

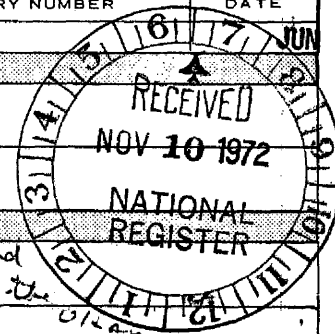
Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Washington	
COUNTY: Okanogan	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE



4 1973

1. NAME

COMMON:
Sites of Fort Okanogan

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: *N of Bridgeport between the Columbia and*
-N.W.-1/4, Sec. 17--(Site #1)-- N.W. 1/4, the

CITY OR TOWN:
Bridgeport near Sec. 21--(Site #2)-- Township 30N-- Range 25E-- Okanogan river

STATE: Washington CODE: 53 COUNTY: Okanogan CODE: 047

Bridgeport near

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input 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 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) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comments

Both sites are in a flood zone

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Washington State Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:
315 North Stadium Way

CITY OR TOWN: Tacoma 98403 STATE: Washington CODE: 53

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Okanogan County Assessor

STREET AND NUMBER:
Okanogan County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: Okanogan STATE: Washington CODE: 53

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
None

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

STATE: Washington

COUNTY: Okanogan

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Very little has been recorded about Fort Okanogan and most of what we know today is the result of archaeological investigation. Apparently, the first site consisted of only one or two buildings until the summer of 1816 when a group of men began to rebuild the post. They built a four-roomed house with a dining hall, two houses for the traders and trappers living at the post, a store house for furs and trading and a stockade. The 15-foot high stockade surrounded the post and had bastions on two corners. The upper floor of the bastions had loop holes in the wall for muskets and a light cannon was on the first floor. Later a blacksmith shop was added to the buildings.

Sometime between 1831 and 1837, the post was abandoned and rebuilt on the Columbia about a mile away. There were several reasons for the move. The landing site on the Okanogan was too shallow and the banks too steep. During the summer, dust and mosquitoes made life miserable and in the winter, the dust turned to mud that made the handling of heavy goods difficult. At the Columbia location, there was a good beach with a gentle ascent to the land and it was a natural ferry.

Today, both sites are located in a low-lying area and are periodically flooded by the back waters of the Wells Dam on the Columbia River. Both sites have been marked with poles which enable the public to view them from a distance at the Fort Okanogan Interpretive Center operated by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



SIGNIFICANCE

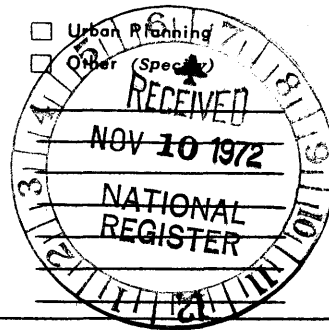
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1811 to 1860

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In the first half of the 19th Century, few ventures were more profitable than the fur trade. Otter and beaver furs sold for high prices in the Orient and beaver hats were fashionable in both Europe and America. By land and sea, American, British and Canadian traders came into the Northwest to take valuable beaver all over the world. Indians provided the majority of the pelts to the traders and post were set up in the wilderness to attract their trade. Not only was the fur trade an important business but it would figure prominently in securing the Northwest for the United States instead of Canada.

In 1811, David Stuart, a partner in the American Pacific Fur Company, headed up the Columbia with eight men. Forty-two days after leaving Astoria, they landed their canoes on the shore of the Okanogan River in Central Washington. Here they would establish Fort Okanogan (or Oakinacken as Stuart had it - spelling played a small part in the fur trade), the first American settlement in what is now the State of Washington.

The site selected was a good one. Located on a sand spit at the confluence of the Okanogan and Columbia Rivers, it was in the middle of a long established Indian trail that led from Oregon Northward to the Fraser River system in Canada. Canadian traders were well aware of the benefits of such a route. No doubt the Americans sought to tap some of the Canadian trade by establishing Fort Okanogan.

In September, the men built a small house of driftwood. The party dispersed and one man, Alexander Ross, spent the winter trading with the Indians. He kept a small store of trade goods in a cellar beneath the house. Trading was good; for trade merchandise amounting to about \$160.00 he received pelts valued at over \$10,000.

Although the Pacific Fur Company was doing well, it faced serious problems. They were low on supplies and the Canadian Northwest Company offered them rigorous competition. Another problem was the War of 1812. The conflict between the new

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

NOV 16 1972

NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE	Washington
COUNTY	Okanogan
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUN 4 1973

(Number all entries)

(significance)

American nation and Great Britain could only make the situation worse. In October of 1813, members of the Northwest Company came to Astoria with word that a ship had sailed from England, "a Frigate to take and destroy everything that is American on the N.W. Coast." Suitably encouraged, the Pacific Fur Company agreed to sell "their Establishments Furs and present Stock," including Fort Okanogan, to the Canadians.

Even after the Nor'westers bought out the American fur trade interests, they faced stiff competition. The powerful Hudson's Bay Company dominated Canadian trade. Formed in 1670, it still exists today. In the 1780's, the Canadians had organized their Northwest Company to face Hudson's Bay; but over the years, the fierce trade wars caused both companies to suffer. Since no one gained through the competition, the groups merged under the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821. With the merger, Fort Okanogan changed hands again.

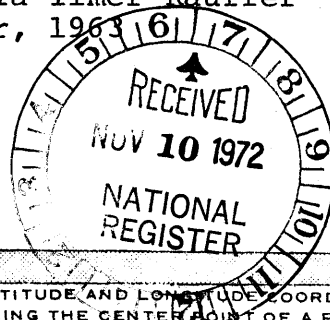
Apparently little changed at Fort Okanogan after it became part of Hudson's Bay Company. From 1826 to 1829, activity at the post increased. Buffalo hides were transshipped to Canada at this point after coming from the Plains, across the Rockies and down the Columbia. When the route for shipments was changed, Fort Okanogan declined again. A Hudson's Bay report relates that "Okanakan . . . is falling off and as a mere place of trade will not soon pay the wages of a clerk and two men."

In 1849, the International Boundary between Canada and the U.S. was extended Westward and Fort Okanogan along with other Hudson's Bay properties suddenly came within the confines of American territory. By agreement the Company continued their commerce. But the days of the fur trade were over. The great American migration that had begun with the trappers brought in settlers eager to homestead. A good beaver peltry needs wilderness to survive and there were few land-hungry Americans who were willing to overlook fertile farmlands for the benefit of the beaver. The styles that had caused the demand for beaver were no longer the fashion and the demand declined. In 1860, the Hudson's Bay Company abandoned Fort Okanogan and moved back into Canada.

The fort was stripped of everything of value and left to the elements. It was used as a temporary camp by Indians and miners passing across the bar. Gradual decay eliminated all signs of the posts, once important establishments in a complex and highly developed trading system.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

History of North Washington; Western Historical Publishing Co. Spokane, Washington, 1904; Sister Maria Ilmer Rauffer - Black Robes and Indians on the last frontier, 1963



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 Degrees Minutes Seconds	LONGITUDE Degrees Minutes Seconds		LATITUDE Degrees Minutes Seconds	LONGITUDE Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		48° 05' 59"	119° 43' 05"	
NE	° ' "	° Site #1				
SE	° ' "	° "				
SW	° ' "	° Site #2		48° 05' 18"	119° 42' 04"	

① 11/297620
5330750
② 11/299000
5329450
CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/2 acre for both sites.

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Robert M. French**

ORGANIZATION: **Okanogan County Liaison** DATE: **11/10/69**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Rt. 1**

CITY OR TOWN: **Okanogan** STATE: **Washington** CODE: **53**

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 Charles H. Odegaard
Charles H. Odegaard

Title Director - Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

Date 7-3-72

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

Robert M. Tuttle
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 6/4/73

ATTEST:
[Signature]
Keeper of The National Register

Date 5/31/73