

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	NOV 16 1976
DATE ENTERED	NOV 21 1978

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Red Rock

AND/OR COMMON

Red Rock

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 21, T17N, R94W

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Wyoming

VICINITY OF

CODE
56

First

COUNTY

Sweetwater

CODE

037

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Robert A. Stratton

STREET & NUMBER

520 Third

CITY, TOWN

Rawlins

VICINITY OF

STATE

Wyoming 82301

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Carbon County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Court House Building

CITY, TOWN

Rawlins

STATE

Wyoming 82301

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Wyoming Recreation Commission, Survey of Historic Sites, Markers and Monuments

DATE

1967; revised 1973

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Wyoming Recreation Commission, 604 East 25th Street

CITY, TOWN

Cheyenne

STATE

Wyoming 82002

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Red Rock is located in south central Wyoming, near the eastern Sweetwater County line, and about 50 miles southwest of the city of Rawlins. At an altitude of 6750 feet above sea level, it is within an area that, surprisingly to some, is called a basin. It is Washakie Basin and it is one-half of a compound depression stretching east to west from the Rock Springs Uplift to the Rawlins Uplift and north to south generally from the Green Mountains to the Sierra Madre Range. The topography of Washakie Basin and Great Divide Basin north of it is varied, but can generally be described as a semi-arid High Plains desert. In June, 1865 Samuel Bowles made a trip along the Overland Trail with Speaker of the U. S. House of Representatives, Schuyler Colfax, and left us his impression of the country through which he passed. The description that follows is one that he applied to the country west of the Continental Divide at Bridger's Pass, to the Green River and beyond.

The effect of the high winds and blowing sands and sharp rains of this region upon the soft rock and clay of some of these hills, is certainly very curious. These agencies have proved wonderful miracle-workers. Wind augurs Mr. Fitzhugh Ludlow called them, I believe; but some of his stories as to their performances are purely imaginative, and only excite ridicule among the mountaineers. But the tall, isolated rocks, that surmount a hill, sometimes round, but always even and smooth as work of finest chisel; the immense columns and fantastic figures upon the walls of rock that line a valley for miles; the solitary mountains upon the plain, fashioned like fortresses, or rising like Gothic cathedral, and called buttes (a French word signifying isolated hill or mountain), separated from their family in some great convulsion of nature; the long lines of rock embankment, one above another, formed sometimes into squares like vast fort, and again running along for miles, a hundred feet above the valley, looking like the most perfect of railroad embankment, with the open space occasionally for a water course;--these and kindred original fashions of nature, with details indescribable and picturesque, constitute the sole redeeming feature for scenery of the country I have been describing, and are a constant excitement and inspiration to the traveler.

Two prominent drainages of the Washakie Basin are Muddy Creek and Bitter Creek. The water of the former flows south toward the Little Snake River, to the Yampa, Green and Colorado Rivers and finally to the Gulf of Mexico. The water of Bitter Creek also flows eventually to the Gulf but the immediate direction of the flow, from a divide that separates Bitter Creek from Muddy Creek, is almost directly west for 70 miles to the Green River. The importance of a brief mention of the two streams is that they and their tributaries were utilized by man as an east-west route of travel.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1862-1869

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Red Rock is one of many historic sites located along the Overland Trail in Wyoming. The Overland Trail was the major, western transportation route in the United States between the years 1862-1869. However, archeological finds in the vicinity of the trail indicate it may have been used by aboriginals as early as 500 A.D., or possibly earlier. Archeological survey may reveal other sites and perhaps help lay the basis for a further understanding of the relationship between this Rocky Mountain-High Plains environment and human activity. Until the prehistory of the trail is better defined that understanding is limited mainly to the historic period.

The history of the Overland Stage Line begins in the early 1860's, but the traffic that passed by Red Rock before that time is less well-recorded. Washakie Basin, in which Red Rock is located, was inhabited by Indian tribes such as the Shoshone for years prior to visitation by the white man. Indeed, Washakie was the name of a great chief of the Shoshone who was a friend to the whites. It is not necessary at this point to detail the succession of tribes that lived and hunted in the Washakie Basin prior to written records, but it is likely that the land was visited and claimed by more than one tribe including the Shoshone, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Ute, and later the Sioux. Stories told by trappers and explorers suggest that the country on both sides of the Sierra Madre Range was an Indian battleground. It may be surmised that the country provided fine hunting and that battles stemmed from, among other causes, competition for hunting.

From 1812, when the Astorians under Robert Stuart crossed Wyoming from west to east along the route that was to become the Oregon Trail, to 1825 when William H. Ashley recorded his east to west expedition through Wyoming along a route that was to become part of the Overland Trail, the area around Red Rock was probably traversed by fur trappers in search of animals. One of the most distinguished of the mountain men, Jim Bridger, was possibly the first white man to blaze a path that later became a pioneer road called the Overland Trail.

The Ashley party was headed in the general direction of Washakie Basin and the Muddy Creek drainage, but turned north soon after crossing the North Platte River

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Addendum

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than ten acres ^{Less than} 1 acre (T.K. 5/8/77)

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,2	7,5,0	5,6,0	4,5	9,0	5,8,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		
C						

B						
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		
D						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mark Junge, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Wyoming Recreation Commission

DATE

February 7, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

604 East 25th Street

TELEPHONE

(307) 777-7695

CITY OR TOWN

Cheyenne

STATE

Wyoming 82002

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE X LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Paul H. Westcott

10-19-76

TITLE

Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

October 18, 1976

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: William Lebonch DATE 11/21/78

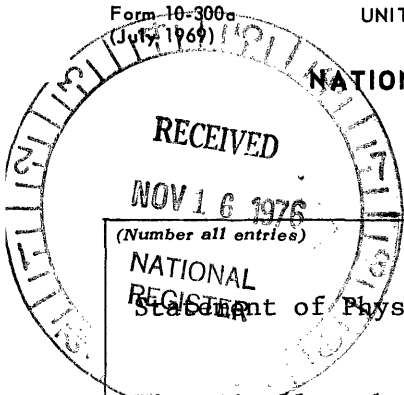
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE Nov 16, 1978

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Statement of Physical Appearance - 2

Historically, the most significant use of the route took place in the 1860's when it was known as the Overland Trail. From Duck Lake Station the Overland Trail leaves a wide, sparsely-vegetated flat of the Washakie Basin, and within five miles enters Barrel Springs Draw. Near the entrance to the draw, located a couple of hundred yards north of the trail and at the base of a low ridge that forms the north rim of the draw, is Red Rock. West of the rock the trail ascends Barrel Springs Draw for 15 miles, past Dug Springs Station, to a barely discernible divide that separates the Muddy Creek drainage from Bitter Creek drainage. Ferdinand V. Hayden crossed this divide in 1869 during his geologic survey of the territories. Moving east from the divide, Hayden encountered the conspicuous Red Rock, and referred to it in his narrative.

From Barrel Springs we descend geologically, the dip of the rocks being reversed, and the same beds rise to view that we saw in traveling eastward from Black Buttes. As we descend into the valley toward Duck Lake, the pinkish bed makes its appearance, and on the left of the road is an isolated mass of sandstone, about twenty feet cube, which forms a sort of landmark. Although this red layer is a conspicuous feature in this region for miles along the valley of the Muddy, yet this isolated mass is the only example of hardened rock connected with the red band in this region. There must have been some local cause originally for the greater tenacity of the cementing material in this restricted locality.

The Red Rock is one of several curious eroded rock formations which are landmarks along this stretch of the Overland Trail. About 20 feet high and 120 feet in circumference, the rock is not of monumental size of significance and is diminutive in size when compared with the height of the Man and Boy Buttes, or with the length of the ruggedly-incised Haystacks, that are west of Red Rock. Nevertheless, as Hayden noted, it stands apart clearly from its surroundings despite its lack of great size. The reason is that its color is so obvious. It is a whorl of sandstone whose color ranges from light pink to ochre to rust, depending upon the position of the viewer and depending upon the time of day and the season of the year. Thin streaks of lighter rock sandwiched into the predominantly red stone give it the appearance of a thinly-layered molded dessert. The elements of nature that exposed the rock have also sculptured it, giving it round, apparently smooth contours. But on closer inspection, it is a coarse sandstone, and granules of it are easily crumbled from its surface. The fine particles that have eroded from the rock over the years surround the rock, and contrast with the dull gray, or gray-green of adjacent soils.

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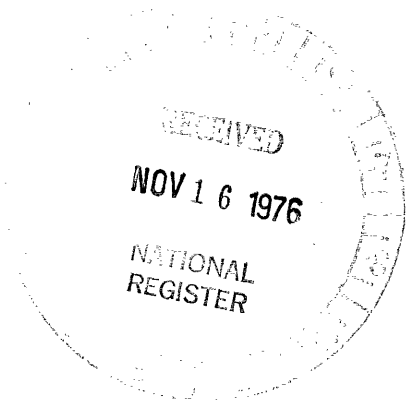
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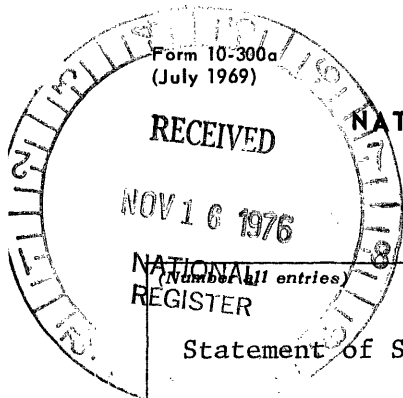
The windward or west side of the rock must have weathered considerably, as the names which were inscribed there are barely legible. The leeward or east side of the rock, less exposed to the wind-borne moisture and sand that is gradually eroding the landmark, still contains ~~names~~ of a dozen or so legible names of passing travelers, at least one of which dates to the 1850's. Three of the most noteworthy historical inscriptions are: E.E. White 1852; Fritz Langer 1862; and J.H. Jones 1862. More recent inscriptions indicate that carving upon the rock is a pastime that continues to the present day.



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Statement of Significance - 2

for the Green River. The 1843 exploring expedition of John C. Fremont took the same route as Ashley, and it was not until 1850 that an official description of the land west of Bridger's Pass, along Muddy Creek, was recorded by Captain Howard Stansbury. The Stansbury expedition encamped in North Barrel Springs Draw, and in the following excerpt from his narrative he records his observations as his command made its way along the draw toward Red Rock and the mouth of Barrel Springs Draw which he called "Red Gate."

Tuesday, September 17. — Our course to-day was up the east fork of Bitter Creek, about south 70° east, for eighteen miles, when we reached its head, ascending very gently to the dividing ground between it and the waters of Muddy Creek, an affluent of Little Snake River, which flows into the Yampah, about twenty miles above the entrance of the latter into Green River. Here we leave the valley of Bitter Creek altogether, having followed it from its mouth for seventy miles. On the level table forming the "divide" is a butte composed of sand and clay, a hundred and fifty or two hundred feet high, standing isolated and detached from the range of bluffs to the south and east of it, and to which, from its shape, we gave the name of "The Haystack." From this landmark we travelled in nearly an eastern direction, gradually descending, for six miles, to the valley of a small branch of the Muddy, to which we gave the name of "Bridger's Fork of Muddy," and encamped in its valley, although the water was so strongly impregnated with alkali that the animals drank it with evident reluctance and disgust.

The valley is here much cut off by abrupt gullies and ravines, formed by the wash from the hills, and in many places the ground is covered with a crust of impure soda to the depth of half an inch. The grass, since our noon halt, has been very scarce, and our poor mules have fared rather badly. Several buffalo were seen to-day, and one antelope killed. Our hunters are calculating largely upon the sport before us as we approach the buffalo range, and are much excited at the prospect of once more revelling in their favourite fare.

Three days later the Stansbury expedition crossed the Continental Divide at Bridger's Pass. Stansbury wrote that a most excellent route had already been traced down its eastern slope, one which presented fewer obstacles to the construction of either a wagon road or railroad than almost any tract of land of the same length. Eventually the expedition rounded the north end of Elk Mountain and the Medicine Bow Range, traversed the Laramie

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Statement of Significance - 3

Plains, crossed the Laramie Range at the head of Lodgepole Creek, and headed for Fort Laramie at the confluence of the Laramie and North Platte Rivers. In summary, the expedition was a success in that it managed to survey a shorter route from Salt Lake across the Rocky Mountains and Great Plains to the Missouri River. The savings effected on the new route between Fort Bridger and the eastern fringe of the Laramie Range was, according to Stansbury, sixty miles. In comparing the Oregon Trail to the newer trail Stansbury wrote:

...a careful observation of the ground on both routes has enabled me to form a general comparison between them; and has led to the unhesitating conclusion that, in point of diminished distance, easy grades, freedom from serious obstacles, and convenience and abundant supply of materials for construction, the line of this reconnaissance presents a trace for a road that is not only perfectly feasible, but decidedly preferable to the other.

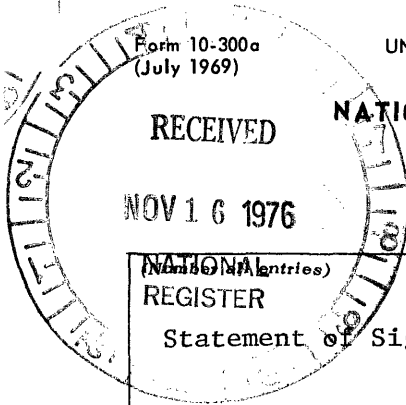
Although emigrants continued to use the Oregon Trail, Stansbury had explored the route that was to be used not only by covered wagons, but also stage-coaches, a transcontinental railroad, and eventually a major, interstate highway.

Growing concern for the Mormon settlement in Utah caused the government to take further action toward actual construction of a more direct route to Salt Lake from the Missouri River. In 1855 Congress appropriated \$50,000 for the construction of a Fort Riley-Fort Bridger road and the following year United States topographical engineer, Lieutenant F.T. Bryan, was authorized to make a reconnaissance of the route. Although Bryan was directed to determine a practical route over which troops and supply wagons could be sent to Utah, the possibility also existed that the route might eventually be used by the planned transcontinental railroad. The Bryan expedition that left Fort Riley on June 21, 1856 chose to follow the route used by Captain Stansbury in 1850, utilizing Bridger's Pass over the Continental Divide. But unlike the Stansbury expedition, at Bridger's Pass Bryan and his men were as far west as they desired to go. After crossing the pass on August 15 the mission was completed by establishment of the fact that wagon traffic over the Continental Divide along the new route was feasible. The Bryan party retraced their trail back over the divide they had crossed earlier in the day, headed eastward, and returned to Fort Riley on October 24, 1856. The following year Bryan and a group of laborers began work on the route, removing obstacles and grading the banks of streams at the wagon crossings, and two years later it was noted that the number of wagons using the newer route had begun to increase.

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It was in 1857 also that Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston, wintering his troops at Camp Scott near Fort Bridger, sent John Bartletson east over Bridger's Pass to determine the feasibility of moving troops from Fort Bridger to Fort Laramie via the Bryan road. Bartletson left Fort Bridger on December 1, 1857 travelled past the Red Rock on December 8, and on December 11 took his men through Bridger's Pass. Before he found Bryan's work, Bartletson discovered that the west side of the pass was not very desirable for wagon traffic, especially in winter. Nevertheless, on December 13 he was at the North Platte River Crossing and one week later, on December 21, Bartletson was at Fort Laramie. Upon examination of his itinerary by Jim Bridger and a certain Major Porter, it was found that the Bartletson party had unintentionally deviated from the original route taken in 1850 by Captain Stansbury. Despite that revelation, however, the need for a wagon road prompted Colonel Johnston to profess hope that the road could be constructed in the summer of 1858 from Fort Laramie southwest, up Lodgepole Creek, through the Black Hills (Laramie Range) at Cheyenne Pass and thence along the Stansbury route to Fort Bridger. Finally, in the spring of 1858 Colonel Johnston received reinforcements, which were sent from Fort Laramie to Fort Bridger. Driving large numbers of mules and horses, Randolph B. Marcy crossed Bridger's Pass in May, 1858.

During the period of largescale westward migration which was underway by 1841 travelers who passed through Wyoming were generally not persons who were interested in exploiting the agricultural resources of the "Great American Desert." They were headed for farms in the rich Oregon Country, gold fields in California, religious freedom in Utah, and later for the ore fields of Colorado, Nevada, Idaho and Montana. They generally passed through but did not settle in Wyoming, although the few who engaged in agriculture during those early years generally did so in order to supply thousands of emigrants headed west. As a consequence of the mass migration, by 1850 there had arisen a clamor for regular and dependable mail and passenger service to and through the Far West. The railroad was envisioned to be the answer to that clamor, but until that was accomplished an overland stage route was necessary. It was not until 1858 that a comparatively efficient mail service was established between the Mississippi River and the Far West. In that year the Butterfield Southern Overland Mail Company went into operation along a southern route. However, the 2,795-mile Ox Bow Route over which the mail passed every 18 to 24 days and later every week was not the shortest possible route to the Pacific Coast from St. Louis. A controversy that developed over the southern route was intensified by the advent of the irrepressible conflict. By March 1, 1861 seven states had passed secession ordinances and a southern confederacy had been formed. Northern fears of depredations upon the southern route

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helped establish the central route more firmly in the minds of congressmen who had been arguing that a central, as well as a southern route, was necessary. On March 2, 1861 the Post Office Appropriation Bill modifying the Overland Mail contract became law and on March 12 the Southern Overland Mail route was ordered discontinued. Beginning July 1, 1861 the already well-established Oregon Trail was adopted as the central mail route that extended from St. Joseph on the Missouri River to Salt Lake City and eventually Placerville, California. That September the point of departure was reestablished on the west side of the Missouri River at Atchison, Kansas, and mail service on the central route was also changed from a semiweekly to a daily schedule. Until 1862 the stagecoach line carrying the mail along the eastern portion of the route from Atchison to Salt Lake City was operated by Bela M. Hughes and was known as the Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express or the C.O.C. and P.P.E.

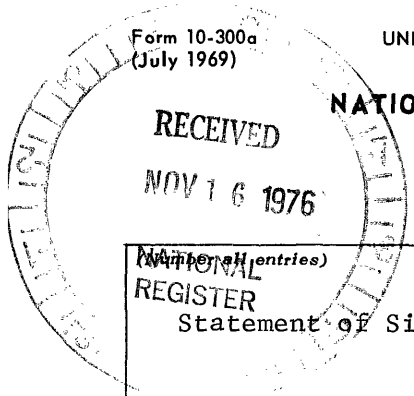
In March, 1862 the C.O.C. and P.P.E. experienced a reorganization when the stage business and United States mail contract was taken over by "Stagecoach King" Ben Holladay. Holladay renamed the company the Overland Stage Line, and by July, 1862 had abandoned the Oregon Trail through Wyoming for the Stansbury route further south. On July 21, 1862 daily mail and passenger service was inaugurated on the Overland Stage Line and the new central route soon became known as the Overland Trail. Thus was begun a short but exciting period in the history of American Transportation, lasting from 1862 to 1869.

There were several reasons for Holladay's substitution of the Overland Trail for the older, well-traveled Oregon Trail. For one, the American Civil War necessitated the withdrawal of troops from various forts in the West, leaving the Oregon Trail more vulnerable to attacks by Indians. The new route went through a sage-covered land where little grass grew, where there was supposedly therefore less game, but where there was an abundance of heavy sand and alkali water. Thus it was hoped the new route would be less susceptible to Indian attack since it was hoped the Indians would shun the area. Nevertheless, Indian attacks took place along the Overland Trail, especially that section from Atchison to Salt Lake City. Correspondingly, stagecoach fare was high, and the rate for the trip from Denver to Salt Lake was twice as high as that between Atchison and Denver. Another reason for adoption of the Stansbury route by Holladay was that the 1859 gold rush to Colorado had spurred economic development in that area of the Rockies, resulting in a demand for daily mail and stagecoach ser-

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vice to connect Denver with the main transcontinental line.* Finally, the route which had been used by Ashley, Fremont, Stansbury and others was adopted by Holladay because it was a shorter, more direct route between the forks of the Platte River in western Nebraska and the Blacks Fork River in southwestern Wyoming.

The Overland Trail split off from the older Oregon Trail near North Platte, Nebraska. From that point stages loaded with passengers and mail rolled along the south side of the South Platte River to Julesburg, Colorado and on to Latham(Greeley, Colorado) one hundred and thirty-five miles southwest of Julesburg. From Latham was a branch line to connect Denver with the main route, but the route west was from Latham up the Cache la Poudre River to La Porte(Fort Collins, Colorado).** From La Porte the trail headed almost directly north to the last station in Colorado at Virginia Dale. From Virginia Dale the trail was steep and rocky as it wound through the Black Hills(Laramie Range) to enter the Laramie Plains. The site of the first station in Wyoming, Willow Springs, is in the Laramie Plains near the present Tie Siding and not far from where the transcontinental Union Pacific Railroad enters the Plains from the east. At the next stop, the Big Laramie Crossing west of Fort Sanders(1866-1882) and present-day Laramie, the main overland route was joined by the Lodgepole Creek branch of the trail which came more directly west. The trail continues north over the wide expanse of the Plains, making stops at three stream crossings as it enters the foothills of the Medicine Bow Range: Little Laramie, Cooper Creek, and Rock Creek or present-day Arlington on Interstate Highway 80. Between Rock Creek Crossing and the next crossing at Medicine Bow

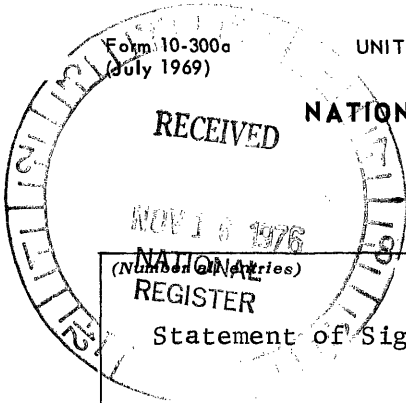
* Denver, by the Post Office Appropriation Bill of March 2, 1861 was given a tri-weekly mail but on September 3, 1862, two months after the adoption of the Overland Trail route, Holladay announced to a Denver newspaper that he had instructed his agents to change the route to include Denver on the line of the great mails.

**On December 2, 1864 Col. J.M. Chivington, headquartered at Denver in the Military District of Colorado, ordered Holladay to remove his stock from the Latham-La Porte route, and the Latham-Denver route to a cutoff route beginning at Fremont's Orchard about 30 miles east of Latham, and extending 70 miles southwest to Denver. The ostensible purpose of the move was the inability of Chivington to protect two routes.

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River, the trail advances west along the northern fringe of the mountains. Following the stop at Medicine Bow were those at Fort Halleck or Elk Mountain, and Pass Creek. Here the Overland Trail winds through Rattlesnake Pass, skirting Elk Mountain and northern end of the range, and heads west and somewhat south toward a crossing at a major river, the North Platte.

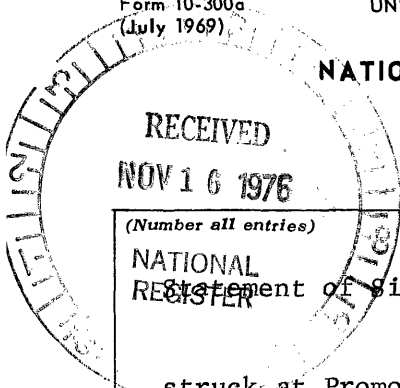
From the North Platte the Overland Trail follows a tributary- Sage Creek- from its confluence with the North Platte. The trail now commences a more direct western route past Sage Creek Station and Pine Grove Station as the long, gradual ascent up Bridger's Pass is begun. Just west of the Continental Divide is Bridger's Pass Station. The trail now enters the greater Green River Basin and finds Muddy Creek, following that branch of the Little Snake River down a narrow canyon to Sulphur Springs Station. The canyon of Muddy Creek opens into a wider, but roughly-dissected valley leading to a desolate region called the Red Desert. West of Sulphur Springs are three other stage stops in the Muddy Creek drainage: Washakie, Duck Lake and Dug Springs. West of Dug Springs the Overland ascends a low divide to enter the Bitter Creek drainage. From that divide Bitter Creek and its various forks carve a route to the Green River, along which stops are made at La Clede, Big Pond, Black Buttes, Point of Rocks, Salt Wells and Rock Springs. At Green River Station the Bitter Creek Valley is left behind, as the trail crosses another major watercourse. From the Green River the direction of the trail is northwest to Lone Tree Station on the Blacks Fork River and then west again, upstream, along the bend of the Blacks Fork to a junction of that river with the Hams Fork River. East of that junction is another junction, that of the Oregon Trail with the Overland Trail. From that point the two are merged as one trail and head west and south, and stops are made at Granger, Church Buttes, Millersville, Fort Bridger, Quaking Asp, and Bear River. Leaving Wyoming and entering Utah the trail is directed toward Salt Lake City and eventually Placerville, California.

Although the Overland Trail was used by aboriginals, trappers, explorers and emigrants prior to the establishment of the Overland Stage Line, and continued to be used by emigrants and settlers following the demise of the company, the days of transcontinental stagecoaching along its ruts were over with the completion of the railroad. By August 15, 1866 the eastern terminus of the mail line was changed from Atchison to Manhattan, Kansas when the railroad reached the latter place. Later that same year Ben Holladay disposed of his stage holdings and Wells Fargo took over the line in anticipation of perhaps half a dozen years of freighting prior to the completion of the railroad. It is said that the company lost heavily when the railroad was finished ahead of schedule. When the golden spike was

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

(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

NATIONAL REGISTER Statement of Significance - 8

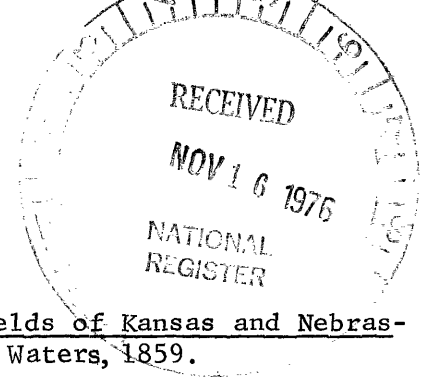
struck at Promontory Summit, Utah on May 10, 1869 the final note of trans-continental stagecoaching was also struck, and the Overland Stage Line was gradually replaced by another mode of transportation. The relative importance of the Overland Stage is succinctly described by historian Leroy Hafen:

The overland stage was shortlived, its days being numbered before it began. It was the last link between the old and the new, in overland transportation. Along with the buffalo and the roving Indian it lived its day and passed. But its services are not to be despised or minimized. For twenty years its record is interwoven with that of the development of the Trans-Mississippi West.

The Red Rock on the Overland Trail should be placed on the National Register. Although it is one of a number of places generally found along western pioneer roads where certain travelers paused to chisel, paint or otherwise leave names and dates, it is one of only a few such places along the Overland Trail. To the traveler on that trail it was and still is a landmark, or guidepost. To the historian it is a primary document that provides a written, albeit scanty, record of the past. The rock is not only a landmark and document, it is a physical monument to the Overland Trail, representing and evidencing a pioneer traffic that was a mid-continent mainstream. It was a traffic that not only carried the United States mail, but also stagecoach passengers, emigrants and freight. National Register status may enhance the possibility for preservation of the Rock, but also important is that National Register status is a recognition of the fact that it is a historic site, although one on a smaller scale than Register Cliff, Independence Rock and Names Hill on the Oregon Trail.

Perhaps archeological survey and exploration may yield more information concerning this curious historic site. That prehistoric visitation or habitation may be discovered in the immediate vicinity is not impossible, especially when one considers the unusual appearance of the rock. Red Rock is in private ownership, and it is not known if there are plans for stabilization of the inscriptions in its crumbling sandstone. The relative isolation of the landmark is probably the reason why more names have not been carved into it, although that isolation may be broken down in the future, as interpretive and recreational development take place along, or in the vicinity of the Overland Trail.

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