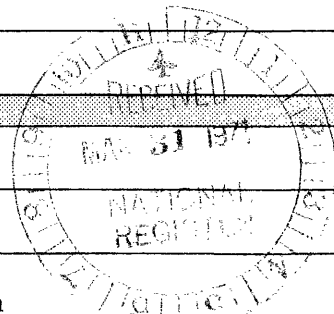


**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| STATE: Wyoming | |
| COUNTY: Carbon | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER 718.56.0004 | DATE 8/12/71 |



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON:
Platte River Crossing

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Bennett's Crossing

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
SE 1/4, Section 33, T.19N., R.85W.

CITY OR TOWN:
Morrison

STATE: Wyoming CODE: 56 COUNTY: Carbon CODE: 007

3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> | Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> | Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> | Private <input type="checkbox"/> | In Process <input type="checkbox"/> | Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Object <input type="checkbox"/> | Both <input type="checkbox"/> | Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/> | Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> | Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate) | | | | |
| Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> | Government <input type="checkbox"/> | Park <input type="checkbox"/> | Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> | Comments <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> | Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> | Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (Specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Military <input type="checkbox"/> | Religious <input type="checkbox"/> | State Historic Site | |
| Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> | Museum <input type="checkbox"/> | Scientific <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME:
State of Wyoming, administered by the Wyoming Recreation Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
604 East 25th Street

CITY OR TOWN: Cheyenne STATE: Wyoming CODE: 56

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Wyoming Recreation Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
604 East 25th Street

CITY OR TOWN: Cheyenne STATE: Wyoming CODE: 56

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

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

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

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Wyoming Recreation Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
604 East 25th Street

CITY OR TOWN: Cheyenne STATE: Wyoming CODE: 56

STATE: WYOMING
COUNTY: CARBON
ENTRY NUMBER: 718.56.0004
DATE: 8/12/71
FOR NPS USE ONLY

14/11/8

7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

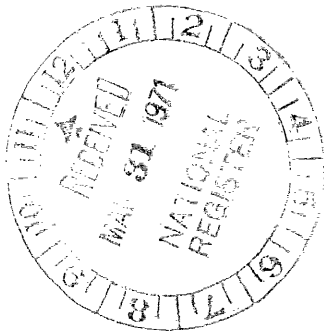
The Platte River Crossing Site, containing a monument and a cemetery, is located atop a high rocky bluff above the Platte River. Surrounding the Site are several barren sandstone cliffs carved by centuries of wind and river erosion. Principal vegetation consists of cottonwood trees, willows, scattered sagebrush, yucca, and several types of native grasses. The semi-desert terrain breaks off sharply into a comparatively verdant river bottom and gives the area a very colorful quality. Its remoteness provides a silent wilderness atmosphere which is much like what one imagines existed before the coming of civilization. Numerous names and dates have been etched in the adjacent rock walls which attest to the passage of many of the migrating pioneers.

A granite commemorative marker has been erected at the Site on which is attached a circular bronze Oregon Trail Plaque (covered wagon, etc.) and the marker is inscribed: "Overland Trail-Platte River Crossing. Erected in memory of those brave Pioneers who passed this way to win and hold the West. This Site, a gift to Wyoming from Ella Mary Davis and family in memory of her husband, a pioneer barber, merchant, and stockman of Carbon County."

Just south of the monument lies a pioneer cemetery containing eight known graves and headstones, all of which have been fenced. Mr. L. C. Bishop recorded in 1929 the names and dates on six of the gravestones as follows (beginning with number one on the north): (1) "LeRoy W. Morrison, Died, May__"; (2) "J. S. White, Died__18th, 1863"; (3) "George Layne"; (4) "William M. Donald, Killed by Indians, June 1864,"; (5) "John Hunter, Aged 17 years, Died August 10, 1865"; (6) stone in place, marks gone; (7) headstone broken off, marks gone; (8) "In memory of Mary E. Stockton, Died August 10, 1865."

Neither the type of construction nor the exact location of the Platte River Stage Station has been determined. Probably the station was of log construction and located within a half-mile distance of the present monument and cemetery.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

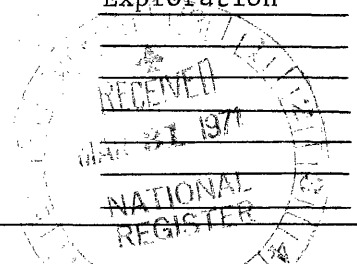
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <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) 1849 - 1900

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Exploration</u> |
| <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the Platte River Crossing Site rests primarily with its being the location where the Overland Trail reached and passed over the North Platte River, a major watercourse along the Trail. The fording of the river at this point was facilitated by the existence of a large island in the middle of the stream which created two channels of lesser water flow. These river channels possessed firm and rocky bottoms, an essential feature for the passage of heavily laden wagons and stages.

Because the Site offered an abundance of wood, water and forage, it also became a favored camping spot and apparently had been such even before the coming of the white man. The entire North Platte Valley offers abundant evidence of the Middle Period forage cultures, and during the Late and Historic Period this area was the traditional warring grounds of the Cheyenne, Arapahoe and Ute Indians. In all probability the Overland Trail was established, like so many of the pioneer trails, along a route that was originally an Indian trail.

The first whites known to have passed through the area were the members of the William Ashley fur trade expedition in 1825. Next came John C. Fremont on his second Western exploration in 1843, guided by Kit Carson. Fremont spent considerable time along the Platte and his adventures thereabouts are well recorded. In 1849 a group of Cherokee Indians passed through the region on their way to California. For years afterwards the trail was known as the "Cherokee Trail."

Perhaps the most significant of the early day explorations was the Stansbury Expedition which camped at the Platte River Crossing in the fall of 1850 while enroute east from Fort Bridger. Of the crossing Captain Stansbury wrote:

The cottonwoods around our camp are the first trees, worthy of the name, that have greeted our eyes for more than a year. They seem to us like old friends, and, as they waved in the fresh breeze over our heads, reminded us of those beloved woodlands from which we had been so long separated. Oh! With what longing desire we had looked forward to such a sight; while our souls, sick of rolling prairies, barren plains, bald and rocky ridges, muddy flats, and sandy wastes, sought in vain

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

_____, Senate Executive Documents, 2nd Session, 35th Cong., Vol. 2, No. 975 (Washington, D. C., William H. Harris, Printer., 1859.)
 _____, Annals of Wyoming, Vol. 33, No. 1, (Cheyenne: Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department, 1961).
 Hafen, L. R. The Overland Mail 1849 - 1869, (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1926).
 Root, F. A. and Connelley, W. E. The Overland Stage to California (Topeka, Kansas: Published by the Authors, 1901).

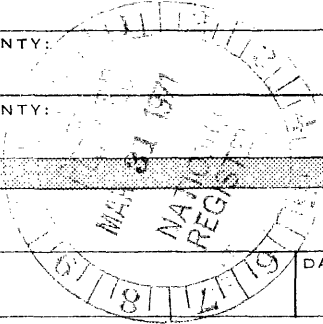
10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY | | | O R | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|---|-------------------------|--|
| CORNER | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | |
| | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | |
| NW | 41° 34' 26" | 106° 58' 05" | | ° ' " | ° ' " | |
| NE | 41° 34' 26" | 106° 57' 25" | | | | |
| SE | 41° 34' 16" | 106° 58' 05" | | | | |
| SW | 41° 34' 16" | 106° 57' 25" | | | | |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **12.5 acres**

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

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |



11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Bill Barnhart, Historian

ORGANIZATION: **Wyoming Recreation Commission** DATE: _____

STREET AND NUMBER:
604 East 25th Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Cheyenne** STATE: **Wyoming** CODE: **56**

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name <u>Paul H. Steward</u></p> <p>Title <u>Liaison Officer, P. L. 89-665</u></p> <p>Date <u>4-7-71</u></p> | <p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><u>Ernest A. Connelley</u> Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>AUG 12 1971</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><u>William J. Huntley</u> Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date JUN 30 1971</p> |
|---|---|

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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

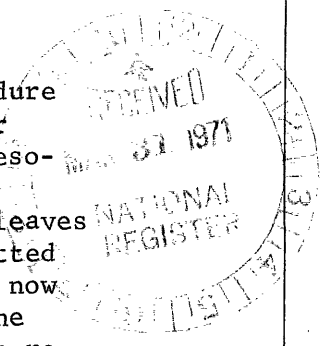
(Continuation Sheet)

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| STATE | |
| Wyoming | |
| COUNTY | |
| Carbon | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| 71.8.56.004 | 8/13/71 |

(Number all entries)

Statement of Significance - page 2

for the forest shade and those hills of living verdure which gave the charm to every landscape. Day after day, week after week, had we journeyed over that desolate basin, without a tree to be seen in the whole horizon. But now the rustling sound of embowered leaves assured us that we had once more reached a spot fitted by nature for the habitation of man. The place we now occupy had long been a favourite camp ground for the numerous warlike parties which annually meet in the region to hunt buffalo and one another. Remains of old Indian stockades are met with scattered about among the thickets; and the guide informed us, that four years since there were at one and the same time, upon this bottom, fifteen or twenty of these forts, constructed by different tribes. Most of them have since been destroyed by fire.



Six years later a reconnaissance was conducted by a party under the command of Lt. Francis T. Bryan to determine the feasibility of a wagon road from Fort Riley, Kansas to Utah. Bryan, relying heavily upon Stansbury's report, moved west across the Platte to Bridger's Pass in August of 1856, and returned east a short time later. The military again used the route in 1857 and 1858 during the so-called Mormon War.

Emigrants used the Overland Trail for years prior to the establishment of the Overland Stage Line and this was, no doubt, a factor in its selection as an alternate stage route in 1862. The desirable qualities of the Platte River Crossing made it a logical location for one of the Overland Stage Stations. The Crossing was approximately 30 miles west of Fort Halleck, a distance of about two days travel by wagon. Fourteen miles further west was Sage Creek Station, the scene of frequent Indian raids. This was considered one of the most dangerous sections of the Trail, but there is little indication that the Platte Crossing itself was ever subject to serious Indian depredations. Although mention is often made of the Crossing in diaries, journals and other writings, unfortunately there is very little specific information concerning the physical aspects of the Site.

The Platte River Crossing was generally good, but, like other mountain rivers, it could be treacherous during periods of high water. With this in mind, Ed Bennett and Frank Earnest established a ferry which utilized cables made of buffalo hides anchored to huge piles of stone on either bank. The ferry operated some time after stages ceased to roll, and, until recent times, the stone piles used for anchors were still visible. The operation of the ferry resulted in the Crossing being referred to by some as Bennett's Ferry.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| STATE | |
| Wyoming | |
| COUNTY | |
| Carbon | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| 71.8.56.0004 | 8/12/71 |

(Number all entries)

Statement of Significance - page 3

Platte River Crossing declined in importance when the Union Pacific Railroad completed its tracklaying through the area in 1868. A principal underlying motive of the early military explorers was the search for suitable passageway for a trans-continental railroad. The Cherokee or Overland Trail was long considered a possibility. Although the route for the railroad chosen was a few miles downstream to the north, the basic premise of the early explorers that this thoroughfare was desirable for a trans-continental rail system proved to be sound. After the abandonment of the stage line an occasional wayfarer still passed along the Overland Trail, but through the years, ranching interests took the area over and it is this latter situation that prevails today.

The small tract of ground that is now State property was originally deeded to the Historical Landmark Commission in 1933 by Mrs. Ella Mary Davis in memory of her husband and her father, John C. Davis, and in 1950 as a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Isadore Bolten.

