

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 29 1985

date entered SEP 26 1985

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

1. Name

LR 698

historic Virginia Dale Stage Station

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number Off Highway 287 n/a not for publication

city, town Virginia Dale n/avicinity of

state Colorado code 08 county Larimer code 069

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Virginia Dale Women's Club c/o Mrs. Forrest Moen, President

street & number --

city, town Virginia Dale n/avicinity of state Colorado 80548

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Larimer County Courthouse

street & number 200 West Oak Street

city, town Fort Collins state Colorado

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date Ongoing federal state county local

depository for survey records Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

city, town Denver state Colorado

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Virginia Dale Stage Station, a remarkably intact log building of piece-sur-piece construction, is located in the foothills of the Rockies in northern Colorado near the Colorado-Wyoming border. The long, one-story hewn log structure sits atop a knoll on the north side of a road which once served as the historic Overland Mail route. The rural landscape of the area has experienced little change since the construction of the station in 1862.

The station is a three-part composition with vertical posts separating each section and into which the end logs are mortised. The east and center units are clapboarded and were originally covered by an open shed-roofed porch. At some point in the 1920s the open porch was enclosed when the building was used as a general store. By 1942 the porch had been removed.¹ The west end section, with the hewn logs exposed, originally had a shed addition of vertical boards which projected approximately the depth of the open porch.

Openings on the front (south) wall include an entrance with a board and batten door in the west section; an offset door in the center unit with a pair of double one-over-one windows to the side; and a door in the east end with a one-over-one window to the side.² The bays have plain surrounds except for triangular pediments which embellish all bays but the door in the west unit. The top log plate is pinned with pegs and spliced in the middle just above the center door.

The gabled east end features a parapet wall that extends above the slope of the roof to just below the roof peak. The corner posts contain a continuous mortise which still show the marks of the housewright's T-auger. The existence of the parapet in combination with the continuous mortise facing the exterior suggests that a two-story addition was planned for the east wall at the time of construction. However, historic photographs verify that the addition never materialized.

A large stone chimney is attached to the east wall with a six-over-six pane window to the side. The window has a plain surround with a triangular pediment. Historic photographs reveal that the stone rubble in evidence around the base of the chimney was present at the period of construction.

The features of the rear (north) wall are obscured by rolled siding applied in the early 1960s as a protective measure to prevent snow from blowing in during the harsh winter months. (The chinking had eroded, leaving gaps between the logs.) Only one window is now visible from the exterior. However on the interior, all the original bays are evident and have only been boarded over or nailed shut. In addition to the window in the west end of the north wall are one window and a door in the center section and one door and one window in the end east unit. Both doors are board and batten. On the west end wall is a door leading into the shed addition.

The exterior of the west wall is also covered with rolled siding and has a small shed addition attached.

The interior is composed of one large open room with exposed log walls. Remains of white wash can still be seen in some areas. A woodstove is placed in the center of the room and makes use of the brick chimney. Known alterations to the interior

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include the lowering of the ceiling and the reconstruction of the brick fireplace on the east wall.

There is an original cellar under the east third of the station with access only through a doorway below grade on the front side of the building. A board and batten door covers both the opening to the stairway leading to the cellar and the cellar door itself. The cellar stairway and the cellar walls are of stone. The south cellar wall was reinforced with concrete in 1984 when the sill log was repaired and realigned. Other features of interest visible in the cellar include floor joists sawn on a reciprocal sawmill.³

The surrounding area remains rural, as it was in the mid-19th century. The only new construction in view from the station is a farm complex to the immediate east. However, it is of a use consistent with the nature of the nominated resource and does not detract from the historic setting of the station. A large barn built c.1862 to the front of the station has been relocated to the newer farm complex.

¹The dates were ascertained by historic photographs.

²An early painting shows six-over-six pane windows on the front wall; however it was probably an oversight by the painter.

³The reciprocal sawmill was in common use in the early 19th century to around 1840 when it was replaced by the circular sawmill. Therefore the sawyer of the lumber for the station was using a mill equipped with what was then (1862) antiquated machinery. It is the only example of reciprocal sawn lumber in an historic building identified to date in the state.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1862 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Built in 1862, the Virginia Dale Stage Station is important for its direct association with the Overland Mail route, a transportation system of national significance in the mid-nineteenth century; and for its architectural interest as a building designed purposely for use as a stage station as well as being one of the outstanding examples of piece-sur-piece log construction in the state.

An event of major consequence to the settlement and development of the West was the establishment of regularized mail service to the region in 1858. Up to that time, mail had been conveyed to points west by private companies under federal contract, using various routes. However, the service was not always dependable nor speedy. Congress addressed the problem in March 1857 with the passage of legislation that authorized the Postmaster General to accept bids "for the conveyance of the entire letter mail from such point on the Mississippi river as the contractors may select to San Francisco, Cal., for six years, at a cost not exceeding \$300,000 per annum for semimonthly, \$450,000 for weekly, or \$600,000 for semi-weekly service."¹

John Butterfield and Company secured the contract and organized the famous Overland Mail. On the Butterfield line, Concord coaches, carrying both mail and up to nine passengers, operated between St. Louis and San Francisco, following the southern route favored by the Postmaster General (the route being roughly from St. Louis to Ft. Smith, Arkansas; through Texas; to Ft. Yuma, California; to San Francisco). The distance totaled 2,729 miles, which was traveled on the average of twenty-five days.² On the arrival in St. Louis of the first Overland Mail from San Francisco, President James Buchanan sent Butterfield his congratulations: "It is a glorious triumph for civilization and the Union. Settlements will soon follow the course of the road, and the East and West will be bound together by a chain of living Americans which can never be broken."³

With the outbreak of the Civil War in April 1861, it became necessary to shift the mail route northward into states held by the Union. Mail service over the new central route was subsequently increased to six times weekly to and from California. The route extended from Atchison, Kansas and followed the Oregon Trail to Fort Bridger, Wyoming and the Mormon Trail to Salt Lake City where it connected with California stages.⁴

In July 1862 alterations were made to the route to avoid problems caused by Wyoming's winter weather and Indian disturbances. The new line left the Oregon Trail at Julesburg, Colorado and ascended the South Platte to Latham, near Greeley. There it forded the river to Greeley and ascended the Cache LaPoudre River to LaPorte. From that point the Overland followed the Cherokee Trail through the foothills of the Rockies of northern Colorado to Bridger's Pass in Wyoming's Rockies and rejoined the

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3 acres

Quadrangle name Virginia Dale Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	3	4	6	9	3	8	0	4	5	3	5	7	4	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

1	3	4	6	9	3	0	0	4	5	3	5	5	4	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

1	3	4	6	9	1	8	5	4	5	3	5	6	4	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

1	3	4	6	9	2	5	0	4	5	3	5	7	3	5
Zone			Easting					Northing						

E

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at the NE corner of the station, the boundary extends N 75'; turns eastward and extends 250' to the E edge of what was once the Overland Trail; turns and extends in a southwesterly direction 300' to the outer edge of the circular access road to the

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

state	NA	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gloria Mills, National Register Coordinator

organization Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation date June 1985

street & number 1300 Broadway telephone 866-4681

city or town Denver state Colorado

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Barbara Sudler

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 8-13-85

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

[Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the National Register date 9/26/85

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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Oregon Trail at Green River, Wyoming. The Overland extended on into Utah and Nevada, terminating at Fort Sutter/Sacramento.⁵

One of the stations established along the alternate route--and the first division point northwest of Denver--was Virginia Dale, located some forty miles northwest of Fort Collins. The first agent assigned to the station was Joseph A. "Jack" Slade, who had been transferred from the North Platte route. Slade, who is credited with naming the station for his wife, was responsible for seeing to the construction of the main building, the stables, and other ancillary structures.⁶ The station was of log, but of a more uncommon piece-sur-piece or mortise and tenon log construction technique. This method is defined as having "vertically notched horizontal timbers . . . placed into the grooves of vertical timbers set at regular intervals."⁷

It is not known whether Jack Slade contracted with a local builder to construct the station or whether the stage company employed their own builders. However, there is an early account which gives information on the manner in which the stations were generally built:

There was a remarkable similarity in many of the stations built along the Platte on the stage route for a distance of at least 250 miles when the line was put in operation. Most of the buildings were erected by the stage company, and usually they were nearly square, one-story hewn, cedar-log structures, of one to three rooms. When constructed with only one room, often partitions of muslin were used to separate the kitchen from the dining-room and sleeping apartments.

(Frank Root, page 64)

Although nearly all the "swing" stations--where a change of horses was provided--were similar, Root notes that a number of the "home" stations as typified of Virginia Dale, differed in several respects, "being two or three times larger, and provided with sheds, outbuildings and a number of other conveniences."⁸ The original Virginia Dale complex is known to have included a barn (now moved to an adjacent farm) and a blacksmith shop (since demolished).

The site selected for the Virginia Dale station was described by a former division agent as "a beautiful and romantic spot on Dale creek."⁹ It was also a location that saw much activity. In 1863 during a period of conflict with the Indians in the region, the station became a place of refuge for a number of women and children who had been living at stations on the line west of that point.

As a consequence of the Indian problem, the U.S. Army designated routes for wagon trains to follow heading west. The route from Julesburg to Denver and on west through LaPorte and Virginia Dale to Fort Steele where it joined the old Oregon Trail, became the only route emigrants were permitted to travel in 1864-66. During that period it has been stated that it was not uncommon to see from fifty to one hundred wagons with their loads of merchandise and freight encamped at the station. Despite the large numbers of people passing through the area, however, the permanent population of the Virginia Dale community never counted more than a few families who settled along the streams.¹⁰

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Control of the mail service remained with the Butterfield Company until 1864 when Ben Holliday successfully bid for a four-year contract to deliver the mail between the Missouri River and Salt Lake City.¹¹ In 1866 Holliday sold out to Wells, Fargo and Company. Three years later the completion of the Union Pacific Railroad ended most of the transcontinental mail service and coaching, although the stagecoach continued to operate for many years in regions to which the railroad did not run.

The Virginia Dale station was abandoned by the Overland Stage Company in 1868 with the extension of the Union Pacific line to Cheyenne. During its operation, the station was under the direct management of Jack Slade until 1863, to be succeeded by William S. Taylor as division agent. Taylor was followed by S. C. Leach who purchased the property in 1868 when the station ceased operation. Leach and his wife lived in the house and operated a post office there for many years until they sold the property to W. C. Stover.¹² By 1909 the station was under the ownership of the Herzlens (sp.) family who constructed a log residence a few yards from the west end of the station. The Herzlens continued to operate the post office, although it may have been moved into the adjacent house. A. J. Lawson owned the property from 1913 to 1930. At that point the station was purchased by A. D. Bashor who operated the post office at the station for two years. It was then moved to a building on the newly rerouted Highway 287 located south of the station. In 1936 the station was bought by Fred Maxwell in whose possession it remained until it was acquired by the Virginia Dale Women's Club.¹³

¹Frank Root, The Overland Stage to California, p. 7.

²Ibid., p. 10; Richard Current, American History, A Survey, p. 475.

³Frank Root, The Overland Stage to California, p. 11.

⁴Margaret Long, The Smoky Hill Trail, p. 153.

⁵Ibid., p. 154.

⁶Ansel Watrous, A History of Larimer County, Colorado, p. 189; Margaret Long, The Smoky Hill Trail, p. 211.

⁷Mary Wilson, Log Cabin Studies, p. 10.

⁸Frank Root, The Overland Stage to California, p. 65.

⁹Ansel Watrous, A History of Larimer County, Colorado, p. 105.

¹⁰Ansel Watrous, A History of Larimer County, Colorado, p. 189, 192; Charles Lilley, "The Settlement and Early History of Virginia Dale," Municipal Facts, July-August 1929, p. 12.

¹¹Thomas D. Clark, Frontier America, p. 675.

¹²Margaret Long, The Smoky Hill Trail, p. 211.

¹³From information provided by Mrs. Forrest Moen, Virginia Dale, Colorado, 1985.

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- Information provided by Wayne C. Sundberg, Fort Collins Historical Society, 1984; Charlene Tresner, Fort Collins Public Library, 1985; and Mrs. Forrest Moen, Virginia Dale Women's Club, 1985.

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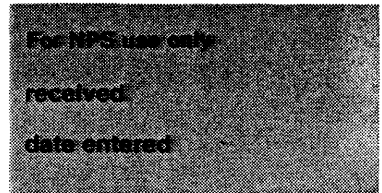
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Verbal Boundary Description (continued)

station; extends 300' S along the outer edge of the drive; turns northward and runs approximately 500' around the western rim of the drive; from the NW tip of the drive, the boundary extends 100' N--running half way in between the 1909 log house and the stage station to the place of beginning. No other buildings or structures are located within the nominated area.

Justification

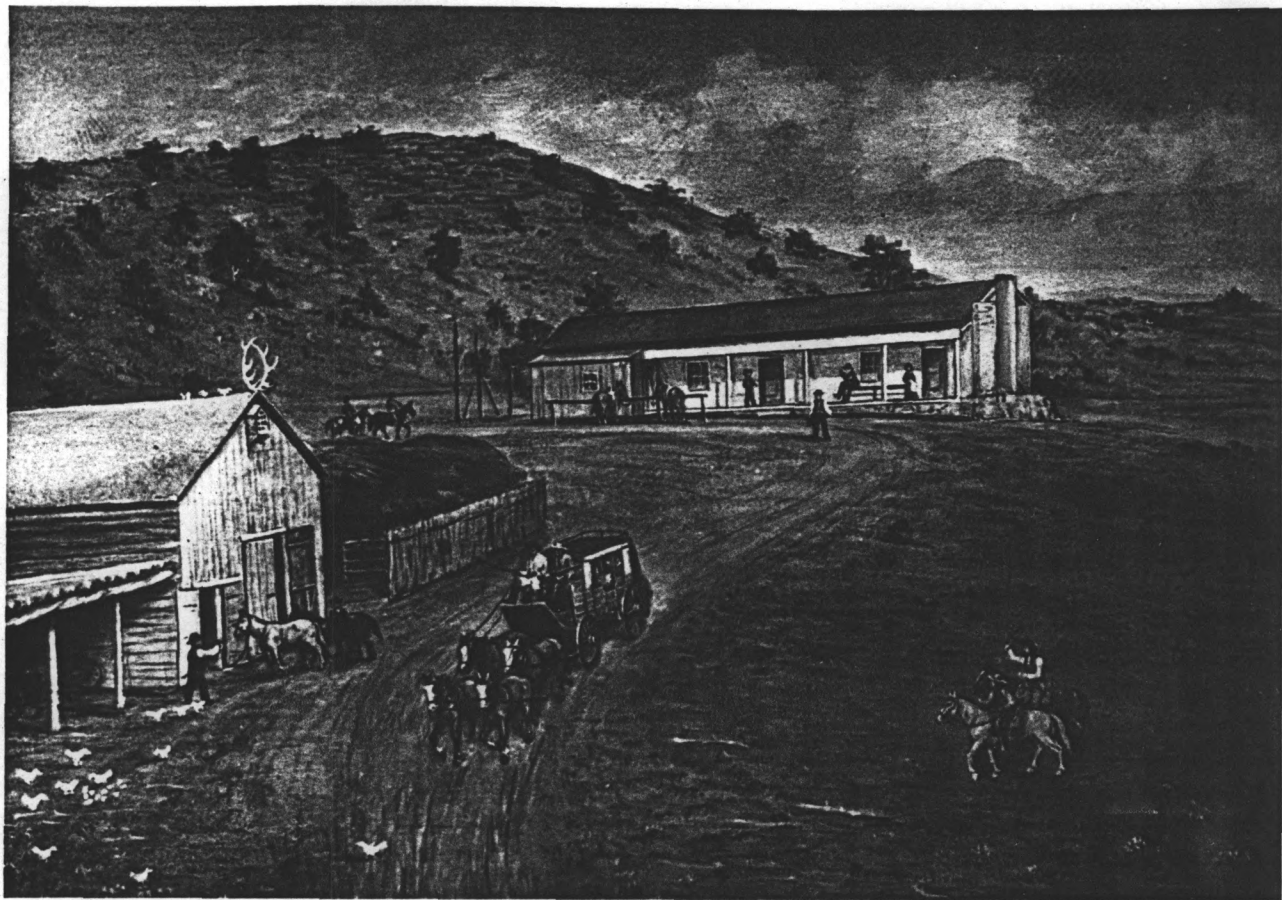
The boundary is drawn to include the immediate historic setting, using the Overland Trail on the NE and the historic entrance drive to the S. The western boundary was drawn to exclude the 1909 log house at the request of the owner. The nominated area also coincides with the knoll location for the station--which defines a natural as well as an historic boundary for the property.



Virginia Dale Stage Station
Larimer County, CO

Photo 1

Photographer: William Henry Jackson
Negative No. F-2147, F-19, 911
Colorado Historical Society, Denver, CO
Date: October 28, 1870



Virginia Dale Stage Station
Larimer County, CO

Photo 2

From painting by William Henry Jackson
Date: unknown
Negative No. F-4789, Colorado Historical
Society, Denver, CO