

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Washington
COUNTY:	Yakima
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	JUN 27 1974

**1. NAME**

COMMON: Fort Simcoe State Park

AND/OR HISTORIC: Fort Simcoe

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: <sup>W</sup>  
38 miles southwest of Yakima on Highway 220

CITY OR TOWN: Yakima vic. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: #4 - Honorable Mike McCormack

STATE: Washington CODE: 53 COUNTY: Yakima CODE: 077

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input 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 type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME: Yakima Indian Tribal Council

STREET AND NUMBER: Fort Road

CITY OR TOWN: Toppenish STATE: Washington CODE: 53

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Yakima County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Yakima STATE: Washington CODE: 53

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey

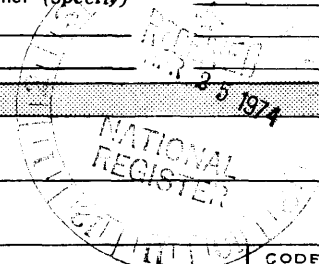
DATE OF SURVEY: 1933  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent     Good     Fair     Deteriorated     Ruins     Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered     Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved     Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Fort Simcoe is located on the Yakima Indian Reservation at a point where the bare Toppenish Plains meet the forest crowned foothills of the Cascade Mountains. The fort buildings are situated in a handsome, spring-fed oak grove which is surrounded by small hillocks covered with bunch grass, sagebrush and, depending on the season, wildflowers. This oak grove was an ancient gathering place of the Yakima Indians who called the area Mool Mool (Bubbling Water), after a still active spring. In this natural setting, the impression of Fort Simcoe's former remoteness is strikingly preserved today.

Fort Simcoe was begun in 1856 and vacated by the Army in 1859. Of the military structures built there, six remain and have been restored by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission: The attractive commanding officer's house which is listed in the Historic American Buildings Survey, three captains' quarters, a squared-log blockhouse located on a slight rise at the southwest corner of the fort, and a guardhouse which has been moved to the west boundary of the post. Three other structures, a barracks and two blockhouses, have been reconstructed on the original locations.

Gone, however, are the original barracks, warehouses, the lieutenants' quarters, the hospital, a small mule-powered sawmill, quarters for laundresses and servants, and three of the blockhouses. Likewise, most of the structures erected during the Indian agency phase of the fort's history (1859-1923) have been razed either by accident or intention. Some of the latter were removed in accordance with the fort restoration project carried out by State Parks in the 1950's.

The exteriors of the three captains' quarters and the commanding officer's house are of board and batten construction. Doors and windows, although sturdy and simple in design, are graceful in detail. Door panels are neatly beveled, and both door and window casings are handsomely trimmed.

The captains' quarters have rectangular panes or French windows, whereas the commanding officer's house has diamond shaped panes and a set of bay windows. All mullions are deep, thin, and slightly beveled.

The foundations of the buildings on officers' row are composed of locally dressed rock, and the fireplaces are lined with stone quarried near The Dalles, Oregon. The sills are of hewn timbers and the outside walls and some of the interior walls are filled with brick between the studdings for greater protection against the weather. Interior finishings vary; some rooms have plastered walls and doors, while others are done in wood.

The squared-log blockhouse has been reroofed several times and remains in good condition today after State Parks restored the building. This one-story structure remains at its original location. The old Army guardhouse has also been restored from the worn and dilapidated shell that it once was.

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#7 - Description  
Fort Simcoe State Park

Seven of the original Indian agency buildings also remain. Included among there are the brick commissary (now used as an interpretive center), a squat jail composed of sheet metal, an old shop, and four high gabled wood frame structures, three of which have been moved. All of these buildings were constructed around the turn-of-the century.

In the late 1930's, young Indian men in the Civilian Conservation Corps cleared the parade ground of an old agency orchard. Later, State Parks erected a replica of the flag pole at the original location.



**6. 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) 1856-59

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 type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Fort Simcoe was one of two regular Army posts established in the interior of Washington Territory as a direct consequence of the Yakima Indian War of the late 1850's. The other was Fort Walla Walla, located 120 miles further east. The Yakima War, the most serious of the Northwest Indian conflicts, erupted in the fall of 1855, when the Yakima, Klickitat, and other associated bands slew Indian agent Andrew J. Bolon in the Simcoe Mountains, killed several gold hunters, raided nearby settlements and fought off punitive Army columns. The immediate cause of the conflict was the disavowal by the Indians of a treaty relinquishing their lands to the government and the advent of miners into the region.

A year later, Colonel George Wright and the Ninth Infantry carried out a successful pacification march through the Yakima country. On the return journey, Wright noted that Mool Mool Spring was located strategically at the intersection of main trails. Thus, Mool Mool was designated the site for a new fort, and Major Robert Seldon Garnett was given the task of directing two companies in the construction of the post, beginning August 8, 1856.

The first quarters were of hewn pine logs cut on the hills behind the fort. The command lived in tents until the first barracks were completed in the cold December of 1856. Most of the construction materials were produced by the soldiers who built a brick kiln, a mule-powered sawmill and quarried rock nearby, but some items were brought in.

Garnett and Louis Scholl, a draftsman working out of Fort Dalles located sixty miles to the south, layed out and designed the fort. According to Scholl: "All doors, window sashes, mantels, bookcases, etc., for those far posts Walla Walla, Simcoe and Colville [the latter created to protect a U.S.-Canadian boundary marking expedition] were transported, some by packmule, but mostly by large six mule wagon trains" from Fort Dalles where the materials were prepared.

Although both Garnett and Scholl designed Fort Simcoe, Scholl was greatly influenced by the Gothic style of Andrew Jackson Downing as evidenced in the Commandant's House -- the pointed eaves, the narrow windows, and the steeply gabled porch roof. An illustration in Downing's The Architecture of Country Houses is undoubtedly the source for the Commandant's House. Scholl was a German who had emigrated to the United States with

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Culverwell, Albert. Stronghold in the Yakima Country: The Story of Fort Simcoe 1856-59. Olympia, Washington: State Parks and Recreation Commission, 1956.

Fort Simcoe State Park Heritage Site, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, n.d.

Gvie, H. Dean. Bugles in the Valley: Garnett's Fort Simcoe. Yakima, Washington: Republic Press, 1956.

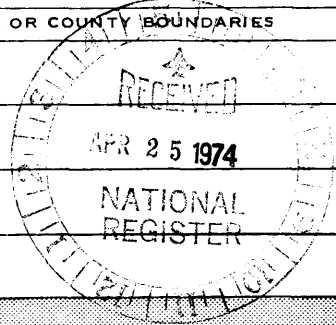
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES			
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE			
NW	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds		
NE	46 °	20	47 "	120 °	50	32 "		
SE	46 °	20	21 "	120 °	49	44 "		
SW	46 °	20	21 "	120 °	50	32 "		

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: ~~2.1~~ 140

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



**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Douglas M. Whisman, Historic Preservation Specialist**

ORGANIZATION: **Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission**      DATE: **May 21, 1971**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**P.O. Box 1128**

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

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

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. Odegard  
 Charles H. Odegard

Title Director - Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

Date April 19, 1974

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 6/27/74

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date 6-26-74

NW 1/4 666660 / 5134570  
 NE 1/4 667060 / 5134600  
 SE 1/4 667060 / 5133810  
 SW 1/4 666071 / 5132940

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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#8 - Significance  
Fort Simcoe State Park (1)

three brothers following a student rebellion against conscription in 1848. Scholl also served the Army as a clerk and guide, and later participated in the Civil War and the Nez Perce conflict, coming occasionally under hostile fire but always remaining in a civilian capacity.

By the summer of 1858, the major developments of the Yakima War had shifted to the Palouse country, located northeast of Fort Walla Walla. In May of 1858, a combined force of Spokane, Palouse, Coeur de Alene, and a few Yakimas defeated a command of 158 men under Colonel E. J. Steptoe. In taking retaliatory action, Colonel George Wright led 700 men north from Fort Walla Walla while Major Garnett simultaneously led a large column north from Fort Simcoe. Both commands met success in their respective areas of operation, and the Yakima War was brought to an effective end. During the period of hostilities, the Army had prohibited the advancement of white settlers into the interior, but after the cessation of the war due in large part to the vital role played by Fort Simcoe, restrictions on settlement were lifted. Cattlemen quickly entered the region and within a half-century this great natural wilderness disappeared under the advance of white civilization.

Fort Simcoe was barely completed before its usefulness as a military post ended. On May 22, 1859, Fort Simcoe was turned over to the Department of Indian Affairs, remaining an Indian agency until 1923. During the agency period, the agency staff occupied the former officers' quarters and the post lost its military atmosphere. The parade ground was plowed and planted as a garden, tended by boys of the school, and then, in 1861, as an orchard. Various of the military buildings were razed and replaced by frame structures. Three of the squared-log blockhouses disappeared; the one at the southeastern corner of the quadrangle was long used as an icehouse and finally chopped up for firewood. In 1949, fire destroyed the last of the barracks, the storehouse and subsistence storehouse of Army days.

The National Park Service considered acquiring the property for restoration during the 1930's but inadequate funds made such a move impossible. The first real attempt to preserve Fort Simcoe was begun in the fall of 1938, under the auspices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. That initial restoration enterprise was conducted with labor supplied from an Indian conservation corps forestry unit quartered in the old school buildings but it was halted by the outbreak of World War II. Due to that work -- the repair of some foundations, floors and roofs and repainting of exteriors -- the four residences comprising officers' row were still in relatively good condition when the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission acquired the property, although they were open and used as cow barns. But the last of the blockhouses -- squatting on a sagebrush rise at the southwest point of the quadrangle -- was hardly more than an almost-roofless shell.

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#8 - Significance  
Fort Simcoe State Park (2)

The basis for the present boundaries was laid in March, 1953, when the State Parks Commission effected a 25-year renewable leasing arrangement with the Yakima Tribal Council for 140 acres of the site. In 1955, with the authority of an act of Congress, the tribe leased the property and 60 adjoining acres to the state for 99 years. That new, long lease permitted the Commission to proceed with greater permanency of its investment. The lease agreement between State Parks and the Yakima Indians was negotiated on the basis that a reasonable and significant historical area would be included. The entire park is part of the area considered essential to the fort and is the only remaining portion of the original military reservation that has been given the protection of an historic site. As mentioned in Item No. 7, Description, the fort is located in a natural oak grove. Other than the grove, the area is open with only sagebrush cover. The full 200 acres provides a reasonable buffer to insure the retention of the original setting of the fort.

Fort Simcoe is significant not only for its importance as an early permanent military post in the state but also for its commendable structures, built in what was an area without settlement of any appreciable kind. A small dot of western civilization, it must have appeared as a cultural oasis during the 1850's. The appearance of a design from Country Houses marks the Commanding Officer's House as the oldest remaining example of Downing's influence in Washington.

