

6-21-73

STATE:	Nebraska	
COUNTY:	Morrill	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	
	APR 24 1973	

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Court House and Jail House Rock

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
25 MO 201

**2. LOCATION**

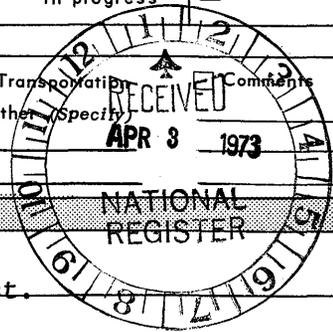
STREET AND NUMBER: Part of the E $\frac{1}{2}$  of Sec.19 & Parts of E $\frac{1}{2}$  of NE $\frac{1}{4}$  & NE $\frac{1}{4}$  SE $\frac{1}{4}$  Sec. 30 & E $\frac{1}{2}$  Sec.20 & NW $\frac{1}{4}$  & parts of NW $\frac{1}{4}$  & NE $\frac{1}{4}$  Sec. 29, T 19 N R 50 W

CITY OR TOWN: of SW $\frac{1}{4}$   
or 5 miles south of Bridgeport

STATE: Nebraska CODE: 31 COUNTY: Morrill CODE: 123

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)



**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Alta Seybolt Herbrick & others - see attached list.

STREET AND NUMBER:  
931 South 3rd Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Sterling STATE: Colorado CODE: 08

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
County Clerk, Morrill County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Bridgeport

CITY OR TOWN: Bridgeport STATE: Nebraska CODE: 31

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic Preservation in Nebraska and State Archeology Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1971 & 1939

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Nebraska State Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1500 "R" Street

CITY OR TOWN: Lincoln STATE: Nebraska CODE: 31

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Nebraska

COUNTY: Morrill

ENTRY NUMBER: APR 24 1973

DATE: APR 24 1973

FOR NPS USE ONLY

\* This nomination is located in the Third Nebraska Congressional District

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
(Check One)			(Check One)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Altered			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		
			<input type="checkbox"/> Moved		
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Court House and Jail House Rocks stand out in the valley because their superstructures, remnants of an ancient plateau which was bisected by the North Platte River, are isolated from the hills bordering the valley. Their tops are approximately 4,050 feet above sea level and some 240 feet above Pumpkin Creek, a near-by stream. The north slope is gradual up to the buttes; however, on the south side the cutting action of Pumpkin Creek has made the bluffs very impressive. In an oxbow of this stream there is a pleasant meadow where trees make an inviting camp site. There is evidence that fur trappers, Indians, gold seekers on their way to California and the Black Hills, and the military once camped in this bend. A little farther to the southwest along the Pumpkin Creek, there is located the remains of a Pony Express Station.

The rock composition of the promontories is to some extent affected by erosion, of course, but they should stand for a very long time. The area proposed for the National Register is the immediate Rock area, a portion of the overland stage and trail north of the Rocks, the Pony Express station at Pumpkin Creek, and a small portion of the ruts of the Sidney - Deadwood Trail.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**5. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal             | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic    | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | <u>Landmark on the</u>                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture            | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | <u>Oregon Trail</u>                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture           | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce               | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications         | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation           |   |  | _____   |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

From the days of Robert Stuart's trip down the Platte River in 1812, Court House and Jail House Rock have been significant landmarks mentioned by travelers following the North Platte Valley. By the time the Forty-Niners traversed the area, the huge rock-like promontories had been described in many terms - from the Castle to the Church to the Coffin. But Court House and Jail House were the most common names by which these landmarks were known during the immigrant period. These two butte remnants some 400 feet above the North Platte River have always been an awesome sight to the traveler on the Trail. This truly monumental national feature was only the first of several rock formations the pioneers were to see, whether they were following the north side of the North Platte River as did the Mormons in 1847, or whether traveling the south side from Ash Hollow as did many of the Forty-Niners. It was also the first great eminence which came into view near Dalton while crossing the Julesburg stretch from the south. This particular monument is mentioned in immigrant diaries second only to Chimney Rock fifteen miles westward, which appears in almost every diary.

There is a Pawnee legend concerning "Ti-wa-ra-, the god of Court House Rock, and a fight the tribe had with the Sioux here. There is also a Dismal River archeological site on the northwest flank of the natural monument.

In the southwest corner of the area nominated there are the remains of the Court House Rock Pony Express Station. This would be the first station west of Mud Springs. The Pony Express and the military generally went on this shorter route on the west side of the rocks, and it was later used by the Sidney - Deadwood Trail.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Harris, Earl R., "Courthouse and Jail Rocks: Landmarks on the Oregon Trail," Nebraska History, Vol. 43, No. 1, Lincoln, 1962.

Mattes, Merrill J., The Great Platte River Road: Nebraska State Historical Society Publications Vol. XXV, 1969.

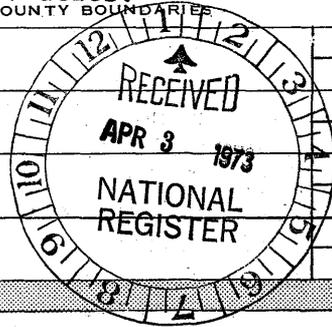
Mattes, Merrill and Henderson, Paul, "The Pony Express: Across Nebraska from St. Joseph to Fort Laramie," Nebraska History, Vol. 41, No. 2, Lincoln, 1960.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	41°	36'	47"	103°	07'	27"			
NE	41°	36'	47"	103°	06'	21"			
SE	41°	35'	15"	103°	06'	21"			
SW	41°	35'	15"	103°	07'	27"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: approximately 917 acres.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



NW 13/656290  
 4608 370  
 SE 13/657630/4605530  
 SW 13/656340/4605500  
 CD

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Carl Hugh Jones, Curator of Branch Museums

ORGANIZATION: Nebraska State Historical Society DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET AND NUMBER: 1500 "R" Street

CITY OR TOWN: Lincoln STATE: Nebraska CODE: 31

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: Morvin D Knott

Title: Director,  
Nebraska State Historical Society

Date: March 29, 1973

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert A. Utley  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 4/24/73

ATTEST:  
[Signature]  
Deputy Director  
Date: 4/13/73

## ACREAGE JUSTIFICATION

The 917 acres proposed in this nomination are necessary to project the environment of Court House and Jail House Rock, there being to the southeast of the area a golf course which preserves the green and prairie atmosphere and will not involve any modern structures. It will also protect the small portions of the trail from destruction. The area has not been under cultivation, except for part of the flat bend of the creek on the south side of the rocks.

It is felt that the trail ruts should be included, since they explain, in part, the significance of these two landmarks to the overland traveler.



Court House and Jail House Rock owners in addition to A. S. Herbrick

Leonard P. Reuter  
Bridgeport, Nebraska 69336

Sarah A. Laux  
c/o Harold Laux  
Bridgeport, Nebraska 69336

Harold Laux  
Bridgeport, Nebraska 69336

Sarah Kirk  
Bridgeport, Nebraska 69336

