

## National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items

☒ New Submission ☐ Amended Submission

### A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Trading Posts in Wyoming: 1832-1868

### B. Associated Historic Contexts

*19<sup>th</sup> Century Trading Posts in Wyoming*

### C. Form Prepared by

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### D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.  
(         See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature and title of certifying official

Date

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Name of Multiple Property Listing

State

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**Table of Contents for Written Narrative**

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

	<b>Page Numbers</b>
<b>E. Statement of Historic Contexts</b> (If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)	<b>E 1-76</b>
<b>F. Associated Property Types</b> (Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)	<b>F 77-97</b>
<b>G. Geographical Data</b>	<b>G 98</b>
<b>H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods</b> (Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)	<b>H 99</b>
<b>I. Major Bibliographical References</b> (List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)	<b>I 100-118</b>

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 1

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Euroamerican fur trading activity began in Wyoming as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century. However, these activities were ephemeral; taking place in Native American villages, temporary camps, or summer Rendezvous sites and often leaving little in the way of an archaeological signature. This changed in 1832 with the construction of Fort Bonneville in what would become western Wyoming. Fort Bonneville was not only believed to be the first trading post constructed in Wyoming, but likely the first building erected with the intention of being a permanent Euroamerican settlement. After 1832, Native American and Euroamerican fur trading activities in the region were increasingly conducted at trading posts. The trading post would remain the focus of these exchanges until the 1860s. As early as 1840, the posts began to serve a new purpose: to supply west-bound emigrants. For the next two decades trading posts were the primary providers of goods and services to Native Americans and Euroamerican emigrants in the West.

The decline to the trading post era was a result of a number of historical developments beginning as early as the 1850s. The Plains Wars between the United States military and the Sioux and their allies decreased emigrant traffic and increased native hostilities, disrupting the trading activities of the posts and leading to decreased profits from the 1850s through the 1860s. The result of the wars saw many of the tribes being relocated by 1868. The removal of the tribes effectively ended the free trading relationship between the posts and the tribes that had existed for decades and further reducing the profitability of the posts. The railroad had also reached Wyoming by 1868. This provided the last blow to the posts. The railroad offered safer, faster, and more reliable transportation from the East to the West, reducing trail use and trading post profitability. It also provided for relatively reliable access to eastern goods. For these reasons by 1868 the trading post was obsolete. Their primary trading partners were gone, the routes they serviced had diminished in importance, and activity in Wyoming had begun to change dramatically. Gone were the days of settlement and exploration. The railroad brought permanent American settlements, springing up along each stop of the train. It would be in these locations that commerce would now be conducted.

Trading activity in the West has a rich and complex history. Economic exchanges served to foster the development of social, cultural, and political relationships between and among tribal groups and Euroamericans. These relationships were developed and maintained through a range of activities including the exchange of goods between individuals, seasonal trade fairs or gatherings, temporary establishments along the emigrant trails such as tent camps or dealers selling wares out of wagon backs, and permanent trading posts. While all of these activities can be considered historically significant, this text will only deal with permanent Euroamerican trading structures. These structures, collectively called trading posts in this document, differ from other locations of trading activity. The trading posts were in many ways integral to the first large scale movement of Euroamericans into the region, the development of the infrastructure necessary for the settlement of the region, and were central in the negotiation and conflict for the West between the tribes and the United States. There were at least 29 trading posts in Wyoming whose occupation dates between 1832 and 1868 (Table 1). This document will provide the historical background, current state of research, and the number and types of archaeological investigations for each of these posts. The historical significance of Wyoming's trading posts will also be discussed, along with an evaluation of relevant National Register criteria.

### **Early Fur Trade Investigations**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 2

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Traditional historic investigations of the fur trade or the establishment of trading posts in North America have often centered on a narrative of western expansion. In this tale hardy American emigrants braved the perils of the West to claim the uncharted lands west of the Mississippi and to expand our national boundaries the width of the continent. The fur trade and the posts that often accompanied it were heralded as the advanced guard of American expansion, exploring and claiming territory in preparation for the eventual settlement of a region (Sleeper Smith 2009:xvii). The response to these interpretations presents a past where fur traders and trappers functioned as exploitative agents (Turner 1977:6). In this scenario Euroamerican traders force European goods on native peoples and compel them to enter into exchange networks with which they are unfamiliar, ultimately leading to the destruction of traditional native lifeways and the destruction of the native culture itself.

In many ways these early interpretations were correct. Often the trappers and traders that lived and worked in native territories did function as the advance guard for Euroamerican civilization. The work of those involved in the fur trade brought valuable information on the local topography, natural resources, and indigenous cultures. In many cases the “infrastructure” developed by the trappers in the way of trails systems, bridges, ferries, and even post locations was later developed to service emigrant trains. There are also instances of trading activity and post construction used as a means of establishing territorial claim to a region (Innis 1962:43-46, Wishart 1979:14, Hafen 2000a:47-48). This activity was common around the Great Lakes and on the Northern Plains during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century when European ownership of the region was contested by the Swedes, Dutch, French, and British and trading activity in a region was often restricted to one or a limited number of companies working under government charters. Posts functioning as territorial markers were less common in the West where territorial borders were often fixed by treaty and trading activity was diversified to include a large number of companies and free traders. This is not to say that posts never served this function in the West. In the northern Rocky Mountains and the Oregon territory where ownership was contested between Britain and the United States until 1846 posts did on occasion serve to provide territorial claim.

Truths can also be found in interpretations that view the posts as exploitative and predatory. Diseases and alcohol imported with the Euroamerican traders proved ultimately destructive to native cultures. While the degree of the cultural change that accompanied the advance of the fur trade is debatable, it is undeniable that the introduction of foreign goods and cultural morays had an influence on traditional Native American lifeways. Finally, the eventual relocation of the tribes and the cultural damage that accompanied it are viewed by many as the unavoidable outcome of the early fur trade contact. In light of these consequences, it is easy to cast early fur trade encounters as dangerous, damaging, and ultimately predatory in nature.

The problem with these interpretations of the fur trade is that they focus on the results and not the actions and the perceptions of the traders, trappers, and tribes. Euroamerican trappers were generally operating based on a motivation for adventure, exploration, or personal financial gain. Often these men developed amicable relations with the tribes, in many cases marrying native women. While the actions of these men could facilitate the exploration and development of the wilderness for national claim and future settlement, this was generally not the intent of the trappers and traders. In fact many of the trappers eventually came to lament the coming of the emigrant trains and American settlement of the region as it brought an end to their livelihood and way of life.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 3

The same problems persist when examining Native American relations and the fur trade. Many interpretations depict native people as passive victims of Euroamerican colonialism or expansion who were powerless to resist the lure of Euroamerican goods that served to integrate them into a market economy with which they were unfamiliar. While few would deny that contact with Euroamericans eventually led to the destruction of traditional economic, subsistence, and cultural systems this was not a foregone conclusion when the trappers reached the West. The tribes themselves saw benefit in trading for Euroamerican goods and often quickly integrated Euroamerican trading activity into already well-established native exchange systems. This text will examine the major historical events and movements associated with the fur trade through the trading post era and discuss the cultural and social implications to Euroamericans and Native Americans that resulted from this activity.

### **Early History of the Fur Trade**

Fur trading activities in North America predate the arrival of Europeans by centuries as furs were frequently incorporated into intertribal exchange networks. Euroamericans plugged into native fur trapping and trading activities beginning with the earliest discovery and exploration of the continent. The first French, Dutch, and English explorers to reach North America engaged Native Americans in the exchange of European goods for native pelts (Hafen 2000a:21-22). Pelts were sent back to Europe for sale to haberdashers, furriers, and the general public (Barbour 2000:11). The desire for furs in Europe caused European trappers and traders to push into remote regions of the wilderness providing the largest return (Hafen 2000a:21). The French were the first to move in large numbers out of the east into the interior of the continent. After establishing Quebec in 1608, they moved down the St. Lawrence River to the Great Lakes and beyond (Hafen 2000a:22). The British and the Dutch soon followed suit, and by the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the three powers were sending trapping parties up river valleys and into the eastern interior of North America. These fur trapping parties often served as the first explorers and agent of contact in the wilderness regions of North America.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, European fur trappers were often in conflict with one another as trappers from each nation moved deeper into the wilderness, expanding their area of influence and size of their trapping grounds and, as a result, the size of their fur yields. The traders and trappers moving ever deeper into the wilderness laid the groundwork for the establishment of governmental authority in these regions (Gardner, Johnson, and Vlcek 1991:4; Hafen 2000a:21, 25-26). Often a permanent trading post would be constructed on the frontier as a means of establishing a claim to that particular territory.

While fur trading activities resulted in the eventual colonization and control of the native wilderness, the early movement of Euroamerican trappers into these regions was done on the terms of the natives. This was a movement of Euroamerican trappers into aboriginal worlds where the establishment of direct contact and economic exchanges between Europeans and Native Americans led to the development of complex personal and economic relationships that ultimately provided for socio-cultural exchanges between the two groups (Podruchny 2006:203). Euroamerican traders generally moved into regions in small numbers and as such were not viewed as threats by the indigenous populations. The goods that accompanied the traders were viewed as beneficial by the tribes as they made daily life and subsistence activities easier and in some cases provided an

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 4

advantage over other tribes in competing for local resources and territory. The readiness of the tribes to trade with the Euroamerican traders did not come solely from the desirability of European goods. Euroamerican traders were not moving west and inducing the tribes to engage in new forms of economic activity. Rather the traders were being integrated into trade networks that dated in some cases as far back as the Archaic Period, over 4,000 years ago. In this manner the traders and trappers worked in partnership with the native tribes exchanging Euroamerican goods for knowledge and furs (Barbour 2001:4-5; Gardner Johnson, and Vlcek 1991:4-5, 11; Wood and Thiessen 1985:7-9). Often the relationships between the traders and tribes became familial as trappers or traders would frequently marry native women, integrating the Euroamerican into the tribe (Wood and Thiessen 1985:8-9). This trade was beneficial to both parties as each was exchanging what were considered common, readily available items to the other for goods that they either would have been unable to procure or manufacture themselves or that could only be attained with great difficulty.

Fur trading on the frontier integrated the tribes into a global market economy as a producer and consumer. As a producer the tribes intensified fur procurement and processing activities so as to gain access to European goods. The furs they traded were shipped to markets across North America, Europe, and Asia. The tribes were not, however, indiscriminate trappers and traders. They would refuse to collect furs if prices were too low or the risks too high and the demands of traders for the tribes to harvest specific pelts often went unheeded (Sleeper-Smith 2009:xx,xxix). The tribes controlled fur collection and processing and were well aware of the desirability and value of the furs to the traders. Due to this, native groups were able to exert their influence and in some way control the nature of the trade in their region as consumers. They did this by not only controlling what was produced for trade but by controlling what was shipped in from Europe for exchange. Native Americans were savvy traders. Early encounters may have allowed the traders to exchange furs for simple beads but the tribes were quick to realize the bargaining position they occupied as well as the relative value of their furs in relation to the traders' European goods (Innis 1962: 109-110, Sleeper-Smith 2009:xxix). Traders needed to quickly become aware of the goods that the tribes found desirable. Native traders would not accept goods they found to be of inferior quality, stylistically unpleasing, or of little use or value to them (Ewers 1997:33). Natives were specific in the types of items, the nature of the items attributes, and the styles of the items that they demanded for trade. They would request specific kettle sizes, weights, and qualities, bead colors, cloth colors and designs, and musket muzzle lengths (Ray 2009:320-337). If the exchange goods were of poor quality or found undesirable, or if the prices of exchange were too low, the tribes would simply refuse to trade or threaten to take their furs to a competitor (Ray 2009:334). The traders found this loss of revenue unacceptable as in these instances they could not only lose the furs but could lose revenue in shipping poor quality or undesirable goods back to Europe. It became commonplace for trading companies to requisition the manufacture of specific goods for the American market. These goods were often tailored specifically to the stylistic, attribute, and quality demands of the Native American consumer (Ray 2009:334-336, Sleeper-Smith 2009: xxxviii). In this manner, the frontier exchanges of furs for goods between Native American groups and Euroamerican traders integrated the complex native exchange network with global production and market economies. In this system both parties worked as consumer and producer working to achieve positive economic returns for their respective interests.

Fur trade interactions often carried deeper meaning to the tribes and the traders than simple economic exchanges. When Euroamerican fur traders entered the wilderness they were entering an aboriginal world with well-developed and complex socio-political relationships between the tribes. Much has been made of how

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 5

European powers allied themselves with native tribes and enlisted them in conflicts with other European nations. These actions essentially embroiled native groups, and the continent of North America, in long standing European political conflicts. Instances of native groups allying and engaging in European conflicts are relatively well documented, such as the Huron and Iroquois allying with the French and British respectively during 18<sup>th</sup> century conflicts between the European nations. What receives less attention is the manner in which Europeans were embroiled in tribal political conflicts. Weaker tribes would often develop strong trade relations or formal political alliances with Euroamerican traders or governmental agencies. These relationships provided access to weapons and ammunition necessary for defense and allowed for the direct intercession of powerful European forces on the tribe's behalf. Meanwhile, stronger tribes often monopolized the European trade in a region and acted as middlemen profiting from down the line trade to native groups without direct access to the European traders. This was a coveted position among the tribes as it provided economic and political advantages over other indigenous groups. When traders attempted to move further inland to establish direct trade with new native groups the tribes acting as middlemen would often protest vocally. It was not uncommon for these tribes to attempt to convince the traders that the inland tribes were violent or not to be trusted. In situations where this type of persuasion proved ineffective, some groups responded by violently attempting to stop the traders. It should be noted that in cases such as this, the conflict was not permanent or personal. These conflicts came as a result of the native group attempting to maintain the economic or political advantage that control of the trade afforded them (Innis 1962:109-110, Ewers 1997:30). Traders also needed to be wary of intertribal conflicts as in some instances establishing trading relations with one tribe could result in tensions with that tribe's enemies.

It was in this world of complex social, political, and economic forces that British and French traders worked as they moved west across the Appalachians, Great Lakes, and southern Canada during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. French and British traders worked to establish friendly trade relations with tribes in these regions as they looked to capture larger portions of the native trade. In doing so they were forced to navigate a web of intertribal conflicts and alliances between tribes such as the Sioux, Assiniboine, Cree, and Fox. The political landscape that the traders worked in was complicated further by political and economic competition internationally between European nations. By the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, France and Britain were the dominant international players contesting for colonial control of northern North America. The dueling intentions of France and Britain brought economic and military conflict to the region as both nations vied to wrest control of North America from the other. Traders from both nations worked west navigating political pitfalls laid before them by European and tribal powers alike. The traders established trading posts and trade relations with the native tribes, exchanging blankets, metal trade goods, alcohol, guns, and ammunition to the native tribes for furs, information, and profit. These trading networks were often used as a means of legitimizing international territorial claims that in many cases the tribes themselves were unaware of. It was during this period, when European control of the continent was not a foregone conclusion, that tribal and European politics became inextricably intertwined with trade. Native Americans and Euroamericans alike formed alliances, trading partnerships, and entered into military conflicts with one another as they sought to advance their own agendas through cooperation with foreign entities.

The opening of the West to the fur trade is directly linked to the European struggle for control of the continent. In 1663 the French began to actively look to extend their North American trade network into Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, and Arkansas (Mathews 2008:202). The French continued to move west, reaching the Mississippi in 1673 (Hafen 2000a:24). The purpose of the French advance to the Mississippi was to create a

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 6

bulwark against British trading interest by establishing friendly trade relations with the native tribes on the Mississippi (Mathews 2008:204). The French remained east of the Mississippi until 1727 when Pierre Gaultier de La Vérendrye was appointed as commandant of the French northern posts. La Vérendrye looked to expand French fur trade interests west of the Mississippi. To achieve this La Vérendrye established Fort La Reine on the Assiniboine River, less than 100 miles west of present day Winnipeg, in October of 1738. It was from here that French fur traders would probe the interior of the continent (Wood and Thiessen 1985:22-23). From this post French traders made contact and worked to establish trade relations with the local tribes including the Assiniboine and Cree. After the construction of the post in 1738, La Vérendrye took a trading party inland with the aid of the Assiniboine toward the villages of the Mandan and Hidatsa, in present day North Dakota (Wood and Thiessen 1985:22). The Assiniboine and Mandan had exchanged goods well before the arrival of Europeans to the area. It is quite likely that European goods had made it to the Mandan and Hidatsa villages from down the line trade via the Assiniboine and Cree who had direct contact with the European traders moving west across Canada. Two more French trading expeditions would make the journey to the Mandan and Hidatsa villages over the course of the next five years. One of these trading parties may have come as far west as the Bighorn Mountains (Wood and Thiessen 1985:22; La Vérendrye 1927).

The French visit to the Mandan villages marks the beginning of the opening of the West to direct European trade. Prior to the arrival of La Vérendrye, the flow of European goods had been controlled by the Assiniboine and Cree who imported them from French and British posts west of the Great Lakes and in south central Canada. The establishment of trade relations between European traders and the Mandan and Hidatsa would inject European goods directly into the Mandan trade network and help to move these goods as far west as the Rockies. La Vérendrye's 1738 expedition did not encounter or hear of other Europeans in the region. However, by 1743 there were contemporary accounts of French traders living among the natives as far west as the Bad River in South Dakota (La Vérendrye 1927:112-113, 123-124). The French expeditions between 1738 and 1743 were the first to engage the Mandan and the Hidatsa in direct trade, preparing them for the British, Spanish, and American traders to come later. While the Vérendrye expeditions found native communities all too willing to engage in trade, there was to be no large influx of French traders into the region. The French withdrew from North America after the French and Indian War ended in 1763, leaving the native trade to the British and Spanish (Mathews 2008:215).

The abandonment of North America by the French did little to slow Native American/European trade. The British had engaged in native trade since the early 17th century. Their early ventures focused on northeast Canada and in the regions east of the Alleghenies. By the mid-18th century British trappers had begun to work west moving into regions of Ohio and Kentucky and spreading their trade network across southern Canada along the Great Lakes and the Hudson Bay (Hafen 2000a:27). British outposts on the Hudson Bay and west of the Alleghenies in Kentucky and Ohio were engaging native groups in trade, providing for the movement of British goods west through secondary exchanges between tribes. The early British trade was dominated by the Hudson Bay Company who filled the void left by the abandonment of the region by the French. After the French left Fort La Reine in 1763 it appears that the post was occupied by the Hudson Bay Company until 1796 when they constructed the Assiniboine River Fort in the same area (Wood and Theissen 1985:23; Voorhis 1930:100-101). From this western post the British continued to provide European goods to western tribes through trade with the Assiniboine and Cree.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 7

The nature of the French and British trade was different. French traders generally moved into the region in small numbers and it is likely that French trading interests west of the Alleghenies never reached more than 600 individuals in a given year (Mathews 2008:219). The French traders in the back country worked to create alliances with the tribes and the traders had little interest and less ability to exert royal control over the lands in which they traded. French traders and trappers only claimed the land that their post sat on, they did not lay claim to the region or assume sovereignty over the tribes. The British, on the other hand, often moved into a region in large numbers, looking to settle and colonize the region in which they were trading. They constructed their posts, claimed the land for the Crown, and claimed to hold sovereignty over the natives in the region. The nature of the trade between agents from the two nations and the tribes was different as well. The French traded high quality goods to the tribes under mutually beneficial trade arrangements. The British traded what the natives considered inferior goods in trade that tended to favor the British traders (Mathews 2008:224-225). Regardless of the trade arrangements the results were the same. European posts located in south central Canada and west of the Great Lakes infused European goods into traditional native trade networks that facilitated the movement of these goods west as far as the Rockies. By this period European goods had been integrated into traditional native lifeways through trade over the past century, leaving the tribes willing to continue to exchange goods with British traders after the French removed themselves from the region.

Following the removal of the French from North America in 1763 information regarding direct trade with the Mandan exchange network is lacking. It appears that a direct infusion of European trade goods into the Mandan network does not return for at least a decade. However, it is likely that the Mandan continued to have access to European goods through exchange with the Assiniboiné and Cree. Direct contact with the Mandan and Hidatsa from the northwest was reestablished in 1773 when a trader named in the historic documents only as Macintosh, working out of Montreal, visited the Mandan villages on the Upper Missouri during the winter of that year (Schoolcraft 1857:253). Over the next twelve years a number of trappers traveled to the Mandan and Hidatsa villages to trade, but regular trade from the northeast was not reestablished until 1785. It was in this year that the Northwest Company, the primary competitors to the Hudson Bay Company, constructed Pine Fort on the Assiniboiné River. Pine Fort was intended to compete with the Hudson Bay Company's Fort Esperance on the Qu'Appelle River, the westernmost British post in Canada (Wood and Thiessen 1985:26-27). The construction of the Northwest Company's post opened direct trade between the British and the Mandan and Hidatsa that would last until 1822 when American posts moved into the area to take up the trade (Wood and Thiessen 1985:27, 42). After the establishment of trade relations with the Mandan and Hidatsa by the British, trade between the two parties rapidly increased into the 1790s.

Increases in British trading activities on the Missouri are in many ways directly responsible for the movement of the Spanish into the region. The central portion of the continent now known as Louisiana had been ceded to the Spanish by the French prior to the end of the French and Indian War (Hafen 2000a:28). Spanish trappers working up the Missouri from St. Louis as early as 1792 began to encounter or hear accounts of British traders in the region (De Voto 1952:601). The Spanish considered British activity on the Missouri an incursion into their sovereign territory. In response to increasing levels of British trading activity on the Missouri the Spanish began to dispatch trading parties in 1795 for the purpose of removing the British from the region and establishing regular trade relations with the natives (Wood and Thiessen 1985:27-28). Spanish traders in St. Louis formed the Missouri Company to establish trade relations with the tribes and to compete with the British on the Missouri and into the West (Hafen 2000a:36; Wood and Thiessen 1985:27-28).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 8

Spanish trade with the Mandan and Hidatsa was never robust as only two large parties are known to have reached their villages, in 1792 and 1796. It appears that trade was not the primary purpose of these expeditions. Rather, they were exploratory in nature for the purpose of displaying Spanish control of the area. The Spanish removed themselves from the region with the purchase of the Louisiana Territory by the United States in 1803. Regardless of the intensity of the initial Spanish activity on the Upper Missouri these trading expeditions are important for two reasons. First, they were integrated into a European/Native American exchange network that fostered some of the earliest social and political interactions between the various Native American tribes and European powers. They also provided for the development of regular European/Native American trade relations that allowed for the infusion of European goods into traditional native trade networks that moved these goods from the American Southwest, Midwest, Great Lakes region, and Southern Canada all the way to the Rockies. Early Spanish activity on the Missouri also facilitated the rapid movement of American, Spanish, and French trappers into the West following the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. While reports vary, the Spanish were active in some capacity along the fringes of Wyoming by at least the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. By 1776 Fathers Francisco Atanasio Dominguez and Silvestre Velez de Escalante had reached the Uinta Mountains. Horse trading in southwestern Wyoming had placed the Shoshoni in direct contact with the Spanish decades earlier. Southwestern Wyoming's rivers and mountains bore Spanish names (e.g. Rio Verde Del Norte, Quin Hoermet Mountain). Taos traders would follow earlier Spanish Routes into Wyoming.

Over the course of nearly two centuries, the European powers had slowly moved into and settled the regions once viewed as wilderness by the early trappers. In the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the contact line between people of European descent and Native American's sat astride the Connecticut River valley, but by the 19<sup>th</sup> century the frontier had pushed west and was now located along the Platte and Yellowstone Rivers, and regions west (Barbour 2000:10). As wilderness became settlement, the new settlements became the base from which trappers would explore the new wilderness. It was in this manner Euroamericans crept across the continent, all the while contacting and engaging new Native American groups in the fur trade. Undoubtedly as Euroamerican use of a region changed, so too did their interactions with the tribes. Early encounters saw the traders and tribes working for mutual benefit as equals. However, as governmental claim and control of a region grew the Euroamerican populations did as well.

The growth of a Euroamerican population in a region generally coincided with, or immediately followed, an increase in Euroamerican political claim to the land, native sovereignty, and in some cases the souls of the natives as well. Different tribes met these demands with a mix of conciliation, physical resistance, and capitulation. Unfortunately, the result was often the same, pacification and removal of the tribes to lands further west so as to allow for Euroamerican settlement. In some cases assimilation mechanisms were employed with the same end in mind. For example, Euroamericans wanted lands and Native Americans that assimilated and honored European land laws and customs were caught into a legal web that ultimately cost them their land. The net result was the loss of land displacement. Many tribes avoided such conflicts by moving west away from Euroamerican colonization. Euroamerican settlers and government agents supported voluntary of compulsory Indian removals as they viewed lands west of the Appalachians, and later the Mississippi, as a vast unsettled wilderness. This assessment could not have been further from the truth. Natives relocating west were injected into a land already occupied by a diverse group of indigenous tribes with established territories, political networks, and cultural traditions. The injection of an increasing number of individuals and cultural groups into

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 9

the West often led to intertribal conflict as established socio-political institutions were challenged and environmental systems were destabilized.

### **Proto Historic Trade in the West**

By the late 18th century, American fur trappers in eastern North America had pushed inland as far as the Mississippi River. To push further would have put them in the French or Spanish territory. In 1762, from the Gulf of Mexico to the near the present Canadian border the land became Spanish Louisiana. In the Louisiana Territory, beyond the Mississippi, only a handful of Spanish and French trappers operated, working the Lower Missouri region (Robertson 1999:5). During this period Spanish traders in California and New Mexico slowly edged northward while English, Scottish, and French trappers in the Canadian Territories began pushed westward at a more rapid pace. By the turn of the nineteenth century these French and Scottish trappers were firmly entrenched as far west as present Manitoba. A party of the North West Company had reached the Pacific by 1793 (Hafen 2000a:29). This transcontinental crossing of North America foreshadowed political changes in the West. As the result of the Treaty of San Ildefonso (1800) between Spain and France, Louisiana Territory was briefly once again held by France (1800-1803). The purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803 opened the regions west of the Mississippi to Americans, and the area soon attracted trappers and traders (Hafen 2000a:41; Robertson 1999:5).

The Louisiana Territory was not initially considered for settlement by the United States. President Jefferson viewed the new territory as a giant reservation for Native Americans in which to relocate tribes. The belief was that indigenous groups living in close proximity to the eastern settlements could be relocated west whereby their land would become available for settlement and the presence of the tribes in the West would provide a bulwark that would stymie efforts of Euroamerican settlers to move further west. This model was based on a belief that the region was a relatively uninhabited wilderness where displaced tribes could settle and continue living a traditional life, free of the entanglements of American civilization. While this scenario provided a tidy solution to the United States land problem, as a growing population needed more land, it was not grounded in fact. These lands were not uninhabited, but rather they were occupied by a mosaic of native tribes with different cultures, settlement and subsistence patterns, and languages. While the government's removal policy refused to acknowledge this, their economic policy did. Even as the United States government looked to prevent immediate settlement of the region, they looked to encourage Native American trade in the area. Trading activity in the West would not only provide economic benefits, it would also serve to strengthen the United States international claims to the land while providing a mechanism for the exploration of the region. One purpose of the Lewis and Clark expedition was to determine suitability of the region for the fur trade (Wishart 1979:18). The Lewis and Clark expedition found many of the tribes were receptive to trade with the Americans, and as a result the United States government encouraged the movement of American trappers, traders, and trading companies into the region (Wishart 1979:18-19).

The native cultures living on the plains and the intermountain west had developed a number of long distance trade networks dating back to at least 8,000 BP and possibly earlier (Vehik and Baugh 1994:249). Over time the nature of the trade would change, but the exchange systems always persisted (Figure 1). Early

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 10

exchange networks stretched from the American Southwest to the Rockies and the Great Plains. By about 3,000 BP this trade network focused largely on the exchange of meat and leather products, procured by relatively nomadic hunting and gathering populations, for corn, squash, tobacco, and other agricultural products produced by horticultural groups (Wood and Thiessen 1985:4-5; Ewers 1954:429). The Cree and Assiniboiné established a trade network in the Upper Missouri Region facilitating the movement of goods from as far away as the Great Lakes to the Blackfeet and Gros Ventre in Montana and Idaho (Barbour 2001:7). Further south, the Mandan and Hidatsa maintained an extensive trade network that connected regions as far north as Manitoba and as far south as the Spanish Southwest (Mathews 2008:47; Wood and Thiessen 1985:5).

Wyoming was also integrated into the Mandan network, and as result the Cree and Assiniboiné network. Groups such as the Crow, Cheyenne, and Arapaho sat central to an exchange network that linked the western, northern, and central plains (Mathews 2008:52; Ewers 1954:429). From the Southwest the Comanche, the Kiowa, and the Ute trade network stretched from the Pueblos in the American Southwest, with whom they traded for agricultural products, to Minnesota, where they traded for pipestone (Mathews 2008:54). The Shoshoni trade network was rather complex as they too had soapstone for pipe making. The Shoshoni's like the Hidatsa and Crow had access to Yellowstone's Obsidian, but the Shoshoni also possessed valuable cherts that prehistorically and historically were traded southward and tied them to trade systems that extended into Mexico. In general in the northern trade networks trade items were transported long distances using major waterways (Baugh and Erickson 1994:244). It was by tapping into these expansive exchange networks that tribes were able to maintain connections and receive goods from regions far removed from the high plains.

Through these networks Euroamerican goods first trickled into the area, long before Spanish, French, British, or American traders ever reached the region. The first European goods came from the southwest as part of the expansion of the Spanish horse and trade good movements. Soon after the Spanish settlement of the region at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, native groups began to acquire European goods through trade. Perhaps the most important European "good" was the horse. Horses were purchased or stolen from Spanish settlers by the tribes of the Southwest. Initially used for food by the native populations, the horse as a means of transportation was quickly integrated into the Comanche, Kiowa, Apache, Navaho, and Ute cultures (Mathews 2008:54-55). By the early 18<sup>th</sup> century groups like the Ute and Shoshoni were trading horses, and other European goods, as far north as the Central Rockies (Hafen 2000a:35-36, Wishart 1979:21). The horse not only increased the mobility of the tribes but made raiding and warfare activity easier to conduct, often with improved results. Hunting efficiency was also improved and larger loads could be transported, resulting in increased lodge sizes. Due to this, the horse soon became a prime social marker within Native American society with horse ownership contributing significantly to an individual's wealth and social status (Mathews 2008: 58; Barbour 2000:9). Tribes began to maintain large horse herds to aid in hunting, raiding, warfare, and transportation. However, horses also served another purpose. Horses proved to be an exceptional trade item, as the tribes in the West could not get them anywhere but from the southwest. It was through the Comanche/Shoshoni, Kiowa, Apache, Navaho, and Ute that the horse, and other European items, began to slowly spread from the American Southwest as trade items that these groups exchanged for goods or prestige (Figure 2). By the early 18<sup>th</sup> century the horse was being traded as far north as Montana, in Nez Perce and Flathead territory (Wishart 1979:21).

The results of these developments led to social changes among the tribes. Those without access to the horse were now placed at a decided disadvantage in trade relationships and often faced increased threat of raids from more mobile groups. Some agricultural societies gave up working the land to adopt the nomadic lifestyle

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 11

of the bison hunting plains tribes (Barbour 2000:9). Inter-tribal conflicts, common in the pre-horse west, began to escalate as tribes with access to the horse began to expand their territories. The Shoshoni and their allies in particular made the most of their direct access to the horse as they pushed north into the plains during the first four decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Ewers 1997:12, Binnema 2001:87).

The Shoshoni advance was only stemmed by the introduction of another European good, the trade gun from the north. The gun was first obtained from French and British trappers, traders, and posts stretching from the Great Lakes through the Canadian Great Plains, then through Native American brokers such as the Mandan (Figure 3) (Wood and Thiessen 1985:3-5). The introduction of the gun also brought changes to tribal life. The gun proved to be an improvement to hunting and warfare technology, although prior to the introduction of repeaters the gun was reserved for battle. Muskets were too noisy and took too long to reload to be efficient for hunting (Ewers 1997:49). Access to guns allowed groups to expand outside of their traditional tribal area and push back against tribes like the Shoshoni. After 1740 tribes on the Northern Plains with regular access to guns and ammunition reversed the fortunes of the expanding horse tribes. These northern tribes, many who by now also had access to the horse, stopped the Shoshoni advance and began to expand their own territorial borders south and westward (Binnema 2001:87). During the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century those with access to guns enjoyed trade and military advantages over those without, just as the horse had done for groups over the course of the previous century. The disadvantages faced by those without guns made it almost compulsory that they acquire them simply to stay on an even footing with the other native tribes in the region. The gun, like the horse, also gained a prominent position in tribal society. It symbolized warlike accomplishment, and the taking of a gun from an enemy was a major coup. The gun was integrated into tribal etiquette, medicine, and religion (Ewers 1997:50).

The gun also saw the introduction of new technologies to the tribes. Initially native groups were reliant on Euroamerican traders for parts and repair of their new weapons. Over time this changed as Native Americans began to acquire the blacksmithing abilities needed to maintain and repair European firearms (Gardner, Johnson, and Vlcek 1991:5). The introduction of European trade items brought change to native cultures; however the degree of this change is debatable. Access to European goods did not result in native social or cultural disintegration. Rather trade items were integrated into traditional social, political, and cultural institutions. Many of the changes that came about as a result of access to these goods were not new activities brought about by the sudden introduction of foreign technologies but were simply representative of the intensification of traditional cultural practices. At the most basic level the adoption of European goods by native groups worked to ease native subsistence stress without transforming native worldviews (Binnema 2001:114). Still, access to these goods provided an advantage for those that had them, and access to these goods would shape the history of the region well before Europeans arrived.

### **The Opening of Direct Trade in the West**

When Euroamerican traders and trappers finally did move into the High Plains and Rocky Mountain regions of the West they were entering a cultural mixing pot with groups from the north, south, east, and west living, trading, and migrating through the area. The Dakota, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Crow moved across the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 12

Missouri at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century through the Great Plains and into the High Plains. Here they had contact, direct and indirect, with the Ute, Shoshoni, Apache, and Bannock who were moving into the region from the north, south, and west. It was these groups who met and traded with French, Spanish, British, Scottish, and American traders as diverse as the tribes themselves. This new period of trade dealt mainly in non-perishable items such as weapons, tools, utensils, and articles of adornment (Vehik and Baugh 1994:241). Unlike the horse which could naturally increase in abundance when introduced, these new European goods needed to be supplied. European goods did not become common on the plains until after 1730. Prior to then, the supply was limited and erratic. The posts were not always stocked and tribes were hesitant to trade European goods via down the line trade when they were not ensured of being able to restock. Until supplies were steady or the Euroamerican traders moved into the region supplies remained limited (Binnema 2001:94-96).

The tribes the Euroamerican traders met when moving into the Great Plains, High Plains and Rocky Mountains regions of the West were willing and eager to trade (Barbour 2001:5, Barbour 2000:9, Wishart 1979:19, Thwaites 1905:86, 90, 98). Euroamerican traders and their goods were quickly integrated into the long distance trade networks and summer trade fairs that were integral to the tribe's economies. In light of the events that came to transpire by the end of the century, where many of the tribes had been defeated and relocated, one may tend to ask why the tribes were not resistant to the movement of an ever increasing number of traders into the area. The answer to this question lies in the utility of the European goods, the Native American worldview, and in the socio-political landscape that had developed on the plains over the course of the previous few centuries. First and foremost the European goods were considered advantageous by the tribes. The ability to obtain these exotic goods through the exchange of furs, something the tribes had been producing for centuries, made the exchanges even more desirable. The desirability of the goods would far outweigh, at least until mid-century, any perceived threat the arrival of Euroamericans presented.

The real issue though is that Euroamericans were likely not perceived as a threat at all during the early contact years. The trappers and traders were few in number and never in a position of authority in the region. At the posts where Euroamerican population density was highest they would likely only have numbered at most in the hundreds and their control of the landscape would not have extended much past the post walls. Even early emigrants were not viewed negatively by the tribes on the plains and east of the Rockies as they were simply passing through and posed no immediate threat to tribal sovereignty. At least until the 1830s, the West was still a decidedly Native American sphere. Euroamericans did form alliances and create bonds with certain tribes, but in many cases the interactions between the tribes and the traders was limited to specific trading activities. In cases where there was prolonged exposure, as in a trader living among the tribes, the Euroamericans had little power. So while early Euroamerican traders were influential in this native world, they were not powerful actors in the traditional and complex patterns of native trade, diplomacy, and warfare in the region.

The Native American worldview also allowed for the integration of Euroamericans into tribal society. There is often an assumption that native groups in the West considered Native American/Euroamerican relations central and important issues during this period. However, it is likely that native/newcomer relationships were not central to native life at the time (Binnema 2001:9). Assumptions about the importance of these power dynamics are often based on our modern understanding of later conflicts and the ultimate result of Euroamerican/Native American contact. The tribes did not develop the understanding of the native as a polar opposite to the Euroamerican until the mid-19th century as American expansionism accelerated. During the early 19th century the various tribes in the West did not self-identify as a collective Native American ethnic

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 13

group. Rather each tribe considered themselves as the “one” or the “people”, with everyone else being the other. There were alliances and trade partnerships between the tribes and some tribes even spoke similar languages; still these other groups would have been considered not of the tribe (Ewers 1997:23).

It was into this worldview that Euroamerican trappers and traders were integrated. The cultural landscape on the plains and the intermountain west had been fluid from at least the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Native groups frequently migrated through the region and those that lived there had long been in competition with one another for territory and resources. The cultures that inhabited the West were unique and constantly changing as a result of these activities. (Calloway 1996:3). The migrations and the conflicts increased with the arrival of European goods and the expansion of Euroamerican settlements. Many of the tribes currently occupying the West were modern creations or newcomers expanding their territory into the region (White 2009a:204). The analysis of Native American/Euroamerican contact during this period has often been presented as the clashing of modern technologically advanced Euroamerican groups with traditional native tribes. The problem with this analysis is that in the West many aspects of “traditional” native culture were always changing, brought about by the introduction of new technologies like the bow and arrow, horse, and gun or the introduction of new ethnic groups. During the early 19<sup>th</sup> century native groups in the West would have been far less interested in preserving traditional native lifeways and more concerned with adapting to the ever changing landscape in the region for the benefit of their family, band, village, or tribe. In this cultural landscape, a tribe’s willingness to accept and deal with Euroamericans stemmed from the perception that they were simply another in a long line of newcomers to the region with which to trade, ally, compete, or fight. It should be kept in mind that these are not mutually exclusive categories.

Just as the cultural dynamic of the region was in constant flux, so too was the political landscape. Even though there was a tendency to view outsiders as the “other” there was also fluidity between bands and tribes of a single ethnic group and between tribes of different ethnic groups. Individuals or families within one tribe could easily move between bands, coming and going as they pleased. This activity strengthened bonds between bands and helped to alleviate tension within a single band. The same principles held to inter-tribal movements. Interethnic interactions ranged from short to long term encounters. Multiple tribes of different ethnicities would often camp together for short periods. On these occasions the tribes would create alliances, trade, or hunt together. Long term interethnic relationships were also common. An individual born of one ethnicity was not prevented from being integrated into a social group of another ethnicity, in doing so becoming one of “the people”. These permeable tribal boundaries allowed for the establishment of mutually beneficial trade and political relationships and for the negotiation of peace between rival groups in a region where social, political, and economic allegiances were fluid and changed frequently. It was not uncommon for allies to fight and enemies to trade, or fight united against a third party (Binnema 2001:14-15).

The ability to attain tribal standing or membership regardless of ethnicity is yet another factor accounting for the openness of the tribes to accept white Euroamericans into the region. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Native American/Euroamerican interactions were not perceived by the tribes as dealings between two distinct and irreconcilable cultural bodies, but rather Euroamerican traders were simply another in a long line of “others” that were easily integrated into the indigenous worldview. So in discussing the fur trade during the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century one needs to not only understand the phenomenon from the perspective of how Native Americans were integrated into a Western Global Market economy but also how the traders, trappers, and trading companies were integrated into the native world (Binnema 2001:9).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 14

Native American social and political systems were not the only concerns that American trappers had to deal with when they moved into the West. There were also Spanish and English agents in the three primary western fur trapping regions: the New Mexico, the Trans-Missouri, and the Oregon trapping arenas. The problem was that when the Louisiana Territory was purchased the international boundaries were often disputed and poorly defined. The northern boundary bordered British territorial claims and the southern boundary bordered Spanish territorial claims. These boundaries were not properly demarcated, and it was openly admitted that the United States held no claim by way of Louisiana west of the Rockies (Washington 1854:51-52; Wishart 1979:14). This brought American trappers into conflict with Spanish authorities in the New Mexico territory to the southwest, and British fur traders in the Trans-Missouri region on the northern border and the Oregon Territory west of the Rockies (Hafen 2000a:40-44, 49-51).

On the southwestern border, American trappers often ran afoul of Spanish authorities when they moved into the fur rich trapping zones along the Rio Grande and Arkansas Rivers bordering the Louisiana and New Mexico Territories. Spanish authorities refused to allow foreign activity in their lands and considered the Rio Grande and Arkansas River regions part of Spanish territory. The United States and Spain agreed upon an international border in the Adams Onis Treaty of 1819. The treaty set Spain's northern boundary at the 42nd Parallel, the current boundary of California and Oregon, east to the Continental Divide, then south to the headwaters of the Arkansas River (Hafen 2000a:56, 63). As a result of the Mexican Revolution in 1821 this boundary was not actually a fixed until 1831. Due to the unsettled nature of the treaty American trappers who operated near the boundaries could still be arrested. Restrictions were eased somewhat in 1821 when Mexico won independence from Spain and allowed American interests to operate within their territorial boundaries (Hafen 2000a:63).

Activities on the northern border were somewhat more complex. British trappers, unhindered by the presence of another nation's sovereign land as American trappers had been, had been moving across the Canadian wilderness throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The British had reached the Pacific Coast by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and by 1806 had begun constructing trading posts west of the Rockies (Hafen 2000a:52-53). East of the Rockies, English, French Canadian, and Scottish trappers had pushed south into modern day Montana, Wyoming, and South Dakota. With the acquisition of the Louisiana Territory, the United States government declared British trappers were forbidden to work the new American territory. The British responded with the appearance of compliance, they removed their bases of operations north to the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan areas, but continued to trap in United States territory to the south (Hafen 2000a:53).

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, American, French, and Spanish trappers operating out of St. Louis were working up the Missouri River and its tributaries. From here the trappers worked north and west into the Dakotas, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Montana. American and British trapping interests clashed in these regions. American interests would seize British posts when possible and violent confrontations between the traders and trappers increased (Hafen 2000a:40, 44). The tribes were also involved in the conflict. Some tribes chose to ally themselves with either the British or American interests. These tribes would refuse trade with one Euroamerican group and when necessary would confront them violently. In return they received weapons and favorable trade relations that gave them an advantage over their native neighbors. Other native groups took no sides but still used the conflict to their benefit; these native groups would use the threat of trade with the other Euroamerican traders to secure better pricing.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 15

---

The American traders and the American government realized the importance of developing and maintaining amicable relations with the tribes in the north. British interests were so well established in the region that Secretary of War, John Calhoun, recommended a strong military presence be established in the area to protect American fur interests. He felt should the British hold not be broken, they would develop lasting relationships with the local tribes (Athearn 1967:12). These concerns were soon dealt with as an international boundary line was established through treaty with Britain in 1818, designating land below the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel as those of the United States (Hafen 2000a:73). Four years later, the American Fur Company invested heavily in the region with development of a western branch. The company moved into the area in force and established a series of primary and secondary posts over the course of the next decade, including Fort Union, Fort Tecumseh, Fort Pierre, and Fort William, all on the Upper Missouri. The technological advantage of having steamboats on Missouri River after 1819 aided the Americans. The steamboat would allow massive shipments of trade goods into the American interior that would tilt the trade advantages towards the Americans. The British simply could not match the speed trade goods could be delivered to the interior. The establishment of a strong American interest in the area further helped break the British hold and drive them from the region (Kapler 1988:E2). West of the Continental Divide in the Oregon Territory, international control was not ceded to the United States until 1846.

### **The Oregon Territory and Conflict**

The acquisition of the Louisiana Territory provided a direct route across most of the continent for American interests. While Thomas Jefferson did not envision initial settlement of the region, he did look to use it as a gateway to the Pacific Coast. By 1803, before the purchase had been officially made, Jefferson had already prepared and sent Lewis and Clark on their monumental voyage to travel up the Missouri River, across the mountains, and by river down to the coast (Hafen 2000a:38). The reason for the urgency in Lewis and Clark's departure was the United State held no official claim to the region of North America west of the Rockies, but three other nations did. Spain, Britain, and Russia all held claims to portions of North America west of the Rockies (Wishart 1979:14). Lewis and Clark began exploring the region in 1804. Four years later, John Astor received a charter to create and operate the American Fur Company. He formed a subsidiary company, the Pacific Fur Company, to trade on the Pacific Coast two years later. In 1810, he sent a ship around South America to begin trading on the coast, and in 1811, an overland group moved up the Missouri from St. Louis to the coast. The trading post Astoria was constructed in 1811 and began trading with the tribes in the region immediately (Hafen 2000a:47-48).

Initial trading on the Pacific Coast was received by the indigenous populations much as it had across most of the continent, with many of the tribes eager to gain access to Euroamerican technologies. Again, the international footprint was light as British, Russian, and American trappers all worked the region but not in large numbers. These trappers posed little threat to native sovereignty and the presence of trappers from multiple nations would have allowed for the tribes to gain favorable exchanges by exploiting the Euroamerican competitions.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 16

Unbeknownst to the natives, the United States government considered the establishment of a fur trading presence and a permanent post on the Pacific Coast as well as the earlier exploration of the area by Lewis and Clark as providing the nation with strong international claim to the land (Wishart 1979:14). This claim was to be short-lived, as the War of 1812 brought British warships to the Pacific Coast of North America to enforce Britain's claim. Astor and his partners were warned in advance of the ships arrival and sold their fur trading interests in the region to the British-held North West Company in October of 1813. Two years later, under the provisions of the Treaty of Ghent, the United States claim to land on the Pacific Coast was reinstated (Hafen 2000a:50,56).

However, British claims were not removed with the Treaty of Ghent. A second treaty signed in 1818 established a joint occupation of the region for ten years. The provision would be extended in 1828 indefinitely as the two nations had yet to come to a satisfactory agreement. The Spanish and Russian claims to the lands were not so tenacious. The Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819 defined the southern boundary of the Louisiana Purchase, and included the Spanish cession of Florida and the Oregon Territories above the 42<sup>nd</sup> degree of Latitude to the United States in return for the United States' guarantee of control of Texas to Spain. Russia was next to remove their claim to the Oregon Territory, relaxing their claim to regions above 54° 40' in 1824 (Wishart 1979:14). After 1824, lands west of the Rockies between 42° and 54° 40' were held jointly by Britain and the United States. Astor had removed himself from the region in 1813, and serious American fur trading interests did not immediately return to the region. The absence of an American fur trading presence allowed the British Hudson Bay Company to exert control in the area. In 1821, Hudson Bay Company control was consolidated when they purchased and merged with their British rival the North West Company (Hafen 2000a:57). The Hudson Bay presence in the Oregon Territory helped to strengthen the British hold on the region. American interests did not seriously rebound from the Astor abandonment until the 1820s when traders working up the Missouri and into the Rockies began to establish posts in the Eastern Rockies.

Advances made by the American fur traders during the 1820s never really materialized into a large scale re-entry into the Pacific Coast. This was not a reflection of United States governmental policy. United States congressmen actively promoted settlement as early as 1820 (Hafen 2000a:57). There was, however, no official governmental action forthcoming. The failure of large numbers of American settlers to reach the Pacific Coast and the stunted movement of the Rocky Mountain fur trade to expand to the coast left the Hudson Bay Company and the British government feeling relatively secure in their control of the region. The British felt it was either impossible or the dangers and difficulties presented by an overland migration prevented the possibility of settlement of the region by the United States (Unruh 1993:31-33). The British therefore felt no need to encourage settlement of the area themselves. While American fur trading activities had been unable to secure the United States control of the area, they were not without merit. American fur trading activities in the Rockies had legitimized the American claim to the lands until they could be settled or secured through treaty. Fur trading activities also provided for the development of a well-worn overland trail from which future settlement activity would commence, and fur trading forays into the regions west of the mountains had provided for a basic understanding of the geography and topography of the land.

Beginning in 1834, missionaries moved across the Oregon, California, Mormon, and Pioneer trails into the Oregon Territory. Missionaries were joined in the 1840s by United States emigrants crossing the trails and settling the region. Even as American emigrants were moving into the territory, the British continued to view the process as unlikely if not impossible (Unruh 1993:33-35). By 1843, over a thousand American emigrants

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 17

were already settled in Oregon, with many more to come for the next three years (Unruh 1993:119). The British attempted to respond by promoting emigration of their own. However, these efforts proved too late with American settlers already in the country en masse. Britain signed the Oregon Treaty in 1846 removing their claims to the territory below the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel (Hafen 2000a:167).

Euroamerican settlement activities ultimately came to be viewed in a negative light by the native groups in the region. The early fur traders had made little or no claim to the land or the people, thus they were tolerated. The missionaries and emigrants were another story. First came the missionaries, erecting churches and seeking to change native lifeways by “civilizing” the indigenous populations through agriculture and the introduction of Christian religious beliefs. Perhaps more importantly, the missionaries were there to “save” the souls of the natives by showing them the error of their traditional religious beliefs and encouraging them to accept the Christian God. Often the natives were willing to endure these intrusions. The diseases that came with the missionaries and passing emigrants, however, proved too much, and in some cases resulted in violence as the natives looked to punish those who introduced the disease. Tensions between the tribes and the Euroamericans rose further as emigration increased. Emigrants were encouraged by the government to make and develop land claims. These lands had not been secured through treaty with the tribes nor had they been cleared militarily, the Oregon Territory was still inhabited by an indigenous native population. As one would expect the tribes responded violently, leading to war between the United States and the native groups in the area (Limerick 2006:43-45). Eventually, the military might of the United States proved too much for the tribes and they were cleared, allowing for American settlement of the region.

### **The Trans-Missouri Region**

The fur trade in areas east of the Rockies was primarily operated out of the Missouri River region from St. Louis. This western fur trade region was called the Trans-Missouri fur trapping arena and it was one of the most active and important fur trade arenas of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Trans-Missouri trapping area was divided into two regions: the Missouri and the Rocky Mountain (Figure 4). Trapping in, and along, the Rocky Mountains focused primarily on the procurement of beaver pelts, and developed only after the Missouri fur trade was well established (Wishart 1979:27, 30, 51-52). The Missouri fur trade was divided into two areas, the Upper and the Lower Missouri trapping arenas. The areas were separated by the Platte River, a tributary of the Missouri, in Nebraska. Regions north of the Platte were referred to as the Upper Missouri and lands below the river were called the Lower Missouri (Brackenridge 1904:226).

The Missouri fur trade was divided into two different interests, buffalo robes and beaver pelts. The earliest focus of the trade in the region was the beaver. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century large beaver populations were spread across the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains (Wishart 1979:29). Rich beaver populations spurred the initial movement from the Lower to the Upper Missouri for two reasons, high demand and familiarity. Beaver pelts brought high prices from European and eastern United States markets, and the trappers from the Lower Missouri were already accustomed to taking these animals (Robertson 1999:4; Wishart 1979:27). By the 1830s, the fur industry on the Upper Missouri began to diversify. Increased access to these

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 18

areas via well-developed overland routes and steam ship up the major waterways allowed, for the first time, the movement of large amounts of buffalo robes.

Tribes living in the Rocky Mountains had long exploited beaver populations and the buffalo was an integral part of survival and subsistence for native groups spread across the Great and High Plains. The tribes' familiarity with hide procurement and preparation made for an easy transition towards an intensification of these activities in order to obtain much desired European goods. The buffalo robe trade developed alongside the beaver trade through the late 1820s into the early 1830s. By 1833, the American Fur Company shipped more buffalo robes than beaver pelts out of the West (Robertson 1999:6-9). By the end of the decade, the beaver trade had collapsed because of falling prices paid per pelt and declining beaver populations. The buffalo robe trade then became the primary fur trade in the region.

*The Opening of the Missouri Trade*

The Lower Missouri trade had begun in earnest in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the establishment of St. Louis. By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, French and Spanish trappers had traded and established forts on the Missouri as far north as present-day North Dakota (Ferris and Phillips 1940:25; Hafen 2000a:35). With the sale of the territory to the United States, trappers moved into the region and began heavily working the Missouri River and its tributaries. The Lower Missouri region was not only one of the most heavily exploited, but it was from here American trappers would range out into new regions of the West. American trappers operating out of the French city of St. Louis spread out along the region's river valleys in search of new pelt-rich territories (Hafen 2000a:41). In doing so, they proved to be the first wave of American exploration and settlement. The fur trappers were in many cases the first to reach and thoroughly explore the area west of the Mississippi and east of the Rockies. In this capacity they acted as ambassadors for the United States as they met and developed trade relations with the local Native American tribes, many whom were now afforded direct access to European goods for the first time (Barbour 2000:10). Their understanding of the region was exploited by the United States military, which often employed trappers familiar with the area as scouts and guides for official United States exploratory expeditions. When fur-rich regions were discovered and trade relations established with the native tribes, fur trading outposts would be built.

The exploration of the Upper Missouri grew out of the intense exploitation of the Lower Missouri region. Spanish trappers working up the Missouri had traded with native groups such as the Poncas, the Mandan, and the Omaha. In some regions, they had even established permanent posts to conduct their trade (Hafen 2000a:35-36). Following the reports of the Lewis and Clark expedition indicating the regions north of the Platte to be fur-rich, trappers immediately began to work the Upper Missouri. During the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a number of trappers and trading companies operating out of St. Louis sent parties up the Missouri to trap the regions north of the Platte River (Ferris and Phillips 1940:25; Wood 2008:15). The St. Louis trappers pushed into Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho and established permanent posts in these regions. The first was on the Yellowstone River near the confluence with the Bighorn in 1807. By 1810, the first American post west of the Continental Divide was established near present day St. Anthony, Idaho (Hafen 2000a:43-45). By 1822, there were no less than five different trading companies operating in the Trans-Missouri regions (Wishart 1979:48).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 19

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The early exploration of the Upper Missouri was dominated by Manuel Lisa's Missouri Fur Company. The Missouri Fur Company began operating in the Upper Missouri region in 1807 and constructed a series of posts in the area over the course of the next two decades (Wishart 1979:42-44). They proved to be integral in stopping British control of the fur trade in the area before the 1818 treaty (Hafen 2000a:46). However, by the early 1820s, the loss of company leadership from untimely deaths, and competition from other fur trading outfits saw the Missouri Fur Company's hold on the area begin to slip, with the company dissolving in 1824 (Wishart 1979:48). Stepping into the void was the French Fur Company run by Bartholomew Berthold, Bernard Pratte, and Pierre Chouteau Jr.

The French Fur Company controlled the fur trade in the Upper Missouri until 1826, with the only competition coming from the Columbia Fur Company in the east Dakotas. Both companies constructed a series of forts throughout the Upper Missouri region, trading with Native Americans and establishing a permanent American presence in the region (Wishart 1979:50-53). The French Fur Company and the Columbia Fur Company were absorbed by the American Fur Company in 1826 and 1827 respectively, as the latter sought to establish a trading presence in the Upper Missouri region. Through these transactions, the American Fur Company inherited a series of posts and experienced trappers distributed across the Upper Missouri region (Wishart 1979:53). In the ensuing years, the American Fur Company expanded its trading post system across the Upper Missouri, establishing a tiered post system consisting of primary trading and distribution centers like Fort Union supporting regional trading houses, which in turn supported smaller trading houses or seasonal posts (Robertson 1999:6). Using this system, the American Fur Company was able to become the predominant trading force in the Upper Missouri region until the 1860s (Kapler1988:E3).

*The Opening of the Rocky Mountain Trade*

The Rocky Mountain fur trade began in earnest in 1823 when William Ashley shifted the focus of his business activities from trading and trapping in the Upper Missouri region to trapping in the Central Rockies (Wishart 1979:52). Ashley had partnered with Andrew Henry in 1822 and the pair initially sought to capitalize on the booming Upper Missouri trade. However, heavy losses in manpower from native attacks during 1822 and 1823 caused Ashley to reorganize the focus of the business venture. The final blow came in 1823 when Ashley lost two keelboats and 14 men to an Arikara attack while working the Yellowstone and Missouri River regions. Following the attack the decision was made to move the trapping expeditions out of Blackfeet country on the Upper Missouri and into the Rocky Mountain region (Wishart 1979:50-51).

Over the winter of 1823 Ashley's men camped with the Crow on the Wind River, preparing to cross the Continental Divide and move into the Rockies the following spring (Wishart 1979:122). In the spring, Ashley split his men into small parties who worked the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains. By March, a party led by Jedediah Smith, with some aid from their Crow hosts, had re-discovered the crossing at South Pass. The initial Euroamerican discovery of the crossing at South Pass had been made years earlier in 1812 by an Astorian party led by Robert Stewart searching for an overland route from the coast to the Missouri River (Bagley 2010:27-28). Having crossed the Continental Divide, Smith worked the Green River and its tributaries. In this manner, the Ashley men had found a viable route to the west via the South Pass and the Platte River trail (Wishart 1979:122).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 20

The retirement of Ashley's partner, Andrew Henry, in 1824 saw the abandonment of their recently constructed Fort Henry on the Bighorn River and the complete removal of his men from the Upper Missouri region. By the fall of 1824, Ashley was fully committed to the Rocky Mountain region (Hafen 2000a:77-78; Wishart 1979:121-122). During the fall and spring trapping seasons of 1824 and 1825, Ashley's men pushed deeper into the Rockies, working up the Green, Snake, and Bear Rivers and their tributaries. Smith's party ventured all the way to the Hudson Bay Company's post on Flathead Lake, in southeast Idaho (Wishart 1979:122). The spring season began with Ashley's men dividing into four groups and moving out into the wilderness, with the understanding they were to meet at Henry's Fork on the Green River, on or before, July 10<sup>th</sup>, marking the first Rendezvous (Wishart 1979:124). Rendezvous were annual summertime gatherings where Euroamerican trappers, traders, and Native American tribes would gather to exchange goods over the course of a couple of days or weeks. This system would become the cornerstone of the Rocky Mountain Trapping System (Becker 2010:25-26; Wishart 1979:190).

Trade in the Rocky Mountains presented different challenges than the trade along the Missouri. The Missouri River allowed for the movement of large amounts of goods into the region with relative ease, when considering the alternative was overland transport. Trading posts in this region could engage in trade with a number of different tribes who made use of the accessible waterways and open landscape to travel great distances to exchange furs for Euroamerican goods. This was not the case in the Rockies. There were no well-established overland routes in the 1820s nor were there accessible water routes that would regularly allow the passage of large amounts of goods. Additionally, climatic conditions seen on the High Plains such as extreme wind, snow, and cold were only worse in the higher elevations of the Rockies, often making movement in the winter impossible. Ashley met these challenges by establishing a completely new type of trade system in the Rockies.

Fur trading activities on the Missouri primarily employed the British model, adapted by the American Fur Company, whereby trade was conducted from permanent trading posts. Trading companies or independent traders would construct a number of posts across the landscape, each to service the tribes in a specific region. Native groups were encouraged to collect and prepare various types of furs; buffalo on the High Plains, beaver throughout the Missouri region, and deer hides along some of the southern tributaries of the Missouri. The tribes could then trade the furs to agents of the fur companies in the field or directly to the nearest post for any number of Euroamerican goods including firearms, pots, files, beads and even alcohol.

The Ashley model deviated significantly from the Missouri River trading model. Ashley rid himself of the overhead of maintaining trading posts and large stores of goods, and to some degree lessened the reliance of a successful business venture on the Native Americans. Traditionally the Native American had been the producer and provider of the furs for the trappers of trading companies. In the Rocky Mountain system, the role of provider was filled by small groups, often less than 50, of Euroamerican trappers. Ashley's employees were transitioned from traders to trappers as their primary purpose in the field was to procure their own furs (Gardner, Johnson, and Vlcek 1991:14). The role of the Native American in this system was supplemental; they traded furs in a diminished capacity from the Upper Missouri system and provided food and shelter for the Euroamerican trappers during the winter months (Wishart 1979:125). While in the field Euroamerican trappers would of course engage in trade with the natives for additional furs, but for the first time, the Euroamerican was now primarily responsible for fur production.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 21

Contemporary Nathaniel Wyeth describes what would come to be known as the Rocky Mountain Trapping System:

“His first attempts were predicated upon the possibility of trading furs with the Indians in the interior for goods. In this he was not successful, and in the event become much reduced in means, and credit, but in the course of this business perceived that there was plenty of Beaver in the country to which he had resorted to trade, but great difficulty to induce the Indians to catch it. After many tryals of trading voyages he converted his trading parties to trapping parties” (Young 1899:73-74).

The trapping and trading system known as the Rocky Mountain Trapping System involved fall and spring trapping seasons. The fall trapping season began in late summer and continued until weather conditions froze the streams or made travel difficult. During the winter months trappers would settle into sheltered river valleys with an abundance of game; often these camps would be west of the Continental Divide so as to benefit from the warmer Pacific air (Wishart 1979:175-76, 185). This was the time when the trappers would relax and enjoy life; winter camp was described by some as “living fat” (Victor 1870:83; Haines 1965:51, 81, 109). Spring trapping would begin as soon as the snow melted and the rivers and streams were navigable. The hunt would last until early summer when pelt quality decreased significantly (Wishart 1979:177-178). During the summer, and central to the Rocky Mountain Trapping System, the annual Rendezvous was held.

The Rendezvous was a pre-designated location where trappers and tribesmen would meet to exchange goods and information. The Rendezvous allowed for trappers and Native Americans to resupply with Euroamerican goods not readily available in the remote Rocky Mountain regions. Annual supply trains would ship goods out of St. Louis into the mountains and to the Rendezvous. Competition was fierce between American suppliers to reach the Rendezvous first, so as to capture the bulk of the trade. Trappers and Native Americans could exchange furs, credit, or money for Euroamerican goods. The trappers would also spend the time trading with tribesmen and other trappers, eventually sending their furs out of the country and back east.

*The Rendezvous*

The first Rendezvous was arranged by Ashley with the intention that his Rocky Mountain trapping parties would congregate at a location on the lower Green River in Wyoming to exchange information and goods for the upcoming fall trapping season. During the spring season of that year Ashley's trapping parties spread out into the Rockies, encountering other trappers to the north and south. Eventually word of the Rendezvous spread and by July of that year the meeting Ashley had organized for his men had turned into an international affair. In July, Ashley's men congregated at Henrys Fork on the Green River and were joined by trappers operating out of Taos to the south and British trappers from the north as well as a camp of local Shoshoni (Becker 2010:29, Hafen 2000a:80-82). For the next 15 years a Rendezvous would be held bringing in a wide variety of trappers, tribes, and traders from St. Louis.

The event itself became an international affair involving British, Mexican, French, and American trappers as well a number of different Native American tribes from trading arenas as distant as the Canadian Northwest and Mexican Southwest. The Rendezvous turned into a sort of festival where Euroamericans and native groups could gather and exchange information, engage in festivities, and perhaps most importantly, trade.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 22

In the Rockies the Rendezvous replaced the trading post as it was able to provide for the distribution of supplies and the collection of furs for transport back east (Gowans 1985:13). This was accomplished by sending supplies up the Missouri then up the Platte into Wyoming where they were then transported overland into the Rockies to the pre-designated Rendezvous site. The result of this activity was the establishment of a well-defined trail system that was able to be traveled by wagon as early as 1832 (Todd 2002:49).

The involvement of the Native Americans in the Rendezvous was integral, as native people may have outnumbered Euroamericans two to one at these gatherings (Becker 2010:52). Native groups provided furs for transport back east and food goods for trade to the trappers themselves. In this manner they helped increase the profitability of the St. Louis traders and aided the Rocky Mountain trappers with information and necessary items. Perhaps even more important than the benefit they provided Euroamericans was the manner in which the Rendezvous was integrated into traditional tribal activity. The Rendezvous is believed by some to be based on the traditional seasonal trading pattern of the local Shoshoni who commonly held a summer trade fair (Plant 1988). However, regardless of the mechanism behind the development of the system the participation in summer trade events was something that many Native American tribes had engaged in for many years. The Crow and Cheyenne had long traditions of annual communal gatherings for ceremonial, hunting, and exchange purposes (Mathews 2008:50, 53). The Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache to the south had long participated in Southwest summer trade fairs in Pecos and Taos (Mathews 2008:54). Just as early Euroamerican trading activities plugged into well-established inter-regional Native American trade networks, so too did the Rocky Mountain Trapping System plug into traditional native trading systems, which greatly increased the success of the venture. Additionally, the participation of the tribes in the Rendezvous integrated them into an international exchange system just as the Assiniboine and Mandan networks had been more than a century before

*Competition in the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade*

By July of 1826, the man responsible for the establishment of the Rendezvous system had retired from the mountains. Ashley sold his stock of merchandise to three former employees, David Jackson, Jedediah Smith, and William L. Sublette and returned to St. Louis to follow a career of business and politics (Hafen 2000a:85). The Jackson, Smith, and Sublette partnership remained the largest fur operation in the Rockies, with the exception of the British who worked the mountains from the west and north, until 1830. In 1830 the partners sold out to Thomas Fitzpatrick, James Bridger, Milton G. Sublette, Henry Fraeb, and Jean Baptiste Gervais. The new partners operated as the Rocky Mountain Fur Company (Ferris and Phillips 1940:27). This same year, American competition in the Rockies grew with the official movement of the American Fur Company into the region

The American Fur Company was a late-comer to the Rocky Mountains compared to Ashley and the Rocky Mountain Fur Company his successors founded. However, as in the Upper Missouri region, the American Fur Company was able to outlast its competitors in the region simply by absorbing them, or through cutthroat competition. The American Fur Company consolidated control of the Upper Missouri region during the late 1820s and early 1830s by first absorbing Stone, Bostwick and Company in 1822. Stone, Bostwick and Company were reorganized as the American Fur Company's Western Department. Five years later, in 1827, the American Fur Company again purchased one of its primary competitors, Bernard Pratte and Company, and placed them in charge of the Western Department. These purchases served to provide an "in" for the American



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 23

Fur Company in St. Louis, allowed them to consolidate their power there, and provided them with ready business operations in the Upper Missouri region. In 1826 and 1827, the purchase of the French Fur Company and the Columbia Fur Company gave the American Fur Company control of a number of posts throughout the Upper Missouri region and provided them with a foothold in the Rockies. The Columbia Fur Company operations were re-organized under the American Fur Company as the Upper Missouri Outfit, which operated under the Western Department (Hafen 2000a:107). The incorporation of the French Fur Company and the Columbia Fur Company effectively removed all major competition from the Upper Missouri and allowed the American Fur Company to expand the reach of their fur trading operations into the Rockies.

The initial movement of the American Fur Company into the Rockies was tentative. In 1827, 1828, and 1829, the Upper Missouri Outfit of the American Fur Company financed or supplied Rocky Mountain trapping expeditions by individuals such as Lucien B. Fontenelle, Andrew Drips, William Bent, and William H. Vanderburgh for the purpose of challenging the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. In 1827 and 1828, the Western Department sent small parties to the mountains to investigate the possibility of success in the region (Wishart 1979:148). By 1830, the American Fur Company moved into the Rockies en masse with both the Upper Missouri Outfit and the Western Department sending large trapping parties and supply trains into the mountains. By 1832 competition in the mountains had increased further. The American Fur Company, the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, British Hudson Bay interests, and several smaller independent firms including the Bean-Sinclair party, the Gantt and Blackwell party, and the Bonneville expedition were all working the region. Many were present at the Pierre's Hole Rendezvous of 1832 (Hafen 2000a:106, 115-122). The Bonneville expedition was one of the larger independent trapping parties to move into the mountains in 1832. That year, Bonneville brought a supply train across the trapper trails and was the first to take wagons overland across South Pass. Having done so, he moved to the confluence of Horse Creek and the Green River and constructed a log fortification known as Fort Bonneville, the first, albeit temporary, trading post constructed in Wyoming (Gardner, Johnson, and Vlcek 1991:22; Todd 2002:47-48).

The American Fur Company's strategy in the Rockies was threefold. First, their men would learn the mountain trade by tailing the more experienced Rocky Mountain Fur Company parties. Second, transportation costs would be cut by sending goods up river by steamer and then overland by packhorse. Finally, they would offer artificially high prices for furs to dominate the trade with free trappers (Wishart 1979:149). In doing so, they hoped to make the Rocky Mountain fur trade unprofitable for the Rocky Mountain Fur Company and force them out of business. This model was based on the assumption the American Fur Company Rocky Mountain outfit could operate at a loss, to be supplemented by trading activities in other fur trade arenas, but the Rocky Mountain Fur Company could not, as their sole focus of activity was in the Rockies. This model initially proved unsuccessful. Until 1832, the Upper Missouri Outfit and the Western Department both worked the mountains independently, driving up costs for the company in general. Additionally, the transportation of goods to the mountains proved more difficult than expected. In 1832, the American Fur Company goods did not make the mountains in time for the Rendezvous and in 1833, the American Fur Company supply train was outpaced by the Rocky Mountain Fur Company supplier (Wishart 1979:149).

Perhaps the largest problem with the American Fur Company Rocky Mountain strategy was the Rocky Mountain Fur Company and its financial backers. American Fur Company trapping efforts had not significantly reduced the number of furs the Rocky Mountain Fur Company was able to collect, and events in 1831 and 1832 gave powerful financiers a larger interest in the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. In 1831 the Rocky Mountain

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 24

Fur Company was unable to ship their furs to St. Louis for sale. When the company had been purchased from Jackson, Smith, and Sublette, some of the purchase price was carried on a note, held by William Sublette. Sublette had not retired from the fur trade after the sale of his company. Rather, he had entered into the supply side of the fur trade and now moved supplies to the mountains for trade with the financial backing of William Ashley (Sunder 2000:353). The Rocky Mountain Fur Company, having failed to trade their furs for the year, was left without funds to either pay Sublette or to resupply. William Sublette agreed to purchase the trade goods and supplies and to transport them to the 1832 Rendezvous, putting the Rocky Mountain Fur Company further in debt to the man (Hafen 2000a:114). The exchange completed at the Rendezvous of Pierre's Hole in 1832 left the Rocky Mountain Fur Company owing nearly \$50,000 to Sublette. They turned over their season's haul, including 13,719 pounds of beaver, to Sublette for sale in St. Louis to pay down their debt. These events gave Sublette an increased financial interest in the company. Sublette returned to St. Louis with the goods where, buoyed by successes in the Rockies, he would enter into a partnership with Robert Campbell, financed by William Ashley. Sublette used his interest in the Rocky Mountain Fur Company to challenge American Fur Company interests in the Rockies. In 1833 he began working up the Missouri, establishing trading posts near most of the American Fur Company forts (Hafen 2000a:134; Sunder 2000:354).

The financial backing of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company by Ashley, through Sublette, and the construction of the Sublette and Campbell opposition posts throughout the West disrupted the American Fur Company plan on multiple fronts. The effort to reduce shipping costs to the mountains had already proved ineffective as the American Fur Company goods failed to reach the Rendezvous in time to pre-empt the opposition's sales. This only left the American Fur Company with the ability to outlast the Rocky Mountain Fur Company by overpaying for goods and operating at a loss. The influx of the Ashley and Sublette money provided a wider margin for the Rocky Mountain Fur Company to operate under, allowing them to last longer and making it more difficult for the American Fur Company to drive them out of business. Additionally, the movement of Sublette and Campbell into the Upper Missouri trade made it more difficult for the American Fur Company to operate at a loss in the Rockies by supplementing their losses from other regions. After 1827 and before 1833, the American Fur Company owned a virtual monopoly in the Upper Missouri region. The Sublette and Campbell posts offered stiff competition and surely affected the American Fur Company profit margins. The American Fur Company was acutely aware of the challenges Sublette and Campbell posed to their fur trade empire. In light of this, the American Fur Company moved quickly to deal with the issue, and entered into negotiations with Sublette during the winter of 1833-1834. The two sides came to an agreement in February of 1834 whereas Sublette and Campbell sold their posts and interests on the Upper Missouri to the American Fur Company and the American Fur Company agreed to remove themselves from the Rockies for one year (Sunder 2000:354).

The agreement allowed the American Fur Company to re-consolidate its interests on the Upper Missouri and Sublette and Campbell to do the same in the Rockies. Following the sale, the founder of the American Fur Company, John Astor, retired. He sold the Western Department, including the Upper Missouri outfit, to Pratte, Chouteau, and Company and the Northern Department to Ramsey Crooks and Associates. Pratte, Chouteau, and company became Pierre Chouteau and Company in 1838, although the company was generally referred to as the American Fur Company (Hafen 2000a:138). The American Fur Company would remain a dominant force on the Upper Missouri for the next several decades. The removal of the American Fur Company from the Rockies left Sublette and Campbell as the primary suppliers to the mountain trappers and the Rendezvous.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 25

The Rocky Mountain Fur Company partners wished to challenge this in 1834 in an attempt to get out from under the Sublette note. They prepared to have Nathaniel Wyeth ship goods and supplies to the 1834 Rendezvous ahead of the Sublette and Campbell trains to monopolize the fur trade at the gathering in an effort to increase their profits. The increase in profits would then be used to pay off Sublette. When Sublette heard of the plan, he arranged to have his supply train depart for the Rendezvous. The train moved quickly to outpace the Wyeth train, only stopping to leave off a small group at the confluence of the Laramie and Platte to construct a new post called Fort William. The Sublette and Campbell party reached the Rendezvous first. The Rocky Mountain Fur Company having no funds with which to pay their debt to Sublette were forced to turn over their furs instead. When Wyeth arrived, this left them without means of paying for the goods they had shipped in, leaving the partners with little choice but to fold. One by one the Rocky Mountain Fur Company partners sold their interests to Sublette, giving him control once again of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company (Hafen 2000a:143-145).

Having regained control of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, Sublette and Campbell quickly ceded control of the Rockies. The pair had lost interest in working the West and wished to remove themselves from the region and focus their activities on real estate and mercantile efforts in Missouri (Hafen 2000a:145). The Rockies were left to independent trappers and smaller companies composed primarily of American Fur Company and Sublette and Campbell men. The largest group left working the Rockies after the dissolution of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company was comprised of Fitzpatrick, Milton Sublette, and Bridger of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company and Fontenelle and Drips, American Fur Company financed trappers. The two outfits operated independently of one another in early 1834 after the dissolution of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, but by September they had merged to form Fontenelle, Fitzpatrick, and Co. The company was the largest in the Rockies and soon expanded their operations to the High Plains by purchasing Fort William from Sublette and Campbell, thus completing the exodus of the pair from the West (Mattes 1987:481). Fontenelle, Fitzpatrick, and Co. operated as an independent firm until the Rendezvous of 1836, when they sold their interests, including Fort William, to the American Fur Company. The partners became employees of the American Fur Company working the post (Milton Sublette) or in the field (Fontenelle, Drips, and Bridger) (Hafen 2000a:156-158). Two short years after agreeing to remove themselves from the Rockies, the American Fur Company was again the dominant trading force on the Upper Missouri and the Rocky Mountains.

The future for the American Fur Company, however, was not in the Rockies. The trapping system there was in decline, much as Astor had predicted before his retirement in 1834. As early as 1830, the Rocky Mountain trapping system was showing signs of strain and decline. Prices paid for beaver pelts were beginning to fall as men's fashions shifted from felted hats made of beaver fur to silk ones. Beaver populations were also in decline from over-trapping. The response to this was to intensify trapping activities to capture more beaver. However, this often served to be counterproductive as larger trapping parties and larger trapping areas only increased overhead in the form of payroll and shipping costs. Falling prices and lower beaver populations resulted in fewer pelts and lower returns on those pelts by mid-decade (Wishart 1979:161-162). The results were dwindling profits for the trappers and the Rendezvous suppliers alike. The years 1838, 1839, and 1840 saw smaller and smaller supply trains and Rendezvous. In 1840, the last Rendezvous was held as beaver prices and populations had bottomed out making the activity ultimately unprofitable, resulting in sparse numbers at the yearly gathering and a refusal by any company to risk shipping goods to the mountains the next year (Hafen

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 26

2000a:163). This marked the end of the beaver trade, the Rendezvous system, and the importance of the Rocky Mountain Fur trade arena in the larger western fur trade system.

*The Development of the Upper Missouri Trade*

The shortcomings of the Rocky Mountain Fur trade were not duplicated in the rest of the American West. While the Rocky Mountain trade was dependent on one product, the beaver, the Upper Missouri trade was diversified. The Upper Missouri trade was able to shift successfully from the beaver to the buffalo robe trade through the 1830s and into the 1840s (Wishart 1979:162). The trade in buffalo robes in the Upper Missouri was made profitable by the opening of the region to regular river travel in 1831 when the American Fur Company established steam travel up the river (Wishart 1979:208). The size and weight of the robes had made overland transport of the robes unprofitable to this point, leaving the buffalo robe trade relatively untouched. Now, regular river access allowed for the movement of large amounts of buffalo robes from the Upper Missouri to St. Louis for sale. By 1833, the American Fur Company was already shipping more buffalo robes than beaver pelts east (Robertson 1999:8). The American Fur Company trade in buffalo robes increased through the rest of the 1830s, leaving the company well equipped to deal with the collapse of the Rocky Mountain fur trade system by the end of the decade. Indeed, the American Fur Company was well positioned with an established system of trading posts throughout the Great and High Plains in 1840 when the fur trade competition moved from the Rockies to the Upper Missouri and Platte Rivers (Kapler 1988:E3; Wishart 1979:73).

The success of the American Fur Company in the 1840s and 1850s came from the infrastructure developed by the company in the 1820s and 1830s. The purchase and incorporation of the French Fur Company and the Columbia Fur Company in the late 1820s had given the American Fur Company a string of posts throughout the Upper Missouri region. The opening of the Missouri to steamboats allowed the American Fur Company to expand their fur trading interests and to successfully engage in the buffalo hide trade, even though the beaver trade was still economically advantageous. The expansion of the American Fur Company post system and the movement into the buffalo trade were mutually advantageous and led to the intensification of one another. New posts opened new regions, which allowed for an increase in the buffalo robe trade. An increased investment in the buffalo robe trade, in turn, led to an increased focus of trading activities at the posts themselves.

Euroamericans lacked the knowledge and skill to produce the buffalo robes themselves (Robertson 1999:6). Therefore, the American Fur Company employed the old standard fur trade system where native groups were encouraged to prepare the furs and bring them to the posts for trade. For this reason, the Ashley fur trade model favored in the Rockies during the 1820s and 1830s was impractical for the buffalo trade. Instead, the American Fur Company built on the posts it had developed, or purchased, in the 1820s.

The American Fur Company built a hierarchical system of trading posts across the northern Great Plains. This system consisted of large primary depots at the top of the hierarchy. The existing Fort Union and Fort Tecumseh, rebuilt in 1832 as Fort Pierre, along with Fort William acquired in 1836, stood as the largest and most important American Fur Company posts. These posts served as the primary focus of fur trading activities in their respective regions. They collected the seasonal fur hauls and were supply depots for the smaller regional American Fur Company posts. These three posts also served as major trading centers in the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 27

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region for native groups and independent traders. At these locations, goods were shipped directly to, and from, St. Louis (Kapler1988:E3; Wishart 1979:54). Next on the hierarchy were the regional posts, permanent structures located at strategic locations throughout the West, positioned to maximize trade with local Native American groups. The regional posts were not only supplied by the primary depots, but they shipped their seasonal fur haul to them for export to St. Louis. At the bottom of the hierarchy sat the small temporary seasonal houses. These buildings were generally intended to last the season and were located in, or near, native settlements. Their purpose was to provide shelter for field operatives while collecting furs and trading with native groups (Kapler1988:E3; Wishart 1979:54). This post system allowed the American Fur Company to gauge profits on a large regional scale. When faced with local competition, the American Fur Company could artificially reduce local pricing to outsell their competitors and drive them out of business. Local losses would be offset by gains made in other regions where the company maintained a monopoly. This allowed the American Fur Company to dominate the fur trade in the Trans-Missouri until the collapse of the system in the 1860s and 1870s (Kapler 1988:E3-4).

The development of the trading post system in the West shifted the primary focus of economic exchange between the tribes and the traders to a permanent location on the landscape. Previously exchanges had taken place at temporary locations such as Rendezvous, native villages, or seasonal cabins constructed by the traders or trappers. Trade at these locations had been conducted in a decidedly Native American sphere where in many ways the sheer number of the tribes in relation to the number of traders in these remote landscapes had placed the tribes in positions of power. The trappers were influential, as they controlled continued access to desired Euroamerican goods, and in many cases they were tied to a tribe through trade agreement or marriage. Still, the traders held little power in the region as they were reliant on the tribes for information, shelter, and protection. During this period the traders' ability to trade was at the behest of the tribes and their desire to maintain regular access to Euroamerican goods. Should the tribes tire of the traders, as did happen, they could, and did on occasion, forcibly remove the traders from their tribal territory.

The trading post was different, they were often stockade for defense. Trade at the posts was in a decidedly Euroamerican sphere, even though the posts were still located deep in the wilderness. While a good amount of trade still occurred in the field, often the tribes would bring their goods to the posts for exchange. In doing so they would be required to follow the traders' rules during the process. Some posts limited the number of natives in the posts at any given time, some did not allow them entrance at all and exacted trade through a small door at the gate, and some posts required the tribesmen surrender their weapons before entering. Even so, many of the native traditions involving pipe smoking and gift giving were often maintained. The nature of post trade was also broader. Trade in native villages focused primarily on a single tribe, trade in a seasonal post focused generally on Native Americans, and the Rendezvous focused on trade with tribes and trappers. The posts had a larger clientele. Posts served multiple tribes, trappers, government scientific, exploratory, and military expeditions, missionaries, emigrants, and any other individual moving through the region. The trading posts would come to make significant profits from sources other than the tribes and began to commit resources and provide services to capture these new avenues of trade. This is not to say that the equity of the native trade was diminished during this period. While the power balance had begun to shift to the traders as the traders resource base widened and exchanges began to increasingly occur at the posts, the tribes still held leverage in the negotiations for a couple of reasons. The traders could not manufacture the buffalo hides. Euroamericans could kill the buffalo but they lacked the knowledge and skill of the tribes in properly preparing the hides. This

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 28

---

left the posts dependent on Native Americans for buffalo robe supplies. Competition among the traders also provided leverage to the tribes. Any given tribe would generally have had access to a number of posts operated by rival companies. The tribes continued to make use of trader rivalries in the field to exact better terms of exchange for themselves.

*The Emigrant Trade*

The American Fur Company activities in the 1820s and 1830s, as well as their intensification of buffalo hide trading activities through the 1830s left them with a series of strategically placed posts throughout the West, often located on, or near, the overland trapping and trading trails. This again left the American Fur Company well situated to capitalize on new trading opportunities. Just as fur trading activities were changing through the 1830s, so was the nature of trail use. By the mid-1830s small groups of missionaries began crossing the trapper and trader trails to convert native tribes. This marked the first use of the trails by Euroamericans not engaging in Native American trading activities, working as part of a government expedition, or individuals interested in exploring the West. In general, these early missionaries were temporary visitors, not interested in permanent settlement of the region.

This changed in 1840 when Joel Walker brought a small group west for the intended purpose of emigration and settlement of the region (Unruh 1993:108, 118). The Walker party was one of the first groups to move west with the intended purpose of settlement and while this group was small; they were a sign of things to come. By mid-decade, emigration was in the thousands per year, reaching tens of thousands per year into the 1850s (Bagley 2010:157; Unruh 1993:119-120). This offered a significant economic opportunity for those providing goods and services the emigrants required.

The infrastructure to capitalize on this opportunity was already in place in the form of fur trading posts located throughout the West. The major posts were often located on the trapper trails near water sources to provide easy access for shipping the season's haul back East. Often the emigrants followed the trapper trails and rivers west as these routes proved the easiest to navigate and provided an ample water source. Therefore, many of the fur trading posts were located near the emigrant traffic. Increased traffic brought increased profits, which in turn brought increased competition as new posts sprung up throughout the region to capitalize on the emigrant trade. Many of the posts began to provide services to the emigrants while simultaneously engaging in Native American trade.

It should be noted while the major focus of the discussion has been on American Fur Company activities in the West and the success of their strategies, many other independent traders and smaller companies were active in the region during this period. The focus on the American Fur Company is because of the integral part they played in the development and implementation of the most successful fur trading strategies in the Upper Missouri region. They were at the forefront of the movement into the Oregon Territory, buffalo robe trade, and emigrant trade. In the Upper Missouri region of the West, independent traders or upstart companies found it difficult to compete with the American Fur Company and rarely presented a challenge for very long. Other fur trade regions were dominated by other companies such as the Hudson Bay Company west of the Continental Divide and north of the Yellowstone in parts of Montana into Canada and westward and the Bent/St. Vrain interests on the South Platte. However, in the Upper Missouri region, early 19<sup>th</sup> century trading activities are

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 29

---

best described in terms of a discussion on American Fur Company trading activities and the efforts of opposition posts.

In Wyoming, this model holds until at least 1849 when the company sold Fort John, its most profitable post in the region, to the military. Fort John was renamed Fort Laramie and functioned as a military post until 1890. After the sale of Fort John, the American Fur Company relocated to Scotts Bluff, Nebraska. This provided an opportunity for independent traders and smaller companies to gain an expanded role in the buffalo and emigrant trading systems in the state.

Through the 1840s, a number of posts were constructed across the emigrant trails to capture the emigrant trade and to compete with American Fur Company interests. Competition on the North Platte River in the form of new posts such as Fort Platte caused the American Fur Company to replace Fort William with a newer, larger post named Fort John in 1841 (Lupton 1977:84). To accommodate their new clientele, trading posts began to offer additional products and services during this period. Artisans were employed at the larger posts to manufacture goods for sale to Euroamericans; many posts began to trade in livestock by exchanging worn-out animals for fresh ones; and some posts or traders went into the boat and bridge business providing safe crossings for emigrant parties.

While the steady increase in emigration provided increased profitability for the posts, there were repercussions. The increase in emigrant traffic was eventually met with hostility from native groups along the trails. Early emigrants had enjoyed primarily friendly relations with Native Americans. Emigrants would solicit directions, employing Native Americans as scouts or guides, and even relying on them to provide river crossings (Unruh 1993:156-157). Natives were compensated with goods from the emigrants themselves or by the United States government who had established a policy of reimbursing native groups for the loss of game and grazing lands to Euroamerican emigrant activity (Hafen and Young 1938:177; Unruh 1993:160). This is not to say there was no conflict between the emigrants and Native Americans during this time. Emigrants are known to have kidnapped Native Americans to act as guides and native groups were infamous for stealing horses and exacting tribute for passage (Unruh 1993:157, 163, 169). As emigration increased, so too did the request for tribute. Native Americans citing loss of game, overgrazing of prairie lands, and depletion of timber and water resources by Euroamerican emigrants demanded formal compensation by the United States government by the mid-1840s. When compensation from the government was not secured or was deemed insufficient, the native demands were met through tribute from the emigrants. The situation had become so dire by 1848 there was legitimate concern Native American depredations would shift from the exacting of tribute and horse thievery to open conflict and possibly even war. Government agents, active in the West, recommended action to compensate the tribes for their losses (Hafen and Young 1938:178; Unruh 1993:169).

The 1840s represented a transitional period in the West. In many ways the interaction between tribes and the United States was split in two. The early part consisted of the movement into and acquisition of the West from other European powers. The second was the securing of the new holdings, the repression of the tribes, and the development of Indian policy during the last four decades of the 19th century (White 2009a: 205). This is what Limerick (2006:27) calls the two periods of conquest. The initial drawing of the lines during the frontier period refers to the allocation of ownership of the region to Euroamericans. The second period is the giving of meaning of power to the lines of ownership. In the West into the 1840s the lines were being drawn by the United States government. International treaties had been secured, territories had begun to be defined and American emigration and settlement of the region was actively being promoted by the government. However,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 30

even with the movement of the United States military into the region, the United States still was not in a position in the region to enforce their new territorial claims against the indigenous populations as a whole. Still, to those in the East the handwriting was on the wall. Many tribes east of the Appalachians and on the eastern plains had been relocated, subdued, or decimated by war with America. The United States government had employed a policy of treaty negotiation where natives were encouraged to cede land in return for annuity payments in cash and goods. As these tribes were relocated to Indian Agencies or reservations they became stewards of the United States, reliant on the government for training in their new livelihood, agriculture, and for items necessary for general survival such as clothing and food.

The government, cognizant of its new role of provider, passed any number of regulations for the “betterment” of the tribes. They banned the sale of alcohol, developed regulations for the dispersal of annuities, and designed enculturation programs (Trennert 1981:92, Ewers 1997:54). All of these policies were designed without any input from the tribes themselves. The goal was the Americanization of the Native Americans, a policy that in many cases proved disastrous to the tribes themselves. The removal of the tribes and ultimate destruction of traditional tribal cultural systems was what many had come to envision for the tribes in the West. As early as the 1830s visitors to the West like painter John Catlin who were familiar with the situation of the tribes further east discussed the situation stating: “My heart bleeds for the fate that awaits the remainder of their unlucky race.” Catlin found the natives in the east to have been “tainted” by the “contaminating vices and dissipations” of American civilization and heralded the tribes on the plains as still “yet uncorrupted” or “uncontaminated” (Limerick 2006:183). In many ways this characterizes the view of the tribes from the east, as unfortunate traditional societies that would eventually be swept away by the advancing tide of civilization. Of course, while many lamented the fate of the Indian, they fully supported the movement of the country west.

The tribes in the West did not view themselves or their situation in the same manner as eastern Americans. They still considered the land theirs and while willing to share it, were becoming increasingly agitated as emigrants brought more disease, used up vital resources like timber, allowed their livestock to overgraze along the trails, and hunted or scared off game (Calloway 1996:8). The situation was made worse by the increased United States military presence in the region.

Still the 1840s saw little in the way of conflict between the tribes and Euroamerican settlers, traders, or government agents. What developed instead is what Richard White calls the Middle Ground. The Middle Ground develops when both parties need to find a means of gaining the cooperation and consent of foreign parties without the use of force. To do this both parties need to attempt to understand the reasoning and worldview of the other. To this end the United States government used trappers and traders who had lived among the tribes as translators or negotiators and prominent native chiefs would travel to Washington or other large US cities. However, understanding was not enough. The parties also needed to assimilate enough of the foreign reasoning to put it to their own use. This type of diplomatic discourse often resulted in groups operating in their own self-interests while justifying their actions according to the “others” cultural standards or premises (White 2009b:248). In this manner both sides attempted to gain some level of insight into the others worldview so as to aid them in negotiating for their own personal advantages while maintaining amicable relationships. The Middle Ground applies to every day person to person interactions and was undoubtedly integral to trader/trapper relations with the tribes and possibly to a lesser extent with emigrant and soldier interaction with the tribes. Most importantly, the Middle Ground was applied to legal negotiations between the tribes and the United States.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 31

---

An agreement between the tribes and the United States government was reached in 1851 with the Fort Laramie Treaty whereby many of the concerns of both parties were dealt with. The Cheyenne, Sioux, Arapaho, Assiniboiné, Mandan, and Arikara signed a treaty with the United States requiring the government to provide \$50,000 in annuity goods to the tribes annually. The United States secured the right to establish roads and military posts in Indian Territory. In return the United States recognized and agreed to respect tribal boundaries (Hafen and Young 1938:193, Calloway 1996:9). The goals of both parties were met in this treaty. The United States looked to reduce the rising levels of conflict with the tribes, and the right to construct and use the trails secured this. The tribes, troubled by the growing number of Euroamericans in the region wanted the US government to officially recognize tribal boundaries, which they did. However, this action may have come too late. Increases in native depredations and toll prices had, on occasion, led to open defiance by emigrants. In many cases this simply implied the demand for free passage at gunpoint, but in other cases emigrants resorted to physical violence. The price for these actions was often paid for, not in goods or tribute, but in blood by the next emigrant party, as natives enraged by the perceived slight would attempt to take, rather than ask, for their tribute (Unruh 1993:173).

Conflicts such as this led to an atmosphere of distrust between the native tribes and the emigrants. This distrust was fostered by sensationalized, or outright fictitious, accounts of Native American hostilities in the popular press in the East and led to the development of a trail philosophy demanding discipline, refusal to provide what were deemed unnecessary concessions, and decisive punishment of aggressive behavior when dealing with Native Americans (Unruh 1993:177). One can easily envision what a vicious cycle this became. The actual nature of the Native American threat has been hard to address historically as depredations tended to be blamed on natives regardless of their involvement. Theft and violent attack on the trail were perhaps just as common by bandits or fellow travelers. However, historically these actions have been attributed to Native Americans (Unruh 1993:199-200). Leaving this discussion, it is still clear that violent conflicts between Native Americans and emigrants were on the rise through the 1850s and into the 1860s. The actual threat was compounded by the perceived threat promulgated by newspaper and popular print of the day.

At the very least, the perceived, if not actual threat, to American emigrants prompted the United States military to act on the emigrants behalf. While the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty had officially recognized the tribal boundaries in the region, this action was more a result of the political realities on the ground in the West than it was of United States policy. Officially, the government was supportive of western expansion and any concession made to the tribes was to ensure the safety of the emigrants through the region when military might was unable to achieve these goals.

Increasingly through the 1850s and 1860s measures taken in the 1851 treaty would prove unnecessary. Through the 1850s and into the 1860s, the military established a series of posts and temporary camps to protect traffic along the emigrant trails from the Missouri to the Pacific Coast. The military employed a multi-faceted strategy in dealing with native groups. Emigrants were protected and native tribes were dealt with through treaty negotiations, exchange of gifts, establishment of Native American reservations, military escorts for emigrant trains, and military expeditions to engage or punish aggressive tribes (Unruh 1993:202-203).

The military presence in the West, while working to protect the emigrants, also served to increase violent encounters between United States interests and Native Americans; especially as United States military punitive expeditions brought the two into direct conflict. Such was the case with the Grattan Massacre in 1854 where military efforts to punish members of the Sioux tribe for the theft of a cow led to armed conflict between

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 32

the tribe and the military (Unruh 1993:216-217). After additional conflicts, including Harney's punitive expedition to Blue Water Creek, the Grattan conflict was eventually settled through negotiation (Hafen and Young 1938:244; Mattes 1987:312-315). This was often the case in conflicts of this type. Unfortunately, the actual negotiations in the Grattan case occurred after the disagreement had elevated to armed conflict.

This pattern would prevail throughout the West during the 1850s and into the 1860s as Native American misunderstandings, or outright depredations, would result in armed conflict with the United States military; ultimately resulting in negotiation or treaty which provided for compensation by the United State in return for Native American concessions and assurances to allow safe passage for emigrants. Increased emigration, increased United States military presence, and government policies aimed at gaining firmer control of the region and local tribes all worked to bring the United States and their interests into greater conflict with Native Americans. In this manner the Trans-Missouri West saw the ebb and flow of violence and conciliation as one punitive expedition after another sought to respond to real or perceived Native American threats. Localized tensions in the region would continue to increase into the 1860s until the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864, which resulted in all-out war between the United States and several allied native tribes. Following Sand Creek, localized tensions and conflicts seen throughout the West prior to 1864 developed into a regional conflict. The western tribes, independently or allied with one another, would remain in almost constant conflict with the United States until the final relocation of the tribes to reservations in the 1890's.

The American policies of warfare and relocation in the West had their beginnings in the 1850s. The Treaty of Fort Laramie had done little to alleviate the complaints of the tribes. More emigrants came followed by larger military forces. Tribal lands were further infringed upon, and game and other resources continued to dwindle causing even U.S. allies to lament that "this country was once covered with buffalo, elk, deer, and antelope, and we had plenty to eat. But now, once the white man has made a road across our land and has killed off our game, we are hungry, and there is nothing left for us to eat" (Calloway 1996:8).

As the tribes pushed back against these transgressions they were increasingly vilified in the east. The characterization of the tribes as violent, savage, or bloodthirsty came in stark contrast to the depiction of the emigrants as independent, hardy explorers. It should be noted here that a massive uprising of all the tribes in the West was not underway, nor was it forthcoming. There were over 30 tribes on the plains and less than a dozen were involved in conflicts with the United States (Ewers 1997:13). Some of the remaining tribes adopted a policy of conciliation and were eventually relocated to reservations. Still others, like the Shoshoni allied themselves with the US. These tribes found this the most expedient way of maintaining political advantage over other tribes in the region and for protecting their territory from American advances.

There were of course those who spoke in support of the tribes. Unfortunately, even many of these groups pushed for the relocation and acculturation of the tribes. The purpose was to separate native groups from the contaminating forces of Euroamerican civilization before they could be corrupted by it. On a reservation the tribes could be introduced to American "civilization" in the form of agriculture and Christian religion under the watchful eye of the federal government. As conflicts increased through the 1850s, and the US military presence in the region became more prominent, the government increasingly shifted towards a policy of relocation. Those that could not be relocated were destroyed (Nichols 2009:162-163).

By the 1860s the United States was actively consolidating its western holdings through treaty and warfare. Treaty negotiations during this period could be marred by distortion or deception. In some cases, especially when lands were at stake, the tribes were intentionally misled. Even when they were not, they were

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 33

---

not always signing the treaty they thought they were due to drunkenness or incompetence of interpreters and the complexity of communicating between English, Spanish, and a number of native tongues at any given treaty (Calloway 1996:22).

The net result of Native American/American interactions during this period saw an increasing number of tribes restricted to reservations. Gone were the days of the Middle Ground when both sides interacted and negotiated as relative equals. The military and economic advantage of the United States often led to leveraged negotiations where the tribes were compelled to accept less than favorable terms. Common terms in many of these negotiations involved the cession of land, the relocation of the tribes, and the payment of annuities by the government to the tribes. These terms served to limit the freedom of the tribes and disrupted traditional social, political, and cultural institutions.

The reservation and annuity period also drastically altered the nature of trader/native relations. A number of forces eroded the relatively equitable nature of exchange that had dominated over the course of the past seven decades. Agencies or reservations were run by Indian Agents who tightly controlled trade in the area. Agents awarded trade licenses, and awarded contracts for the distribution of annuities. This inevitably led to the abuse of this power by the agents who profited by awarding contracts and granting licenses for fees or by taking bribes to deny licenses to rival traders (Trennert 1981:28-29). Traders receiving licenses and contracts used the distribution of annuities to their advantage. Traders could make large sums of money by extending credit to the tribes in return for payment at annuity time. They could also make good money purchasing private Indian land plots, provided to Indians in treaties, in return for their debts (Trennert 1981:7).

Frontier merchants were different from early traders who lived with the tribes. Frontier merchants actively pushed for the settlement of the region and understood that the tribes would be passed by. They simply knew they could profit from the process. Frontier traders used their profits from native trading and other business activity to influence Indian policy in Washington. These lobbying activities were not done for the advancement of the native cause but rather to increase the profitability of the traders business.

The traders used their influence in Washington and with the Indian Agents to secure favorable trade arrangements and maximize their profits from the annuity distributions. Annuity funds were intended to aid in the civilization and acculturation of the tribes. The problem was that there was no way to dictate how the money was spent and often the funds ended up in the coffers of the traders. The traders, aware of the profit to be made, were all too willing to give credit and collect when the next annuity payment came. If the tribes could not pay, the traders would acquire power of attorney and pursue claims against the government (Trennert 1981:207). It bears mention that not all traders or Indian Agents were corrupt. Still, this type of activity became more prevalent during this period as the natives' ability to exact fair and even trade dealings was eroded.

In supplying the tribes with the goods they desired or required the traders were able to develop strong relationships with the tribes, allowing them to become influential in tribal politics as well. Government officials were aware of the traders' discrepancies and wary of their influence over the tribes. Still, little was done to curtail the traders influence. The frontier traders were able to successfully depose Indian Agents and tribal leaders, control the payment of annuity funds, represent the tribes against the government, and dictate treaty provisions (Trennert 1981:207). The problem was there was little the government could do to limit the influence of the traders. Discontinuing annuity payments or beginning to only distribute goods would be viewed poorly by the tribes and the traders alike. The government was reliant on the cooperation of the tribes to facilitate

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 34

western expansion and the traders were needed as negotiators. For these reasons abuses of the annuity system were overlooked.

The development of the annuity and reservation policies ultimately resulted in an erosion of the tribes ability to engage in equitable trade with American traders. Whereas the coming of the Euroamerican trader had integrated the tribes into a global market economy where they functioned as active equal partners, this period saw them removed from it. The coming of "civilization" brought Indian agencies, increased regulation, and corruption. Annuities began to remove the tribes as equal partners from the global market as native groups were no longer providing goods to the market but were exchanging government money for trader goods. Many traders were now as interested in forming relationships with the source of the income, the government, as they were the tribes. As the tribes now had nothing to offer the traders but received money and the traders were there at the behest of the Indian Agent, the tribe's ability to influence trading activity was severely reduced, leading to further exploitation. The tribes bargaining position was further weakened by the reduction in competition between the traders. Large trade companies and influential traders worked to remove competition from a region. In this environment the tribes were no longer able to gain favorable trade arrangements as they had for centuries by exploiting rivalries between nations or traders as there was often nowhere else to take their trade.

There is no definitive line that clearly separates the free trade period from the annuity period across the entire West. Rather this was process, much as the American settlement of the region was. Tribes that signed treaties agreeing to relocation and annuity payments or those that were pacified would often be the first in a region to pass into annuity trading. During the same period tribes who resisted would often remain in the free market as their continued mobility allowed them to obtain trade goods from traders situated over a large geographical area. There was also no wholesale replacement of free traders with frontier traders looking to exploit the tribes. As annuity payments and treaties limiting the mobility of the tribes in a region were passed, corruption would begin to grow as traders were able to exploit the situation. Some free traders learned to exploit the system while others continued to operate as they had, closed up shop, or relocated. While this process occurred at different times at different places across the West, by the 1890s it was complete. The tribes had been pacified and limited to reservations. They were no longer active participants in a global market economy. Instead they traded with government appointed traders with government provided funds.

### **Fur and Emigrant Trade of the Plains and Rocky Mountain-Regions of Wyoming**

Prior to the expansion of trade networks up the Missouri and its tributaries Euroamerican goods had been entering the region for centuries as secondary trade items from the north, east, and south through established Native American trade networks. This changed in the 19th century as Europeans and Americans working out of St. Louis moved up the Missouri through Nebraska and into Wyoming. The precise date that Euroamerican trading parties first set foot in Wyoming is unclear, as is the date of the movement of the first European trade goods into the region.

The first well documented movement of Euroamericans through Wyoming occurred in 1812 when an overland trading party under the employment of John Astor traveled across the state as part of an expedition looking to find an overland route from the Pacific Northwest to St. Louis (Barbour 2000:8). It is likely that

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 35

Euroamericans made contact with the tribes in the area prior to this point. From the south the Spanish, moving out of Santa Fe and other southwestern settlements, are documented to have moved as far north as Nebraska, Utah, and Colorado by the early to mid-18th century (Barbour 2000:7; Twitchell 1914:291, 298, 384, 478). French trappers reached North Dakota by 1738 and in the following decades a number took up residence along the Missouri in North and South Dakota with tribes such as the Mandan and Arikara (Wood and Thiessen 1985:24, 27; Gates 1965:38-39). The possibility also remains that the 1742 La Vérendrye expedition reached as far west as the Bighorn Mountains of Wyoming or Montana (La Vérendrye 1927). In 1802 Northwest Company agents traveled the Yellowstone and Bighorn Rivers into the Rockies, possibly into Wyoming (Nasatir 1930:525).

Based on the movement of these trappers there appears to be some evidence that Euroamerican traders reached Wyoming prior to 1812, perhaps as early as 1738. Even so, these early expeditions into Wyoming did not result in regular direct trade relations between Native Americans and Euroamericans; those would come later. These expeditions did introduce the tribes in the region to the French, Spanish, British, and eventually Americans who had been providing the goods that the tribes were so familiar with. Movement of the trappers and traders wholesale into the region would not begin until the 1820s.

By the early 1820s, tribes were familiar with European goods and even had Euroamerican traders living among them (Barbour 2000:8). Ashley's movement into the mountains in 1824 marked the formal opening of western Wyoming to fur trading activities. The Rocky Mountain trading system connected trade networks from the Spanish Southwest, Northwest coast, southern Canada, and the Missouri Valley. Tribes from southern Canada, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado and parts of the Pacific Coast and American, Spanish, French, and British trappers came together in the Rockies to exchange furs, goods, and information. These diverse groups created social and economic partnerships in the Rockies through their involvement in the fur trade. Trappers and tribes competed, and fought, amongst themselves and with one another while simultaneously relying on one another for information, security, food, shelter, and trade goods. The trappers and traders were there for financial gain and the tribes were involved to gain access to much desired European goods. However, the activities in the Rockies served another purpose and the tribes and many of the trappers were unaware of the part they played.

The early fur trading activities in the Rockies played a role in events relating to the American/British disputed territory of Oregon. The purchase of the Louisiana Territory gave the United States no claim to regions west of the Continental Divide. The Astorians opened up the area with the establishment of trading posts on the Pacific Coast. However, their gains were temporary as British interests acquired Astor's Pacific holdings in 1813 (Hafen 2000a:50). The development of the Rocky Mountain trading system in the 1820s served to legitimize the United States claim to the region with the development of a permanent American presence. This presence was expressed in the form of the economic and social ties developed between American traders and native tribes, and through establishment of permanent fur trading outposts. While the trappers themselves were in many cases unaware of the part they played, the United States government was aware of the importance of maintaining a presence in the region and actively promoted the movement of trappers and traders into the interior. More trappers equaled a greater American presence, giving more weight to American claims to the region. The posts served as a visible component of this strategy, providing a permanent structure to serve as a sign of American control. In Wyoming, the first such structure was Captain Bonneville's Fort Bonneville,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 36

constructed in 1832. Fort Bonneville provided a permanent American presence in the Green River valley region of the Rockies, an area held in joint British and American control (Gardner, Johnson, and Vlcek 1991:28).

Fur trading activities, while serving to legitimize American claims to the Rockies and regions west, also managed to provide for the successful settlement of disputed territories. Trappers and supply trains regularly moved across Wyoming, some using parts of the old Astorian trails. As the fur trade intensified, a well-defined trail system developed providing regular access to the West. These trails provide trappers easy access to the mountains, allowed an intensification of trading activities, and connected the Wyoming fur trade to posts and regions west such as Fort Hall, Fort Boise, and the Pacific coast. The trails also served as reliable transportation routes to the Pacific facilitating emigration, eventually allowing for the accession of the territory into the United States via treaty in 1846.

Fort Bonneville and the Rocky Mountain beaver fur trade, while constituting the beginning of the fur trading post era in Wyoming, were a short lived part of the story. The 1830s had seen a decline in the beaver pelt component of the fur trade, the driving force behind the fur trade in the West. Decline in the beaver trade coincided with the burgeoning of the buffalo robe trade and development of Euroamerican emigrant traffic on overland trails. The primary 19<sup>th</sup> century trading activities in Wyoming were related to the buffalo robe and emigrant trade. Only a small number of posts were constructed in the state for the purpose of engaging only in fur trading activities. Fort Bonneville and the Portuguese Houses were both Bonneville posts engaging in beaver trade. Fort William and Fort Sarpy were buffalo robe posts constructed in the latter half of the 1830s or early 1840s. Only Fort William lasted more than two years and was in operation past 1841.

At least 24 posts were built in, or after, 1841. Fort William and the posts constructed after 1841 were part of a larger Upper Missouri trading region. The buffalo robe trade integrated the Wyoming posts into the Trans-Missouri buffalo trading system operating on the High and Great Plains. The posts were part of the hierarchical system with local, regional, and primary posts collecting robes from tribes in the West and shipping them eastward to St. Louis for sale. The emigrant trade connected the post economically to activities in the east, west, and south. Trade goods came from the East, generally shipped out of St. Louis, and were traded to emigrants for use in the West. Traders in Wyoming were integrated into an overland post trail system servicing emigrants at posts such as Fort John in Nebraska, Richard's Post and Fort Bridger in Wyoming and Fort Hall and Fort Boise in Idaho. Livestock and liquor, traded to emigrants and Native Americans alike, also had origins in the East, but more commonly came from Mexican territories to the south out of Santa Fe or Taos. In this manner the Wyoming posts disseminated Euroamerican goods from the south and east to emigrants and tribes who would carry them north, south, and west.

From 1841 through the next two decades, the primary trade in Wyoming would focus on capturing the growing emigrant and buffalo robe trade. Both the buffalo robe and emigrant trade increased through the 1840s and saw their heyday in the 1850s. As the number of emigrant increased, so too did the number of trading posts. In 1841 and 1842, there were six posts built near the emigrant trails to engage in native and emigrant trade, including Fort William's replacement, Fort John, and the first of the major American Fur Company competitors on the North Platte, Fort Platte. By 1843, Jim Bridger constructed the first trading post on the Green River, Fort Bridger, with the express purpose of servicing the emigrants in western Wyoming. In the years to follow, dozens of other posts were established for the same purpose along the emigrant trails throughout Wyoming. In general, the new posts would engage in Native American buffalo robe trade in the fall and winter months and in emigrant trade during the summer months.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 37

Change in the nature of regional trading during the 1840s was met with a change in the components associated with trading posts. Fur trading posts were often stockaded establishments meant to house trade goods and the year's haul of furs, with residential facilities associated with the trading house itself. Components of the fur trading post included a stockade, a trading house, storage facilities, and residential facilities. Depending on the breadth of trading activities at each site, one or all of these features would have been associated with a post. Larger trading posts contained all of them and smaller posts had only a few or combined features. Emigrant trading posts saw a greater variability in site components. Stockades, storage facilities, residential structures, and trading houses were primary components of any post. However, as emigrant posts expanded, they increased the number of services provided to their new clientele and the number of associated features expanded accordingly. Trading posts catering to emigrant traffic not only offered goods the emigrants needed, but services as well. Posts constructed in the 1840s and early 1850s housed artisans and blacksmiths, traded in livestock, and some provided river crossings.

During the late 1850s and early 1860s, travel, communication, and security facilities began to be associated with the trading posts as well. As emigrant traffic increased, the settlement of the West became more intense and a concern developed for maintaining standardized communication with those living beyond the Rockies. Stagecoach and Pony Express points, as well as telegraph line and mail stations, were often constructed or housed at the trading posts to accomplish this goal. A military presence was also common in these locations. The United States government considered the settlement of the West and communication with the new western communities important. For this reason, temporary posts or camps were often located at prominent crossing points or mail and telegraph stations.

Increases in emigration and the accompanying native hostility were seen in Wyoming by the mid-1840s. The increase in Native American hostilities resulted in enactment of governmental restrictions through the 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s. These government sanctions on trading activity limited or banned the sale of items such as liquor, arms and munitions. The Native American hostilities were also met with an increase of the United State military in the region. Military posts sprang up along the trails during the 1850s and early 1860s, connecting the state to a regional command chain stretching from Missouri to Oregon. The 1851 treaty guaranteeing government payment for Native American concessions was negotiated in eastern Wyoming near Fort Laramie, near the old Fort William/Fort John site. Depredations committed by emigrants and natives alike were seen across Wyoming, with the Grattan Massacre occurring in August 1854 near Bordeaux's Trading Post on the North Platte River in southeastern Wyoming. In response to the Grattan Massacre, trading post operators in eastern Wyoming were ordered to cease operations and temporarily relocate to Fort Laramie.

The relocation of the traders was done not only to protect the traders, as many had suffered losses from native theft, but also to limit the influence the traders had on the natives. The traders walked a fine line during this period. While many of these traders had been in the West for decades they were Euroamericans who grew up in a western world and as such were familiar with a Euroamerican worldview. In many ways they were still connected to this world as their goods and financing originated there, and a large portion of their income came from passing emigrants. Of course this is not to say that these Euroamerican trappers held the same opinion and interacted with the tribes as the government and many emigrants did. The trappers and traders in the West still relied on Native American trade in buffalo hides and Euroamerican goods to augment their summer emigrant income. But their connection to the tribes went deeper. Many trappers and traders had lived among the tribes and had taken native wives, integrating them into the tribe itself. Furthermore, while they often operated out of

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 38

their posts, the traders were still located in relatively remote locations. So in many ways, even as the development of the region progressed, whether working in the field or at the post, the trappers and traders were often massively outnumbered by the tribes and in many ways at the mercy of the natives. So even as settlement and development of the West progressed during the 1850s the trappers and traders in Wyoming continued to have well developed, complex relationships with the tribes in which they attempted to balance their "Americanness" with traditional, familiar relationships that they had developed over the past couple of decades. It was due to these relationships, as well as the economic benefit, that some traders would continue to exchange firearms, powder, and other contraband to the tribes even after the government imposed bans on their sale.

The tribes too were conflicted in their dealings with the traders during this period. Traditionally tribes had been receptive to traders and trappers visiting their villages or constructing posts for the exchange of goods. The natives saw the benefit in these exchanges and often the trade was conducted on the terms of the tribesmen. Many of the trappers had married into the tribes making them an extension of their own. When the trappers were the only whites in the field these relationships flourished. However as emigrants, stage and telegraph stations and military installations joined the trappers in the West the posts began to symbolize the encroachment of a foreign culture on traditional tribal territories. This situation was only made worse by the construction of stage stations, telegraph stations, and military posts in or near many of the trading post locations. The change in perception led to the increasing focus of hostilities on the posts themselves. Of course these actions were heavily influenced by traditional native socio-political divisions. In general, tribes would not attack the post of a trader who was married into or affiliated with the tribe. They would instead focus their attentions on traders affiliated with other tribes be it through marriage or economic partnership. In this manner they were able to express their frustrations with American encroachment while maintaining their relations with their local trader.

Government officials were aware of these complex relationships and their involvement in the protection of the posts was twofold. They felt the sale of guns and liquor to native groups served to embolden them and ultimately worked to increase native dissent. To prevent this, and to protect the traders themselves, the traders were called to Fort Laramie. Military detachments were also stationed at, or near, some of the posts to protect them from destruction and prevent the damage of strategic structures such as river crossings that were deemed necessary or integral to emigration and the development of the region (Murray 1974:13-14).

Traders were allowed to return to their posts in 1856, although tensions continued to increase into the 1860s. By the early 1860s, hostility along the Oregon Trail had begun to affect trading posts in the region. Native tensions, together with government restrictions on trading with tribes, had begun to reduce the annual profits of the native trade. This was coupled with a decline in emigration caused in part by fear of attack from Native Americans. Fewer emigrants led to a further reduction in the profitability of the posts. Declines in annual profit were also met by an increased threat of native depredations, generally but not limited to theft. The aftermath of the Grattan Massacre showed even traders with Native American affiliations were not safe from the threat of violence from the tribes. Finally, with all of these factors combining to reduce the profits of each establishment, the posts were also subject to increased government oversight during the 1850s and 1860s.

Government sanctions and post inspections increased steadily through the 40s, 50s, and into the 60s as larger military forces allowed the United States government to enforce increasingly stringent trading restrictions. The government looked to tighten control of what was exchanged and where transactions occurred. Through the early 1860s, all these factors served to make trading dangerous, unprofitable, or undesirable, causing many of the posts to close. After the Sand Creek Massacre in late November 1864 and the resulting war



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 39

of 1865 between the United States and several allied tribes, trading activity was increasingly relocated to government-run Indian agencies or reservations. It was during this period in Wyoming that the free trader was replaced by the frontier trader and the equity of trade arrangements between the tribes and the traders began to erode. The government had affectively relocated many of the tribes by 1868, placing much of the Native American economic activity under the control of appointed post traders.

The railroad had also reached the region by 1868. The implication of this was twofold. First it provided safer, faster, and more reliable transportation across the continent resulting in further decreases to overland emigration. The rail also introduced reliable access to cheaper eastern goods. This last development was more than the posts could handle. The routes they had serviced were obsolete, their primary trading partners had either diminished or been relocated, and invaluable goods they had solely provided for decades were now readily available. For these reasons the era of the trading post came to a close in 1868. Economic activity in this region would be forever changed. The Native American no longer played an integral role in regional economic models for free enterprise exchanges; instead they were serviced by government appointed agency traders. Economic activity would now occur in the settlements developing near military installations, rail stops, or other permanent American settlements in the region. The interaction between Euroamerican and Native Americans was also permanently changed. The cultural, political, and economic relationships that developed during the early years of the fur trade and lasted well into the trading post era had been destroyed. The tribes had been relocated to reservations, separating them socially, culturally, and economically from the developing American society in the West.

### **The Role of the Trading Post in the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

Frederick Jackson Turner, a 19<sup>th</sup> century historian described trading posts as places that blended races and customs, developed commercial confidence, fostered the custom of depending on outside nations for certain supplies, and afforded a means of peaceful intercourse between societies naturally hostile. Unfortunately, he found that trading posts in the American West were an exception to this definition. Turner (1977:4-6) saw western posts as exploitative and damaging to traditional native societies. In light of recent scholarship that has re-evaluated fur trade relations and called into question many of these old analyses it would now seem appropriate to extend Turner's original definition of global trading posts to those found in the American West (White 1991, Calloway 1996, Limerick 2006, Maybury-Lewis et al. 2009, Sleeper-Smith 2009, White 2009a, White 2009 b). Wyoming trading posts were indeed places that blended races and customs, developed commercial confidence, fostered the custom of depending on outside nations for certain supplies, and afforded a means of peaceful intercourse between societies naturally hostile.

Early fur trading activities and post construction often fostered the first social and economic exchanges between Euroamericans and the various native tribes in the wilderness. The wilderness was an ever-moving frontier: always the wild lands beyond the furthest reaches of European or American settlement in North America (Barbour 2000:10-11). As settlement of the continent progressed, the wilderness moved incrementally from the Appalachians to the Mississippi to the Trans-Missouri West and the Upper Missouri, Rocky Mountains, and Oregon Territory regions. In advance of the Euroamerican settlement was the fur trade, ranging

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 40

out far in advance of civilization; first exploring, then developing, the region through establishment of trading posts and trapper trails. In doing so, they often initiated the first contact with Native American groups in the region, developing the first social and cultural relationships between tribes and the East. In this manner the two groups not only exchanged goods and knowledge, but cultural mores as well (Barbour 2000:10, Becker 2010:130, 134-135). The trading posts themselves served as foci for many cultural exchanges and as a visible point on the landscape to disseminate Euroamerican goods as well as cultural ideals and standards.

As a symbol of Euroamerican interests to the native tribes, the posts also served as a visible marker to other Euroamerican powers. In the new frontier, from Nebraska west, American trappers and trading companies now competed with Spanish, English, French, and Russian entrepreneurs. When the Louisiana Territory was purchased the international boundaries were poorly defined and often disputed. The northern boundary, paralleling British territorial claims, and the southern boundary, adjacent to Spanish territorial claims were not properly demarcated (Washington 1854:51-52; Wishart 1979:14). All of this led American trappers in the Louisiana Territory to frequently come into conflict with their Spanish counterparts to the south and west, and with British interests in the north and west (Hafen 2000a:40-44, 49-51). Trading posts functioned as means of establishing an American presence in the newly acquired territory bounded by foreign interests to the north, south, and west, and in doing so providing a strong American claim in the region. In the Trans-Missouri region, traders and trappers helped break the British influence in the area by establishing a competitive fur trading network. In the Oregon Territory where American fur trading activities were not as intense, the mere presence of trappers and construction of trading posts was enough for the United States to establish a lasting territorial claim resulting in the acquisition of the region in 1846.

Although posts provided for geographic exploration of a region, the means to base a territorial claim, and initial social and economic exchanges between Native Americans and Euroamericans, the most immediate function of the trading post was to provide a base for economic and cultural exchanges. The posts themselves were often part of inter- and intra-regional exchange networks. An intra-regional post hierarchy existed whereby primary, regional, and local posts exchanged supplies and furs. Above that existed an inter-regional exchange network connecting posts in Wyoming and the greater Trans-Missouri region with the East through exchange of supplies and trade goods for furs with firms located in St. Louis, with the Southwest through importing of liquor and livestock from Taos and Santa Fe, and with the West through exchange of goods with emigrants and prospectors passing through the region.

While this discussion focuses on the meaning and importance of the posts to international interests or businessmen and financiers of the trading activity in the East it likely does not represent the meaning and importance of the posts to the tribes, passing emigrants, trappers, and post employees who made use of these facilities in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. To the emigrants and trappers the posts were bastions of civilization in a vast wilderness. In some instances they were lifelines to survival providing services and goods the emigrants desperately needed to survive and continue their journey. To the trapper they provided a place to exchange their season's fur haul and provided goods needed to resupply for the next trapping season. To the employees the posts were home. The posts provided more than goods to these individuals; they also served as a location to recreate, receive medical treatment and recover, and as a place to disseminate and gather information. To the tribes the trading posts were not only places to exchange furs. The posts also functioned as a place to recreate and take in liquor and as a bank of sorts where the tribesmen could receive credit or pawn goods to get necessities for the upcoming hunt. They also served as a medical center where treatment could be obtained, a

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 41

---

place to dispose of and bury the dead for some tribes, and as a social or information center where different bands from singular tribes or any number of different tribes could meet and exchange goods and information with each other, post employees, or passing emigrants (Ewers 1997:42-44).

**Chronological Listing of Wyoming Posts**

During the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Wyoming went from a largely unknown region where little Euroamerican activity occurred, to one with well-defined overland routes, a strong and active military presence, and a robust Euroamerican economy based on trade and freight. To say this Multiple Property Document focuses on trading posts may be a bit vague and deserves some clarification. For the purposes of this Multiple Property Document, a trading post is defined as a locus of economic activity within the boundaries of the State of Wyoming. This broad definition comes with a few caveats. The locus of trading activity must have been focused on a physical structure erected by an individual or private company for conducting commerce with Native Americans or Euroamericans. The construction and trading activity at the location must have been initiated and conducted without the support of the United States military or government and it must have been in operation in the 19th century. During this period, there were a number of undertakings overlapping with portions of this definition, yet failing to meet them all. For clarification, I present a brief list of sites or activities not considered trading posts here: government-run or subsidized trading houses, military installations, institutions established for the purpose of distributing government goods to Native Americans, and private residences of prominent traders, unless the site was also the locus of trading activity. Open-air trading sites, such as rendezvous, temporary sites established along the emigrant trails for seasonal trading, trading at ferry or bridge services, or Native American villages where trading activities were focused are also not considered trading posts.

The definition of a trading post for this document has been chosen because all of the selected attributes are directly related to a number of significant historical developments. Early trading activity was in many cases the earliest contact between Native American tribes and Europeans. The trading activity itself provided a common ground upon which economic, social, and cultural exchanges were built. This activity integrated the Native Americans into a global market while at the same time embroiled the tribes in Euroamerican politics and Euroamericans in tribal politics. This was a significant period in the American and Native American pasts, and all of the aforementioned trading activity was integrally involved in these processes. However the trading post alone contains additional historical significance. The primary difference between trading posts and trading conducted in Native Villages, at Rendezvous sites, ferries, bridges, or open air sites is the presence of permanent Euroamerican structures. The construction of the first post, Fort Bonneville, signaled the beginning of a shift in Euroamerican activity in Wyoming. The construction of that post was the beginning of a movement away from an ephemeral presence in the region by traders and trappers who were severely outnumbered by the tribes and in many ways were here at the mercy of the tribes. The early traders and trappers coexisted with the tribes, lived among them, and even married into them. They made no claim to the land or on the sovereignty of the tribes. The same cannot be said for the trading posts.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 42

Trading posts were ideally constructed as permanent structures on the landscape. The traders or companies who opened and ran the posts claimed the land and defended it with stockades and firepower. While trappers and traders from the posts still entered the field, living and working with the tribes, the posts were a symbol of a new permanent American presence in Wyoming and the West at large. The new American presence would not be content to live among the tribes. Rather the posts signaled the beginning of an era where American powers, foreign to the region, would seek to lay claim to the land and the tribes themselves. During this period, before American control of the region was secured, the posts were intermediary zones. The posts, post traders, tribes were connected to two worlds. The traders were connected to tribes through trade and sometimes marriage and they were connected to the United States through citizenship, economics, and trade with the emigrants. Activity at the posts provided direct and regular access to Euroamerican goods that had now been thoroughly integrated into native lifeways. The posts provided permanent locations where tribes would meet and exchange information amongst themselves and with other native groups. The posts also served as neutral zones for treaty negotiations and where natives, emigrants, military and government officials, and other Euroamerican visitors interacted. Traders and employees of the posts worked as intermediaries between tribes and government officials, as interpreters, and treaty negotiators. During this transitional period in the American West trading posts occupied a role of social, cultural, and economic mediator between two groups growing ever closer to conflict.

To the emigrant the posts served as cultural oasis providing Euroamerican goods, news, and company. However, the posts were much more than that. They were identifiable destinations on a foreign landscape. Many trading posts advertised in the east making emigrants aware of post locations and the services they provided. In this manner the posts also served as lifelines to the passing emigrants where medical attention, much needed services, and at times protection could be secured from a relatively reliable source in a foreign land. As emigration increased the posts came to be viewed as secure locations at which to place stage, telegraph, or Pony Express stations.

The economic, social, and cultural exchanges facilitated by the trading posts, the role the posts played in the Native American/American struggle for the West, and the importance of the posts to the passing emigrants hold historical and social significance for the American and Native American past. Due to this only permanent trading loci that were in operation during this period will be considered for this document.

There are at least 29 trading posts located in the state of Wyoming constructed and in operation between 1832 and 1868 (Figure 5) which meet one or more of these criteria. The following is a chronological listing of those posts. Each entry contains a brief background on the post, a list of associated features and property types, details of any archaeological investigations conducted at the post, and types of data likely to be gained from future archaeological work at the site.

***Fort Bonneville***

The first trading post constructed in Wyoming was Fort Bonneville in 1832 by Captain Benjamin L. E. Bonneville. Captain Bonneville was a French immigrant who enlisted in the United States military in 1815 and came west to aid in the construction and garrisoning of Fort Gibson on the Grand River in Oklahoma in 1824

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 43

(Todd 2002:46). It was from Fort Gibson that Bonneville, while in employment of the military, became familiar with the West through survey and interaction with native groups. In 1831 Bonneville asked for a leave of absence from the military to examine the topography of the West, and to study the native tribes and their trading practices so as to determine how to best make the country available to American citizens (Irving 1961:xxv-xxvi). The leave request was granted and he departed from Fort Osage, Missouri in May of 1832. Bonneville's party consisted of 100 men, 20 wagons loaded with trade goods and supplies, horses, mules, cows, and oxen (Todd 2002:49). The party followed the Kansas River west to the Platte, then ascended the Platte, the North Platte and crossed the Continental Divide at South Pass (Gardner, Johnson, and Vlcek 1991:22). This was the first wagon train to cross South Pass (Todd 2002:49). The train moved northwest to the confluence of Horse Creek and the Green River where the party stopped and constructed Fort Bonneville.

Fort Bonneville was a log structure surrounded by a fifteen-foot-high square palisade with two blockhouses located on diagonal corners (Ferris and Phillips 1940:275). Inside the palisade was a bourgeois house, an office and house for the post clerk, barracks for the engages, storehouses, a fur press, and shops including a blacksmith shop (Chittenden 1935:46-47). The archaeological record indicates the post may not have matched Chittenden's secondary description. The post was located three hundred yards from the Green River on the west and two miles from Horse Creek on the east (Ferris and Phillips 1940:274). The location of the post was poorly chosen. It was well suited for summer trade with access to water, available grazing land, and natural topography making the post easily defendable (Ferris and Phillips 1940:274-275; Gardner, Johnson, and Vlcek 1991:29). Unfortunately, the high altitude resulted in such harsh winters the region was uninhabitable during the winter months (Chittenden 1935:398-399). Because of the limited use the post would see, it was dubbed "Fort Nonsense" by contemporaries (Gardner, Johnson, and Vlcek 1991:28).

The nature of Captain Bonneville's operations in the region remains murky. The military leave he had been issued ordered him to collect "any information that may be useful to the Government" (Irving 1961:379-380). The Green River Valley was then claimed by both the British and Americans. It has been suggested Bonneville's expedition was intended to report on the British holdings in the valley and beyond, as well as to gauge the strength of the British and their Native American allies in the region (Chittenden 1935:421-434). The possibility remains the construction of the fort was intended not only to exchange goods with Native Americans, but to establish a symbolic permanent United States presence in the region (Gardner, Johnson, and Vlcek. 1991:28; Todd 2002:48). Regardless of military intent, Bonneville did engage in trading activities at the post. Numerous contemporaries provide reports of native trade at the post (Gardner, Johnson, and Vlcek 1991:31), including Ferris and Phillip's (1940:274) June 1833 report of 50 to 60 lodges of Snakes trading at the post.

Reports of the post activities are limited. After construction in 1832, Bonneville moved his party to the headwaters of the Salmon River for winter quarters (Gardner, Johnson, and Vlcek 1991:29). Activity at Fort Bonneville had only lasted from July through August 22 in 1832 (Chittenden 1935:398-399). The Bonneville parties trapped the Rockies in early 1833, and returned to the post at Horse Creek for the summer rendezvous held in the vicinity. The Bonneville men worked the Wind River and Big Horn regions of Wyoming that fall, with Bonneville visiting his post at Horse Creek as late as October of 1833. Through November into December, Bonneville moved to Ham's Fork, through Bear Lake, and eventually wintered on the Portneuf River, Idaho (Todd 2002:53). From here Bonneville turned his attention to penetrating Hudson Bay country in Oregon Territory (Irving 1961:381). By August of 1835 Bonneville was back in Missouri, and by the fall of 1836 he

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 44

had resumed an active role in the military, ending his fur trading activities in the West. There is no indication Bonneville or any member of his party revisited the post on Horse Creek after October of 1833, nor is there any indication the post was permanently reoccupied after that time. However as a number of summer Rendezvous would be held there in the following years, it is likely the post saw some level of use through the last Rendezvous in 1840.

After abandonment, the fort deteriorated or was destroyed, leaving only an archaeological signature by the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today Fort Bonneville is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The site is on a combination of public and private lands in Sublette County. The location is marked by a monument erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1915 bearing the inscription, "Site of Fort Bonneville, 1832-1915" (Barnhart 1970). The post was initially excavated by Dr. George Frison of the University of Wyoming in 1968. In 1989, Western Wyoming College conducted archaeological investigations at the site at the request of the Sublette County Certified Local Government to "define the nature and extent of the historic deposits at the fort and to determine where the palisade walls were located" (Gardner, Johnson, and Vlcek 1991:1). Before excavations, a proton magnetometer survey was conducted to define subsurface anomalies possibly indicating the presence of historic remains, with a primary goal being palisade identification. Excavations were then placed on the subsurface anomalies revealed by the survey to determine their origin (Gardner, Johnson, and Vlcek 1991:35-36). The 1989 excavations covered 32 square meters and yielded artifacts representative of 19<sup>th</sup> century material culture and a series of features including a portion of the blacksmith shop, habitation areas, and parts of the palisade (Gardner, Johnson, and Vlcek 1991:122). The blacksmith shop appears to have been used to repair broken metal goods, possibly for traders or Native Americans (Gardner, Johnson, and Vlcek 1991:59-60). The palisade was a cottonwood picket, without a foundation, backfilled with dirt, clay, and gravel (Gardner, Johnson, and Vlcek 1991:63). Both features reveal similarities in construction technique and site function with late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century Canadian fur trade posts (Gardner, Johnson, and Vlcek 1991:54-56,63). Habitation areas defined by magnetometer survey and excavation reveal evidence of domestic and cooking activity as well as food preparation and storage (Gardner, Johnson, and Vlcek 1991:122). The 1989 excavations helped to provide details about fur trading activities and post life in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Rocky Mountains often omitted from historical accounts, including domestic activity, trade and blacksmith activity, and post construction. To date, only a portion of the post has been surveyed and excavated, leaving open the possibility future research could expand upon the 1989 work. It is especially important to possibly provide tighter dates as to when the site was in use (Gardner personal communication 2012).

***Fort William***

Fort William, built in 1834, was the second trading post constructed in Wyoming. The post was built by William Patton and a crew of fourteen men for William Sublette and Robert Campbell (Hafen 2000a:143). The pair had spent the beginning of the 1830s establishing control of the Rocky Mountain fur trade by exerting increasing influence on the Rocky Mountain Fur Company as their principle debt holders and challenging the American Fur Company on the Upper Missouri by establishing rival posts. After protracted negotiations in the summer of 1834, the American Fur Company bought out the Sublette and Campbell Upper Missouri interests

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 45

(Barbour 2000:23-25, Hafen 2000a:137). Leaving the Upper Missouri, Sublette and Campbell turned their focus to the Rockies and the High Plains of Wyoming. Sending a supply train to the summer rendezvous, the partners allowed some of the party to stay at the junction of the Laramie and Platte Rivers to construct a post (Barbour 2000:26, Hafen 2000a:137). The fifteen man crew constructed a log post on the left bank of the Laramie about one mile from its confluence with the Platte (Chittenden 1935:940-941).

The post was mentioned in numerous trapper and travelers journals as it was placed on one of the main trails through the region. Construction began with the laying of the log foundations in May of 1834 (Barbour 2000:26-27). Fort William was finished and open for trading by the fall. The post was surrounded by a cottonwood palisade 13 to 15 feet high, at least 80 x 100 feet in size and possibly as large as 150 feet square (Walker and De Vore 2008:15, Wislizenus 1969:67-68). The palisade was accompanied by three defensive towers or blockhouses (Wislizenus 1969:67); two placed on diagonal corners with the third above the gate (Walker and De Vore 2008:15). The gate was built of blocks (Wislizenus 1969:67). Lining the inside of the palisade were residences, a blacksmith, and a storage building. The central courtyard was open, with the exception of a corral (Wislizenus 1969:67-68). Contemporary images of the post were sketched and later painted by Alfred Jacob Miller in 1837 (Figures 6 and 7).

Fort William was operated by Sublette and Campbell for only a year. They sold the post to the remnants of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company (Fontenelle, Fitzpatrick, and Company) in the spring of 1835 (Barbour 2000:28-29; Hafen 2000a:145-146). These new partners, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Milton Sublette, Jim Bridger, Lucien Fontenelle, and Andrew Drips, operated the post until the summer of 1836. The post may have been referred to as Fort Lucien by some during this period (Hanson and Walters 1976:297; Robertson 1999:144). Fontenelle and Drips had been employed by the American Fur Company before their withdrawal from the Rockies, and the partnership of Fontenelle, Fitzpatrick, and Company had worked with the American Fur Company. As early as the fall of 1835, the American Fur Company had made overtures to purchase the post (Hafen 2000a:149). These aspirations were not met until the Rendezvous of 1836, when title to Fort William was transferred to Joshua Pilcher of the American Fur Company (Barbour 2000:31; Hafen 2000a:155). The acquisition of the post removed a major competitor to the American Fur Company, provided the company access to the Sioux buffalo robes and a direct access line for supplying the Rocky Mountain Rendezvous (Barbour 2000:35-36).

The American Fur Company traded with natives, trappers, and travelers alike from this location until 1841. The cottonwood logs of the post had begun to deteriorate by this point and the construction of a rival post, Fort Platte, convinced the American Fur Company a larger, newer post needed to be erected (Walker 2004:8). A new adobe post called Fort John was constructed (Lupton 1977:84; Mattes 1980:IV; Wishart 1979:91). The location of the new post in relation to Fort William has not yet been determined (Walker 2004:14). Fort John was later sold to the military in 1849. The military established Fort Laramie at this location and occupied the site until 1890 when the property sold to homesteaders at public auction. The site was purchased by the state of Wyoming in 1937, with Civilian Conservation Corps archaeological investigation of the property beginning that fall (Walker and De Vore 2008:30). The site was turned over to the National Park Service in 1938. The agency expanded the site in 1960 to include additional acreage originally part of the post (Walker 2004:14; Walker and De Vore 2008:30). The site was designated the Fort Laramie National Historic Site in 1961 (Walker and De Vore 2008:30). The National Park Service immediately began restoring the site (Walker and De Vore 2008:32). Archaeological investigations have been conducted at the site every decade since. Unfortunately, most of these

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 46

investigations have been conducted as inventories, as CRM mitigation efforts, or focused only on the military occupation of the site. However, valuable information on the fur trade period has been gained. Recently archaeological investigations conducted between 2002 and 2005 have used remote sensing and test excavations to aid in the inventory of the military era, homestead era, and fur trade era subsurface deposits. This work has revealed the relative locations of Fort John and the military era Ward and Guerrier trading post (Walker and De Vore 2008:361-362). Unfortunately, projects attempting to locate the remains of Fort William have been unsuccessful (Walker 2004). However, it is believed the post should be archeologically visible (Walker 2004:ii). This leaves open the possibility future excavations may reveal the site. Should the site be found, it would be considered likely to contain archaeological deposits with the ability to provide valuable information regarding the interpretation of Fort Laramie history and events related to the early fur trade.

***The Portuguese Houses***

In 1834, a second trading post was constructed in Wyoming with direct connections to the Rocky Mountain fur trade and Captain Bonneville. Captain Bonneville sent Antonio Montero to trade with the Crow in the Powder River country in the summer of 1834 (Becker 2010:57). Montero constructed a post on the north bank of the Middle Fork of the Powder River in the fall of that year. This location was unusual as it was not located on a primary trade, water, or transportation way (Becker 2010:58). As such, the post appears to have been relatively unprofitable (Irving 1961). The post was also plagued by harassment and theft by rival trappers and the Blackfeet. The trappers also managed to agitate the Crow, causing them to join in the thefts (Becker 2010:63, 66; Irving 1961:354, Victor 1870:223-224). Because of these difficulties, Montero abandoned the post in 1839. The post saw little or no reuse after abandonment (Becker 2010:59-60).

The post was constructed of hewn logs and surrounded by a stockade (Chittenden 1935:941; Todd 1977:1). The stockade was some 200 feet square and eight to 10 feet high (Todd 1977:1). Historic documents also mention a corral or animal pen (Irving 1961:354).

Today the site sits in a field on private land in Johnson County. There are no surface remains associated with the Portuguese Houses; there is only the archaeological signature. A marker was placed at the site in 1928 by the Wyoming Historic Landmarks Commission and in 1977 the Portuguese Houses were included in the Wyoming Cultural Records Database as archaeological site 48JO96 (Becker 2010:71; Todd 1977). The current owners of the property, since 1943, have actively worked to prevent looting of the site (Becker 2010:72). The site, however, has been used as a hayfield since at least the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 2007 geophysical investigations were conducted to determine the nature of the subsurface remains. Magnetometer and conductivity surveys were conducted (Becker 2010:74). The results revealed a strong archaeological signature (Becker 2010:79-82). The survey identified the location of the post palisade, a 38 meter squared rectangle, anomalies on the northern half of the palisade believed to be architectural elements, the location of the post corral, and possible locations of associated native or trapper lodges (Becker 2010:79-83; Grey n.d.). Besides the architectural elements of the post, the geophysical survey also identified possible associated campsites of post visitors. These signatures indicate farming activity on the site has only disturbed the surface of the site and below the plow zone, intact archaeological deposits are undisturbed by looters or other post-depositional



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 47

activities. Therefore, it should be considered likely archaeological investigations at the Portuguese Houses will provide information relevant to the early Rocky Mountain fur trade.

***Fort Sarpy***

In 1837, a second post was constructed near the confluence of the Laramie and Platte Rivers. The post was constructed by Pierre Sylvester Gregoire Sarpy, an American Fur Company employee (Hamilton 1837, Howard 1838). In 1836, the American Fur Company, now in control of Pratte, Chouteau, and Company, decided to move into the incredibly competitive Platte River fur trade arena. They employed Sarpy and Henry Fraeb as their agents to advance this cause. Sarpy and Fraeb established a post on the South Platte in late 1836/early 1837. That post, named Fort Jackson, was north of Fort Lupton and south of Fort Vasquez and Fort Lookout, or Fort St. Vrain. All of these posts were located within 20 miles of one another, causing for intense competition in the region (Hafen 1995:292). Using Fort Jackson as their base of operations, Sarpy and Fraeb would range as far as 200 miles out to secure furs. They soon expanded their trading operations into the North Platte region. During the 1837-1838 season, Fraeb remained at Fort Jackson to oversee trading operations while Sarpy traveled to the North Fork of the Platte River, the Fort William area, where he established a small outpost from which to conduct trading operations for the season (Hamilton 1837; Howard 1838). His endeavors were apparently successful, as a letter from J. A. Hamilton indicated Sarpy had taken a good quantity of trade from a B. Woods in the North Platte Country (Hamilton 1837). In 1838, Sarpy himself reported trading was good in the North Platte region and declared his intention to take his furs down the Platte. He would have been aware of Chouteau's intentions to sell Fort Jackson, as Chouteau was becoming uneasy about future fur trading prospects in the Missouri area and was moving his interests elsewhere. It is unclear if Sarpy ever returned to Fort Jackson after the 1838 trading season, but the post was sold in the summer of 1838 to George Bent and Ceran St. Vrain. Regardless of whether Sarpy returned to Fort Jackson, the sale of the post marked the end of his partnership with Fraeb and his trading activities in the region (Hafen 1995:95-96). The sale of Fort Jackson marked the division of the Arkansas-Platte River trading area between Chouteau and the Bent/Vrain. Chouteau's interests became focused on the North Platte region while Bent/Vrain worked the regions to the south. After the sale of Fort Jackson, Sarpy returned his attention to his trading business at Fort Bellevue. He operated out of this area for the next 20 years (Hafen 1995:97). As for Fort Sarpy, there is no indication Chouteau or any of his traders reoccupied the post. This should not be considered unusual, as the American Fur Company had recently purchased and occupied Fort William making the Sarpy Post expendable.

Fort Sarpy was located eight miles east of Fort William (Robertson 1999:71). This general location is based on a contemporary letter by J. A. Hamilton placing Sarpy eight miles from B. Woods, the Fort William post trader in 1837. Unfortunately, there are no references indicating the exact location of Fort Sarpy, nor is there any discussion on the construction material, methods, or the post layout. Fort Sarpy appears to have been a seasonal trading outpost associated with Fort Jackson, located further south. All indications are Fort Sarpy was in operation for one trading season and then abandoned with the sale of Fort Jackson. Sarpy never returned to the region and the Chouteau interests having recently purchased Fort William were not in need of the small

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 48

Sarpy Post. With no other historic or modern reference to the location of Fort Sarpy, the location of the post remains a mystery.

Fort Sarpy has been all but lost to history. There are only a couple of references to the post itself in the historical documents (Hamilton 1837; Howard 1838). Hafen (1995), Robertson (1999). Hanson and Walters (1976) and Hanson (1966) contain the only mention of the post in modern literature. The location of the post is unknown and as a result there have been no modern archaeological investigations at the site. Without a location, a discussion on the archaeological significance of the post is impossible, as the site may no longer exist. However, should the site be located and found to be intact, archaeological investigations would likely yield valuable information relating to transitional fur trading activities at the end of the 1830s.

***Fort Platte***

In 1841, a year after the initial emigration of the Walker party, a series of new posts appeared in the Laramie Point area to capture the emigrant and buffalo trades; the first being Fort Platte. Fort Platte was the first serious competition to the American Fur Company's Fort William and the first adobe post on the North Platte (Lupton 1977:84). The post was constructed by Lancaster Lupton, a former military man and American Fur Company employee (Barbour 2000:38; Lupton 1977:83). Lupton had initially entered the fur trade on the South Platte, constructing Fort Lupton 15 miles south of Denver. This is probably where the impetus for building in adobe came from, as adobe posts were common in that region. From the South Platte, Lupton looked north to establish a post near Fort William. The exact date of Fort Platte's construction is unknown; it may have been as early as the fall of 1840. There is no mention of the post in 1839 by Wislizenus or by Father De Smet during the summer of 1840, but travelers through the region in 1841 mention the post (Lupton 1977:84; Chittenden 1935:941). Unable to compete with the American Fur Company, Lupton was bankrupt by 1842 (Sage 1846:46). In April 1842, Lupton sold the post to John Sybille and David Adams (Lupton 1977:87). The pair placed Joseph Bissonette and John Richard in charge of post operations (Lupton 1977:87). Bissonette and Richard figured prominently in the early operations of the post, as several travelers refer to Fort Platte as Fort Bissonette or Richard Fort (Hafen and Young 1938:89, 94). Sybille and Adams either rebuilt or remodeled the post after their purchase, with renovations being completed in October (Fremont 1842; Jackson and Spence 1970:146-147). The competition from Fort John proved too stiff for Sybille and Adams, as they too sold the post. In August of 1843, Bernard Pratte Jr. and John Charles Cabanne purchased Fort Platte (Hafen and Young 1938:94). Over the next two years Pratte and Cabanne competed fiercely with the traders at Fort John, with allegations of illegal alcohol sales frequently being levied by the American Fur Company traders (Hafen and Young 1938:94-98). By 1844, Pratte and Cabanne were expanding their operations with plans to build four new posts throughout the region (Hafen and Young 1938:95). However, in a sharp reversal, the pair sold the post and some of their supplies to the American Fur Company traders at Fort John by the winter of 1845 (Hafen and Young 1938:103-104; Hanson and Walters 1976:298).

Pratte and Cabanne realized the business potential of the region relating to the rising emigrant numbers and the increasing buffalo trade; unfortunately they were located within a mile of Fort John, curtailing their trade. In 1845, they decided to relocate eight miles east of Fort John to try and capture the emigrant trade before

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 49

they reached Fort John. In the summer and fall Cabanne, Bissonette, and Richard constructed Fort Bernard, east of the Fort Platte. Fort Platte was now owned by the American Fur Company (Hafen and Young 1938:101-103; Lupton 1977:21-23). With no further need for the post, they left it to deteriorate. The post was still standing when the military purchased Fort John in 1849 (Hafen and Young 1938:107). The post may have been used as filler material by the military during construction activities at Fort Laramie in the 1850s (Mattes 1949:27).

There are a number of historic references to the location and layout of Fort Platte. The post was constructed on the left bank of the Platte, between the Laramie and Platte rivers, a mile from the American Fur company post of Fort William, and later Fort John (Chittenden 1935:941; Hanson and Walters 1976:298). Contemporary Rufus Sage describes the post as being located on the left bank of the north fork of the Platte at lat. 42° 12' 10", long. 105° 20' 13", sitting on the overland wagon trail to Oregon. The post itself was constructed of adobe walls with the exterior wall running 250 feet x 200 feet, 20 feet tall, and 4 feet thick. There were bastions at the northwest and southwest corners, with 12 interior buildings. The post housed an office, a store, a warehouse, a meat house, a blacksmith, a kitchen, and five dwellings. The buildings were positioned to form a yard and corral (Sage 1846:46). Mormon emigrants measured the post in 1847, two years after Pratte and Cabanne abandoned the site. They found the post was 144 feet by 103.2 feet outside with eleven foot walls 30 inches thick. Inside the walls were 16 foot x 15 foot rooms. They surrounded a yard 61 feet 9 inches by 56 feet in size. The northern portion of the post was set aside as a yard for the horses, measuring 98 feet 9 inches by 47 feet. The northeast corner had an attached building measuring 29 feet 4 inches by 19 feet 6 inches. The post was made of whitewashed adobe. They found 18 rooms in Fort Platte, six on the east and west sides and three on the north and south sides of the fort. These rooms were used as stores, blacksmith shops, and dwellings (Figure 8) (Bullock n.d.:123-125).

After the abandonment of Fort Platte, the post sat vacant until it was destroyed by the military in the 1850s. The property stayed under military control until Fort Laramie was abandoned in 1890 when the Fort Laramie property was divided and sold to homesteaders. Such was also the fate of Fort Platte. The site is currently located on privately owned agricultural lands. In July of 1951, the Historical Landmark Commission of Wyoming erected a plaque on state highway 160 to commemorate the location of Fort Platte (Hafen and Young 1938:107). Aside from simple site identification, there have been no archaeological investigations of the site. Geophysical investigations at the Portuguese Houses have shown decades of agricultural activities only disturb the surface of the ground, leaving deeper subsurface remains intact. Should this be the case at Fort Platte, archaeological investigations are likely to yield valuable information relating to the early emigrant period in Wyoming.

***Fort John***

Fort John was an American Fur Company post constructed in 1841 to replace the deteriorating Fort William at the confluence of the Laramie and Platte Rivers. After their purchase of the property in 1836 and before 1841, the American Fur Company had seen no serious competition in the region (Mattes 1980:IV). In 1841, a former Fort William employee, Lancaster Lupton, constructed a rival post within a mile of Fort William (Barbour 2000:53). The sudden appearance of a rival post provided incentive for the deteriorating Fort William

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 50

to be replaced with a larger structure, named Fort John (Lupton 1977:84; Mattes 1980:IV; McDermott 2002:68;). The new post, unlike Fort William which had been constructed of logs and had seriously deteriorated in less than seven years, was constructed of adobe. Adobe posts had been in use on the South Platte for more than a decade (Wishart 1979:91). Adobe provided advantages log stockades did not. The arid nature of the region allowed adobe buildings to be more durable than those made of log (Wishart 1979:91). Additionally, adobe was more fire resistant and provided more insulation than log construction (Robertson 1999:13).

Fort John was constructed on the west side of the Laramie Fork, about two miles from the confluence with the Platte (Palmer 1966:27). Less than a mile away, towards the Platte, sat the new rival post, Fort Platte (Mattes 1980:IV). The location of Fort William in relation to Fort John has yet to be discovered. Initially it was believed Fort John was constructed about a mile further west from the Laramie than Fort William. However, more recently it has been proposed they were constructed on the same site (Walker 2004:14-16; see also Mattes 1980). The post itself was constructed of adobe, with a two foot thick wall surrounding the property. The walls were 12 to 15 feet high with pickets or spikes along the top (Palmer 1966:27-28). Parkman reported there were two blockhouses at opposite corners of the post, with another over the main gate (Parkman 2008:94). There were gates in the northern and southern walls. The interior of the walls were lined with storage rooms, residences, offices, a blacksmith shop, and a carpenter's shop (Palmer 1966:28; Parkman 2008:94-95). The interior of the fort was a large open square, with a portion partitioned aside for use as a corral. Outside the post was a four acre plot of land set aside for the planting of corn (Palmer 1966:28). In 1847, a Mormon party passed through the Platte region, stopping at Fort John. While there, they measured and sketched the post (Figure 9). They found the post to be 167 feet x 121 feet 4 inches in size, containing stables and 18 rooms consisting of dwellings, stores, and a blacksmith shop (Hafen and Young 1938:125-126). The American Fur Company operated Fort John from 1841 to 1849 trading with Native Americans, travelers, and emigrants (Hafen and Young 1938:124-125; Robertson 1999:147). As westward emigration increased, the military began to establish a system of forts along the trails to protect strategic locations and the emigrants alike. As part of this effort, the military purchased Fort John in June of 1849. The adobe post was too small for military use, so the post was only occupied temporarily until the new, larger, military post of Fort Laramie could be completed. Initial construction work on Fort Laramie was concluded in the fall of 1850. The Fort John structure continued to be used until the early 1860s when it was dismantled by the military (Robertson 1999:147).

The site of Fort John now lies within the Fort Laramie National Historic Site. There are no surface remains of the post. As previously mentioned, archaeological investigations at Fort Laramie have been ongoing since 1937. An 1858 photograph and site excavations in 1950 and 2004 have revealed the general location of Fort John (Walker and De Vore 2008:361). Fort John appears to lie just west of the military fort parade grounds. The possibility remains Fort William also lies in this location. Serious excavations have not been conducted on the remains of Fort John, although the 2004 investigations may have revealed the presence of at least one intact cellar storage area related to Fort John (Walker and De Vore 2008). Future archaeological investigations have a good potential to identify the exact location of the post, thus also allowing for the possible identification of the Fort William location. Archaeological investigations may also reveal information relating to the early history of Fort Laramie, the nature of the regional fur trade, and information relating to the westward emigration of tens of thousands of Euroamericans during the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 51

*Fraeb's Post*

Wyoming SHPO documents indicate the presence of a trading post in Carbon County constructed by Henry Fraeb sometime between 1830 and 1841. The site has been assigned Smithsonian number 48CR1184. There appears to be a significant amount of confusion regarding the nature of this post. There are no documents offering any information as to the size or layout of the post, nor is there any mention of the activities occurring there, other than Fraeb's death. The site form is based on Wyoming Recreation Commission data, placing Fraeb's Post in this location from 1839 to 1841. During this period, Henry Fraeb was partnered with Jim Bridger and they are known to have begun construction of a post abandoned after Fraeb's death (Gowans and Campbell 1975:10; Janin 2001:58).

Chittenden (1935) places Fraeb's Post at St. Vrain's Fork of the Elkhead River. The Wyoming Atlas and Gazetteer (1992) places the post on Battle Creek. The discrepancy appears to be an issue relating to differences in modern designations, as opposed to designations used in an 1850 map generated by Captain Stansbury, as both appear to place the post in the same location near the Wyoming and Colorado border (Robertson 1999:276). Others have stated the post was located in western Wyoming, on the Green River between the mouths of the Big Sandy and Black's Fork (Gowans and Campbell 1975:10; Janin 2001:58). Today both sites are recorded in the Wyoming SHPO cultural records files, with historic documents claiming each site is the real location of the Fraeb/Bridger trading post. For the purposes of this document, the Green River site will be considered the legitimate Fraeb/Bridger post, and site 48CR1184 will not be considered a trading post based on an analysis of the location of the post, the historical documents, and movements of Henry Fraeb during this period.

The historic documents placing the Fraeb Post in southern Wyoming are based on military maps generated from Stansbury's movement through the region in 1849 and 1850, well after the post was abandoned. Stansbury relied on local traditions and oral histories to identify the previous use of the extant, but abandoned, buildings. This is in stark contrast to the historic documents placing the Fraeb/Bridger post in western Wyoming. These accounts are from Mormon emigrants who actually visited the post while it was under construction (Gowans and Campbell 1975:10). The location of the posts supports this. Fraeb's Post in southern Wyoming was constructed as early as 1839 and as late as 1841. Regardless of the exact date, this came well after the collapse of the beaver trade, during the rise of the buffalo trade, and at the beginning of the emigrant era. To place a post in the mountains of southern Wyoming would only make sense if one were attempting to engage in the beaver trade, which was no longer profitable by this period. The placement of a post in the Green River valley in western Wyoming, along the westward trails and water routes, would strategically allow the post to engage in buffalo and emigrant trading activities. Finally, when one tracks the movements of Henry Fraeb during this period, it does not appear he would have had the time to construct a post in southern Wyoming. From 1837 to 1838, Fraeb was partnered with Peter Sarpy, operating Fort Jackson in central Colorado. During this period Fraeb worked the post while Sarpy worked the field (Hafen 1928:9-17). After the sale of the post in late 1838, Fraeb traveled to St. Louis where he partnered with Bridger in 1840 (Hafen 2000b:136). During the spring of 1840, Fraeb and Bridger took a supply train to the last Rendezvous (Johansen 1959:39) and Fraeb traveled to southern California, returning to the Green River region by July of 1841 (Fraeb n.d.). From the Green River area, Fraeb ventured south to hunt but was killed in a conflict in August with natives in the region

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 52

(Hafen 2000b:137). Following this timeline, one can see there is no period before July of 1841, a month before his death, where Fraeb was active in southern Wyoming. There are no documents placing Bridger here either, although he is known to have been active in the Green River region of western Wyoming during this time.

Post location, historic documents, and Fraeb's whereabouts all make it unlikely the southern Wyoming post site is accurate. As such, it is not considered a trading post for this document. However, neither locality has seen any form of archaeological investigation, making this difficult to verify. This analysis is based only on the currently available historic documentation. Should new information be discovered, or archaeological investigation undertaken, it is possible site 48CR1184 could still be revealed to be the actual location of Fraeb's Post. However, for now, the Green River location appears to have a higher probability for being the true location.

***Fort Adams***

In September of 1841, John Sybille and David Adams moved into the North Platte region and established a log post near the confluence the Laramie and Platte Rivers (Adams 1841) dubbed Fort Adams. The traders constructed their post on the Oregon Trail route, near the American Fur Company's Fort William/Fort John and Lupton's Fort Platte (Hanson and Walters 1976:298, Lupton 1977:86). Sybille and Adams had recently received their first trading license to operate as freelance traders in the Laramie's Fork, Cheyenne, and Wind River areas. They were financed by David's brother, John, and Bernard Pratte, a former Chouteau partner (Barry 1972:437). Fort Adams was abandoned in the spring of 1842, when the Sybille, Adams, and Company purchased the larger Fort Platte from Lancaster P. Lupton (Lupton 1977:86). Sybille and Adams set to renovating and improving Fort Platte, and operated out of the post for the next couple of years (Hanson and Walters 1976:298). While the activities of Sybille and Adams are relatively well documented, the fate of Fort Adams itself is not. After the purchase of Fort Platte, historic documents make no further mention of Fort Adams. It seems likely the post would have been abandoned, as its proximity to Fort Platte and inferior size would have made it obsolete.

Fort Adams was occupied for only one season. Because of the limited use of the post, there are few historic documents referencing it. Other than the fact the post was constructed of cottonwood logs, there is little known about the post location or layout (Robertson 1999:39). We know nothing of the building dimensions or associated properties or features, nor do we know the exact location.

John Sybille and David Adams figured prominently into the historic events surrounding the Platte/Laramie River region in the 1840s. Fort Adams, however, did not. The limited use of the post does not deduct from its archaeological potential. The post was constructed during an important transitional period when traders were transitioning from trade aimed primarily at native populations to servicing the emigrants passing through the area. The occupation of Fort Adams for one trading season could allow for a historical "snapshot" into trading activities at this time. Unfortunately, the location of the post is unknown. There are no historical accounts of the location of the post, and it is likely the structures have long been destroyed. Should the archaeological remains of Fort Adams be located, and found to be undisturbed, the site would have the potential to provide information pertinent to trading activities in the North Platte region in the 1840s.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 53

---

***Lock and Randolph Company***

The post of Lock, Randolph and Company is yet another post on the North Platte of which little is known. Historical references about activities of Lock and Randolph on the North Platte are limited. Lock and Randolph only operated in the area for a year or two and indications are the post was built two miles from Fort Adams in 1841. They seem to have been ill prepared for the venture as they had to borrow two axes to begin construction of their post (Adams 1841). It should come as no surprise they failed to find great success trading in the region. Trade on the North Platte at the time was dominated by competition from the much larger trading firms of Chouteau operating out of Fort John/Fort William and the Lupton operations at Fort Platte. Unable to compete, Lock and Randolph relocated to Fort Vasquez on the South Platte which they purchased in 1842 (Hanson and Walters 1976:298; Robertson 1999:151).

The Lock and Randolph Post is one of the more enigmatic trading posts from the North Platte region. There are few historical references and even fewer modern citations of the post. The only reference to the construction material, methods, or design indicates the post was constructed of logs (Robertson 1999:151). There is no information regarding the layout of the post or the structures and features associated with it. The location of the post is a complete mystery. There is no modern reference to the post's location; yet another North Platte post with a location lost to history. Barring the discovery of additional references to the post, or the discovery of Fort Adams or the Lock and Randolph Post itself, the location of the Lock and Randolph post will remain a mystery.

As with Fort Sarpy and Fort Adams, a complete discussion on the archaeological significance is difficult to undertake without a site. Should the site be located and found to be intact, the remains of the Lock and Randolph Post would provide valuable information regarding the activities of the smaller independent traders in the Platte River region during the transitional period from beaver trading to emigrant and buffalo robe trading in the early 1840s.

***Fort Bridger***

In 1841, Jim Bridger made his first attempt at constructing a trading post. It should be noted this was not his first foray into the fur trade, nor the first post where he held partial ownership. Bridger had been active in the fur trade since 1822 (Gowans and Campbell 1975:5; Ismert 2002:85) and was a member of the partnership which purchased and operated Fort William from 1835 to 1836. After the sale of Fort William, Bridger continued to work the Rockies, at first independently, then under the employment of Fontenelle, and finally for the American Fur Company in 1838 (Ismert 2002:90-92).

Bridger, in partnership with Henry Fraeb, constructed a small post (48SW4074) on the Green River between the mouths of the Big Sandy and Black's Fork during the summer of 1841 (Gowans and Campbell 1975:10; Janin 2001:58). This post was located about 50 miles northeast of the modern Fort Bridger in Uinta

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 54

County (Janin 2001:58). Before the buildings were completed, Henry Fraeb was killed by the Arapaho in 1841. It is unknown if the post was ever occupied as Bridger had shifted the focus of his activities by 1842. The structures at the first Bridger post were significant as log cabins and chimneys were still standing in 1849 (Gowans and Campbell 1975:10). There are no historic documents relating the layout or construction of the post, beyond its construction of logs. Likewise, there have been no archaeological investigations at the site. For this reason, information regarding Bridger #1 is limited, leaving open the possibility archaeological investigations would have the ability to provide information regarding post activity and information relating to the transition from fur trading activities to emigrant trading taking place in Wyoming during the beginning of the 1840s.

In the early summer of 1842 Bridger began the construction of a second post (48UT1091), located on a bluff overlooking Blacks Fork. This post was also occupied for less than a year, and quite possibly never completed (Gowans and Campbell 1975:10; Janin 2001:58). Much like Bridger #1, there is little known about this post other than its existence and its log construction. The general location of the post is known, however the exact location and nature of the post remains within the larger site area are still a mystery. Archaeological investigations at this site are likely to provide the same types of information work at Bridger #1 would yield.

In 1843, with the aid of his new partner Louis Vasquez, Bridger began construction of his third and final post (Gowans and Campbell 1975:10-11; Janin 2001:58). Fort Bridger #3 (48UT29), was relocated to the river bottom below the bluff and occupied by August (Gowans and Campbell 1975:10-11). The post was placed along the emigrant route and was intended to capture the emigrant trade through the region, as well as to engage the native tribes in trade (Ellison et al. 1981:11). This was the first post built in Wyoming for the primary purpose of engaging in the emigrant trade (Gowans and Campbell 1975:1, 11). In 1843, Bridger reported the general location of the post and the presence of a blacksmith shop (Ellison 1981:13). Contemporary accounts of the first three years of occupation at the site report a small, crudely built "fort". Palmer (1966:35) reports the structures were constructed of cottonwood, willow, and pine with mud daubing. McBride, a visitor to the post in 1846, reports a single log cabin with a roof of willow brush covered with earth (Morgan 1963:96). Another report counted two or three crudely built log cabins (Gowans and Campbell 1975:13). All reports document native and trapper lodges surrounding the post. The post had been hastily constructed to be ready to capture the burgeoning 1843 emigrant trade. Over the course of the first three years, little was done to improve the post (Gowans and Campbell 1975:13).

This changes in 1847, when reports of the post become more favorable. They describe the post as being constructed of two adjoining, long (about 40 feet), low cabins set in an L shape. The cabins were joined by a log picket some 8 to 10 feet high (Boardman 1929:102; Ellison et al. 1981:13; Ware 1932:25-26). In the fall of 1847, or spring of 1848, Bridger and Vasquez constructed six new buildings at the site (Bryant 1885:1424-144). Aside from reports of a blacksmith, private residences, and storage, there is no other mention of building functions at the Bridger Post. Accounts reveal the post was wood construction, earthen roofed, had a log picket, and a corral for horse trading. There is no indication the post was remodeled after 1848. It seems likely the 1848 post structure remained until Bridger and Vasquez relinquished the post in 1853. Mormon reports indicate the post was 80 feet square (Gowans and Campbell 1975:82).

Through the 1840s and into the 1850s, Mormon emigration to Utah steadily increased. As early as 1849, Brigham Young's "State of Deseret" claimed the Green River valley as part of its territory (Gowans and Campbell 1975:37). When the Utah territory was established, Brigham Young was named governor. In this



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 55

capacity he looked to establish governmental control over the Green River valley. As the Governor of the territory, Young had the authority to establish ferries in the Green River region. This placed the Mormons in direct conflict with Bridger and the other trappers and traders in the region who had traditionally provided these services (Gowans and Campbell 1976:9-10). Tensions reached a head in 1853 when Bridger and other free traders in the region, spurred by a loss of emigrant trade to Salt Lake City, a loss of control of the ferries, and the levying of taxes on their businesses by the territorial governor, took up arms and forcibly took back control of the ferries (Gowans and Campbell 1976:11-13). Brigham Young, based on accusations of native incitement and spurred on by attacks on the Mormon ferries, sent an armed posse into the Green River valley to arrest Bridger and the other agitants. Bridger fled to avoid arrest and the Mormon posse occupied his post until October of 1853 (Gowans and Campbell 1975:55). Bridger returned to the post briefly in the fall to aid in a government survey. After completion of the survey, Bridger and Vasquez returned to Missouri (Gowans and Campbell 1976:15; Ismert 2002:96-98).

Bridger alleged the Mormons burned the post in 1853 when they attempted to arrest him. This allegation seems false, as the posse kept detailed records of the post items they used during their stay with the intention of repaying the post owners (Gowans and Campbell 1975:55-56). After Bridger's abandonment of the property, a contingent of Mormon settlers attempted to occupy the post in the fall of 1853. They were however, repelled by a group of local trappers and traders living at the site. While the Mormons obtained political jurisdiction of the post in 1854, they never occupied the post until they purchased the property from Bridger in 1855. The story concerning the transfer of control of the post from Bridger to the Mormons has seen many variations. Bridger attested he was run off the property when the Mormons burned the post and he received no compensation for it. Others claim the Mormons purchased the property in 1853. Historic documents seem to indicate Bridger returned to the Green River valley in 1855 and executed the sale of the post to Mormon agent Lewis Robison for the price of \$8,000 (Gowans and Campbell 1975:66). The Mormons occupied the post in 1855 and began to reconstruct the post in 1857. They built a stone structure 14 feet high and 100 feet square. The top of the wall was picketed with bastions on diagonal corners. A 52 foot square corral was placed along the outside of the post walls (Gowans and Campbell 1975:82).

The Mormons operated it as a trading post and supply depot for both Mormon and non-Mormon emigrants until the fall of 1857 when rising tensions between the Mormon leadership in Utah and the United States government resulted in military action. In the summer of 1857, United States troops were sent west to re-secure the Utah Territories and restore the supremacy of the United States in the region (Gowans and Campbell 1975:94). Moving along the Oregon Trail, United States forces passed Fort Laramie and South Pass, reaching Ham's Fork on September 28<sup>th</sup>. Mormons in the Green River valley immediately began to flee, burning everything they could, as they wished to leave no supplies for the army. Fort Bridger was set on fire on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1857. The military officially occupied the site in November, declaring it a military reservation (Gowans and Campbell 1975:95-101). They remained there until 1890, when they abandoned the military post. The property then passed into private ownership. After years of private ownership, the property was purchased by the Wyoming Historic Landmark Commission in 1928 and is now operated as a state historic site, and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

There have been numerous archaeological investigations of the post, most recently by Dudley Gardner of Western Wyoming Community College (Gardner, Johnson, and Lindmeir 1991, Gardner various). Excavations have aided in the restoration of military period buildings, the reconstruction of the original Bridger

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 56

Post, and the construction of an interpretive archaeological site containing the base of the cobble rock wall built by the Mormons. Excavations have also helped generate a better understanding of historic activities at Fort Bridger. Information regarding the involvement of women in the trading/trapping activities at the post from 1843 to 1853; the significant involvement of the Shoshoni in the emigrant era trading patterns from 1843 to 1868; and the nature of the environmental change taking place in the region from 1843 to 1890 have all come as a result of archaeological excavations. In light of what has already been learned from the site, future excavations will continue to provide valuable information on historic trading activities in the region. Fort Bridger serves as an excellent example of how archaeological investigations at a 19<sup>th</sup> century trading post can provide valuable information relating to the historic activities of the inhabitants of the posts.

***Bordeaux's Sarpy Point Post***

The sale of Fort John by the American Fur Company to the United States military in 1849 released the stranglehold the firm had held on the fur trade in the North Platte region for nearly a decade. Following the sale, the North Platte was inundated by a number of independent traders looking to take advantage of the opportunity (Hanson 1972:139). One of the first independent posts constructed was built by former Fort John post trader, James Bordeaux. Bordeaux entered the fur trade at the age of 12 in 1826 when he gained employment on an American Fur Company expedition on the Missouri. He remained in their employment at varying capacities until the sale of Fort Laramie (McDermott 2002:65-66).

With the sale of Fort John, Bordeaux occupied a wintering post he had constructed in 1846 while still in employment at Fort Laramie on the White River, near modern Chadron, Nebraska (Trenholm 1954:121) as an independent trader (Hanson and Walters 1976:305). Later that year or early in the following year, Bordeaux constructed a post on the North Platte. The post on the North Platte, Bordeaux's Sarpy's Point Post, was positioned on a low terrace on the southern side of the Platte, eight miles below Fort John (Hanson 1966:6). The Sarpy's Point Post served a different purpose than the post on the White River. The White River Post focused primarily on trade with local tribes and the buffalo robe trade. The Sarpy's Point Post traded with the native tribes, but also engaged in trade with the passing emigrants traveling the Oregon Trail (Hanson 1991:4). Bordeaux successfully traded with natives and emigrants in the region for the better part of the next two decades.

In 1854 the Grattan Fight took place near the Sarpy's Point Post. After the battle, the Sioux commandeered the government annuity goods from the local storehouse, as well as the trade goods from many of the local traders, including those from Bordeaux's Sarpy's Point Post (Hanson 1966:7-8). This did not deter Bordeaux, for he continued to operate in the North Platte region until 1868.

In 1862 he constructed a trading outpost at Rawhide Butte and in 1867 he built a store at the intersection of the newly constructed roads from Fort Laramie to Fort D. A. Russell and from Fort Fetterman to Fort D. A. Russell. Bordeaux continued to operate out of the Sarpy's Point Post as well. The exact date Bordeaux abandoned the Sarpy's Point Post is unknown, although correspondences by Captain Eugene Ware indicate the post was still in operation as late as 1864 (Hanson 1966:9).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 57

The latter half of the 1860s was a difficult time for traders on the North Platte. Increased hostility from native groups made trading increasingly more dangerous and the decrease in emigrant traffic led to a decrease in profits. The establishment of Indian Agencies during this period offered traders like Bordeaux a new opportunity. His familiarity with the native tribes made him an ideal candidate for employment. Taking advantage of this, Bordeaux relocated to the Whetstone Agency in South Dakota in 1868 (Wagoner 1936). This marks the latest date for Bordeaux activity on the North Platte, indicating the Sarpy's Point Post was abandoned no later than 1868.

There are no complete descriptions of the Bordeaux Post, although it has been described as an unstockaded log structure with a trading house, a storehouse, a cellar, and a cemetery (Hanson 1966:6; Hanson 1991:4; Ware 1960; Zeimens n.d.:5). Bordeaux also engaged in livestock trading including cows, pigs, chickens, and horses. This leaves open the possibility stables, corrals, and animal pens were also present (Bettelyoun 1999:42). The exact location of the Sarpy's Point Post has been lost. The general location was recognized in 1953 when the Historical Landmark Commission of Wyoming placed a marker on State Highway 157, near Lingle, commemorating the location of the Grattan Fight (Zeimens n.d.:5). The property itself has been developed as agricultural lands, which had the effect of both destroying and rediscovering the post. In 1980, Allan Korell exposed cultural material and human remains while leveling his field for farming activities. The Wyoming State Archaeologist was notified and their inspection of the site determined it to be a significant discovery. Unfortunately, there were no funds available for the excavation and preservation of the materials. In an effort to rectify this situation, George Zeimens and a group of local avocational archaeologists and historians secured funds from the Wyoming Council for Humanities to conduct salvage excavations at the site (Zeimens n.d.:6).

Agricultural activities had resulted in the exposure of six areas of cultural material at the site (Zeimens et al. 1987:71-72). Disturbed cultural material and human remains were collected from Areas I and II, with cultural material being labeled in accordance with the grave it had been removed from. The undisturbed remnant of each feature was then excavated and recorded. Exploratory trenches in Area I and II were placed so as to search for additional graves. The results for each trench were negative. A proton magnetometer survey was conducted to search for subsurface remains. Unfortunately, the abundance of metal remains limited the effectiveness of the survey (Zeimens et al. 1987:71-72). Areas II, IV, V, and VI were not tested, although the presence of surface remains indicated test excavation may reveal additional information. Seventy years ago, Area III yielded several human skeletal remains buried inside a wagon box along with other cultural artifacts (Zeimens et al. 1987:72). Area IV is thought to be the actual location of the Bordeaux Post (Zeimens et al. 1987:72).

The lack of intact surface remains does not preclude the possibility the site contains archaeological potential. The original site contained at least three distinct property types from which further archaeological investigations can garner data useful to the historical record. The original trading house is thought to be located in area IV. While no surface remains are intact, other features associated with the building may be. Zeimens (1987:73) reports the cultural material exposed by agricultural activities was located below a layer of modern topsoil. The original foundations for the post may still be buried beneath the topsoil. Additionally, Captain Eugene Ware reported the post contained a cellar (Ware 1960:198-199). The 1987 archaeological investigations concluded the area had been leveled but had not been brought down to the level of the cellar (Zeimens n.d.:6). In all likelihood, further archaeological investigations would reveal the remains of the Bordeaux Post cellar.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 58

The original post had a storehouse for goods traded to the native groups and the emigrants (Hanson 1991:4). As with the trading house, no surface remains from this structure are intact. However, further excavations could reveal features such as the foundation and storage pits or cellars as well as information regarding the size, location, construction materials and methods, and the nature of the trade goods housed there. Finally, the site area contains a cemetery believed to be associated with the Bordeaux Post (Zeimens n.d.:6-9). Further archaeological investigation could outline the dimensions of the cemetery as well as to provide information on the individuals interred within it.

***Fort Bernard***

With the sale and abandonment of Fort Platte in 1845, Pratte, Cabanne, Bissonette, and Richard relocated eight miles east of Fort John (Robertson 1999:71). Fort Bernard was likely occupied by August as Fort John post trader Anthony R. Bouis reported Fort Platte abandoned by August 31, 1845 (Fort Pierre 1918). On December 18, 1845 Pratte and Cabanne sold their interest to Honore Picotte (Picotte 1845). This left Bissonette, Richard and Picotte as partners. Post operations were run by Richard and field operations conducted by Bissonette. The exact role Picotte played is unknown (Lupton 1979:23). Fort Bernard did good business in the fall and winter of 1845 trading corn for buffalo robes. The post's good fortune continued into the spring of 1846 when they managed to undersell Fort John by 30% to 40% in the emigrant trade (Picotte 1846). Along with the sale of goods to emigrants and the trading of robes with native groups, the traders at Fort Bernard engaged in the sale of mules, the exchange of wagons for goods, and the exchange of good horses for bad (Lupton 1979:29; Morgan 1963:572, 575; Wade 1947:447). The post was destroyed by fire sometime between the fall of 1846 and the spring of 1847 as emigrants mention the post in full operation in August of 1846 but destroyed in May of 1847 (Lupton 1979:32). There are no records indicating the post was rebuilt.

The location, design, and layout of Fort Bernard is well documented in the historic literature. Parkman, a traveler on the Oregon Trail in 1846 describes the post as designed to "form a hollow square, with rooms for lodging and storage opening upon the area within." The fortifications had not been completed and Parkman found the fort "ill-fitted for the purposes of defense". Parkman was taken into the main room in the establishment, measuring ten by ten feet. The building was made of logs with a black mud floor, the roof was made of rough timbers, and the post contained a large fireplace with four flat rocks from the prairie. It is doubtful the post was ever completed as Parkman reports in July of 1846 only two of the four stockade walls were present (Parkman 2008:89-90). The trade in livestock leaves open the likelihood the post contained some type of stable or corral system, and the exchange and repair of emigrant wagons makes the presence of artisans and a blacksmith possible.

Today the site sits on a terrace near the Platte River on privately owned agricultural property in Goshen County. Archaeological investigations by George Zeimens, with funds from the Wyoming Council for the Humanities, have revealed subsurface remains of portions of the post, again indicating agricultural activities do not completely destroy the archaeological signature of the posts. To date, only a small portion of Fort Bernard has been excavated. The intact nature of the deposits indicates the data potential from this site is great, with future archaeological investigations likely to yield valuable information relating to the early emigrant trade.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 59

---

***Ash Point***

Ash Point is a small, one room, trading post constructed in 1850 ten miles downriver from Bordeaux's Sarpy Point Post. The post was located on the emigrant trail and primarily traded in horses (Unruh 1993:270; Zeimens n.d.:9). Richard operated the post until April of 1851, when it was purchased by Seth Ward and William Le Guerrier (Tutt n.d.; Unruh 1993:279;). Ward and Guerrier abandoned the post after it burned in 1852, when they relocated to Sand Creek, near Register Cliff (Mattes and Borrensens n.d.:9 ; Zeimens n.d.:9). There is no indication the site was immediately reoccupied for trading activities. However, by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the site was occupied by the Swan Land Cattle Company. The Ash Point location has seen continuous occupation since.

There are few documents referencing the post, primarily because of the limited occupation and limited nature of activities conducted there. The location of Ash Point was given in reference to Bordeaux's Post; fortunately the location of Bordeaux's Post is known. Other than a brief description as a one room establishment, nothing else is known about the post. There is no mention of stockades, storage rooms, or even blacksmiths - three features common to posts before and during this period. The reference to horse trading leaves open the possibility stables or corrals were present to house the animals.

Archaeological investigations conducted during the 1980s are believed to have located the remains of Ash Point. Agricultural activities at Rock Ranch, in Goshen County, revealed historic cultural deposits from the right time period. The property owners consented to allow archaeological investigations to determine the significance of the remains up. Unfortunately, the agricultural activities were not limited to simple plowing and planting as the property owners were conducting terrace leveling procedures. The site also contained modern structures. Archaeological investigations revealed the stratigraphy of much of the site had been destroyed by activity at the site over the past 100 years. However, a portion of the site did maintain stratigraphic integrity. In this location, foundations and cultural material recovered were believed to be the foundation and artifacts related to the original Ash Point Post (Zeimens et al. 1987:78-80). The Ash Point site is relatively unique because modern activity there has not been limited to simple agricultural activities; rather the site has seen modern construction and terrace leveling which has caused serious disturbances to the archaeological record. Data from the undisturbed sections of the post can provide information on emigrant era trade and horse exchange. However, most of the site is severely disturbed, making it unlikely any valuable information will be gained from excavations of these areas, although the possibility does remain.

***Bissonette's Platte River Post***

After the destruction of Fort Bernard in 1846, Joseph Bissonette entered into a brief partnership with James Bordeaux and Charles Primeau in 1849. The partners operated out of Bordeaux's Sarpy Point Post, constructed near the old Fort Bernard site. The partnership dissolved in 1850, with Bordeaux continuing

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 60

operations from the Sarpy Point Post and Bissonette relocating three miles upriver (Bissonette 1893; Stansbury 1852:288). From this location, he traded hardware, cloth goods, and other supplies to native groups and engaged in the prosperous emigrant trade in the spring and summer. Bissonette also traded livestock and ran a ferry to provide river crossings for passing emigrants (McDermott 2001:54). Operations at the North Platte Post lasted until 1854 when Bissonette relocated to the mouth of LaBonte Creek on the Platte, south of present day Douglas WY.

There is little known about Bissonette's North Platte Post. Only a general location is known, with Bissonette and other contemporaries placing the post three miles upriver from Bordeaux's Sarpy Point Post. There is no currently known reference to the size, layout, or method of post construction. Knowledge of Bissonette's trading activities during this period may provide some insight; emigrant trade and livestock sales and exchange. It is likely there was a blacksmith shop to service the emigrants and some type of stable or corral system to facilitate the livestock trade. Archaeological investigations have the potential to not only locate the post itself but provide insight into the post trading activities, size and layout of the post, and manner of post construction. Bissonette's Post was in operation during a period when smaller independent traders were constructing and operating most of the trading posts in the region after the departure of the American Fur Company from the region. The post was also in operation during the peak of the emigrant era, and the time when Native American and United States relations were beginning to deteriorate. Data from archaeological investigations at Bissonette's Post could provide valuable insight into the nature of the emigrant trade at its height, native trade as tensions in the region began to escalate, and independent trading life in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

### ***Seminole's Post***

Seminole's Post was an Oregon Trail log trading compound established in 1852 on the Sweetwater River near Devil's Gate. The post was constructed and operated by Charles Lajeunesse and his business partners August Archambault, Hubert Papin, and Moses and Charley Perat (Conyers 1905:456; Harris 1852; Little 1891:23; Mousseau in Ricker 1906, notebook 28:16, 20; Terrell in Mattes 1988:391 entry 1298; Walker 2009:1, 22-23;) Lajeunesse was referred to as Little Simon, or Simono, resulting in the nickname Seminole (Anonymous 1929; Anderson 1987:334; Lavender 1972:6; Walker 2009:1) Seminole was a member of the well-known Missouri Lajeunesse family and had been active in the fur trade beginning, at least, in 1827. During the period between 1827 and 1852 Seminole worked for, or with, Chouteau and the American Fur Company, Sublette and Campbell, and in the latter years, as a minor partner in the Bridger interests on the Green River (Alter 1962:205-212; Field 1957:127; Larson 1968:9; Morgan and Harris, in Anderson 1987:83, 334; Walker 2009:14-15). In 1851, Seminole, having worked with Bridger for the past eight years, saw the potential of the emigrant trade and decided to strike out on his own. Having worked the Wyoming region for the last several decades, Seminole was well informed on the trails and river crossings. Devil's Gate was a location where all emigrants, regardless of their destination, had to pass using only one side of the river. He knew this location would allow a post to capture all of the emigrant traffic through the region (Walker 2009:21). In May or June of 1852, Seminole and his partners arrived at the site and immediately began trading out of the backs of their wagons

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 61

while they constructed the post (Walker 2009:21; Frizzell in Holmes 1997:53). The post consisted of a number of log buildings, a corral, and a palisade. The main gate opened directly onto the Oregon Trail, providing easy access for the passing emigrants. The post employed a blacksmith, cook, stock tenders, hunters, and a clerk and traded in livestock, horses and cattle (Walker 2009:22). A bridge was also constructed where the trail met the river, about seven miles away from the post, late in 1852 (Mousseau in Ricker 1906:16, 17).

Over the next four years the post would engage in trade with Native Americans and emigrants alike, although the primary focus and source of income was from the emigrant traffic (Unruh 1993:85). In 1854, emigration dropped to 21,000, and fell to 6,600 in 1855 (Walker 2009:26-27). Native hostilities seen to the east after the Grattan Massacre began to develop near Devil's Gate by 1855. While tensions did not run as high in the Sweetwater region, Seminoe was the focus of several native raids, including horses and livestock theft (Walker 2009:27-28; Williams in Haines 1981:221). As native tensions increased into 1856, General Harney ordered the Platte River traders to Fort Laramie. Harney also mentioned the Devil's Gate traders in the decree, but Seminoe stayed at his post (Walker 2009:29). By the fall of 1856, decreases in emigrant and native trade, along with the threat of native hostilities led to abandonment of the post by Seminoe (Walker 2009:1, 27-28). The exact date he left the post is unknown. However, it is recorded the post had been abandoned by July of 1856 (Galloway 1927:54; Hafen and Hafen 1955:211). In October, members of the Martin Handcart company, a Mormon emigrant train enroute to Utah, were caught in a blizzard and sought shelter in the abandoned post. The group used portions of the post as firewood to stay warm during the blizzard (Anonymous 1943:231; Beebe 1973:18; Brown n.d.; Haines 1981:196, 197). The post served as a mail express station into 1857, at which time it was destroyed by the Mormons as they retreated to Utah as Federal troops advanced during the Mormon War (Walker 2009:54). By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the post had either been disassembled or had deteriorated and the location lost.

Contemporary descriptions of Seminoe's Post have provided information on post layout, construction, and location. The post is described as having been built of hewn logs with a sod roof and being a 120 foot long square post (Booth 1962:187). It was a ten room stockaded facility located  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile south of Devil's Gate with corrals, a cattle yard and a blacksmith (Jones 1967:102-104; Rogerson 1907; Smith 1855:8). A mail station had also been established at the site (Bryans 1990:32, 33; Gray 1984:12-19; Young 1859). A cemetery containing Euroamerican and Native American remains is also associated with the post (Spinelli 1976:25; Walker 2009:9-10).

The location of Seminoe's Post remained lost until 2001 when the National Park Service's Long Distance Trail Office in Salt Lake City asked the Midwest Archeological Center and the Wyoming State Archaeologist's Office to conduct investigations to locate the post (Walker 2009:38). Journal entries by John Lyman Smith from 1855 and a survey map of mail stations in the Devil's Gate area from 1857 which showed the location of Seminoe's Post were used as a starting point for the investigations (Walker 2009:54). These documents were used to place a 120 m x 180 m grid in a field south of old Wyoming Highway 220 and east of Pete Creek for the purpose of conducting magnetic gradient and a resistance or ground conductivity surveys (Walker 2009:38, 50). The work revealed magnetic anomalies roughly the size and shape of Seminoe's Post (Walker 2009:54). The geophysical results were used to focus archaeological investigations during the summer of 2001. Excavations were conducted by the Wyoming State Archaeologist Office for the purpose of providing information to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints to allow for reconstruction of the post (Walker 2009:42). Historical accounts of the location, design, and layout of the post were shown to be relatively accurate

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 62

based on the excavation data (Walker 2009:95). Today the site is part of the Martin Handcart Visitor Center, a historic interpretive center open to the public. A replica of Seminole's Post has been constructed next to the original site, to protect any remaining archaeological deposits for future investigation (Walker 2009:100).

***Ward and Guerrier's Sand Point Post***

In 1852, Ward and Guerrier moved their trading operations to Sand Point, near Register Cliff nine miles west of Fort Laramie (Hafen and Young 1938:240; Mattes 2000:364-365). The reason for the move is unknown. The location was the first stop for emigrants out of Fort Laramie. The Sand Point Post engaged in emigrant trade, livestock exchange, and Native American trade. They traded for mules from the Kiowa and Comanche and maintained fields and ranching facilities for maintenance and trade of cattle and oxen to passing emigrants (Mattes 2000:365-366). Ward and Guerrier were also involved in the river crossing business. They were involved in several bridge construction projects on the North Platte River and may have operated a ferry near the post to provide river crossings (Tutt n.d.). A mail station and Pony Express station were also located at the Sand Point Post (Mattes 2000:368, 371). The post was temporarily abandoned in 1855 when General Harney called the North Platte traders to Fort Laramie. Ward and Guerrier began trading at the post again once the traders were released from the Fort. During this period, portions of the Sand Point Post were destroyed by emigrants who used the post for fuel (Mattes 2000:371).

In 1857, Seth Ward gained the post sutlership at Fort Laramie (Hoffman 1857). Ward ran the sutlership while Guerrier operated native and emigrant trade from Sand Point. This arrangement worked until 1858 when Guerrier was killed in an explosion (Goshen News and Fort Laramie Scout 1927). After Guerrier's death, B. B. Mills and Antione Janis managed Ward's operations at Sand Point (Mattes 2000:371). Sand Point was in operation as late as 1860-1861 (Mattes 2000:371-372). The nature of Ward's involvement in the area may have changed in 1863 when he relocated to Nebraska City (Lewis Publishing 1896:567-570). However, there is record Ward was still licensed to trade and was engaging in trade with native groups in the Fort Laramie territory as late as 1864 (Loree 1863). Correspondences by Ward in 1868, listing his properties in an effort to sell his interests in the region, do not mention the Sand Point post (Mattes 2000:379). By 1871, Ward no longer had the sutlership at Fort Laramie and left the region (Anderson 1956; Ward 1871). There is no mention of the Ward and Guerrier Sand Point Post after this.

The location, design, and layout of the Ward and Guerrier Post are known to varying degrees. The post was listed in contemporary accounts as having been located at Register Cliff some seven to eight miles from Fort Laramie (Hafen and Young 1938:240; Mattes 2000:364-365). Today, the remains of a stone chimney may reveal the location of the post (Barnhart 1972:4). The post consisted of two to three wood buildings and a larger stone building (Ferris 1856:62-63). The uses of the buildings are not given, although based on standard trading post design; a trading house, a storage house, and a residential facility were likely. Historic records mention the presence of a mail station and a pony express station at the post. It is unknown if these facilities would have used existing buildings or if new buildings were constructed for the stations. Burials and corrals are also known to have been located at, or near, the Ward and Guerrier Sand Point Post. There is no information on the layout of the post.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 63

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It is clear there is much to learn about this Ward and Guerrier Post. There has been no archaeological investigation at the post except for a general surface survey of Register Cliff conducted in 1963 (Barnhart 1972:1). As the relative location of the post is known, further geophysical and archaeological excavation would likely yield valuable information regarding emigrant and native trading activities during the highpoint of the emigrant era.

*Archambault's Post*

In 1853, a new trading post was constructed near Independence Rock. The nature of this post has caused much confusion in part because of the complex ownership of the post and the diverse nature of the owner's activities in the region for the preceding decade. Archambault's Post was originally constructed in association with Seminoe's Post. August Archambault, along with his brother and several other individuals, were partners in the Seminoe venture (Frizzell in Holmes 1997:53; Walker 2009:21). That same year, they also constructed a bridge, some seven miles away on the Sweetwater River (Mousseau in Ricker 1906:16, 17). It became apparent in 1853 construction of the post and the bridge so far apart was a mistake, as it now required two parties to operate. However, the decision was made not to abandon Seminoe's Post at Devil's Gate. A new facility was constructed near the bridge location; this post became Archambault's Post. Even though the post was less elaborate than Seminoe's and provided less shelter it began to eclipse Seminoe's in trade primarily because Archambault's location was further east. Eventually the site became known as Sweetwater Station, possibly because of the subsequent placement of a stage station nearby (Anonymous 1943; Beebe 1973:18; Hafen and Young 1938:234; Mousseau in Ricker 1906:16, 17; Townley 1994:4; Walker 2009:24).

The emigrant literature refers to the post as "Shambro's", a likely reference to Archambault (Walker 2009:21). Other contemporary records describe the partnership between Seminoe, Archambault, and a number of other Canadians more accurately (Mousseau in Ricker 1906:16, 20). These accounts indicate when the post was constructed; it was owned and operated by the partnership. Sometime between the post construction in 1853 and abandonment in 1856 ownership passed solely to Archambault (Murray 1975:13). The year in which this happened is unknown.

There is also some confusion regarding which year the post was constructed. Contemporaries place Archambault in the Devil's Gate region, constructing a trading post, as early as 1846. Archambault and a number of other trappers of Canadian descent had been operating out of the Green River as early as 1843. They were associated in some way with the Bridger and Seminoe operations in the area (Alter 1962:251, 253, 254, 205-212; Morgan and Harris in Anderson 1987:334). By the mid-1840s, the Green River trappers were aware of the economic opportunities the emigrant trade in the Sweetwater River region had to offer. Large trading parties would often move to the Sweetwater region for the summer, erecting temporary hide lodges and trading out of wagons (Johnston, in Alter 1962:232). There is no indication Archambault constructed a permanent trading post on the Sweetwater near Devil's Gate or Independence Rock before 1852. The confusion seems to stem from his open-air trading activities in the area during the 1840s, while operating out of the Green River region.

Operations at Archambault's post lasted until 1856 when decreases in emigration and increases in Native American hostilities resulted in abandoned (Murray 1975:13). The exact date of the initial abandonment

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 64

is unknown, however, it is reported the region was cleared by July (Galloway 1927:54; Hafen and Hafen 1955:211). Archambault attempted to re-occupy the site in September of 1856 but was quickly forced to retreat by the still hostile Sioux in the area. The Sioux shot Archambault's cattle and ran off a number of his horses. An arrow was left in the post door to serve as a warning. In the spring of 1857, Archambault attempted to return to the post. Again the Sioux forced him to leave; this time for good (Anonymous 1943:231; Brown n.d.; Beebe 1973:18; Haines 1981:196, 197).

Several references have indicated the post was re-occupied by either Gilbert and Garrish or Guinard (Beebe 1973:18; Haines 1981:196, 197; Junge 1976:35). None of these references appear to be accurate. Archambault's Post is located a little over a mile below Devil's Gate, while Guinard's Sweetwater Station is located over six miles northeast of Devil's Gate and Gilbert Station is over 60 miles away. While Archambault's location is closer than the seven miles estimated by contemporaries, it is still positioned more appropriately than any other post. Guinard's Post is located east of Devil's Gate, not west of it as Seminoe's Post was. Gilbert Station is located much further away - likely to far away to have been managed from Seminoe's Post. It seems probable when viewed in relation to the open 19<sup>th</sup> century Wyoming landscape, these three posts were close enough to be thought of as occupying a single location. However, today we recognize them as three distinct properties, located at three distinct locations.

To date, there have been no archaeological investigations of Archambault's Post. The exact location of the post is still unknown, as are the size, layout, and nature of construction. Archaeological survey, geophysical investigations, and excavation could provide valuable data on location, layout, and construction methods. There is also potential to gain information relating to emigrant trading activities during the height of the emigrant era, the nature of the Shoshoni/American trade, and the lives of the post traders who owned and operated small independent posts during the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

***Bissonette's LaBonte Creek Post***

In 1854, Joseph Bissonette relocated from his Platte River Post, near Sarpy's Point, to the mouth of LaBonte Creek (Hanson and Walters 1976:306; Robertson 1999:71). The impetus for the relocation is unknown, as Bissonette was involved in a lucrative toll bridge operation on the Platte River near modern day Casper, at the time (Hanson 1991:4). He sold his interest in the bridge to John Richard in 1854 and moved to LaBonte Creek some 50 miles east (McDermott 2001:54-55). Operations from LaBonte Creek were difficult for Bissonette. After the Grattan Fight, angry Sioux raided his post and made off with most of Bissonette's goods. The next year, 1855, a group of Minneconjous seized one of Bissonette's wagon trains headed to the Powder River, destroying the goods and taking the livestock (Bissonette 1892; McDermott 2001:55). By the summer of 1855, the United States military had ordered all traders in the region to cease trading activities with native groups until the Sioux could be punished (Twiss 1855). Bissonette spent the winter of 1855 at Fort Laramie where he met and befriended Indian Agent Thomas Twiss. In July of 1856, all traders in the region were ordered to relocate to Fort Laramie as a result of the hostilities between the Sioux and the United States military (Hoffman 1856). While at the fort, Bissonette's friendship with Twiss resulted in his appointment as interpreter in September of 1856. It is unclear exactly when Bissonette abandoned the LaBonte Post. Trading activities at

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 65

the post may have ceased in 1855 when the military proclaimed a trade hiatus. However, Bissonette may have continued to operate at the post in some capacity until he relocated his trading operations to Deer Creek in 1857 (McDermott 2001:55-56). After Bissonette's abandonment of the post, the site was occupied in 1858 by LaBonte Creek Stage Station.

Information regarding Bissonette's LaBonte Creek Post is almost as limited as the North Platte Post. A site location, 48CO179, has been assigned to the LaBonte Post (SHPO Cultural Records), however; the exact location of the post within the larger site is currently unknown. No references to size, layout, or method of construction are known to exist. References providing insight into trading activity are also nonexistent. No archaeological investigations have been conducted at the site. The LaBonte Post is representative of the number of smaller independent posts in operation during the mid-1850s during the peak of the emigrant era, and a period of heightened conflict between the United States and the native groups in the region. Archaeological investigations have the potential to not only locate the post, but to provide information on design and construction methods, and independent trading life in the mid-19th century.

***Ward and Guerrier's Fort Laramie Post***

In 1855, when General Harney ordered the Platte River traders to Fort Laramie, Ward and Guerrier arrived from Sand Point and soon began trading from this new location. A trading post was erected possibly as early as 1855, but most definitely by 1856 when a "Ward and Guerrier's Trading Post" appears on an army lieutenant's map (Kelton n.d.). It is unknown how long this post was in operation, because in 1857 Seth Ward was appointed the Fort Laramie sutlership and William Guerrier died in 1858 (Goshen News and Fort Laramie Scout 1927; Hoffman 1857). Ward operated both as Fort Sutler and Indian trader in the North Platte region for a number of years (Mattes 2000:369-370). Ward operated the post sutlership while Guerrier managed the Indian trade portion of the business. From the spring of 1857 when Ward was made Sutler to the spring of 1858 when Guerrier died, Ward operated from the adobe sutler store (Mattes 2000:371). Guerrier may have operated out of the Fort Laramie Post, as correspondences by Ward in 1857 indicate the Sand Creek Post had been destroyed by emigrants after their abandonment of the site and had yet to be repaired (Ward 1857). However, after Guerrier's death Ward relocated the Indian trade back to Sand Point under the management of B. B. Mills and Antoine Janis (Mattes 2000:371). It is likely trading operations from the Fort Laramie Post ended at this point. Use of the Ward and Guerrier Post most definitely ended by 1863 as maps of the fort after 1863 no longer show the trading post (Beck and Browning 1977:1; Cellar 1976:1; Husted 1963:27).

The Ward and Guerrier Post at Fort Laramie was located just south of the Laramie River immediately across from the fort itself, and east of Deer Creek (Seger 1976). Excavations at the Ward and Guerrier Post in 1963, 1976 and 2004, as well as a historic photo of the post, have provided information on construction and layout. The post consisted of two wood buildings - one larger rectangular building and a smaller square building (Husted 1963:27). Logs were sunk in lime-filled post holes and sided with wood planking. At least some of the interior walls were plastered (Husted 1963:29). Only the lime and rock foundations remain today (Cellar 1976:2). Excavations showed no evidence the roof and walls collapsed after abandonment leaving investigators to conclude the post was disassembled rather than destroyed or left to deteriorate (Husted 1963:28-29). An

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 66

analysis of artifact distributions indicated the larger rectangular building functioned as the storage house, trading house, and living facilities while the smaller square building was operated as the blacksmith shop (Cellar 1976:2; Husted 1963:28-29)

The location of the post within the Fort Laramie National Historic Site has provided for a number of archaeological investigations of the Ward and Guerrier Post. Shovel testing, geophysical survey, and excavations have been conducted at the post location in 1963, 1969, 1976, 2003 and 2004 (Beck and Browning 1977; Cellar 1976; Husted 1963; Walker and De Vore 2008; Weymouth 1979). These investigations revealed not only the location of the post, but also provided data on the condition of the archaeological remains. The archaeological remains of the Fort Laramie Ward and Guerrier Post were threatened by construction and deterioration in 1976, resulting in a recommendation the site be excavated before the data potential of the site was compromised (Beck and Browning 1977:11; Cellar 1976:5). Both authors found the site likely to yield significant information on a variety of 19<sup>th</sup> century trading activities. As such, should further work at this location were to be considered, full scale excavation would be the next logical step. The site is no longer threatened by construction.

***Moncravie House***

John B. Moncravie, a French immigrant, is said to have constructed a post on the Laramie River in the latter half of the 1850s. Moncravie came West during his military service in the 1820s (Hafen 1995:74). By 1833, his military service completed, Moncravie began to work for various trading posts in the region. Moncravie was registered as a clerk at Fort Union in 1833 and is known to have worked as a clerk and boatman in the Missouri River region until 1849 (Abel 1932, Audubon 1897:138, Fort Pierre 1918:220-31). The sale of Fort John by Chouteau resulted in Chouteau constructing another post in the Platte region. Moncravie aided in the construction of the post and after completion, was hired as a clerk. He is known to have been at the post as late as 1852 (Hafen 1995:77; Fort Pierre 1918). In 1856, Moncravie struck out on his own when he secured a treaty with the Oglala Sioux, to which he was related by marriage, for a 49 square mile track of land in the Fort Laramie area (Hafen 1995:78-79).

The treaty indicated Moncravie's new property contained both branches of the Laramie River and the headwaters of LaBonte Creek (Whetstone Agency n.d. 1). Moncravie provided the government with a sketch of the new property, placing his post 12 miles upriver from Fort Laramie. The Moncravie House was located on the right bank of the Laramie, with the Bissonette House located on the left. At this time, Moncravie had also constructed a small trading house in the Laramie vicinity (Whetstone Agency n.d. 2). Moncravie did not stay in the region long. By 1858, he had a farm and stock ranch in eastern Nebraska in the Blue River valley (Hafen 1995:79). There is no reference in historic documents on what happened to Moncravie's Laramie River Post when he relocated to Nebraska. There is also no indication he, or any member of his family, operated the post on the Laramie after 1858.

The Moncravie House, as it has been referred to in modern literature, has been lost to history. The exact location is unknown as are the layout, dimensions, and building material. The nature of the historical documentation could allow for the rediscovery of this post's location. The National Archives holds the original

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 67

treaty, with a detailed description of the property location, as well as a sketch Moncravie provided of the location of the house on the property. There have been no archaeological investigations at the site as the post location is presently unknown. However, the detailed information in the National Archive documents may provide opportunity for rediscovery of this lost post. Additionally, the reference to the Bissonette House may provide a lead for the lost location of Bissonette's Upper Platte Post. Should either of these posts be found, it is unlikely the structures remain. Still, archaeological investigations would be able to provide information regarding the historic activities at these sites.

***Richard's Post***

In 1853, John Richard constructed a bridge and trading post on the North Platte near present day Casper, Wyoming. Richard had been active in the region as early as the 1840s (Eckles 1983:6). By 1842, he was employed by Sybille and Adams at Fort Platte, where it is rumored he brought liquor from Taos (McDermott 2000:289-3030). After Fort Platte's abandonment, he relocated to Fort Bernard where he eventually partnered with Joseph Bissonette. With the destruction of Fort Bernard, Richard remained active in the region, eventually constructing the Ash Point Post in 1850. He remained at Ash Point until 1851 when the post was sold to Seth Ward and William Guerrier. Richard, along with a number of partners, then constructed two bridge crossings on the Platte River; one at the mouth of Deer Creek and the other near Fort Laramie (Hanson 1991:4; Unruh 1993:279). From the Deer Creek location, Richard operated a bridge, four ferries, and a blacksmith shop (Unruh 1993:279). Both bridges washed out in 1852 and neither was rebuilt (Eckles 1983:7; Hanson 1991:4; McDermott 2000:289-303). In 1853, Richard, along with seven partners including Joseph Bissonette, Seth Ward, and William Guerrier, constructed a more substantial bridge across the North Platte, near Evansville, Wyoming (Murray 1974:26-27). This bridge was constructed from lumber transported from the Caspar Mountains and was held together with iron bolts. The structure was over 800 feet long and 18 feet wide, requiring 23 piers filled with large rocks to span the river. Richard also constructed log buildings which served as residences, a trading house, a grocery, a dry goods store, and a blacksmith shop (McDermott 2000:289). These buildings were located on the south end of the bridge (Eckles 1983:11). Richard bought out the partners in 1854 (Eckles 1983:8; McDermott 2001:54-55; Murray 1975:12;).

From this location Richard provided goods to passing emigrants, charged tolls for river crossings, offered blacksmithing services, traded livestock, sold liquor, and engaged in fur trading activities with local native tribes (McDermott 2000:289). During the first ten years of operation, the post was "the most important trading post in the vicinity and probably the third largest community in Wyoming" (Western Interpretive Services 1978:50). Richard began to suffer property loss by the mid-1850s as a result of the escalating native tensions in the area, including the loss of livestock (McDermott 2000:289; Sioux Expedition Letters). Following the Grattan Massacre when the traders were called into Fort Laramie, Richard was forced to abandon his post (Murray 1975:13; Sioux Expedition Letters). Complaints from traders concerned about the security of their properties along with a concern for the protection of emigrants in the region and a need to protect strategic locations on the trail resulted in the dispatch of small military contingents to strategic locations (Hoffman 1855). Richard's Post was one such location where a temporary military camp called Camp Clay, also referred

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 68

to as Camp Davis and Fort Clay, was established approximately 750 feet from the south end of the bridge (McDermott 2000:291; Murray 1975:14). Richard was allowed to return to his post in March of 1856 (Murray 1975:14). Richard's return saw an expansion of the military garrison. The garrison was rechristened Camp Davis, and was reassigned as a sub-post of Fort Laramie (McDermott 2000:292; Murray 1975:15-16). The military abandoned the camp in November of 1856, ignoring Richard's request they stay (Murray 1975:15-16). Richard's concern for the military presence at the post came not from a perceived need of protection, but rather from a desire to maintain a steady source of income provided by the military presence (McDermott 2000:294).

Richard was able to compensate for the loss of income by the withdrawal of the military from his post through increased revenues from trail traffic brought about by the development of a mail route and increases in freight traffic (McDermott 2000:295). The relocation of the Upper Platte Indian Agency to Deer Creek in 1857, within 30 miles of the post, allowed Richard to expand his trading activities with the Dakota (Eckles 1983:14). The military absence from the region was short-lived, as a new garrison was established at Richard's Post in 1858. This new post, called the Post at Platte Bridge, was intended to protect the freight lines from Mormon attack during the Utah Expedition (McDermott 2000:296-298; Murray 1975:17-18). This military post has been referred to as the Camp at Platte Bridge, Post at Platte Bridge, and Camp Payne, resulting in its confusion with the later Platte Bridge Station (Murray 1975:17-18). It should be noted the Platte Bridge Station was located at Guinard's Bridge, not Richard's Post. The Mormon Wars were over by the summer of 1858 and the military abandoned the second military establishment at Richard's Post in April of 1859 (McDermott 2000:300).

There were several other notable events associated with Richard's Post in 1858. Increases in trade brought about by the relocation of the Upper Platte Agency and the increase in mail and freight traffic must have resulted in an economic windfall for Richard as he constructed new adobe buildings at his North Platte location, one of which was a blacksmith shop (Eckles 1983:16). He also sought to capitalize on the discovery of gold near Pikes Peak. A ferry and trading post were constructed by Richard and his brother near Cherry Creek, Colorado in 1858 and 1859 to service the prospectors in the area. The post was one of the first permanent buildings constructed in the settlement which eventually developed into Denver, Colorado (McDermott 2000:296; Murray 1975:16).

Before 1858, Richard had operated without any serious competition. This changed with the construction of a second bridge in the region, owned and operated by Louis Guinard (Eckles 1983:18). Guinard had operated a bridge on the Sweetwater and used his profits from this venture to construct the new bridge near Richard's on the Platte. Guinard's Bridge was referred to as the Upper Platte Bridge and Richard's was referred to as the Lower Platte Bridge (Eckles 1983:18). Guinard's Bridge soon captured a large amount of the traffic and trade through the region (Eckles 1983:21; McDermott 2000:301). However, the constant threat of native hostilities and the loss of his son in 1860 saw Guinard sell the bridge to Richard by 1864 (Murray 1975:20-21; Richard 1887).

As native hostilities increased during the early part of the 1860s, Richard continued to operate out of his North Platte Post trading with emigrants, native groups, and the military by providing hay, wood, and freighting services for posts on the trail (Eckles 1983:22-24). The early part of the 1860s were good to Richard as increased native hostilities resulted in increased arms and munitions sales to the tribes (Jones 1967:19). The stage line, pony express, and telegraph had all reached the region, serving to increase sales. Richard's Post was also considered a point of assembly and departure point for wagon trains following the Bozeman and Bridger Trails into Montana (Walker 2009:35; Weaver 1910:75). By 1865, increased native hostilities, as well as legal

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 69

problems with the United States military, saw Richard sell his interests in the region and relocate to Rock Creek on the Overland Trail (Eckles 1983:27). The sale of the post to the military in 1865 saw the abandonment of the Richard Post and Bridge. During this same period, the military presence in the region continued to grow, with Fort Caspar being established near Guinard's Bridge by November of 1865 (Eckles 1983:27). During the winter of 1865/1866, the Richard Bridge was dismantled by the military for firewood (Nicholas 1978:7; Western Interpretive Services 1978:50). The fate of the post buildings is unknown, although they may also have been dismantled and burned (Nicholas 1972). Guinard's Bridge was burned by natives after the site was abandoned in October of 1867 (Eckles 1983:29). It is not known what happened to the buildings.

There is ample reference to the location and trading activities of Richard's Post, although the layout of the post is unknown. The Fort Kearny, South Pass, and Honey Lake Wagon Expedition of 1857 recorded the location of the post (Murray 1975:9). This information has been used to relocate the post, although no extant buildings remain. Today, site number 48NA866 has been assigned to mark the location of the post and site number 48NA553 marks the location of the bridge. The original post was constructed of logs with adobe buildings being added later in 1858 (Eckles 1983:16; McDermott 2000:289). The post contained 15 – 20 log houses including residences, a trading house, a grocery, a dry goods store, and a blacksmith shop (McDermott 2000:291; Murray 1975:20). Corrals or stables would also have been present, as Richard is known to have traded in livestock (Murray 1975:11).

Richard's Post and Bridge were rediscovered in 1963 when excavations uncovered some of the original buildings and bridge piers. The city of Evansville protected the site after these discoveries (Murray 1975:27; Nicholas 1972). Additional survey and excavations were conducted in 1983 in advance of proposed road construction in the area (Eckles 1983). Surface concentrations of 19<sup>th</sup> century artifacts were used to place test excavations. Excavations revealed trade beads, hearths, domestic artifacts, a fireplace, a possible floor structure, and a variety of 19<sup>th</sup> century metal, glass, and ceramic items. Post-depositional activity and intensive site use during the 19<sup>th</sup> century resulted in disturbances and mixing of cultural materials, making the identification of structural remains difficult. However, the artifacts and features present were able to provide this information (Eckles 1983:31). Unfortunately, road construction destroyed much of the site. Still, what remains of Richard's Post has been recommended as eligible for the National Register as the data from the site is "important for continuing research with regard to the time period, middle Nineteenth Century Euroamerican settlement and emigration to the West, as well as the relationship between Euroamerican expansion and its impact on Native American populations" (Eckles 1983:31).

***Bissonette's Deer Creek Post***

In 1857, Joseph Bissonette relocated his trading activities to Deer Creek. He had been active in the region as early as the 1840s when he worked for Pratte and Cabanne at Fort Platte and Fort Bernard. By mid-decade, he was in partnership with John Richard at Fort Bernard and James Bordeaux at the Sarpy Point Post. In 1850, he struck out on his own on the North Platte. For reasons unknown, he made the ill-fated decision to relocate to LaBonte Creek in 1854. This venture proved disastrous. Having sold his interest in a lucrative Platte River toll bridge near Casper, he lost out on the hefty profits garnered from the emigrant trade. His business

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 70

ventures further soured at LaBonte Creek where he suffered significant financial losses from native depredations in 1854 and 1855. The depredations, along with various military edicts, saw him at Fort Laramie by the winter of 1855. Here his fortunes began to turn around. Friendship with Indian Agent Thomas Twiss resulted in his appointment as interpreter. In 1857, Twiss relocated the Indian agency to the mouth of Deer Creek and Bissonette followed. He constructed a post near Deer Creek in 1857 from which he conducted trade with natives on the Upper Platte Indian Agency and engaged in emigrant trade (Bryans 1990:43). Bissonette's tenure at Deer Creek was fraught with scandal when he was accused of trading excessive amounts of liquor to the natives and stealing annuity goods intended for the Upper Platte Agency (McDermott 2001:56-57; Raynolds 1860; Twiss 1860). The incidents were investigated, but it appears Bissonette's friendship with the Indian Agent prevented prosecution. Twiss was removed from office in 1861 but Bissonette continued to operate his post until 1865. In 1861, a military sub-post was placed at Deer Creek, preventing the open sale of liquor and curtailing Bissonette's profits (McDermott 2001:58). Bissonette's tradership was revoked in 1863 by the new agent John Loree, it was not returned until 1864. However, it may have been a moot point by then as increasing native hostilities in the region had already begun to adversely affect trading. By the summer of 1864, most of the tribes in the area were engaged in open conflict with the United States military. Through the fall and spring of 1864 and 1865, Bissonette lost up to seventy horses to the tribes. The increases in hostilities and governmental oversight reduced the profitability of the post to such an extent Bissonette abandoned the post in 1865. Shortly after, natives burned Deer Creek (McDermott 2001:57-58).

The location, size, layout, and types of trading activities at Deer Creek are relatively well known when compared to the other Bissonette posts. The Deer Creek Post was constructed a few miles from the Upper Platte Agency near the mouth of Deer Creek. Today the location of the post has been identified; it sits on 40 acres on the west bank of Deer Creek one-half mile south of its confluence with the Platte River. The site is just west of the north 200 block of 1st Street in Glenrock, Wyoming (Bryans 1986:8). This 40 acre site designation includes the Bissonette Post, a telegraph station, a post office, Pony Express station, and the military sub-post, with a portion of the Oregon Trail running through the site (Bryans 1986:8; Johnson 1971:55, 56; McDermott 2001:58). The site was identified through historic documents and local collecting activities yielding 19<sup>th</sup> century material on the ground surface. There are no extant buildings at the site (Bryans 1986). Even so, the layout of the post is well documented in historical papers and maps. The Bissonette Post contained six buildings with fifteen rooms and three corrals. A map of the site (Figure 10) was generated by Caspar Collins in the winter of 1863-1864 (Bryans 1986:8-9; Collins n.d. 1; Walker 2009:33). A trading house, blacksmith shop, hotel-saloon, and post office were part of the Bissonette Post (McDermott 2001:56; Walker 2009:33).

To date, there have been no archaeological investigations with the exception of the 1960s collection conducted by a local collector. Survey and geophysical investigations would aid in the interpretation of the site by allowing for the identification of the numerous discrete properties located at Deer Creek, including the stage station, Pony Express station, trading post, and military post. Further archaeological investigations at the trading post proper could provide information on trading activity associated with the Upper Platte Agency, emigrant activity in the late 1850s and early 1860s, and Native American trading activity associated with the escalation of conflict in the West resulting in all-out war by 1865.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 71

Louis Guinard, a French immigrant, moved to the Sweetwater River in 1857 and constructed a bridge and trading post (McDermott 1997:23). The post was constructed below Independence Rock for the primary purpose of capitalizing on Utah Expedition traffic (McDermott 1997:23; Murray 1975:19). Guinard was related to the Shoshoni through marriage and likely also engaged in trading activities with the tribe. The post was large and surrounded by a substantial stockade (Murray 1975:19; O'Neill n.d.). Guinard operated the post and bridge until 1859 when he used the profits from his operation to construct a new bridge compound on the North Platte. The construction of the new bridge resulted in Guinard's abandonment of the Sweetwater River Bridge and Post (Eckles 1983:18; McDermott 1997:23-24; Murray 1975:19). The site was subsequently occupied by a stage line, mail station, Pony Express station, telegraph station, and a military post. The Pony Express station was closed in 1861; the stage line ceased activity in 1862; and the post was eventually abandoned in 1867 when the telegraph station and military post were removed (Murray 1974:1).

While the site was occupied for ten years, the trading post itself was only in operation for two years. There are few historic documents referencing the post while it was active (Spring 1969). The location of the post is known, but information regarding post design and layout and nature of the trading activities remains unknown. Wyoming Cultural Records lists Guinard's Sweetwater Bridge as site 48NA565 and the post is listed as 48NA298. Neither site has seen intensive archeological excavations, although both have been subjected to some form of survey and mapping. A small amount of cultural materials was recovered from the surface of site 48NA298 (Murray 1974). The original footings of the bridge are visible on both sides of the Sweetwater River (Waitkus 1989). Archaeological remains at the post consist of 17 depressions, six rock alignments, three or four dump areas, and a surface scatter of cultural material ranging in age from prehistoric to modern times (Murray 1974). It has been postulated the depression may represent the remains of buildings associated with the trading post and various military and commercial buildings are known to have existed at the site (Murray 1974). With so much unknown about the post, archaeological and historical investigations are needed to provide greater insight into the 19th century trading activities at this location. Future archaeological investigations, including geophysical survey or excavation of Guinard's Sweetwater Post and Bridge have the potential to provide valuable information regarding post design and layout, as well as insight into trading activities associated with the Shoshoni and the Utah Expedition.

***Drips' North Platte Post***

Andrew Drips constructed a third post in Wyoming in 1857. Drips' North Platte Post was constructed 19 miles east of Fort Laramie on the Oregon Trail, near present day Torrington, Wyoming (Mattes 1987:470). Drips had been active in the fur trade as early as 1819, working out of St. Louis. By 1830, Drips was working for the American Fur Company, advancing the company's efforts to compete with the Rocky Mountain Fur Company for the Central Rocky Mountain beaver trade (Carter 2003:144-45; Hafen 1973:90-92). In 1842, Drips was appointed special Indian Agent on the Upper Missouri, for the purpose of controlling the liquor trade (Carter 2003:153; Hafen 1973:191). Drips held this office until 1846 when he was released for favoring

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 72

enforcement against American Fur Company competitors, especially Fort Platte, while ignoring infractions by the American Fur Company (Carter 2003:154; Hafen and Young 1938:96-98). Upon his release, Drips was re-employed by the American Fur Company, first at Fort Pierre until 1848, and then Fort John until 1849 (Carter 2003:154-155). When Fort John was sold, the American Fur Company relocated to Scott's Bluffs and constructed a new trading post named Fort John. Drips operated this new post until 1852. After leaving Fort John, Drips spent the next five years with his family in Kansas City and engaged in trading activities in central and eastern Wyoming (Ketcham 1961; Mattes 1987:468-470; Morgan and Harris 1967:292-296). Drips officially re-entered the trade business full time in 1857 with the construction of his North Platte Post. The post's primary purpose was to engage in emigrant trade on the Oregon Trail, but it appears he also engaged in fur trading activity (Carter 2003:155; Robertson 1999:107). Drips traded here until his death in 1860 (Robertson 1999:107).

There is virtually nothing known about the Drips Post other than its location: 19 to 20 miles east of Fort Laramie (Carter 2003:155; Robertson 1999:107). The post is known because of two contemporary accounts placing Drips at this location trading in 1857 and 1858; Percival G. Lowes' journal entry in 1857 and a Kansas City Journal of Commerce article from 1858 (Carter 2003:155; Mattes 1987:470). There are no records of the size and design of the post, nor is there an in-depth discussion of the trading activity. Additional historical and archaeological investigations are necessary to provide a clearer understanding of the nature of Drips' North Platte Post. The post has been assigned site number 48GO84; however, only the general location of the post is known. The actual placement of the post within the larger site has not been determined. Survey and geophysical investigation could aid in the location of the post. Geophysical survey can also provide information on size and layout. Finally, excavation could provide information on design and on independent operator trading activities with emigrants and Native Americans in the latter half of the 1850s.

### ***Gilbert Station***

In 1858, Henry S. Gilbert and William Garrish constructed a trading post, which contemporaries referred to as Gilbert's Station, at the ninth crossing of the Sweetwater River, near the Lander Cutoff of the Oregon Trail (Bagley 2007:201). Contemporaries described the post in 1861 as consisting of four log cabins, one of which was unfinished, and refer to Gilbert as the hotel keeper, postmaster, and blacksmith (Tripp 1861, Tracy 1945:103-104). References indicate the presence of a blacksmith shop, a mail station, some type of residential facilities on the premises in accompaniment of the trading house. There is also a mention of a Pony Express rider at the post in 1861 (Bagley 2007:226). The military garrisoned the site in 1861 to protect the crossing, the mail, telegraph, and Pony Express stations in the vicinity (Bagley 2007:241). The mail and stage were relocated south to the Overland trail in 1862. However, the telegraph station remained, keeping the military garrison in place to protect it (Hellyer 1973:6-7). It appears the site was abandoned sometime in 1861 because of increased native hostilities and decreases in emigration. There are no mentions of Gilbert's Station in the historic literature after 1861.

The exact location of Gilbert's Station is unknown. Today the site sits within the larger site of Burnt Ranch, which saw continued use from the 1850s into the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Hellyer 1973:6-8). Gilbert's Station,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 73

various mail, telegraph, stage, and Pony Express stations, 19<sup>th</sup> century settlements, and military encampments all existed in this location. Archaeological survey of the area has revealed two standing buildings, rock foundations, depressions (likely the locations of buildings), corral locations, a cemetery, and portions of the Oregon Trail. There have been no further archaeological investigations. As such, it is unclear which of the foundations or depressions found at the site are remnants of Gilbert's Station or associated with the subsequent occupations. The stratigraphic integrity of the site has not been verified. Historic and modern construction activities may have seriously disturbed the subsurface remains of the original Gilbert's Station. However, should the remains of the post be found in good context, they have the potential to provide information relating to emigrant trading activities during the 1850s and 1860s, as well as providing insight into the economic development of Wyoming during this period with the coming of mail, telegraph, stage and Pony Express stations, and the development of permanent settlements.

***Guinard's Platte River Post***

In 1859, Louis Guinard used profits from his Sweetwater River Post to construct a new bridge and trading post operation on the North Platte, near Richard's Post. The placement of the bridge in this location should be considered unusual, as Richard was already operating a substantial bridge and post compound in the vicinity. There are currently two explanations for why he did this. Hagen (1955:7) finds there to have been enough traffic through the region to support the operation of two bridges, while Nicholas (1979) believes the Guinard Bridge was built to service westbound traffic, allowing the wagons to avoid the sandy soils on the hills north of Casper. While Guinard's complex was small, it soon began to capture much of the emigrant traffic through the region (Frost 1976:2; McDermott 2000:302). However, Guinard's affiliation to the Shoshoni proved disadvantageous to him at this location. The post was located on the eastern fringe of the Shoshoni territory. Additionally, his primary competition in the area, Richard, was related to the Dakota through marriage. The Dakota were a constant threat to Guinard, frequently stealing from him (Eckles 1983:21; Murray 1975:20-21, Twiss 1860). Because of this, and possibly the murder of his son in the area during 1860, Guinard sold his Platte River Post and bridge to John Richard by 1864 (Murray 1975:20; Richard 1887).

A stage station in operation until 1862 was also located near the post itself (Collins n.d. 2; Murray 1975:21). In 1861, the original post house was expanded into a telegraph station (Frost 1976:2). An army volunteer unit from Fort Laramie garrisoned Guinard's Bridge in 1862. The garrison was known as Platte Bridge Station from 1862-1865 (Murray 1975:22-23). In 1865, Richard sold the property to the military. They began expanding their presence at the site through an increase in the number of troops, the reintroduction of army regulars to the post, and construction of several log buildings. During the peak of the military occupation, there were more than two dozen major buildings and several additional outbuildings meant to house three to four hundred men (Frost 1976:2). The new post was known as Fort Caspar. Fort Caspar was abandoned in 1867 and buildings moved to Fort Fetterman (Murray 1975:25-27). Guinard's Bridge was later destroyed by natives (Eckles 1983:29).

Guinard's complex on the North Platte consisted of a small residence and store located at the south end of the bridge complex, which was a timber structure measuring 13 by 100 feet, resting on cribbed wood piers

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 74

filled with stone (Collins n.d. 2; Frost 1976:2; Murray 1975:21). The post was constructed as a low log-in-panel building, with a trading house, living quarters, and the Pacific Telegraph Station (Collins n.d. 2; Murray 1975:21). The exact nature of the post layout and number of original post buildings are unknown. A stage station was also present on site, consisting of several log-in-panel buildings with an attached corral (Collins n.d. 2; Murray 1975:21). Collins (n.d. 2) describes the station as resembling a stockade trading post. The site also housed a military post and a garrison for the telegraph station; most of which were constructed after 1863.

The site itself is complex, with multiple components besides the Guinard Post, including military and other commercial aspects. From 1858 to 1867, different buildings were constructed by multiple entities for a variety of purposes. Standing structures would be repurposed, as was the case with the Guinard Post and the telegraph station. Today no extant buildings are present at the site and it is possible any building associated with the Guinard occupation was cleared for contemporary construction projects, repurposed for building material, or disassembled with the rest of the buildings when the military relocated to Fort Fetterman. The possibility also exists that any remaining trading post buildings were destroyed with the bridge. The only remnants of the bridge are the bridge piers which remain visible on the surface (Frost 1976:2).

Guinard's Platte River Post is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Fort Caspar nomination. Archaeological investigations at the site have primarily focused on the military component. However, it is interesting to note data from the investigations conducted in the 1930s were used to reconstruct several buildings from the 1863 pre-military building episode (Frost 1976:2). Even with the lack of archaeological investigations on the trading post itself, it is still considered a contributing property to the nomination based on the post's involvement in fur trading and emigrant trading activities during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Frost 1976:9).

***Merchant and Williams Trading Post***

In the winter or spring of 1861, the Merchant and Williams Trading Post was constructed near Devil's Gate (Murray 1979). One year later the post was destroyed by fire, reportedly set ablaze by Native Americans. The Mormon Militia later reconstructed the post (Burton and Hullinger in Fisher 1979). Contemporary references to the Merchant and Williams post are scant, limited to the Mormon journal entries found in the Fisher (1979) text. Because of this, the nature of the trading activities at the post, the layout and post components, and the length of time the post was in operation are unknown.

Wyoming Cultural Records registers two site numbers as the possible location of the Merchant and Williams Trading Post, 48NA291 and 487NA295. These designations are based on locations given in the Burton and Hollinger journal entries and the presence of artifact scatters on the surface at these locations. The Merchant and Williams post may also be associated with site 48NA320. Further archaeological investigation will be needed to determine the exact nature of the location of the Merchant and Williams Post (Hillman 2004). Additional historical and archaeological investigations could aid in the location of the post as well as provide information relating to size and layout. Excavation could provide information on design and on trading activities near Devil's Gate in the 1860's as well as Mormon involvement in trading activities during this period.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number E Page 75

---

***Bordeaux's Rawhide Buttes Post***

In 1862, James Bordeaux constructed a post at Rawhide Butte, now called Rawhide Mountain. The post is located 12 miles south of Lusk, Wyoming (Robertson 1999:80). Bordeaux's activities at the post were limited, as he only occupied the site for a year or two (McDermott 2002:75). The point at which he abandoned the post is unknown, although contemporary accounts mention the remains of a post at the site in 1864 (Hanson 1966:8). During the period the Rawhide Buttes Post was in operation, 1862-1864, Bordeaux continued to operate at Sarpy's Point and Bordeaux Creek, Nebraska.

Today the site sits on private land in Goshen County, Wyoming. There have been no archaeological investigations of the post, and no site number has been assigned. There is little known about the post design, layout, or the trading activities. Additional historic and archaeological research is needed to provide a better understanding of the historical activities at this location. Survey and geophysical investigations can be used to help define the exact location of the site and to provide preliminary information on the size and layout of the post. Subsurface testing will be necessary to gather data on design, size, layout, construction methods, and the nature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century trading activities at the site.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 77

**Property Types**

Euroamerican activity in Wyoming began with a small number of trappers and traders moving through, and working, the Central Rocky Mountain and High Plains regions during the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Multiple factors including the discovery of overland routes through southern Wyoming in 1812 led to activity increasing in the region. By the 1820s, hundreds of American, French, Spanish, and British trappers, representing up to a half dozen different fur companies, were trapping and trading for beaver and buffalo furs in the Rocky Mountains and the High Plains. Traders and trappers lived amongst, traded with, and intermarried with the Native Americans who lived in and moved through the region. Native American tribes acquired not only European goods, but also a familiarity with Euroamerican culture and customs, leaving tribes irrevocably changed. Before the 1830s, however, the Euroamerican presence left little in the way of a permanent mark on the landscape, with the exception of subtle changes to Native American material culture. The changes made in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century are visible in the archaeological record. . The construction of Fort Bonneville in 1832 served as bellwether of changing intentions of Euroamericans. Fort Bonneville symbolized the intention of Euroamericans becoming a permanent economic and political force in the area. Stuart's cabin near Bessemer Bend in 1812 probably was not intended to be permanent. In the following three decades, the face of the Wyoming landscape would change as Euroamerican sites, buildings, and features became common place, and even dominated portions of the state. Trading houses, military installations, telegraph, mail, stage, and Pony Express stations, and bridges, boat crossings, and well-defined trapper and emigrant trails grew up quickly and served as harbingers, then highly visible symbols, of growing American interest in exploration and settlement of the region.

Sites falling under this documents definition of a trading post must also have been constructed and in operation between January 1832 and December 1868. This era begins with the early fur trade period, continues through the emigrant era, and ends with the relocation of the tribes and the coming of the railroad. The fur trading post era defined here begins in 1832 and lasts until 1840. While fur trading activity in the study area predates 1832, this early economic activity was primarily conducted in Native American villages or at the yearly rendezvous. The construction of Fort Bonneville in 1832 marked the beginning of the fur trade/trading post era in Wyoming. During the fur trading post era, economic activity was focused on obtaining furs and trading Euroamerican goods to Native Americans. Post traders also profited from increased military troops and government expeditions moving through the region. The post traders expanded scope of operations with traders, trappers, and missionaries insured their economic success. However, the primary source of income came from the beaver and buffalo hides exchanged for eastern trade goods with the tribes.

In 1840, the trading posts began to service a new clientele besides their traditional Native American trading partners. Before 1840, small groups of Americans not engaging in fur trade activities or involved in government expeditions moved through Wyoming. For the most part, these individuals were missionaries, looking to convert the thousands of Native Americans in the West. Beginning in 1840, a new type of traveler crossed through the region. Joel Walker's overland party, one of the first avowed emigrant trains on the trail, marks the beginning of the emigrant era. Following the Walker party, tens of thousands of individuals moved through Wyoming every summer for the purpose of emigrating to, and settling, the West. These new travelers

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 78

provided an economic opportunity to anyone who could offer the goods and services they needed. Fortunately, the infrastructure to do so was already in place in the form of the fur trading posts located on the trapper, turned emigrant, trails. In 1843, Jim Bridger constructed the first trading post in Wyoming with the intended purpose of servicing the emigrants. Dozens more sprung up along the trail over the next 20 years. These privately owned trading posts recorded much of their income from the summer emigrant trade during this period. However, as in the fur trade era, these posts did not limit their economic enterprises to capturing one source of income. Many, if not all, continued to engage in trade with Native American groups, government expeditions, military outfits, and Euroamerican trappers.

Increased emigrant activity through the region was met with increased Native American hostility toward the emigrants and the United States military through the 1850s and into the early 1860s. Heightened hostilities eventually led to the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864. This resulted in a series of events ultimately making the operation of a trading post either too dangerous or too unprofitable. The events of the early 1860s, including the Civil War and discovery of gold in Idaho and Montana came at a time when Native Americans chose armed resistance to meet the changes on their traditional land. Intensified Native American hostilities also caused a reduction in emigrant activity on the trails into the early 1860s. Emigration never actually ceased, it changed focus and actually led to more stage stations being built on different portions of the Overland Trail. An argument could be made that stage stations were trading posts, but that is beyond the scope of this context. What is significant is that the changing face of emigration combined with the uncertainty of life in a trading post surrounded by hostile tribes led to a sporadic and decreased level of trading posts that were outside the protective ring of the U.S. Military Stations at places like Fort Laramie and Fort Bridger. Small trading posts were not able to garner a significant amount of income. Native American hostilities also resulted in decreased trade with the tribes, either by native choice or government mandate; again this reduced profitability. Finally, the Native American hostility was met with increased United States military presence in the region. This generated an increase in governmental intervention in the economic activities at trading posts, further reducing their profitability. Sustained decreases in profitability caused by these factors led to the closure of many of the posts by the mid-1860s.

There are at least 29 known trading posts in the State of Wyoming meeting the definition and timeframe put forth above. With the exception of three, Fort Bonneville (which is in proximity to the Lander Cut-Off of the Oregon Trail), Bordeaux's Rawhide Creek Post, and the Portuguese Houses, all are located on, or near, one of the trapper or emigrant trails - primarily in the southern portion of the state. The construction of a trading post was in many ways dictated by the availability of local material, topography, and skill of the individuals building it. There was no standardized plan. However, there were many general similarities between posts. Posts were often square or rectangular, constructed of logs, and sometimes placed on rock foundations (Robertson 1999:12-13; Wishart 1979:88-89). Some posts were constructed of adobe brick, especially on the North and South Platte Rivers after 1835 (Wishart 1979:88). The benefits of building in adobe were the fire resistant nature of the blocks, their tendency to resist rot, and the increased insulation they provided (Robertson 1999:13). Regardless of building material, posts often contained warehouses, residences for employees or visitors, artisan and blacksmith workshops, and a trading house. Accompanying these buildings were gardens and corrals in close vicinity to the posts (Robertson 1999:13-14; Wishart 1979:88).

The size and complexity of each post and associated structures was often directly related to its placement in the regional trade system. Major trading depots like Fort Union were much larger, with well-

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 79

constructed and detailed buildings containing “luxuries” such as shingled roofs, glass windows, and wooden floors. Local posts were smaller and cruder with parchment window coverings and dirt floors (Wishart 1979:89-91). Some posts were surrounded by a palisade, although this practice became less common during the emigrant period (Robertson 1999:12). Palisades were log pickets placed into the ground on end ten to twenty feet high surrounding the post (Kapler 1988:E5; Robertson 1999:12). They were often accompanied by defensive bastions or blockhouses with cannon or rifle ports, a wooden catwalk ringing the inside of the picket, and one or more gates for access (Kapler 1988:E5; Robertson 1999:12-13). Company posts contained a bourgeois house serving as the residence of the man in charge of the post, where official business was conducted and guests were entertained. The bourgeois’ house was often the largest and fanciest building at the post, in some cases, as at Fort Union, North Dakota, the house bordered on gaudy or pretentious (Robertson 1999:13-15; Wishart 1979:90).

Unfortunately, there is no trading post in the State of Wyoming with extant buildings. All of the posts have deteriorated or been destroyed, leaving only an archaeological footprint behind. Five of these posts have only a general location mentioned in the historical documents and have yet to be found; we know at least the general site location of 24. Of the 24, three have not been assigned a site number by the State Historic Preservation Office: Ash Point, Bordeaux’s Sarpy Point Post, and Bordeaux’s Rawhide Creek Post. However, even with a general site location known and a site number assigned, this does not mean the exact location of the post buildings and structures have been identified. Often a combination of detailed historical maps and documents, ethnographic evidence, and some level of archaeological site survey ranging from simple mapping to surface collection has been used to identify the general site of the post. Still, in these cases much remains unknown about the site. The post location, layout, and nature of the archaeological remains are often a mystery and require further investigations to ascertain.

Ash Point, Ford Bernard, Fort Bonneville, Bordeaux’s Sarpy Point Post, Fort Bridger #3, Guinard’s Platte River Post, Guinard’s Sweetwater River Post, the Portuguese Houses, Richard’s Trading Post, Seminoe’s Trading Post, Ward and Guerrier’s Fort Laramie Post, and Fort William have been the subject of geophysical or archaeological excavations with varying results. Geophysical investigations were undertaken at two possible locations for Fort William in an attempt to locate the post, without success. At the Portuguese Houses and Seminoe’s Trading Post, geophysical investigations were more successful in locating the posts. In the case of Seminoe’s Post, geophysical data were used to successfully focus the excavation. Excavations at Ash Point, Fort Bernard, Fort Bonneville, and Seminoe’s Trading Post have been used to locate and uncover all, or portions of, the trading post. They have also aided in the successful reconstruction of post designs, provided information on 19<sup>th</sup> century activities at the post, and in some cases, aided in the reconstruction of the post itself. Of these 12 posts from which additional information was gained via archaeological investigation, two are currently run as public interpretive sites and three are listed on the National Register of historic Places. Fort Bridger #3 and Seminoe’s Trading Post used information gained from archaeological investigations to reconstruct some, or all, of the original post buildings and aid in the overall interpretation of the site. Fort Bonneville, Fort Bridger #3, and Guinard’s Platte River Post are all currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Every other property with some manner of archaeological investigation has been evaluated and is considered eligible to the National Register.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 80***Associated Feature and Property types***

Viewing the trading post as a singular entity may be a bit of an oversimplification. Historical records and archaeological investigations reveal there are 21 different features and property types possibly associated with, or constitute, a trading post. Trading houses, storage buildings, stockades, blockhouses or defensive towers, residential facilities, blacksmith shops, corrals, cellars, cemeteries, middens or trash pits, Native American lodges, artisan shops, bridges, ferries, emigrant camps, telegraph stations, pony express stations, stagecoach stations, mail stations, and military camps may all be found in, or at, a trading post. Some of these features and buildings constitute the makeup of the post itself, others are features left by individuals who traded at the post, and still others are remnants of Euroamerican activities focused on the post property for one reason or another. It should be kept in mind while all of these features and properties may be found on any given post, not every post contained all of these features and property types. Additionally, bridges, ferries, emigrant camps, stations, and military camps are far more likely to have been located at emigrant era posts because of the different activities taking place at them. Many of these features and structures may have served more than one purpose at a time, or may have been repurposed over the use of the post. One building may have housed the trading house, storage, and residential facilities. Likewise, the blacksmith and other artisans may have shared a building and the blockhouses or defensive towers may have simply been portions of elevated catwalks on the stockade. Each trading post was unique; and even those owned by the same company had their construction influenced more by the topography, environmental conditions, available raw materials, and men in the field erecting the post than by a standard design.

Archaeologically the trading post is considered one site with the above mentioned associated property types considered features within the larger site. However, for the purposes of this National Register document, the larger trading post will be looked at as a historic district, with each property type and feature being considered a contributing or non-contributing component. Originally, each trading post was comprised of buildings and structures. The original buildings and structures are no longer intact; now only the archaeological signature of the original post remains. This signature consists of ruins of the original buildings and structures and remains of historic activities in cemeteries, middens, and historic artifacts scatters. Traditionally, archaeologists consider these to be individual features making up the entirety of the site, in this case a trading post. This document will refer to all ruins and spatially distinct archaeological features or artifact deposits as individual sites within the historic district of the trading post.

***Trading Houses***

Trading houses are one of the few properties present at all posts. Trading houses were the focus of economic activity where much of the trading took place. They were secure houses or rooms where engages or post managers could exchange goods. Trading houses were a component of both fur trade and emigrant posts. Rock foundations, log posts, post molds, or adobe wall definition, and presence of plate glass and metal (particularly nails) are archaeological indicators of a building's presence. The placement of the building within

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 81

---

the trading post and the associated archaeological features and artifacts can be used to identify use. A trading house can be identified by the presence of a formal fireplace and lighter artifact densities than storage or habitation areas. The location of the building within the post can also be used to determine use. Often the trading house will be located near or adjacent to the gate, close to the trail.

The trading is the only necessary component for the consideration of a property as a trading post. Trading houses should generally be evaluated as significant under Criteria A and/or D. The trading house facilitated social and economic exchanges between Euroamericans of varying ethnicity and Native Americans from dozens of tribes. The economic activities at the trading houses were integrated into larger regional exchange networks. The houses were also linked to larger historical issues relating to westward emigration and Native American/United States hostilities. The archaeological record from the trading houses has the potential to provide information relevant to the nature of Native American and Euroamerican 19<sup>th</sup> century life in Wyoming, Native American/Euroamerican social and economic exchange networks, the emigrant era, Native American/United States hostilities, and the American settlement and development of the West in general. In assessing the integrity of Criterion A, location, setting, feeling and association must be addressed. For Criterion D, integrity of location, materials, design, and association must be addressed. It is unlikely that the property would be eligible under either Criteria B or C. However should the property be eligible under these Criteria, the property would have to possess integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association for Criterion B and design, workmanship, and materials for Criterion C.

### *Storage Houses*

Storage houses were another common building at both fur trade and emigrant era posts. For smaller posts, storage may have been located within the larger building. For many posts, separate storage buildings housed everything from trade goods to powder magazines, foodstuffs, and blacksmith and artisan supplies. Rock foundations, log posts, post molds, or adobe wall definition, and presence of plate glass and metal (particularly nails) are archaeological indicators of the presence of a building. The placement of the building within the trading post and associated archaeological features and artifacts can be used to identify use. Storage houses may be identified by the presence of trade goods including, but not limited to, trade beads, metal points, files, or an abundance of a singularity of other Euroamerican goods. Fireplaces, artifacts associated with residential use, and windows are features and components often found in occupational or residential buildings. The absence of these components can also be indicative of the use of a building as a storage house. Storage houses are also commonly located adjacent to, or attached to, the trading house or a blacksmith or artisan shop.

The storage house should generally be evaluated as significant under Criteria A and/or D. The storage house contained goods critical to the economic exchanges between Euroamericans and Native Americans. These goods were also necessary for successful emigration to and settlement of the West. The archaeological record from each storage house has the potential to provide information relevant to the nature of Native American and Euroamerican 19<sup>th</sup> century life in Wyoming, Native American/Euroamerican economic exchange networks, and the American settlement and development of the West in general. In assessing the integrity of Criterion A, location, setting, feeling and association must be addressed. For Criterion D, integrity of location,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 82

---

materials, design, and association must be addressed. It is unlikely that the property would be eligible under either Criteria B or C. However should the property be eligible under these Criteria, the property would have to possess integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association for Criterion B and design, workmanship, and materials for Criterion C.

***Residential Facilities***

Residential facilities were another common component of fur trade and emigrant posts. They may have occupied individual buildings or been part of the trading house or storage buildings. Residential facilities were not integral for the daily function of the posts economically, but they were needed to house individuals who were. Post managers, post engagés, clerks, hunters, artisans, and guests of the posts all required rooms. The post manager, or bourgeois, often was given a residence of their own. This residence typically was the most elegant building at the post and could have contained a living space, a kitchen, and multiple sleeping quarters. The residences for other post employees and guests would have varied from a single shared room in one building to multiple rooms in multiple buildings, depending on the size of the post. Rock foundations, log posts, post molds, or adobe wall definition, and presence of plate glass and metal (particularly nails) are archaeological indicators of the presence of a building. Associated archaeological features and artifacts can be used to identify use. Residential facilities can be identified by archaeological features such as fireplaces, building material such as plate glass, and artifact deposits indicative of residential use (including but not limited to bottle glass, ceramics, and food waste). In the case of a bourgeois house, the building would be one of the largest on the post with a more elaborate design. Archaeologically, one would expect the foundation to be larger, revealing multiple rooms of varying use (including residential, cooking, and work areas). Increased amounts of plate glass, more elaborate or expensive ceramics types and a difference in faunal remains would be recovered from a bourgeois house.

Residential facilities should generally be evaluated as significant under Criteria A and/or D. Residential facilities housed the individuals living and trading at the posts. Should one look to better understand the daily lives of these individuals and the nature of trading post life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in general, information gained from the archaeological record can provide more than anecdotal evidence in the form of the actual material possessions used, repurposed, and discarded in these buildings. In assessing the integrity of Criterion A, location, setting, feeling and association must be addressed. For Criterion D, integrity of location, materials, design, and association must be addressed. It is unlikely that the property would be eligible under either Criteria B or C. However should the property be eligible under these Criteria, the property would have to possess integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association for Criterion B and design, workmanship, and materials for Criterion C.

***Blacksmith Shop***

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 83

The presence of a blacksmith shop at a trading post was important from the earliest days of settlement in the region. Even though well-defined overland trails had developed by the 1830s, Wyoming was still a remote place. Overland travel was difficult and rivers were unpredictable; flooding would often strand boats on sandbars making travel slow and treacherous. When winter descended, movement in and out of the region was nearly impossible. Having a blacksmith shop capable of manufacturing and repairing necessary wares was almost mandatory. Blacksmith shops were present at the earliest posts, Fort Bonneville and Fort William, and were fixtures at practically every post constructed thereafter. The role of the blacksmith shop became more important during the emigrant era than during the fur trade. While they still served to manufacture and repair goods in support of the daily operations of the post, now they manufactured and repaired emigrant goods, allowing the posts to directly profit from the shop. Rock foundations, log posts, post molds, or adobe wall definition, as well as the presence of plate glass and metal (particularly nails) are archaeological indicators of the presence of a building. Associated archaeological features and artifacts can be used to identify use. Blacksmith shops can be identified by the presence of archaeological features and artifacts such as formal forge areas, slag piles, tools associated with blacksmithing activity, and a large amount of metal.

A blacksmith shop should generally be evaluated as significant under Criteria A and/or D. Early blacksmith shops facilitated economic exchanges between Euroamericans and Native Americans through repair and manufacture of goods. Blacksmith shops were a necessity for survival of the individuals at the post and the passing emigrants. They also provided Euroamerican goods which were quickly integrated into Native American material culture. Archaeologically, blacksmith shops have the potential to provide information relevant to the nature of Native American and Euroamerican 19<sup>th</sup> century life in Wyoming, Native American/Euroamerican social and economic exchange networks, the emigrant era, and the American settlement and development of the West in general. In assessing the integrity of Criterion A, location, setting, feeling, and association must be addressed. For Criterion D, integrity of location, materials, design, and association must be addressed. It is unlikely that the property would be eligible under either Criteria B or C. However should the property be eligible under these Criteria, the property would have to possess integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association for Criterion B and design, workmanship, and materials for Criterion C.

***Stockades/Defensive Walls***

Stockades were defensive structures and an integral part of early posts. Logs were placed in the ground on end to provide a picket wall 10 to 20 feet high around the entire post. Often the palisade contained a walkway around its upper inside wall to allow defenders to fire over the top of the wall and remain protected by the stockade. Defensive structures were used often during the early fur trade period when traders were constructing posts in little known regions, when relations with native tribes were new or volatile, and where there was little in the way of a United States military presence. While stockades continued into the emigrant era in regions where United States/ native relations were normalized or where traders had intermarried with local tribes, they were not as frequent. Some posts constructed adobe walls around the post for the same purpose. Stockades can be identified archaeologically by presence of foundation stones, posts, post molds, or linear

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 84

adobe definition. These features will be located near, or adjacent to, the exterior of the post buildings forming a square or rectangular perimeter around the post.

A stockade should generally be evaluated as significant under Criteria A and/or D. Stockades were used to physically define the boundaries of the trading post. The walls served as a symbol to Native Americans, European powers, and rival trading companies showing a specific trader, a trading company, and even the nation claimed ownership of this region. The stockades also served the practical purpose of providing the post employees, visitors, and passing emigrants protection from hostile native tribes. Archaeologically, stockades and defensive walls can provide information on the physical extent of the post and the degree to which resources were invested in defense, providing an indicator of Native American/American relations in the region. In assessing the integrity of Criterion A, location, setting, feeling, and association must be addressed. For Criterion D, integrity of location, materials, design, and association must be addressed. It is unlikely that the property would be eligible under either Criteria B or C. However should the property be eligible under these Criteria, the property would have to possess integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association for Criterion B and design, workmanship, and materials for Criterion C.

***Blockhouses/Defensive Towers***

Blockhouses or defensive towers often accompanied stockades. These were defensive bastions typically located on diagonal corners of the post. Blockhouses were considered the primary means of post defense. Depending on the size of the post, they were fitted with rifle or cannon ports to allow free fire along all sides of the post (Kapler 1988:E5; Robertson 1999:12). Blockhouses can be identified archaeologically by the presence of foundation stones, posts, post molds, or adobe definitions located along the wall extent, near a gate, or at the corners of stockade or defensive wall.

Blockhouses should generally be evaluated as significant under Criteria A and/or D. Blockhouses symbolized the power and defensive capabilities of a given post, besides serving the practical purpose of providing the post employees, visitors, and passing emigrants protection from hostile native tribes. Information regarding the degree to which resources were invested in defense, providing an indicator of Native American/American relations in the region, can be gained from the archaeological investigation of a blockhouse. In assessing the integrity of Criterion A, location, setting, feeling, and association must be addressed. For Criterion D, integrity of location, materials, design, and association must be addressed. It is unlikely that the property would be eligible under either Criteria B or C. However should the property be eligible under these Criteria, the property would have to possess integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association for Criterion B and design, workmanship, and materials for Criterion C.

***Corrals/Stables***

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 85

Posts often kept cows, goats, mules, and horses for multiple reasons. In many cases, the animals were used to supply food and transportation. However, during the emigrant period these animals were often kept to sell or exchange for worn out animals owned by passing emigrants. Regardless of the reason, the post would have been in need of a place to keep livestock. Some posts simply used the central courtyard, while others constructed corrals or stables for housing their herds (Robertson 1999:13). Posts, post molds, and adobe wall definition are archaeological signatures of corrals and stables. These features are often located in the center of post's courtyard, or adjacent to the exterior wall. Artifacts associated with livestock care, such as bridles and shoes, may be recovered from stables. Corrals may be represented archaeologically by the absence of artifacts or presence of additional stockade evidence.

Corrals and stables should generally be evaluated as significant under Criteria A and/or D. Livestock were an integral part of the posts of the West, providing food and transportation for the post. The posts also traded horses to Native Americans and cattle, horses, sheep, goats, and oxen to passing emigrants. Archaeological investigations of corrals and stables can provide information on the extent to which each post engaged in the livestock trade and which animals were kept and traded. These data are likely to provide information on daily post life, trading activities, and the involvement of a given post in larger regional livestock exchanges. In assessing the integrity of Criterion A, location, setting, feeling, and association must be addressed. For Criterion D, integrity of location, materials, design, and association must be considered. It is unlikely that the property would be eligible under either Criteria B or C. However should the property be eligible under these Criteria, the property would have to possess integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association for Criterion B and design, workmanship, and materials for Criterion C.

### *Cellars*

There are not many references to post cellars. The best example comes from the writings of contemporary Captain Eugene Ware (1960:198-199) who mentions a cellar at Bordeaux's Sarpy Point post. Excavations at Seminole's Post revealed the presence of cellars in several of the buildings (Walker 2009:54) and at least one cellar has been recorded within Fort John (Walker and De Vore 2008). It is also known traders commonly used storage pits to house valuable items. The construction of a cellar to do the same should not be considered unusual as it maximized storage space without the need for the construction of a new building. Cellars can be defined archaeologically by rock or log-lined walls extending well below the surface of the ground within an existing building. A variety of artifacts can be associated with cellars, depending on the nature of the associated structure. Cellars associated with residential facilities would be expected to return artifacts associated with residential activities, while cellars associated with special use buildings such as trading houses, blacksmith shops, or artisan shops would return artifacts relating to those activities.

Cellars should generally be evaluated as significant under Criteria A and/or D. Cellars were primarily storage facilities, containing materials necessary for the daily operations and daily life at the posts. An examination of the material recovered from a post's cellars has the potential to reveal information relevant to the nature of Native American and Euroamerican 19<sup>th</sup> century life, Native American/Euroamerican economic exchange networks, and the nature of craft manufacture for emigrant sale. In assessing the integrity of Criterion

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 86

A, location, setting, feeling, and association must be addressed. For Criterion D, integrity of location, materials, design, and association must be considered. It is unlikely that the property would be eligible under either Criteria B or C. However should the property be eligible under these Criteria, the property would have to possess integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association for Criterion B and design, workmanship, and materials for Criterion C.

***Cemeteries***

Cemeteries are a component of fur trade and emigrant trading posts. Post employees, traders, trappers, emigrants, and Native American visitors to the trading posts who died while at, or in the employment of, a post would often be buried there. Archaeological and historic references have revealed the presence of cemeteries at Bordeaux's Sarpy Point Post, Fort William, and Seminoe's Post. It is likely virtually every post occupied for an extended period of time would have had an associated cemetery, based on the level of activity at these posts and the need to properly dispose of the dead. Archaeologically, a 19<sup>th</sup> century post cemetery is recognizable from surface depressions often left as the fill settles in the grave and by placement of multiple buried human remains, often in association with Native American and/or Euroamerican artifacts. Some burials were placed in coffins, leaving the remains of the coffin and coffin hardware.

Cemeteries should generally be evaluated as significant under Criteria A and/or D. The post cemeteries contain the remains of post traders and their families, Euroamerican emigrants, and Native Americans. The dental and osteological remains of these individuals can provide information on diet, disease, and overall health; while an examination of the grave goods can provide information on issues ranging from daily activities to larger cultural traditions of the Native Americans and Euroamericans living, trading, and traveling through this region in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In assessing the integrity of Criterion A, location, setting, feeling, and association must be addressed. For Criterion D, integrity of location, materials, design, and association must be addressed. It is unlikely that the property would be eligible under either Criteria B or C. However should the property be eligible under these Criteria, the property would have to possess integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association for Criterion B and design, workmanship, and materials for Criterion C.

***Middens or Trash Pits***

Middens and trash pits are commonly associated with every site where extended human activity took place. Trading posts are no different. The accumulation of waste associated with domestic, economic, and manufacturing or repair activity would require a method for disposal. This was commonly done by providing for discard piles or pits designated for the placement of trash. Midden and trash pit placement and size varied, as there may have been no official strategy employed in their use. All residential buildings, blacksmith and artisan shops, lodges, and emigrant camps would have generated waste and likely had a midden or pit located nearby. Likewise, a post may have had a larger midden or pit where local deposits could be dumped when full.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 87

Archaeologically, middens and trash pits are recognizable as surface scatters or buried collections of debris. These features can be found scattered across the landscape. Within the post, middens and pits would be expected to be associated with buildings used for residential, trading, or manufacturing activities. Outside the post, middens and trash pits may be located virtually anywhere lodges or camps would have been. Artifacts contained would include broken or discarded tools, bottles, ceramics, faunal remains, or any other material associated with domestic, trading, or manufacturing activity. Material contained in each midden would depend on the nature of the associated building or feature.

Middens and trash pits should generally be evaluated as significant under Criteria D. Human activity at each trading post generated waste. An examination of the waste deposited in middens and trash pits provides insight into how materials were manufactured, used, repurposed, and discarded. Analysis of this material can reveal how items were valued, used, and exchanged among and between individuals and cultures. Insight can be gained into the daily activities of the individuals who lived, traded, and visited the posts as well as information regarding larger cultural traditions and the nature of Native Americans/Euroamerican exchange in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In assessing the integrity of Criterion A, location, setting, feeling and association must be addressed. For Criterion D, integrity of location, materials, design, and association must be considered. It is unlikely that the property would be eligible under either Criteria B or C. However should the property be eligible under these Criteria, the property would have to possess integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association for Criterion B and design, workmanship, and materials for Criterion C.

*Native American Lodges*

Native American lodges, while not part of the trading post itself, make up part of the post's cultural landscape. There are many references to seasonal lodges constructed outside of the post proper. These lodges represent homes of Native American families of post employees and seasonal residences of various native tribes visiting the posts to exchange goods. Historic documents place anywhere from a dozen to a few hundred lodges around a post in any given year. Lodge numbers correlate roughly to the size of the post with larger posts having more lodges. Depending on the length of time a post was in operation and the overall size of the post, the surrounding landscape could be littered with the remains of Native American lodges. Archaeologically, lodges are identifiable by the presence of hearths, Native American artifacts, Euroamerican trade goods, surface depressions, and structural features such as stone rings and post molds.

Lodges should generally be evaluated as significant under Criteria A and/or D. Lodges served as the residences for Native American visitors to trading posts and Native American families related to the post owner, traders, and employees. An examination of the lodges and the material remains they are associated with can provide information on social structure, material culture, and general issues relating to Native American life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In assessing the integrity of Criterion A, location, setting, feeling and association must be addressed. For Criterion D, integrity of location, materials, design, and association must be considered. It is unlikely that the property would be eligible under either Criteria B or C. However should the property be eligible under these Criteria, the property would have to possess integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association for Criterion B and design, workmanship, and materials for Criterion C.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 88

---

*Artisan shops and craft manufacturing facilities*

Even the earliest posts contained a variety of craft shops which may have included blacksmith, cooper, and carpenter facilities (Robertson 1999:13). The variety of shops present would have been dependent on the size and nature of the post. Larger primary posts like Fort Union, North Dakota would have, at minimum, housed blacksmith and cooper shops, with smaller seasonal posts containing just blacksmith facilities or no craft shops at all. The utility of maintaining artisan and craft manufacturing facilities increased with the onset of the emigrant era. Emigrants required a different set of goods and services than did Native Americans. For this reason, emigrant era posts typically housed a larger number of artisan and craft facilities than fur trading posts, to manufacture goods or provide services to the emigrant clientele. Rock foundations, log posts, post molds, or adobe wall definition, and the presence of plate glass and metal (particularly nails) are archaeological indicators of the presence of a building. Craft manufacture and artisan shops can be identified by the presence of artifacts associated with the function of the building, such as wood or metal working tools, and the absence of domestic waste viewed as an indicator of occupational use.

Artisan and craft shops should generally be evaluated as significant under Criteria A and/or D. Artisan and craft facilities were integral in manufacturing and repairing Euroamerican goods used by the inhabitants of the post, passing emigrants, and Native Americans. The archaeological record from artisan shops has the potential to provide information relevant to the nature of Native American and Euroamerican 19<sup>th</sup> century life in Wyoming, Native American/Euroamerican social and economic exchange networks, the emigrant era, Native American/United States hostilities, and the American settlement and development of the West in general. In assessing the integrity of Criterion A, location, setting, feeling, and association must be addressed. For Criterion D, integrity of location, materials, design, and association must be addressed. It is unlikely that the property would be eligible under either Criteria B or C. However should the property be eligible under these Criteria, the property would have to possess integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association for Criterion B and design, workmanship, and materials for Criterion C.

*Bridges*

Another feature associated with emigrant trading posts are bridges. The mass movement of emigrants involved a large number of wagons. This presented a need for safe river crossings over the Laramie, Platte, Green, and Sweetwater Rivers, arteries which alternately flooded and dried up, leaving thick beds of mud to cross. Crossing the rivers could be difficult because of the mud and dangerous from flooding. For this reason, a number of posts operators constructed bridge crossings. Richard, Guinard, and Archambault are three Wyoming posts that operated emigrant crossings. There are no known intact 19<sup>th</sup> century bridges in Wyoming. Archaeologically, the remnants of these bridges are recognizable by posts, post molds, and rock-filled, log-cased piers from the original foundation.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 89

---

Bridges should generally be evaluated as significant under Criteria A and/or D. Bridges were necessary to facilitate safe and efficient movement of emigrant and military traffic to the West. Archaeologically, bridges can provide information on construction material and methods and the degree to which resources were invested in providing safe river crossings, providing an indicator of the level of Emigrant activity at a given location. In assessing the integrity of Criterion A, location, setting, feeling and association must be addressed. For Criterion D, integrity of location, materials, design, and association must be considered. It is unlikely that the property would be eligible under either Criteria B or C. However should the property be eligible under these Criteria, the property would have to possess integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association for Criterion B and design, workmanship, and materials for Criterion C.

***Emigrant Camps***

Like Native American lodges, emigrant camps are not part of a post though they represent part of the adjacent cultural landscape. Through the 1840s and 1850s, hundreds of thousands of emigrants followed the trails across Wyoming and stopped at trading posts along the way. Emigrant camps are more ephemeral than Native American lodges as the duration of the emigrants' stay was often shorter and no permanent structures were erected. Still, over the course of a post's lifetime, tens of thousands of emigrants may have visited. The archaeological visibility of emigrant camps lie in open air hearths or fire pits and their association with 19<sup>th</sup> century artifact scatters. Because of the sheer number of emigrant visitors to some posts, much like native lodges, these artifacts may simply be littered across the landscape.

Emigrant camps should generally be evaluated as significant under Criteria A and/or D. Emigrant camps served as the residences for hundreds of thousands of Euroamericans traveling through Wyoming during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. An examination of the material remains associated with the emigrant camps can provide information on Euroamerican 19<sup>th</sup> century life in Wyoming, economic exchange networks, and the American settlement and development of the West in general. In assessing the integrity of Criterion A, location, setting, feeling and association must be addressed. For Criterion D, location, materials, design, and association must be addressed. It is unlikely that the property would be eligible under either Criteria B or C. However should the property be eligible under these Criteria, the property would have to possess integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association for Criterion B and design, workmanship, and materials for Criterion C.

***Telegraph, Pony Express, Stagecoach, and Mail Stations***

The government came to consider settlement of the West and communication with western communities more important as westward emigration increased. Consequently, the government facilitated construction of transportation and communication facilities along the emigrant trails through the 1850s into the 1860s. Stations were commonly placed at strategic locations, often already occupied by trading posts. These stations were often not operated by the post trader, but simply occupied the same space. Stations were sometimes placed within, or

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 90

next to, an operating post and continued to be there after the trading post closed. In other instances, the station was placed in, or next to, an abandoned post. Rock foundations, log posts, post molds, adobe wall definition, and the presence of plate glass and metal (particularly nails) are archaeological indicators of the presence of a building. Communication and transportation stations can be identified by absence of domestic waste and in the secondary building of repair episodes occurring after the construction of the original post. These facilities, when not operated by the post trader, are considered non-contributing components of a trading post.

If these were operated by the post trader, they should generally be evaluated as significant under Criteria A and/or D. Telegraph, Pony Express, stagecoach, and mail stations facilitated the western movement of American emigrants and provided a link to the east through which information could pass. Archaeologically, telegraph, Pony Express, stagecoach, and mail stations can provide information regarding the nature and intensity of Euroamerican emigration to the American West. In assessing the integrity of Criterion A, location, setting, feeling and association must be addressed. For Criterion D, location, materials, design, and association must be addressed. It is unlikely that the property would be eligible under either Criteria B or C. However should the property be eligible under these Criteria, the property would have to possess integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association for Criterion B and design, workmanship, and materials for Criterion C.

**Statement of Significance**

For a trading post property to be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places there has to be an association with at least one area of significance under Criteria A, B, C, or D. The areas of significance that Wyoming's trading posts may be associated with Criteria A and B are Economics, Ethnic Heritage, Exploration/Settlement, and Politics/Government. For a property to be considered eligible under Criteria C it would need to be associated with Architecture and Engineering. The area of significance under Criteria D would be Archaeology and a relation to any of the areas of significance associated with Criteria A or B. Trading posts would most likely be eligible under Criteria A and D, although some circumstances would allow for a nomination under Criteria B and C.

*Criterion A.*

The 19<sup>th</sup> century trading posts may be eligible for listing on the National Register based on their local and regional significance under Criterion A in the area of Economics, Ethnic Heritage, Exploration/Settlement, and Politics/Government. It became increasingly obvious to European powers by the 1840's that the number of Americans living in and crossing through this region made their political control of the area tenuous. The Mexican American War sealed the fate of lands once held by Spain and Mexico. Britain soon ceded its claims to the land as a recognition of political realities. Trading Posts are symbolic evidence of the spread of American economic and ultimately political influence in the region. These posts were involved in a number of significant historical developments in the Native American and Euroamerican pasts.

Europeans began the settlement of North America well over a century before the tribes in the West were physically introduced to the descendants of Western Europeans. European goods, guns, and horses reached the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 91

region well in advance of Euroamerican explorers and trappers. Often the first cultural exchanges between indigenous groups and Euroamericans came through the long distance exchange of goods. This exchange proved so profitable that the Euroamericans pushed further into the interior in order to have direct economic relations with the tribes in the West. Posts were developed in tribal territories across the West to facilitate the exchange of goods with the diverse nations living in the region. The trade agreements negotiated between the tribes and traders integrated the tribes into the global market and saw the global market respond by manufacturing goods for native communities. These trading activities led to the development of stronger cultural and political relationships between the tribes and Euroamericans. Euroamerican trappers frequently married into tribal communities and the movement of trappers and traders in and out of Native American territories brought European cultural mores to tribal societies and introduced tribal socio-cultural norms to the east. Traders and trading activity were also influenced by tribal conflicts. At the same time, Europeans were not above involving Native Americans in European conflicts. All of these activities effectively intertwined native and Euroamerican cultural groups economically, socially, culturally, and politically.

Fur trading activity conducted out of the trading posts often served as the earliest form of contact between Native Americans and Euroamericans in the West. These economic exchanges facilitated the development of deeper cultural and socio-political relationships between the groups. Trappers and traders working out of the posts also provided for the earliest exploration of the region by Euroamericans and the posts and the trading activity itself was used by governments to develop claims to the land. These claims eventually led to the development and settlement of the region by American emigrants in Wyoming. The movement of emigrants through and the eventual settlement of Wyoming were facilitated by the goods, services, and infrastructure provided and developed by the posts. These developments strained the relatively amicable relations that the tribes and Euroamericans in the region enjoyed. The negotiation for control of the West was inextricably tied to the posts. The posts provided neutral grounds where natives and Euroamericans could exchange goods and information, develop and negotiate cultural understandings, and negotiate official government treaties. When an accord could not be met the goods and services necessary for the tribes to militarily resist American expansion were provided by the posts. Over the course of these developments the posts held complex and ever changing social and cultural meanings to the tribes, the traders, and the government.

To the tribes the posts served to provide direct and constant access to European goods that they had come to desire, but had not been readily available on a regular basis. The posts also brought conflict, between Euroamerican governments, traders, and the tribes. The tribes competed amongst each other for access to goods and to control the distribution of European goods to tribes away from the posts, they joined Euroamerican governments in conflicts with other nations for the benefit of the tribe, and they exploited intercompany and international competition to exact better trade agreements from the traders. The posts served as financier and operating bases from which to explore the region, they acted as the physical structures that provided international title to the land, and were involved in international, intertribal, and interagency competition and conflict during this period.

After 1840 international claims to the region had been resolved and the region had been thoroughly explored. It was during the 1840s that Euroamerican use of Wyoming began to shift dramatically. Missionaries, government and military expeditions, and emigrants began to cross the old trapper trails in ever increasing numbers. The nature of the trade at the posts changed during this period. Trading posts in the region, while

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 92

continuing to engage in the Native American trade, expanded their operations to include goods and services required by the passing emigrants and other Euroamerican customers. In doing so, the trading posts facilitated the settlement of the West by providing west-bound settlers and prospectors goods, services, shelter, and information integral for them to complete their journey and eventually settle the West. While engaging in these activities, the posts in Wyoming aided the development of the local infrastructure in the way of trails, river crossings, and communication and transportation stations.

Beginning in the 1850s the United States government began to actively negotiate with Native Americans for the right to use the land. Over time the requests turned from the right to use to the right to own. During the 1850s when the US military presence in the region was limited, governmental aspirations of territorial acquisitions were often achieved through negotiation. Into the 1860s as the United States military presence expanded and the tribes were increasingly compelled to relocate through payment or threat of military action. During this period when the new ownership of the West was being negotiated the posts played an integral role. For the traders it could be boom or bust. The annuities paid to the tribes as a result of treaty negotiations were profitable for many of the posts. However increased government regulations and limitations on what could be traded, such as liquor, guns, and munitions, served to limit profits. The posts faced additional scrutiny from the government, now weary of the traders' relationships with the tribes. The tribes had also begun to grow weary of any Euroamerican establishment in their tribal land. Even so the posts played an important role during this transitional period.

To the Native Americans the posts provided goods necessary for their opposition to American expansion. The posts themselves also operated as neutral zones where the tribes and Euroamerican interests could formally or informally negotiate cultural and political differences. Often official treaty negotiations were held at the posts with traders or post employees functioning as intermediaries, translators, or formal negotiators. In acting as such the posts were indispensable to both sides. The tribes needed not only the goods provided by the posts but the support and advocacy of many of the traders as well. The government for their part was reliant on the posts to provide for the distribution of annuity goods or to provide goods for annuity payments to the tribes and to provide goods and services necessary for westward emigration. The United States was also reliant on the traders as translators, to help in negotiations, and perhaps most importantly to help navigate cultural incongruities between the two disparate negotiating parties. Even so the posts saw reprisals from both sides when negotiations broke down. Posts saw sanctions and closures from the government and theft and vandalism by the tribes. The role the posts played in the negotiation of the West make them significant under Criterion A.

In order to assess the significance of an individual post it must be shown that the post was not only related to an important event or period of significance, but that the post had an important historical association with it. To determine this the researcher needs to address questions such as: What role did this post play in developing and maintaining social, cultural, economic, and/or political relationships between Native Americans and Euroamericans? What goods, services, or infrastructure developments that contributed to Euroamerican emigration and settlement of the region were provided and/or developed by this post? What role did the post play in the exploration and settlement of the region by Euroamericans? How was this post involved in international, intertribal, and interagency competition and conflict? What role did this post play in the negotiation of the West? Many posts were in operation during multiple periods of significance and were associated with any number of events. Post may have been active during the Native American fur trade period and the early emigrant period, they may have associations with Native Americans, Euroamericans of various

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 93

ethnic identities, and United States military activity, and they may have social, economic, and/or military significance. The key to determining the significance for each post is in identifying the periods, the cultural groups, and the historically significant movements or developments with which it is associated; then demonstrating the importance of the post by explicitly illustrating the unique, representative, or pivotal manner in which this specific post is related to each of these phenomena.

*Integrity*

In assessing the integrity of each trading post the primary areas of concern will be location, setting, feeling, and association. As the archaeological signature may be all that remains of these posts, every site with *insitu* remains retains its integrity of location as the site has not been moved since construction, occupation, deposition, and abandonment occurred at the location in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Integrity of setting will of course be site specific. However, the rural nature of Wyoming and the location of the posts themselves make it likely many will retain integrity of setting. Posts such as Richard's and Guinard's which are located within, or near, the city boundaries of Evansville and Casper respectively do not retain integrity of setting as they are now located in a relatively urban environment when compared to their original setting located as isolated outposts on the High Plains. However, many other posts retain good integrity of setting. Fort Bernard is one such example. Today Fort Bernard sits in an isolated field on a river terrace above the Platte removed from modern intrusions except for the dirt road one takes to get there. The setting today is much as it would have been in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Integrity of feeling and association will have to be addressed much like setting, on a site-by-site basis. Original post locations were remote with the site generally resting on a level expanse near a river with little or no sign of civilization except for the post structures themselves and the hard packed dirt trails. In many ways, the posts of Wyoming can meet this standard, due in large part to the predominately rural nature of the state. Many of these sites are located in low population density areas of the state, frequently in agricultural regions. Aside from the dirt roads and plowed fields, many of the sites appear much as they would have 150 years ago. Naturally, the closer modern features such as highways, telephone lines, and modern buildings encroach on the site, the less likely they are to retain integrity of feeling and association; again, with urban sites like Richard's and Guinard's possessing lower integrity.

*Criterion B.*

For Criterion B to be applicable, the property must meet two requirements. The first is the significance of the individual. Usually that significance can be measured in some form of recognition the person attained either during or after his or her life or for accomplishments during the period of historic significance. There is no clear and automatic qualification as a significant individual; it is the duty of the evaluator to demonstrate the significance, but it is important to note, within this specific historic context, the individual's significance must be related to the varied aspects of the fur and emigrant trades in Wyoming. Individuals may well be significant in other contexts, but they may not be appropriately identified under Criterion B in properties eligible or contributing within this context. The significance of the individual must be approached with great caution (Cassity 2011:15).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 94

The second test, once the significance of the individual within this context has been established and documented, is the property being evaluated, when compared to other properties associated with the individual, is the most appropriate one for demonstrating the individual's contribution. Being born at a place usually does not suffice. A place where the person, however, formulated a strategy or prepared a plan or worked with others on a project linked to the person's significance will confirm this important linkage (Cassity 2011:15).

For a property associated with an individual person, it is necessary to demonstrate the trading post directly reflected or shaped his or her influence; it was not peripheral or tangential to the activities for which the person became significant. This was the place important in making him or her significant. Several considerations are relevant: (1) size of the property alone does not make a trading post significant nor does it make the person who developed it significant; (2) the property and the features must be related in specific ways to the significance of the person in history; (3) an individual auxiliary building or structure is unlikely to qualify under Criterion B, but the complex of buildings of which it is a part might (Cassity 2011:15-16). While posts such as Fort Bridger may be able to be listed due to their association with Jim Bridger and Louis Vasquez. meeting the aforementioned conditions for other trading posts in the state will be difficult. In light of this it is unlikely the Wyoming trading posts would be eligible for listing to the National Register based on Criterion B.

*Criterion C.*

An evaluation of Criterion C involves an assessment of the design and construction of the properties. The assessment of Wyoming trading posts reveals no extant buildings or structures allowing for eligibility under Criterion C. However, should surface remains of one of the posts be revealed, a listing under Criterion C is possible. If one seeks to list a trading post as a single property, it would be most appropriate to consider the embodiment of distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. The assessment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction is an evaluation of how the posts are related by cultural tradition, function, dates of construction, or resource availability. Most Wyoming trading posts were constructed within a 36 year span, from 1832 to 1868. The posts also share distinctive design and functional elements as well as similar construction methods and materials. In this document, trading posts have been discussed as a number of buildings and structures combining to form one trading post district. Each of these buildings and structures may not be individually eligible under Criterion C, but together they collectively constitute a trading post with a distinctive design, layout, and function. Currently there are no known posts in Wyoming with extant buildings, making nomination under Criterion C unlikely. However, should future research reveal standing trading posts buildings or structures, nomination under Criterion C is possible.

*Criterion D.*

The Wyoming trading posts should also be considered eligible to the National Register under Criterion D because of their ability to contain intact cultural deposits that can illuminate much about the regions past. For the most part, there are no significant surface remains of the posts but archaeological investigations have revealed there to be substantial subsurface deposits associated with the 19<sup>th</sup> century occupation of these sites. An investigation of these deposits is likely to yield information relevant to the earliest contact between Native Americans and Euroamericans, the earliest Euroamerican exploration and settlement of the region, westward

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 95

emigration, the transitional period when American and Native Americans interests competed for control of the region, the manner of construction and layout of the posts, and on the lives of the Native Americans and Euroamericans living and trading at the posts during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Trading posts provide an excellent union between archaeology and history. The information that post excavations can reveal make them another set of historical references. Excavations at Fort Bridger and Seminoe's Post have yielded information relating to the methods and materials used in post construction and have been used to aid in the reconstruction of all, or parts, of the posts (Gardner, Johnson, and Lindmier 1991, Walker 2009). Data recovered from Fort Bonneville, Seminoe's Post and Ward and Guerrier have provided information relating to early 19<sup>th</sup> century blacksmithing activities (Gardner Johnson, and Vlcek 1991, Walker 2004). Excavations at Fort Bridger have revealed information regarding the involvement of Native Americans and women in trading activities during the 1840s as well as information relating to environmental changes occurring in the region at the time (Gardner various). Intact deposits at trading posts throughout Wyoming yet to see serious archaeological investigations have the ability to answer questions such as these involving 19<sup>th</sup> century trading activities.

Trading post excavations also have the ability to contribute to both high range theory and middle range theory for both historical and prehistoric research questions. High range research could focus on ethnic identity, cultural contact, cultural hostilities, the expansion of state vs. tribal systems, frontier processes, gender roles, and/or issues involving trade and economic systems. Middle range research investigating site formation processes, refining the study of activity structures, and/or refining relative dating techniques could also be conducted.

The research potential of these posts is expansive. A number of research questions regarding prehistoric, protohistoric, or historic events or phenomena can be posed. Contact period excavations could reveal information regarding the nature of subsistence change among native tribes, the involvement of Native Americans in trading activity at the posts, the manner in which Euroamerican trappers and traders integrated Native American subsistence strategies with traditional post strategies, or the nature of Native American/Euroamerican relations at a given post. When examining the emigration period post excavations can provide insight into emigrant/native relations, the nature and importance of native trade during this period, and the manner in which emigrant trade varied over time and across the trails. Information can also be gained about the nature of government/tribal relations, the manner in which native and emigrant trade changed with increased government regulation, and the involvement of Native Americans in the trade during this period. Post construction materials, methods, and layouts can be determined from archaeological investigations. Site disturbances and post depositional processes at work on the low lying flood plains where the posts generally sit can also be examined through excavations of the posts sites. These are just a few of the research questions that can be addressed through archaeological investigations of the posts. The length of post occupation and period that it was occupied will determine the nature of the questions that excavations at each post have the ability to answer.

The archaeology of trading posts may also be a significant part of their contribution to public education. Sites such as Fort Bridger and Seminoe's Post are run as public interpretive centers. Excavations have added to the historical interpretation of these sites. This leaves open the possibility that any trading post with a significant association to historic periods or events has the ability, through excavation, to provide important information regarding transformative periods in the West that can aid in public education projects.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number F Page 96

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Should a post meet the aforementioned criteria for significance, the integrity of the post would still need to be determined. In assessing the integrity of the posts under Criterion D, there are four primary aspects of concern: location, materials, design, and association. The utility of applying any of these rests on the horizontal and vertical integrity of the individual site. If the site has been disturbed to such an extent the archaeological record has been removed or combined with earlier or modern material, it may be unlikely to yield any usable information. A site's horizontal integrity is directly related to integrity of location. This can be addressed by asking the simple question, "Does this site sit where it did when the material was deposited, or has it been moved or removed?" This is the level of archaeological investigation most of the sites have seen.

After the general location of the post is identified, generally through the use of historic documents, the boundaries of the post itself need to be defined through the presence of surface remains or artifact scatters, by pedestrian survey, or through identification of subsurface anomalies found through geophysical investigations. Physical inspections of the ground surface, geophysical investigations, shovel testing, or test excavations can then be used to look for disturbances to the stratigraphy of the site. If the site is found to be free of post depositional disturbance, then it can be said to have integrity of location.

Each post should also be evaluated for their ability to convey integrity of material and design. Or in other words each site should be evaluated based on whether or not they contain intact cultural deposits. For the most part, this information can only be attained through archaeological investigations. Excavations can reveal whether the site stratigraphy is intact. Sites with intact stratigraphy will have 19th century material present in situ. In these instances, the 19th century materials and site designs can be determined. Such is the case with several post excavations in this region. Excavations at Fort Bridger, Seminoe's Post, and a Bordeaux post in Nebraska provided information on construction material and techniques and the design of the buildings and layout of the post in general. All sites with stratigraphic integrity have the ability to provide this type of detailed information. Of course, a discussion on integrity of material and design cannot be undertaken in the absence of archaeological investigations.

Finally, an assessment of the integrity of association can only be addressed after defining the research questions, as integrity of association for an archaeological site is defined as the relationship between the research question and the likely presence of archaeological data to address the question. For example, questions addressing construction methods, post design, and alterations could be addressed through an examination of foundations and post molds; both of which have been found during post excavations, making it likely integrity of association could be attained. If one sought to investigate trading post diet through an examination of floral remains, integrity of association may be harder to attain. However, should a site contain intact remains, dates gathered from the subsurface remains would have the potential to answer any number of research questions, always leaving open the possibility for integrity of association to be attained, so long as the appropriate research question is posed.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   G   Page  97 

---

**Geographical Data**

The area evaluated for this Multiple Property Document was the entire state of Wyoming. The trading posts this investigation presented were located primarily in the southern and western part of the state. The locations of the posts were dictated by the presence of the Rocky Mountains to the west, the involvement of some Wyoming posts in the Rocky Mountain fur trade, and the river and emigrant trail corridors in the southern part of the state. Specifically, the posts are located in Carbon, Converse, Fremont, Goshen, Johnson, Natrona, Platte, Sublette, Sweetwater, and Uinta counties. However, as the defined boundary of the study is the state of Wyoming, trading posts eluding this document but meeting the criteria set forth should be considered for inclusion regardless of their location within the state. A list of the Wyoming posts is provided on the following pages.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number H Page 98

---

**Identification and Evaluation Methods**

This project used several sources to identify the Wyoming trading posts and develop the appropriate historical theme. Larger syntheses on the fur and emigrant trades of North America were used as a starting point from which to identify the more significant posts in the state as well as the general trends seen across the continent (Chittenden 1935; Hafen 2000a; Robertson 1999; Unruh 1993; Wishart 1979). Texts and regional syntheses relating to the early fur trade and the emigrant period were used to provide an overview of the entire period of study. Discussions in these texts ranged from descriptions of the posts and trading activities at the regional level, including the entire West during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to discussions on local posts or traders (Hanson 1980; Murray 1975).

Wyoming SHPO site data was also searched to locate posts discovered in the literature, and to define trading posts not identified in the initial historical literature search. Literature searches were then conducted on trading posts the SHPO data or SHPO staff identified. The lists generated by the SHPO data and literature searches were cross referenced to generate sufficient background information and to locate site numbers for each post. This was done with relative success as SHPO data providing post names allowed for a more accurate means of searching for post information. Posts identified only in the literature could be located in the SHPO under alternative site names, often affiliated with later non-post use of the site. For example, Ward and Guerrier's Sand Creek site was repurposed as the Star Ranch Pony Express Station.

Having defined the trading posts by way of literature searches and SHPO information, a list was generated of post names, company affiliations, and owner names. This allowed for the generation of accurate post backgrounds by way of primary and secondary materials retrieved through archival research and searches of academic and online databases.

The archaeological potential of the sites was assessed through a review of the site reports generated from previous archaeological investigations and discussions with the individuals responsible for the excavations, when possible. Excavation reports provided information on the archaeological investigations, or lack thereof, at each post. Excavations results, data collected, and information provided regarding 19<sup>th</sup> century site activity was used to assess data potential of future excavations at each site.

To conclude, the discussion on the general history and significance of the fur trade and emigrant eras is based on an analysis of secondary texts covering these topics. This analysis was supplemented using primary source documents when available. Information regarding post names, locations, and histories was generated using many of the same primary and secondary sources. Additionally, data from SHPO files and personnel were integrated with site specific literature searches to provide a more comprehensive background for each post. Finally, SHPO files, excavation reports, and personal interviews were used to address the nature of the archaeological investigations at each post and the potential for future excavations to yield significant data. Archival research, academic and online database searches, SHPO data, excavation site reports, and information garnered from discussions with those responsible for the archaeological investigations of some of the posts were all used in the generation of this document.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   1   Page   99  

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page  100 

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page  101 

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page  102 

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page  103 

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page   104  

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page  105 

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page  106 

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page  107 

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page  108 

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page  109 

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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Name of Property

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County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page  110 

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Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 1 Page 111

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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Section number   I   Page  112 

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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Name of Property

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County and State

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page  113 

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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Name of Property

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County and State

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Section number   I   Page  114 

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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Name of Property

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County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page  115 

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page  116 

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page  117 

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**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

-----  
 Name of Property

-----  
 County and State

-----  
 Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page   118  

**Figures**

**Table 1: Wyoming Trading Posts**

Name	Timeframe	Site Number
Fort Adams	1841-1842	N/A
Archambault's Post	1853-1857	48NA292
Ash Point	1850-1852	N/A
Fort Bernard	1845-1846	48GO31
Bissonette's North Platte Post	1850-1854	N/A
Fort Bonneville	1832-1835	48SU29
Bordeaux's Rawhide Creek Post	1862-1864	N/A
Bordeaux's Sarpy Point Post	1850-1868	N/A
Bridger Trading Post	1841	48SE4074
Fort Bridger 2	1842-1843	48UT1091
Fort Bridger 3	1843-1857	48UT29
Deer Creek	1857-1865	48CO178
Drips Post	1857-1860	48GO84
Gilbert Station	1858-1861	48FR244
Guinard's Platte River Post	1859-1865	48NA209
Guinard's Sweetwater River Post	1857-1859	48NA298
Fort John	1841-1849	48GO1
LaBonte Station	1854-1857	48CO179
Lock and Randolph	1841	N/A
Merchant and Williams	1861	48NA320
Moncravie House	1856-1858	N/A
Fort Platte	1841-1845	48GO33

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page   119  

---

Portuguese House	1834-1839	48JO96
Richard's Post	1855-1865	48NA866
Fort Sarpy	1837-1838	N/A
Seminole's Post	1852-1855	48NA288
Ward and Guerrier's Fort		
Laramie Post	1855-1858	48GO16
Ward and Guerrier's Sand		
Point Post	1852-1855	48PL183
Fort William	1834-1841	48GO1



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

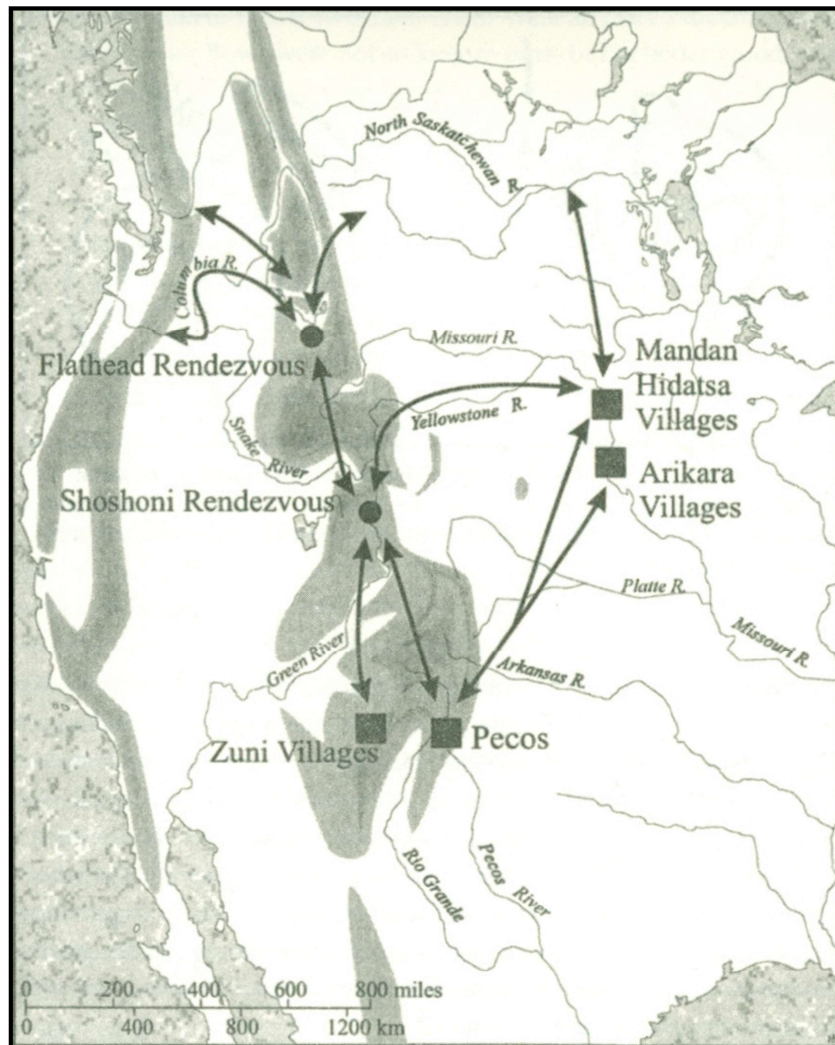
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County and State

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page   120  

Figure 1: Prehistoric Trade Networks in the West (From Binnema 2001)



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

.....  
Name of Property

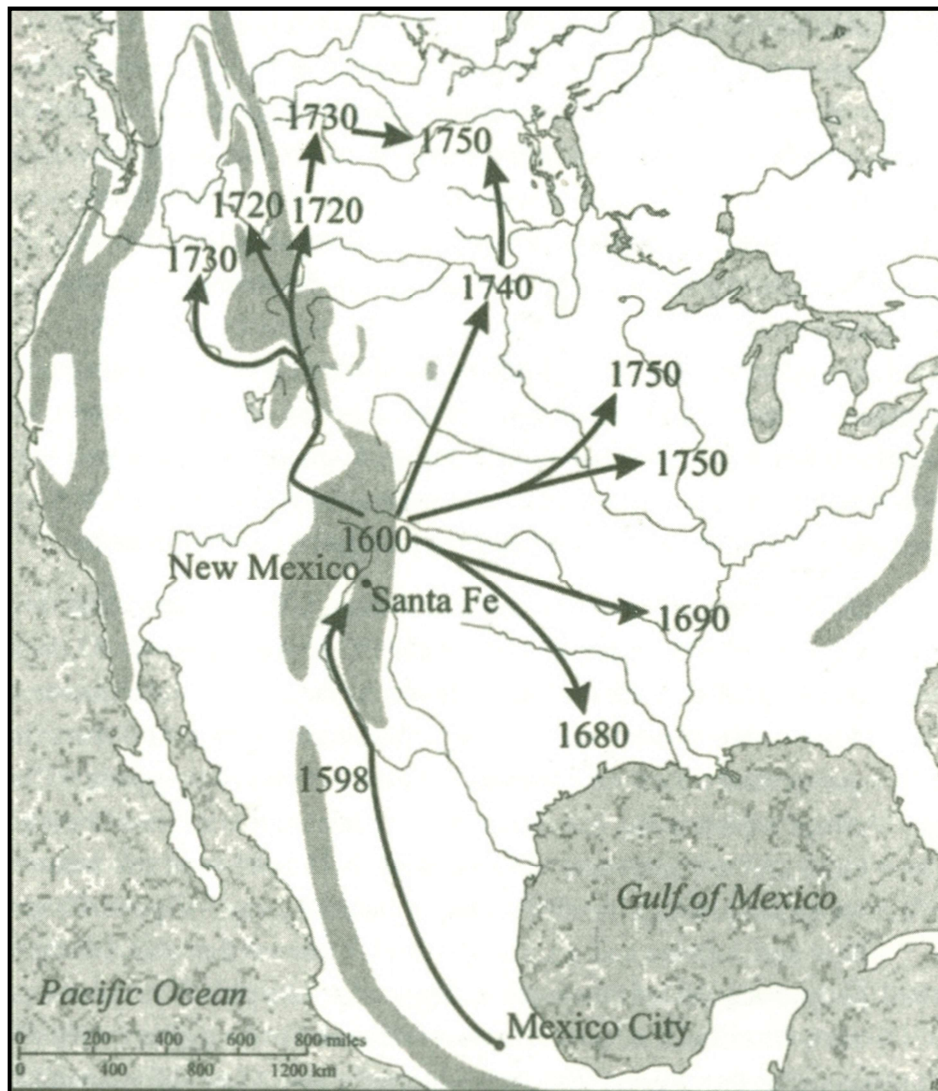
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County and State

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page   121  

---

Figure 2: The dispersal of the horse across the west (From Binnema 2001)



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

.....  
Name of Property

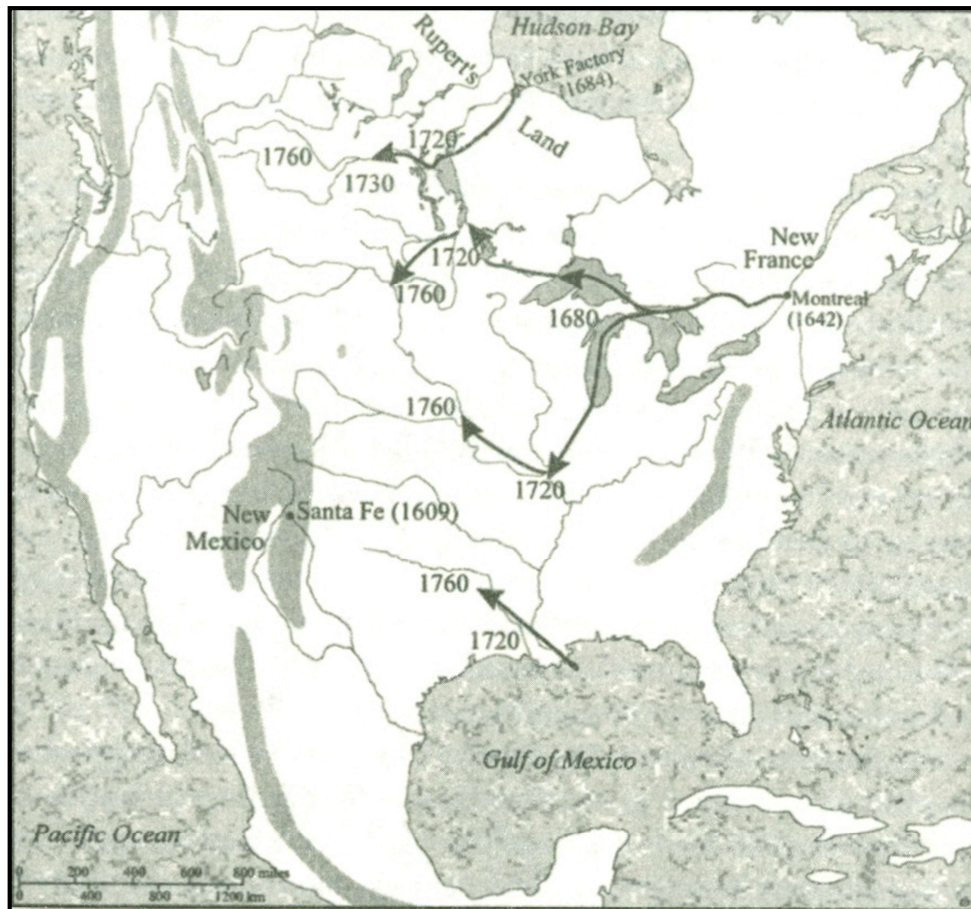
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County and State

.....  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page   122  

---

Figure 3: The dispersal of the gun across the West. (From Binnema 2001)





United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page   123  

---

Figure 4: Fur Trading Areas. Map courtesy of Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

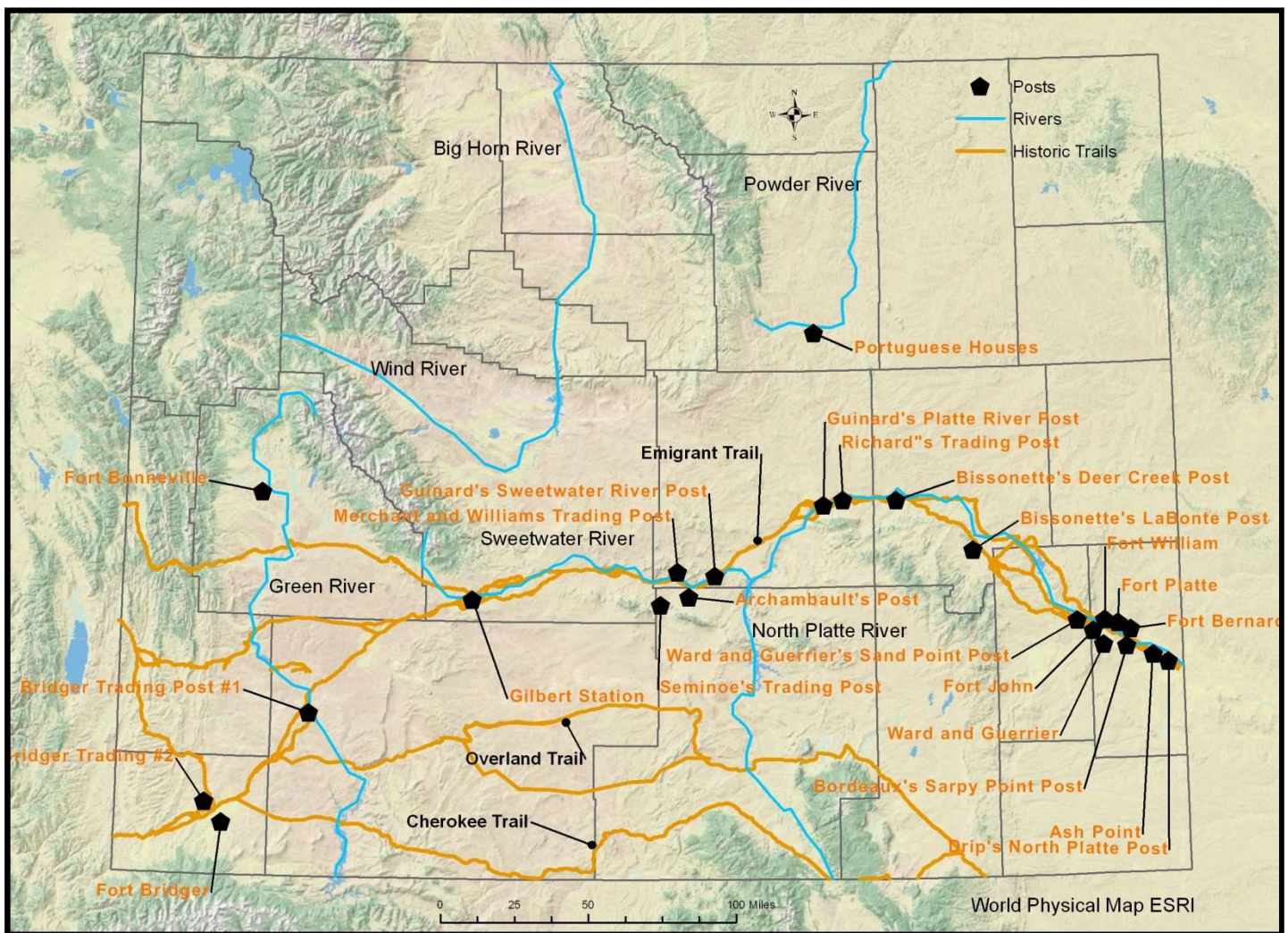
Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 1 Page 124

Figure 5: Wyoming Trading Post Locations. Map courtesy of Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office.





United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number I Page 125

---

Figure 6: Painting of the Exterior of Fort William, by Alfred Jacob Miller (courtesy of Fort Laramie National Historic Site and the Walters Art Museum).



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page   126  

---

Figure 7: Painting of the Interior of Fort William, by Alfred Jacob Miller (courtesy of Fort Laramie National Historic Site and the Walters Art Museum).





United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

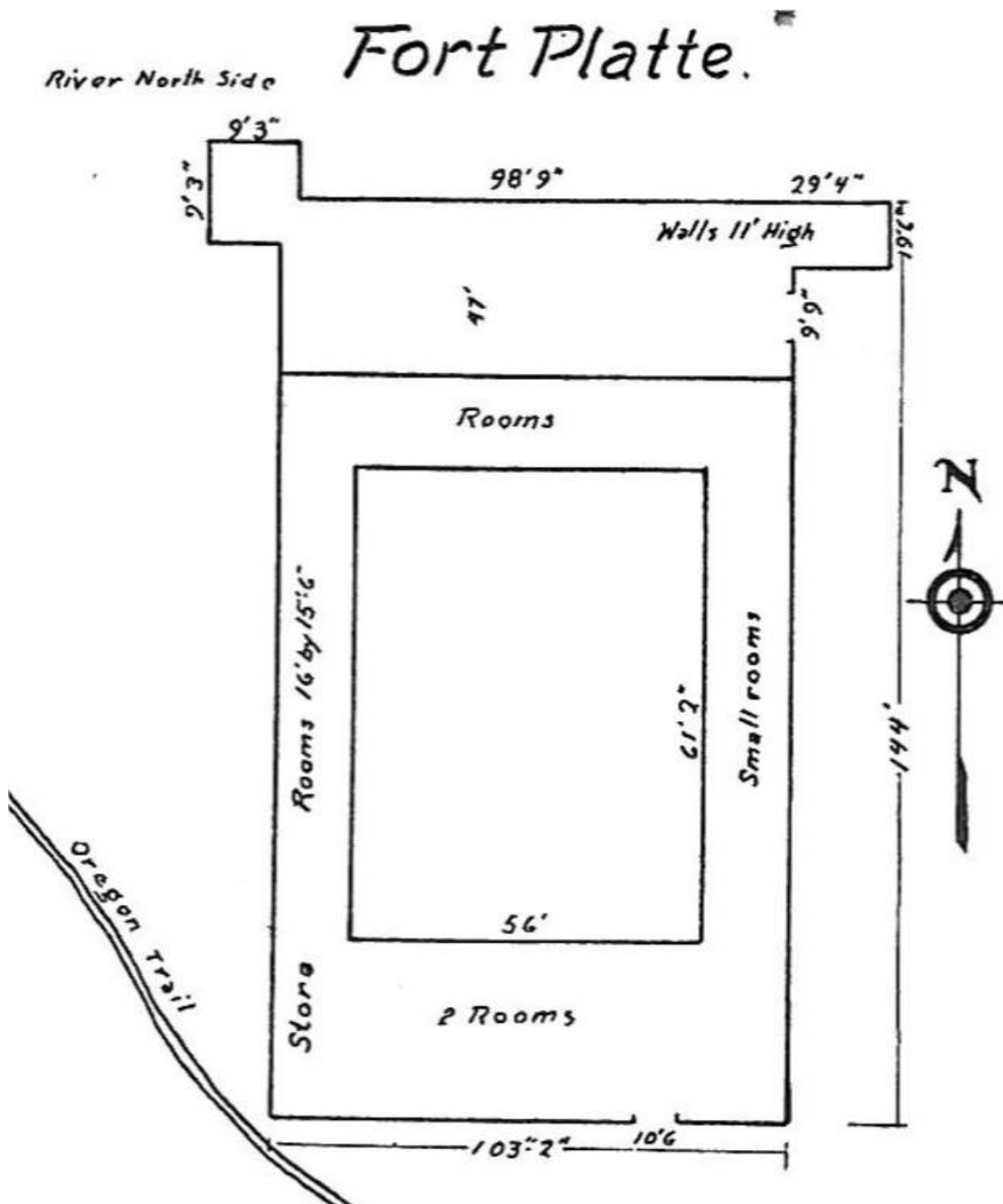
Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number I Page 127

Figure 8: Plan view of Fort. Platte (from the drawings in Thomas Bullock's Journal, Mormon Church Archives, Salt Laker City)





**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

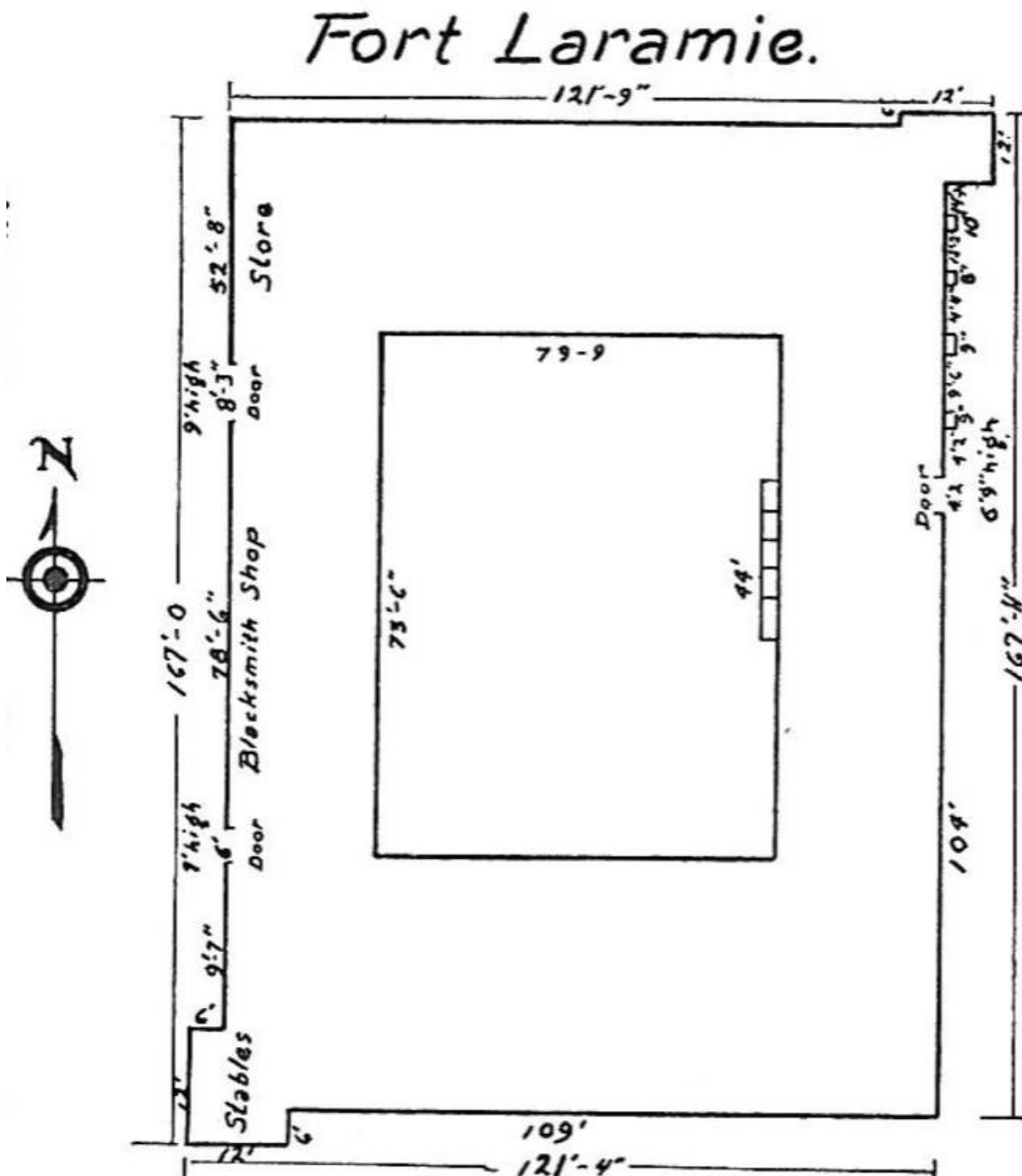
Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   1   Page  128 

Figure 9: Planview of Fort John (from the drawings in Thomas Bullock's Journal, Mormon Church Archives, Salt Laker City)



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

-----  
Name of Property

-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   I   Page  129 

---

Figure 10: Layout of Bissonette's Deer Creek Post (courtesy of Caspar Collins Papers, Colorado State University Archives, Fort Collins, Colorado).

