

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Dakota
COUNTY: Williams
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE: APR 1 1975

1. NAME

COMMON: Fort Buford State Historic Site
AND/OR HISTORIC: Fort Buford

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 22 miles southwest of Williston on U.S. 2 & unmarked county road. (Sections 15 & 16 T. 152 N; R. 104 W.)
CITY OR TOWN: Williston Vicinity
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 1
STATE: North Dakota
CODE: 38
COUNTY: Williams
CODE: 105

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One): Site
OWNERSHIP: Public
STATUS: Unoccupied
ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC: Unrestricted
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate): Park

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: State Historical Society of North Dakota - State of North Dakota
STREET AND NUMBER: Liberty Memorial Building
CITY OR TOWN: Bismarck
STATE: North Dakota
CODE: 38

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Office of Register of Deeds
STREET AND NUMBER: Williams County Courthouse
CITY OR TOWN: Williston
STATE: North Dakota
CODE: 38

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: State Historical Society Historic Sites Registry, N.D. Century Code, Chapter 55-10-04
DATE OF SURVEY: 1967
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: State Historical Society of North Dakota
STREET AND NUMBER: Liberty Memorial Building
CITY OR TOWN: Bismarck
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Fort Buford was constructed amid a semi-arid plains type environment on a sparsely vegetated plateau forty feet above the left bank of the Missouri River about a mile downstream from what was then the mouth of the Yellowstone River. Constructed during the summer of 1866, the original post consisted of log and adobe quarters enclosed within a rough stockade of cottonwood logs, designed to house one company of infantry. Due to constant harassment by hostile Sioux Indians during the first winter, the post was expanded to accommodate five companies the next year, necessitating the construction of a new post which was built on the original site.

Some materials for the new post were obtained from nearby Fort Union, a former fur trading post built in 1829 by the American Fur Company and operated by various companies until 1864. In addition, a sawmill was put into operation to prepare logs for the new stockade which was rectangular, with sides 330 yards by 200 yards, standing 12 feet high and enclosing seven adobe buildings. In 1871 the stockade was removed, and two sets of officer's quarters, a hospital, a guard house, and several storehouses were erected outside of the original inclosure followed, the next year, by sixteen more sets of officers quarters. Except for the adobe barracks and a stone powder magazine, the buildings of the post were one story frame structures. Additional buildings included six quartermaster's storehouses, a bakery, the adjutants office, a corral and stable area, ice houses, laundresses quarters, a saw mill, and a butcher shop. In 1875, a Surgeon General's report on Fort Buford was most critical of the hasty and careless manner in which the structures at the installation had been erected. When the post was closed, on October 1, 1895 Brig. Gen. John R. Brooks reported that the buildings at Fort Buford were in a dilapidated condition.

Most of the buildings which comprised Fort Buford were sold at auction shortly after the post was abandoned. Since 1924 the site has been preserved as a historic site, with 200 acres of the once 30 square mile military Reservation currently under the administration of the State Historical Society of North Dakota. The only buildings still standing are the stone powder magazine and the officers headquarters, which now serves as a museum.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



8. 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)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Fort Buford, established on June 13, 1866, was located near the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers, (an area long recognized as a trading ground and a point of vital importance in the control of the Northern Great Plains), as part of the chain of military posts extending from Fort Leavenworth to the Columbia River. With its commanding position over the two major water routes into the northwestern plains, it played a major role in the policing of this frontier region for the oncoming white settlement.

First commanded by Captain William G. Rankin, 6th United States Infantry, Fort Buford was initially designed to accommodate one company of Infantry. But during the first year, the post was so constantly harassed by hostile Indians that the garrison was increased to five companies the next year. Although the fort itself was never subjected to a sustained assault, so frequent were the hostile attacks that the post was virtually under seige in its early years. In addition to occassional forays against the corrals and out buildings, war parties made raids on woodcutting, haying and hunting parties so consistently that it was nearly impossible for the men to safely leave without an armed escort. In 1867, a rumor circulated the eastern newspapers that the entire garrison had been massacred and that Captain Rankin's wife had been tied to a horse by the Indians and sent galloping helplessly across the plains. Another account had Captain Rankin shooting his wife to prevent her falling into the hands of the Indians. Neither report was true.

In addition to struggling for its own survival, Fort Buford initially served to police the fur traders who had been illegally trading ammunition and whiskey to hostile Indians in the area, and as the point of distribution for government annuities to the various Indian tribes living in the vicinity. But it was during the Indian Wars of the late 1870's and the early 1880's that Fort Buford experienced its greatest significance as a military installation.

In 1876, the wounded survivors of the Battle of the Little Big Horn were carried down the Yellowstone to Fort Buford (where several, too severely injured

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

U.S. War Department. Surgeon Generals Office. Circular No. 8: A Report on the Hygiene of the United States Army with Descriptions of Military Posts. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1875, pp. 399-402.

Kimball, James P. "Fort Buford", North Dakota Historical Quarterly. Vol. IV. No. 2 (January, 1930), pp. 73-77.

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	47 ° 59 ' 23 "	104 ° 00 ' 23 "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	47 ° 59 ' 23 "	103 ° 58 ' 45 "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	47 ° 58 ' 42 "	103 ° 58 ' 45 "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	47 ° 58 ' 42 "	104 ° 00 ' 23 "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **200 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Walter L. Bailey, Historic Preservation Planner**

ORGANIZATION: **State Historical Society of North Dakota** DATE: **10-29-74**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Liberty Memorial Building**

CITY OR TOWN: **Bismarck** STATE: **North Dakota** CODE: **58501** **38**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: **Jane E. Sperry**

Title: **N.D. S.H.P.O.**

Date: **Nov 19, 1974**

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

A. R. W. [Signature]
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: **4/1/75**

ATTEST:

[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: **APR 1 1975**

No
 607M
 CS

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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Billings	
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(Number all entries)

8 Significance (continued page 2)

to safely travel further, were placed in the post hospital) and down the Missouri to Bismarck on the steamboat Far West captained by Grant Marsh. Following the Custer disaster, the government conducted a relentless campaign against the Sioux and Cheyenne in eastern Montana and in Wyoming. As men and ordinance were shipped up the Missouri and the Yellowstone to support this campaign, Fort Buford became a key supply depot and provided security escorts for the logistical support lines passing up the two rivers.

As the hostile Indians surrendered, they were brought first to Fort Buford and were then transferred to various agencies or prisons. Following their surrender in Montana's Bearpaw Mountains in 1877, Chief Joseph and his Nez Perce followers were first held at Fort Buford awaiting transfer to Bismarck and thence, eventually, to the Indian Territory of Oklahoma. During the next several years many prominent chiefs came into the Fort Buford "holding place" including Gall, Crow King, and Rain-in-the-Face. Then, early in 1881, large numbers of Sioux began appearing at the post to surrender until, on July 19, the still powerful and proud Sitting Bull arrived with his immediate band of followers, numbering 187 men, women and children. Having sought refuge in Canada since the dramatic events of 1876, this notable Sioux leader was finally convinced to return to the United States and surrender by E. H. Allison, an influential scout from Fort Buford. From there Sitting Bull was sent to Fort Randall for two years imprisonment, and was later returned to the Standing Rock Agency.

Throughout its life, the post was also kept busy with more routine activities such as regular patrol duties and policing the border to prevent Indians from Canada crossing into the United States to make raids on American reservations; and, keeping those in the United States from crossing into Canada. The Northwestern Treaty Commission met with Indian tribesmen there in 1866, and in 1874, the Northern Boundary Survey used the post as its headquarters and staging area while surveying the United States-Canadian border. When the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba (Great Northern) Railway was built through the region, Fort Buford provided troops in 1887 to guard the construction workers.

As white settlement began to fill the region in the late 1880's and early 1890's, the need for the post diminished, and on October 1, 1895, the post

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8 Significance (continued page 3)

was officially abandoned, the four remaining companies being transferred to Fort Assiniboine, Montana.

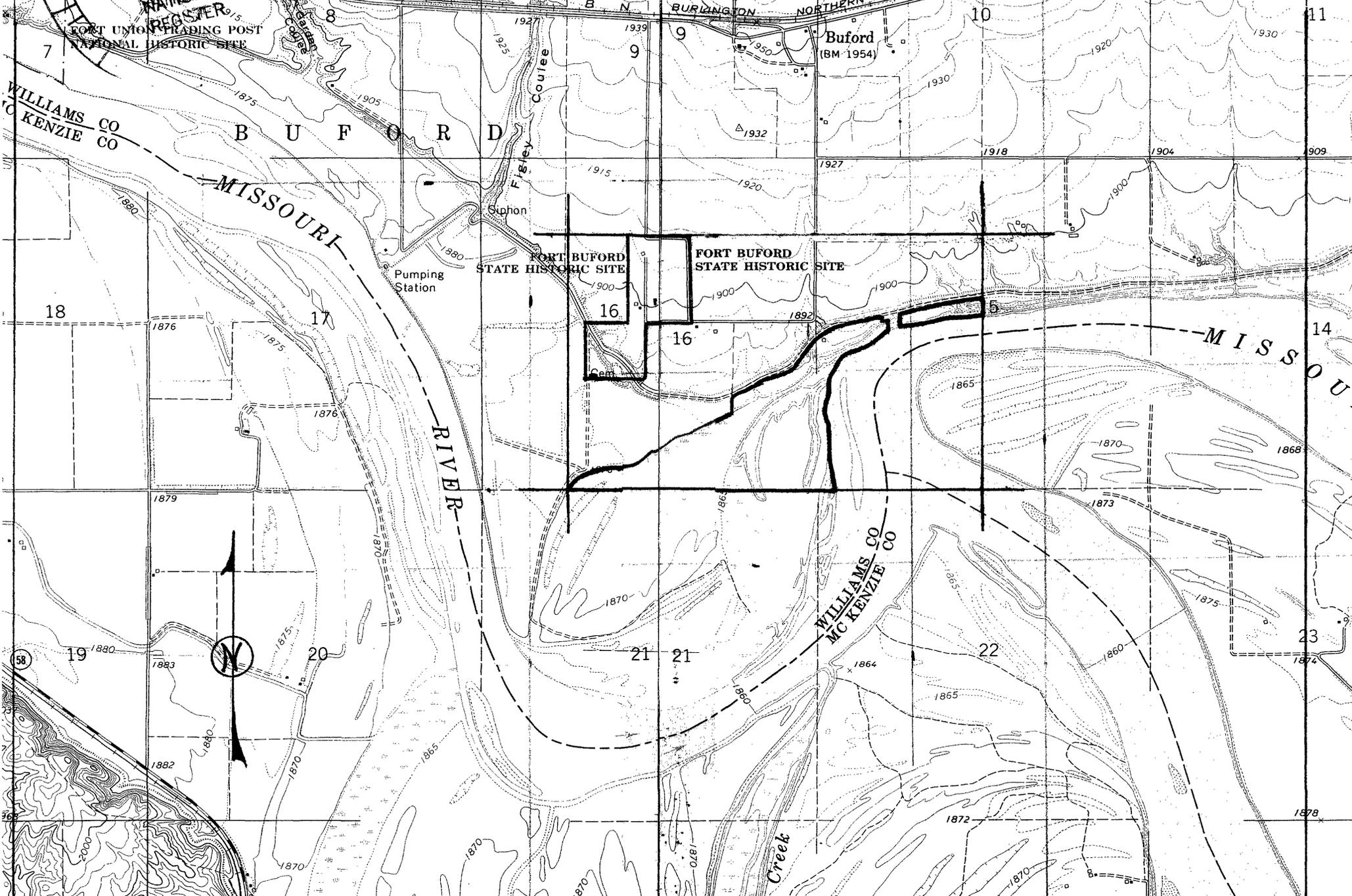
Following the closing of the post, most of the buildings were sold at public auction, and in 1924, Fort Buford was established as a state historic site under the administration of the State Historical Society of North Dakota. The only surviving structures of the old post, the officer's quarters, which has been converted into a museum, and the powder magazine, stand in silent tribute to the vital role Fort Buford played in the opening of upper Missouri River.



DORE QUADRANGLE
MONTANA-NORTH DAKOTA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

BUFORD QUADRANGLE
NORTH DAKOTA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

104°00' 10 MI. TO U.S. 2 577000m.E. 57'30" 3 340000 FEET (MONT.) 574



WILLIAMS CO
MC KENZIE CO

MISSOURI RIVER

FORT BUFORD STATE HISTORIC SITE

FORT BUFORD STATE HISTORIC SITE

WILLIAMS CO
MC KENZIE CO



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