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ESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Contemporary observers described Fort Halleck as consisting of a collection of log structures, huts and dugouts flanking a small parade ground. Three minor streams ran through the grounds. These combined with the surrounding mountain meadows and the towering Elk Mountain in the background gave the site a very picturesque setting. Native materials from the nearby mountains were used in the post's construction and some of the structures were made by placing logs upright in the ground close together and then adding a sod roof. The majority, however, were the conventional low profile "log cabin" style. There is no evidence, based upon present available sources, that the Fort ever had a stockade surrounding it.

None of Fort Halleck's original buildings are definitely known to still be in existence but one small log building at the site is thought to have been either in use at the Fort or else constructed of leftover materials from one of the Fort's original structures.

Today, the site of Fort Halleck is used as a ranch headquarters by the Palm Livestock Company. A modern ranch house along with barns, corrals and various outbuildings occupy the original Fort grounds. This Company also owns and uses most of the area that comprised the Fort Halleck military reservation.

A stone marker is located in the abandoned Fort Halleck cemetery, now a hay meadow. The inscription on the marker reads "Fort Halleck, U.S. Military Post, July 20, 1862 - July 4, 1866. This monument was erected by the State of Wyoming and the Jacques LaRamie Chapter of the D. A. R. in 1914.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

Fort Halleck represents the single and strategic military establishment located along the transcontinental thoroughfare historically known as "The Overland Trail". The building of the Fort was prompted by the hostile Indian warfare existing on the Plains during the early 1860's and its primary purpose was to aid in keeping the line of transportation open between the East and the West.

At the beginning of the Civil War military strength in the West declined to a point that made it difficult and sometimes impossible to keep Indian depredations in check. Along the Oregon - California Trail the stages carrying the United States mails could not be taken through certain areas. Ben Holladay, proprietor of the Overland Stage line contracted to deliver the mail, appealed to the federal government to alleviate the situation. The decision was made to move the route south along a thoroughfare then known as the "Cherokee Trail" or "Bitter Creek" route. This roadway followed up the South Platte River, skirted the Medicine Bow mountains and then headed west across Bridger's Pass and on to Fort Bridger.

Fort Halleck was established about midway on the Overland at the base of Elk Mountain on the northern extremity of the Medicine Bow range. The Fort went into operation on July 20, 1862 at the same time as the stage line was being rerouted. Soldiers of Company A of the 11th Ohio Cavalry constructed the post and named it in honor of Major General Henry W. Halleck of Civil War fame.

The relocation of the stage route meant increased use of the Overland Trail by emigrants, freighters and other travelers. Dr. J. H. Finfrock, acting surgeon at Fort Halleck, recorded the passing in 1864 of 4,264 wagons, 17,584 men, women and children, and an estimated 50,000 head of livestock. Contrary to expectations the Indians harassed the users of the new route with the same vigor as elsewhere and Fort Halleck found itself in the center of the most dangerously threatened sector of the trail. From Fort Halleck troops of the 11th Ohio Cavalry and other volunteer units patrolled up and down the trail, both east and west, providing protection and escort. The soldiers experienced hard duty, Indian fighting represented an everyday hazard, and isolation, disease and the elements constituted additional hardships. On occasion the Indians managed to run off or capture all the livestock from the stage stations for several miles and in some instances pillaged and

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9.	MAJOR	BIBLIOG	RAPHICA	LRI	FEREN	CES									I	
	<u>Annals of Wyoming</u> , Vol. 33, No. 1, (Cheyenne: Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department, 1961) p. 97. Finfrock, J. W., <u>Diary</u> (Laramie, Wyoming, Western History Research Center, Coe Library, University of Wyoming).															
	Frederick, J. V. <u>Ben Holladay</u> , <u>the Stage Coach King</u> (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1940).															
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Form 10-300a (Dec. 1968)

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE										
Wyoming										
COUNTY										
Carbon										
FOR NPS USE ONLY										
ENTRY NUMBER DATE										
10.4.49 MD9										

Fort Halleck

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

8. Statement of Significance - page - 2

burned the stations. When this happened the Trail became impassable, civilians congregated at the Fort for protection and huge quantities of mail would accumulate, unable to be taken further. Such conditions required the loading of several large government wagons with mail and under heavy cavalry escort "running the gauntlet" through the disputed region.

The year of 1865 marked the high point of Indian disturbances along the Overland Trail. With the end of the Civil War and the increased migration to the Montana gold fields the scene shifted to the Bozeman Trail. The establishment of three new protective forts along this route diverted the hostile Indians attention northward. Fort Halleck was officially abandoned by the military on July 4, 1866. Captain Henry R. Mizner, Commanding Officer, dismantled the Fort and removed the usable materials and supplies to Fort Buford (later Sanders), a newly located post on the Laramie Plains established in anticipation of the forthcoming construction of a transcontinental railroad. The four year period in which Fort Halleck was in existence represented a critical time in American history. Although short-lived, the Fort filled a vital need in serving the interests of the United States government when maintaining contact with the Western states became an important consideration in the nation's survival.