

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Wyoming	
COUNTY: Carbon	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70-4-49-0011	DATE 4/28/70

1. NAME

COMMON:
Bridger's Pass

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
SE 1/4 NW 1/4, Section 8, T. 18 N., R. 89 W., 6th P.M.

CITY OR TOWN:
Rawlins, Wyoming

STATE: Wyoming CODE: 49 COUNTY: Carbon CODE: 007

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/>	Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: Restricted <input type="checkbox"/>
Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/>	Private <input type="checkbox"/>	Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Object <input type="checkbox"/>	Both <input type="checkbox"/>	Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Government <input type="checkbox"/>	Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>	Comments <input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial <input type="checkbox"/>	Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	
Educational <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	Religious <input type="checkbox"/>		
Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME:
State Office, Bureau of Land Management, Department of Interior

STREET AND NUMBER:
P. O. Box 1828

CITY OR TOWN: Cheyenne STATE: Wyoming CODE: 49

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Bureau of Land Management

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE: 08

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: .9 acres

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Wyoming Recreation Commission, Survey of Historic Sites, Markers & Mon.

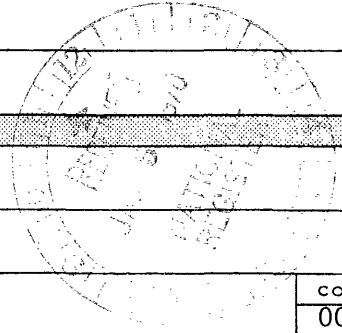
DATE OF SURVEY: Summer-Fall 1967 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Wyoming Recreation Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
604 East 25th Street

CITY OR TOWN: Cheyenne STATE: Wyoming CODE: 49

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE:
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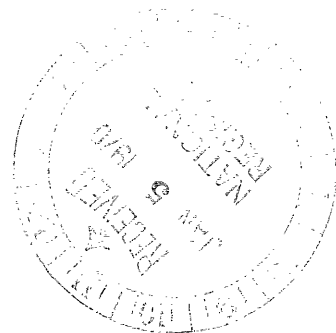
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Bridger's Pass is a geographic landmark located on the continental divide in southern Wyoming between the North Platte river drainage and the Snake river drainage. The headwaters at the Pass are Muddy Creek which flows west towards the Pacific slope and Sage Creek which flows east into the Atlantic's watershed. The terrain is gradual though hilly and covered with sagebrush, grasses and other vegetation native to the region. As one approaches the Pass, high ridges rise on each side gradually channeling the route of travel. The high surrounding ridges are covered with scrub pine and occasional stands of quaking aspen giving the vicinity a highly scenic quality. A county dirt road traverses Bridger's Pass following the same general course as the old Overland Trail. The site can be reached on improved roads by traveling south and west of Rawlins, Wyoming for twenty miles.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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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) 18~~50~~⁵⁰ - 1868

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry		<u>Overland Migration</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Bridger's Pass was second in importance only to South Pass as a major central passageway over the continental divide during the period of westward development and migration that occurred in the United States around mid-nineteenth century. The Pass was long considered a likely possibility for the routing of a transcontinental railroad system. For over six years the Overland Stage line traversed Bridger's Pass while providing United States mail delivery and transcontinental transportation between the Missouri River and the Pacific Coast.

It is not known when man first began to travel over Bridger's Pass. One discovery of prehistoric cultural remains in the immediate vicinity of the Pass was estimated through Carbon - 14 dating processes as being 11,000 years old. Although there is no proof it is reasonable to assume that the Pass was used for centuries by prehistoric peoples migrating over the High Plains. Since the early Western fur trappers customarily followed Indian trails it is also likely that the Pass received some usage during the period of the Rocky Mountain fur trade. In fact it was the noted fur trapper James Bridger that guided Captain Howard Stansbury and his men over the Pass in 1850. The Stansbury Expedition is the first organized body of white men known to have traveled through the Pass. Bridger had supposedly discovered the divide around 1842 or 1843 but its designation as "Bridger's Pass" cannot be traced back farther than the Stansbury report. No doubt Stansbury gave it this name in recognition of the services performed by his respected guide. The Stansbury expedition was sent out by the federal government in 1849 to explore and survey the valley of the Great Salt Lake. Returning east the following year the expedition stopped over at Fort Bridger, hired Jim Bridger as a guide, and then traveled across the Red Desert reaching Bridger's Pass on September 20, 1850. From Bridger's Pass the Stansbury party continued on to Fort Laramie thus ending their reconnaissance. Stansbury's report of his findings publicized the possibilities of an overland route through Bridger's Pass and contributed greatly to the use the Pass would later receive. The trail over Bridger's Pass became generally known as the Cherokee Trail, named after a group of Cherokee Indians who had passed through the region in 1849 on their way to California.

The great surge westward created by the California "gold rush" resulted in some emigrant travel over Bridger's Pass throughout the 1850's. In

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

_____, Senate Executive Documents, 2nd Session, 35th Cong., Vol. 2, No. 975 (Washington D.C., William H. Harris, Printer., 1859.) p. 52-56, 104-112.

_____, Annals of Wyoming, Vol. 33, No. 1, (Cheyenne: Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department, 1961).

Hafen, L. R. The Overland Mail 1849 - 1869, (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1926).

Root, F. A. and Connelley, W. E. The Overland Stage to California (Topeka, Kansas: Published by the Authors, 1901).

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	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		N41° 33' 2"	W107° 26' 0"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

13/29/69
4602000

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

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:
Bill Barnhart, Historian

ORGANIZATION: **Wyoming Recreation Commission** DATE: **Dec. 19, 1969**

STREET AND NUMBER:
604 East 25th Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Cheyenne** STATE: **Wyoming 82001** CODE: **49**

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

<p>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:</p> <p>National <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name <u><i>Paul H. Stessert</i></u></p> <p>Title <u>State Liaison Officer</u></p> <p>Date <u>December 19, 1969</u></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><i>Ernest Allen Connelley</i> Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date <u>APR 28 1970</u></p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><i>William J. Sturtevant</i> Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date <u>APR 2 1970</u></p>
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Bridger's Pass

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

8. Statement of Significance - page - 2

1856, Bridger's Pass became the object of another military reconnaissance. That year Lieutenant Francis F. Bryan lead an expedition west to determine the feasibility of establishing a road between Fort Riley, Kansas and the valley of the Salt Lake. Bryan moved his wagons through Bridger's Pass in August of 1856 cutting out a trail and making some improvements as he went. Having crossed the continental divide with wagons, Bryan had surmounted his greatest obstacle and considered his mission a success. He then retraced his route back over the Pass and returned to the Laramie Plains and into Colorado.

When a dispute developed between the United States and the Mormons in Utah the Bridger's Pass route again saw usage by the military. During this so-called "Mormon War" Col. A. S. Johnston, then wintering with his troops at Camp Scott near Fort Bridger, sent John Bartleston over Bridger's Pass to determine its desirability for use in moving troops from Fort Laramie. Leaving Fort Bridger December 1, 1857, Bartleston made the trip to Fort Laramie and noted in his diary the favorable qualities of the terrain. He concluded, "I think this pass is better than the south pass."

The military was not fully convinced of the advantages of the Bridger's Pass route over those of South Pass, however, the Bridger's Pass route meant saving a few miles and the next spring Johnston's reinforcements traveled over it on their way to Fort Bridger. Driving large numbers of mules and horses, units of cavalry and rifleman under the command of Captain Randolph B. Marcy crossed the divide in May of 1858.

After the "Mormon War" the Bridger's Pass route did not see any activity of great consequence until 1862. By this time the Civil War was in progress and military strength in the West was being depleted. Indian harassments increased to such an extent that the Oregon-California Trail became unsafe to travel and Ben Holladay's Overland Stage and Express Company was unable to make delivery of the United States mails to the West Coast. In hopes of avoiding Indian depredations a section of the Stage Line was relocated along a route that passed over Bridger's Pass. New stage stations were built at regular intervals along the new route. One station was located at Bridger's Pass, 922 miles west of the Missouri. Approximately ten miles to the east of Bridger's Pass Station was Pine Grove Station and ten miles to the west was Sulphur Springs Station. This section of the trail became one of the hardest hit as the Indians continued to harass the stage line operation culminating in the disastrous summer of 1865. In 1865 the Indians managed to completely disrupt stage travel, to destroy stage stations and other property, and run off all the company's livestock over a hundred mile stretch. The Indians also managed to kill a number of white men in their attacks. Bridger's Pass Station never came under direct seige by the Indians but it occasionally suffered from the loss of livestock and property. At times during the peak of Indian hostilities the station attendants deserted Bridger's Pass for the relative safety afforded by the Sulphur Springs Station.

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8. Statement of Significance - page - 3

Use of the Overland Trail steadily declined after the completion of the first transcontinental railway in 1869. Superseded by the railroad the Overland Stage Line was forced to suspend operations. Bridger's Pass thereafter was off the main stream of transcontinental movement. Today, the Bridger's Pass area serves local ranching interests and is relatively isolated from the modern world. A quiet atmosphere pervades the Pass with little suggestion of the exciting activity that prevailed a century before.

