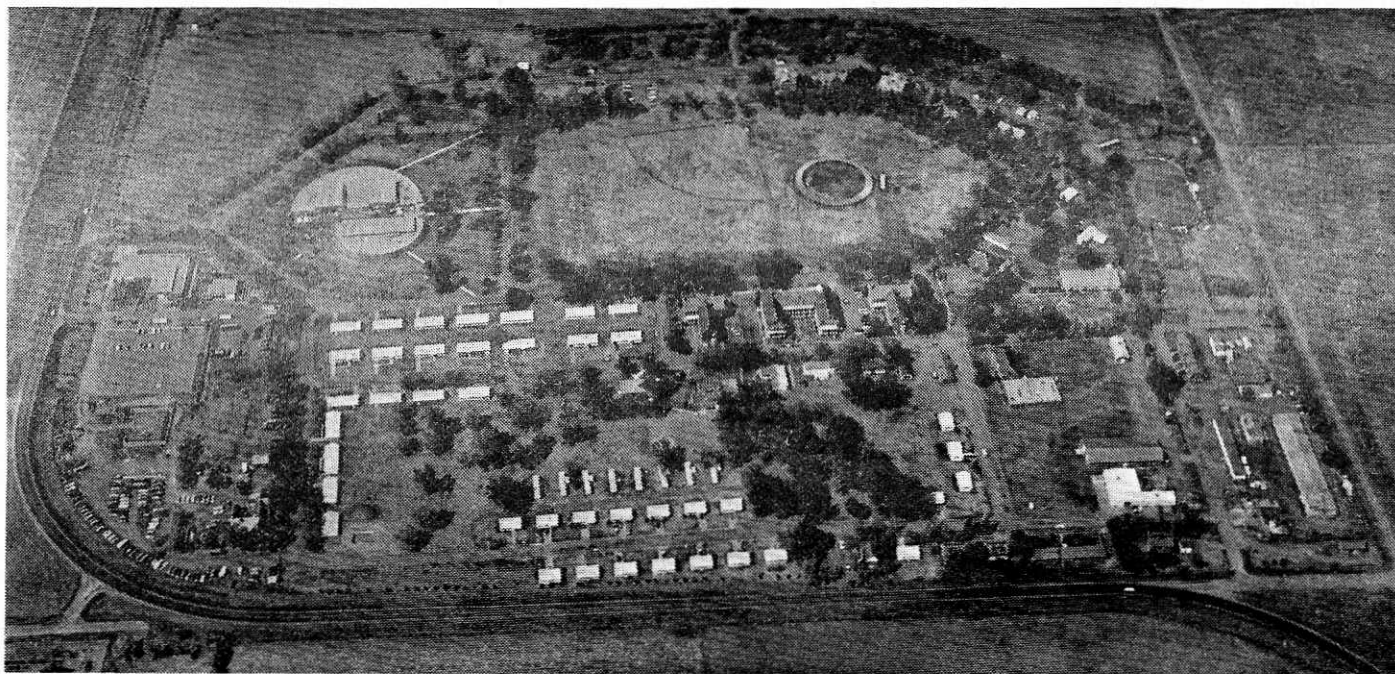


The United Tribes Educational Technical Center: Historical Perspective

Editors Note: This is the last series of articles on the history and projections of the Historical Significance of Fort Lincoln, ND.

The private foundation that had operated the Lewis and Clark Job Corps Center explored the possibility for establishing a pre-vocational training center at the camp. This would be used to train young people from both Dakotas, Minnesota, and Montana. This was not to be. When the Job Corps men left local citizens indicated that they had had less trouble than expected. The Job Corps men seemed happy enough to leave. One of them complained that he had "thought when I came here this was a good-sized town, There is nothing to do here,"



Aerial view of United Tribes Educational Technical Center as it appears June, 1980.

tional training center. The support of the United Tribes on August 15, 1969. Fort Bureau of Indian Affairs of North Dakota and the city Lincoln was again being

this was a good-sized town, There is nothing to do here," Many of the Negro corpsmen indicated dissatisfaction with the reception they received in all-white Bismarck. Certainly the failure to have a black community to refer to made it difficult for corpsmen. (Bismarck Daily Tribune, January 31, 1968.) The fort itself remained and was in excellent condition.

Proposals again came for possible uses of Fort Lincoln. It was suggested that it could be used as a trade school, a vocational training center for Indians, and a facility for law enforcement officers. The Mandan Pioneer suggested that there was growing favor for using it as an Indian vocational training site and suggested that the United Tribes of North Dakota was highly interested in this. Indian leaders representing the tribes had met with Senator Quentin Burdick and Commissioner of Indian Affairs Robert Bennett and put forth a size-point plan for using the center as a family-type voca-

tional training center. The Bureau of Indian Affairs asked the OEO to suspend any decision on disposal of the Job Corps. Center until further planning could be done on an Indian program. (Mandan Pioneer, March 21, 1968.) In about the same period, Senator Milton Young of North Dakota suggested that the Peace Corps. use Fort Lincoln as a training center for two and a half months during the summer where Peace Corpsmen would undergo training for work in Kenya, Africa. (Mandan Pioneer, April 27, 1968.)

On the ninth of October, 1968, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved an appropriation of \$1.7 million to establish an Indian vocational training center at Fort Lincoln. The idea would be to prepare individuals and Indian families for urban employment with a strong stress on vocational education. Senator Young felt this would help the Indians who suffered from great poverty but had a great deal of talent. The proposed center had the

support of the United Tribes of North Dakota and the city of Bismarck. Certain large corporations such as RCA, expressed an interest in contracting for the training of people. (Bismarck Daily Tribune, October 9, 1968.) On January 16, 1969, it was announced that representatives of the Bendix Field Engineering Corporation would fly to Bismarck to meet with the United Tribes to discuss the possibility of Bendix operating the Indian vocational training center. Philco also expressed an interest. The final appropriation was for \$700,000 and the long-range goals remained the same. (Bismarck Daily Tribune, January 16, 1969.) The Bendix Company was selected over RCA and Philco as the contractor by United Sioux Tribes. It was planned that initially twenty-five families, ten individual parents, and fifty single Indian men and fifty single Indian women would be enrolled. (Bismarck Daily Tribune, March 22, 1969.) The center was slated to open

on August 15, 1969. Fort Lincoln was again being renovated and twenty prefabricated, three-bedroom homes were under construction. (Bismarck Daily Tribune, June 25, 1969.) Staffs were recruited and hired and all was ready to go. By the 25th of August, when the facility actually opened, Indian families were moving in and Fort Lincoln had a new use. Bendix served to get the Indian training center off the ground and started but the Indians themselves took over the actual running of it and phased out the corporation. Indian self-determination and pride can succeed in creating a viable and workable facility that gave promise of a solution to the use of Fort Lincoln that has prospects of lasting into the foreseeable future. The tribes have not substantially altered the site, the buildings are in remarkably fine condition on the exterior and interior remodeling has been minimal.