is the final resting place of some local colorful personalities including outlaws, fur traders, military veterans of Civil War, WWI and WWII, prospectors, Native American residents, suffragettes, murder victims, children who succumbed to epidemics, and historic leaders. It was originally called Union Cemetery.
11. **Fort Pierre Railroad Depot** was built in 1906 by the Chicago and North Western Railroad as part of their expansion to Rapid City and beyond. It was closed and sold as surplus in 1963. Local residents who grew up on nearby ranches remember bringing their cream and eggs to the depot to be shipped. The Depot was discovered on the Shirley Miller ranch near Mud Butte in 2010 and donated to Fort Pierre if they would “come and get it.” The “Bring It Home” group did just that in March 2013. It is owned by the Verendrye Museum and will officially open the week of Memorial Day 2016. Hours will be Memorial Day through Labor Day Monday – Saturday 9 am – 4 pm and Sunday 11 am – 4 pm.
12. **1876-1906 Old Deadwood Trail**, from 1875 to 1908, the Old Deadwood Trail was the only way freight could be transported from the steamships on the Missouri River to the Black Hills. Oxen teams used this 200 mile trail to haul freight to Deadwood and the Gold Rush. In 2008, a wagon train was organized to celebrate the 100 year anniversary of its closure.
13. **Fort Pierre Chouteau – National Historic Landmark** was built in 1833 by its namesake Pierre Chouteau who at one time held a monopoly on the fur trading of the Northwest. It was the largest trading post on the upper Missouri River and a thriving community of traders, trappers and Native Americans surrounded it. The royalty and nobleman of Europe wore hats made from the beaver pelts shipped from this location by riverboat. Of the 16 National Historic Landmarks in South Dakota, Fort Pierre Chouteau is one of the two located in Fort Pierre. The other is the Verendrye Site. The Fort Pierre Chouteau site has been designated for improvements in the next year to include a fort-like picnic area and interpretive trail.
14. **Scotty Philip Cemetery** is the burial place of the famed “Scotty” Philip and the location of one of his ranch homes. Scotty Philip came to the area in 1870 and is credited with saving the buffalo from extinction. Thousands of his buffalo grazed to the North of the cemetery in what is still referred to as the “buffalo pasture.” Casey Tibbs is also buried in Scotty Phillip Cemetery.
15. **Oahe Dam** was dedicated in 1962 by President John F. Kennedy and was the largest rolled-earth dam in the world. It is 245 feet high, 9,300 feet long and the width at the base is 3,500. Lake Oahe, created by the dam, stretches 231 miles north to Bismarck, ND. The lake covers 347,000 acres of land and has 2,250 miles of shoreline (more than the coast of California. Oahe (OH-AH-HEE) is a Dakota Sioux word meaning “something to stand upon, a foundation.”

**(Watch in upcoming issues of the Fort Pierre News for an article on upcoming events and concerts this summer and fall in Fort Pierre.)**