

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received JUN 30 1980
date entered SEP 4 1980

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Rock Fort Campsite

and/or common

2. Location

off I-80N

street & number Columbia River shoreline, between Bridge and Garrison not for publication

Streets extended

city, town The Dalles vicinity of _____ congressional district 2 4th

state Oregon code 41 county Wasco code 065

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: memorial

4. Owner of Property

name Honorable Rick Cantrell, Judge, Wasco County

street & number Wasco County Courthouse

city, town The Dalles vicinity of _____ state Oregon 97058

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Wasco County Courthouse

street & number 5th and Washington Streets

city, town The Dalles state Oregon 97058

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title The Dalles Historical Commission has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date October 3, 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records The Dalles Historical Landmarks Commission

city, town The Dalles state Oregon 97058

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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

The area containing Rock Fort campsite, and that which is proposed for nomination to the National Register, is a 5.5-acre wedge-shaped parcel in the angle formed by the southerly Columbia River shoreline and the northerly right-of-way line of Bargeway Road, between Bridge and Garrison Streets extended, in The Dalles, Wasco County, Oregon.

The property was conveyed to Wasco County for commemorative park purposes by the Union Pacific Railroad through the Union Pacific Land Resources Corporation on December 30, 1976. The gift, a Bicentennial gesture, was the culmination of years of effort on the part of local attorney Edgar M. Dick, who, with others, launched a campaign to identify, develop and commemorate Lewis and Clark's campsite at The Dalles. The celestial observations recorded in the journals of the expedition were reduplicated and verified at the U.S. Naval Academy and Naval Observatory. In 1974 a special sub-committee of the Oregon Lewis and Clark Trail Committee had been formed to investigate documentary evidence and provide final authentication of the location of Lewis and Clark's "Rock Fort." A bronze tablet commemorating the historic expedition which used the site in 1805 and 1806 was mounted in a stone cairn near the center of the site and dedicated with due ceremony on October 22, 1977--nearly the 172nd anniversary of the expedition's first appearance at the setting.

The shoreline site is a shallow bowl, or depression on a rocky ledge, well above water grade, around the perimeter of which outcroppings of basalt form low palisades, or a natural "fortification." The rocky site supports sparse vegetation, chiefly native grasses.

A small parking area has been provided under public auspices adjacent to the site, and a pathway ascends from the frontage road to the marker. The only intrusion into the otherwise undisturbed site is a guyed power pole which is scheduled for removal in the future by the local Public Utility District. The site offers an unimpeded view of the Columbia River and the rugged geologic formations of its northerly shore and, to the east, Port of The Dalles facilities and the city spreading out to the south and east. The site lies immediately north of the transportation corridor containing the Union Pacific Railroad, Interstate Highway 84, and Bargeway Road--the access road to local port facilities. The area was modified slightly during construction of the Interstate Highway, which required excavation along the southerly edge of the site.

During the time that the Union Pacific Railroad was encouraged to deed the property containing Rock Fort campsite to a public entity, the Oregon Lewis and Clark Trail Committee was called upon to assist in authentication of the site. Accordingly, a special subcommittee was formed to review evidence and submit its findings to the Wasco County Court--the prospective trustee. Members of the subcommittee were as follows: Mrs. Nicky Tom, resident of The Dalles; Irving Anderson, author of articles on the Sacagawea burial place controversy and inspiration of the Charbonneau Memorial in Malheur County, Oregon (a National Register property); Robert Lange, past president of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc., and editor of the Foundation's quarterly publication We Proceeded On; Millard McClung, Associate Director of the Oregon Historical Society; and E. G. Chuinard, past president of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc., long-time chairman of the Governor's Oregon Lewis and Clark Trail Committee, and author of the well-known monograph Medical Aspects of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (Friends of the Library, Oregon State University, 1965).

Evidence supporting authenticity of the site enumerated by the subcommittee included:
1) conformity of topography with Captain Clark's sketch map of the mid-Columbia River showing

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the location of "Fort Camp;" 2) the relationship of the site to the original mouth of Quenett, or Mill Creek prior to rechanneling of the creek's entrance into the Columbia; and 3) the pictorial record of the site prior to inundation of the shoreline by the Bonneville Dam impoundment. The site was first photographed, apparently, by Olin D. Wheeler and published in Wheeler's The Trail of Lewis and Clark (New York: Putnam, 1904). The photograph appearing on page 159 of Volume 2 of Wheeler's book shows the sandy beach at the base of the point of rocks on which the expedition landed the canoes. This location was just below the entrance to Quenett Creek, which provided fresh water for the encampment. Owing to Captain Clark's references to weather conditions and faulty operation of the chronometer, the subcommittee felt that the well-preserved and distinctive topography was a more reliable basis for identification of the site than celestial observations.

The special distinction of the site was underscored by E. G. Chuinard in his address to the Third Annual Oregon-Washington Lewis and Clark Symposium at The Dalles on October 4, 1975. Dr. Chuinard pointed out that "most of the Oregon Lewis and Clark campsites along the Columbia River have been destroyed, and Rock Fort is essentially the only one remaining above Bonneville Dam."

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400-1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500-1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600-1699	___ architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/
___ 1700-1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ humanitarian
XX 1800-1899	___ commerce	XX exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
___ 1900-	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates 1805, 1806

Builder/Architect

1805: Expedition arrived Oct. 25; departed Oct. 28. 1806: arrived April 15; departed April 18
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The epoch-making expedition led by Lewis and Clark across the continent to the Pacific Ocean and back between 1804 and 1806 spent six months--nearly a quarter of the two-year mission--on the Columbia River between Washington and Oregon. Of the eighteen different campsites on the south, or Oregon shoreline--all of them recorded in the journals of the expedition--"Rock Fort," or "Fort Rock" campsite at The Dalles is, next to the winter headquarters known as Fort Clatsop, the most readily located because of its situation in a distinctive formation sufficiently elevated above water level to have escaped the impact of floods and hydroelectric improvements. As a National Memorial, Fort Clatsop at the mouth of the Columbia is listed in the National Register. Rock Fort campsite is the only other site associated with the Lewis and Clark expedition in Oregon--other than the salt cairn site on the coast--to have been proposed for nomination to the National Register to date. It is significant among camp areas on the Lewis and Clark Trail in Oregon for the unusual extent of its use by the expedition (6 nights in all); and because it has been reliably located on the basis of celestial observation and topographic evidence, and because it has remained undisturbed, for the most part, to the present day.

On October 25, 1805, after having negotiated two extensive rapids on the Columbia, the expedition made camp in the bowl of a fort-like outcropping just downstream from the mouth of Mill Creek at present-day The Dalles. The expedition spent two days and three nights at this spot during the outgoing journey, taking advantage of fair weather to take celestial observations, caulk battered canoes and dry river-soaked stores. Hunting parties following Mill Creek (which Lewis and Clark named "Quenett" after Indian usage) into the foothills of the Cascade Range to the southwest found the first game to vary the expedition's diet since entering Oregon. On October 26 the expedition was visited by chiefs of Chinookan tribes from the Washington shore of the Columbia. The two chiefs were given medals and assorted other presents by the co-commanders as a customary gesture of good will. The expedition camped three nights at Rock Fort again on the home-bound journey, April 15-17, 1806, and once again was visited by people from Chinookan villages at the Great Narrows, which came to be called "Les Grandes Dalles" by voyageurs who arrived on the Columbia after Lewis and Clark.

The campsite at the foot of the Great Narrows is described as follows in the journals of the expedition.

October 25th

...At five miles from the large bend we came to the mouth of a creek 20 yards wide, heading in the range of mountains which runs SSW and SW for a long distance, and discharging a considerable quantity of water; it is called by the Indians Quenett. We halted below it under a high point of rocks on the left; and as it was necessary to make some celestial observations, we formed a camp on top of the rocks. This situation is perfectly well calculated for defense in case the Indians should incline to attack us, for the rocks form a sort of natural fortification, with the aid of the river and creek; it is also convenient to hunt along the foot of the mountains to the west and southwest, where there are several species of timber which form fine coverts for game.1

9. Major Bibliographical References

Coues, Elliott, ed. History of the Expedition Under the Command of Lewis and Clark (New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1965) Vol. 2, pp 669-673; Vol. 3, pp 950-953. 721
 McArthur, Lewis A. Oregon Geographic Names (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1974) p. 722
 "'Rock Fort'" Campsite Marker Installed at Authenticated Location, The Dalles, Oregon" We
 Proceeded On. The official publication of the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation,
 (see continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property 5.50 acres
 Quadrangle name The Dalles South, Oregon-Washington Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>0</u>	<u>6</u> <u>4</u> <u>1</u> <u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>	<u>5</u> <u>0</u> <u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>7</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property is located in SW ¼ SW ¼ Sec. 34, T2N, R13E, W.M., in The Dalles, Wasco County, Oregon. Legally described as T.L. 1500, the 5.5-acre property's metes and bounds description is given on the following continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

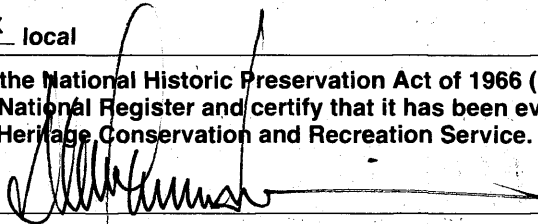
name/title Gladys Seufert (with editorial additions by Elisabeth Walton Potter and E.G. Chuinard, Chairman, Oregon Lewis & Clark Trail Committee)
 organization The Dalles Historical Landmarks Commission October, 1979
 street & number 913 Laughlin Street telephone 503/296-3979
 city or town The Dalles state Oregon 97058

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

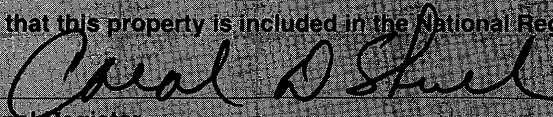
national state local

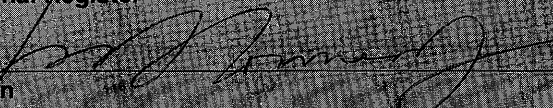
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy SHPO date June 16, 1980

For HCERS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

 date 9-4-80
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest:  date 9-2-80
 Chief of Registration

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April 15th

...At three in the afternoon we came to the mouth of Quinett creek, which we ascended a short distance, and camped for the night at the spot we had called Rock fort.²

The significance of the expedition led by Lewis and Clark to Oregon and to the nation as a whole is expressed in the following excerpts from the Lewis and Clark Trail pamphlet published by the Oregon State Highway Department in 1967.

The pioneer United States exploration of uncharted territory extending to the Pacific was authorized by Thomas Jefferson, far-seeing third president of the new republic. In 1803, when the Louisiana Purchase placed under United States ownership a vast region stretching from the Mississippi to the Rockies, President Jefferson speeded his plans to find the best water communication from the Continental Divide--roughly the boundary of United States territory--to the Pacific Ocean. The expedition successfully led across the continent from Missouri and back between 1804 and 1806 would eventually enhance the United States claim to the Oregon country. It paved the way for the first settlement--Astoria, the Pacific Fur Company Post of 1811.

It was a Yankee trader, Robert Gray, commanding the Columbia, who had discovered the great river of the west in 1792 and named it for his Boston ship. Five months later British explorer William Broughton, one of Captain Vancouver's lieutenants, had sailed up the river, designating landmarks as far inland as the Willamette Valley. It was for Lewis and Clark to complete the act of discovery as they made their way down the Columbia in the Fall of 1805.

Making up the thirty-three member Corps of North Western Discovery were US Army regulars hardy backwoodsmen, skilled hunters and boatmen, and interpreters. Meriwether Lewis (1774-1809) and William Clark (1770-1838) commanded the mission. Lewis, the President's private secretary, chose for co-commander his friend Clark, a militia captain under whom he had once served on the Ohio frontier. Both were experienced army officers and woodsmen. Clark was a deft cartographer, and Lewis had a naturalist's instincts. Captain Lewis prepared for the expedition with the leading men of science in Philadelphia, studying techniques of mapping and natural science, and reviewing the findings of previous explorations and circumnavigations.

The Corps passed the rainy winter months of 1805-1806 in their camp near the mouth of the Columbia. Named for the neighboring Indian tribes, Fort Clatsop offered a convenient lookout to which building timber, game, and a source of producing salt were readily available. The respite was used to bring the notes and journals up to date and to prepare clothing and firearms for the return trip.

At Fort Clatsop Captain Clark completed a preliminary map of the country through which the expedition had passed since leaving the Mississippi. In so doing, he noted that the Corps had succeeded in their mission to locate and chart "the most practicable and navigable passage across the Continent of North America." In addition to the charts and maps which would prove basic to the nation's frontier defenses and to future overland expeditions and migrations, Lewis and Clark carefully recorded topographical features and noted plants and animals encountered en route.

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Lewis and Clark had been instructed to confirm and correct the observations of the outgoing trip during the journey back to the United States. This proved a judicious policy as it was in traveling up river in the spring of 1806 that the expedition learned they had missed the mouth of the Willamette. During a brief side trip into the entrance of this major tributary, the explorers learned of another Cascade peak, Mt. Jefferson, which they named in honor of the President.

Oregon grape, the state flower, and Oregon maple were among the species of flora new to science discovered by the expedition. Lewis and Clark also returned with significant information about the Indian population--their languages, physical characteristics, and traditions. The expedition reached the point of departure near St. Louis in September, having spent six months--nearly a quarter of their two years' mission--on the Columbia between Washington and Oregon.³

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- 1 Coues, Elliott, ed., History of the Expedition under the Command of Lewis and Clark (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1965), Vol. 2, p. 669.
 - 2 Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 950.
 - 3 Lewis and Clark Trail in Oregon. Prepared by the Oregon State Highway Department for the Lewis and Clark Trail Commission, Salem, Oregon, 1967. (text by Elisabeth Walton).

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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- Inc., Vol. 4, No. 1 (February 1978), 10.
- Lewis and Clark Trail in Oregon (pam), Oregon State Highway Department, Salem, OR, 1967.
- Report of Visit to Rock Fort at The Dalles on October 24, 1974, by a subcommittee of the Oregon Lewis and Clark Trail Committee: Mrs. Nicky Tom, Irving Anderson, Robert Lange, Millard McClung, and E.G. Chuinard. 3 pages. Confirms authenticity of the traditionally recognized site. Adopted by full Committee and transmitted to Wasco County Court.
- Chuinard, E. G., "The Expedition's 'Rock Fort' Campsites." Address to the Third Annual Oregon-Washington Lewis and Clark Symposium, October 4, 1975, The Dalles, Wasco County, Oregon.
- "Preservers Eye Site on Lewis-Clark Trail," Oregon Journal (October 6, 1975).
- "Historic Site Deserves Protection," Oregon Journal (October 10, 1975).

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A parcel of land situated in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 34, Township 2 North, Range 13 East of the Willamette Meridian, in Wasco County, State of Oregon, bounded and described as follows:

Commencing at the NW corner of Section 3, Township 1 North, Range 13 East, of the Willamette Meridian, which corner is 428.44' distant easterly from the SW corner of said Section 34; thence along the westerly line of that certain parcel of land conveyed by Oregon Steam Navigation Company to Oregon Railway and Navigation Company via Deed dated March 31, 1880, recorded in Book G, page 197, of the Deed Records of said county, north 10° 30' west, a distance of 260.0', more or less, to the true point of beginning, said point also being the northwesterly corner of that certain parcel of land conveyed by Union Pacific Railroad Company to the State of Oregon, by and through its State Highway Commission, identified as parcel No. 16, via warranty deed dated February 27, 1967, UPRR Co. LSDA, No. 3428; thence continuing along said westerly line, north 10° 30' west, a distance of 320.1' more or less, to the most southerly corner of that certain parcel of land conveyed by the Union Pacific Railroad Company to the United States of America by a donation dated January 31, 1963, UPRR Co., LSDA No. 3160; thence along the southeasterly line of said deeded parcel, north 34° 14' east, a distance of 130' more or less, to the meander line of the left bank of the Columbia River; thence southeasterly along said left bank to a point on the south line of said Section 34; thence along said south line, west, to a point on the northerly right-of-way line to said parcel No. 16, said point also being 80' distant northeasterly, measured radially from the center line of Frontage Road as described in said parcel No. 16; thence northwesterly along the northerly right-of-way line of said parcel No. 16 and concentric with said center line of Frontage Road to a point opposite Roadway Survey Station "FR" 19 + 25.51 p.c. in said center line of Frontage Road; thence continuing along said northerly right-of-way line of said parcel No. 16 north 86° 31' 14" west to the true point of beginning.