

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Montana	
COUNTY: Ravalli	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70.10.25.0011	DATE 10/6/70

1. NAME

COMMON:
Fort Owen ~~State Monument~~

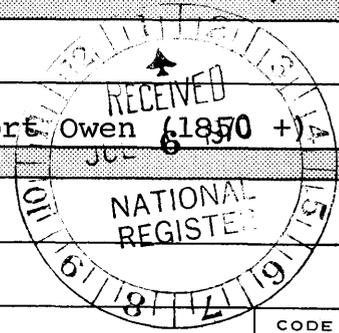
AND/OR HISTORIC:
Original "St. Mary's Mission" (1841-1850); Fort Owen (1850 +)

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
T9N R20W, Section 22 (NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of SE $\frac{1}{4}$)

CITY OR TOWN:
Approximately 1/2 mile NW of Stevensville

STATE: Montana CODE: 25 COUNTY: Ravalli CODE: 081



3. CLASSIFICATION

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

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
State of Montana

STREET AND NUMBER:
Mitchell Building

CITY OR TOWN:
Helena

STATE: Montana CODE: 25

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Ravalli County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Hamilton

STATE: Montana CODE: 25

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
State Inventory and HABS

DATE OF SURVEY: Sept., 1968 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
State Fish and Game Department

STREET AND NUMBER:
Mitchell Building

CITY OR TOWN:
Helena

STATE: Montana CODE: 25

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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ENTRY NUMBER 70.10.25.0011	DATE 10/6/70
DATE	

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input 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

A sketch of the fort done in 1853 revealed a log stockade containing several buildings with several log buildings in the vicinity of the fort.

Construction of the fort in its final form began in earnest in 1857, with adobe bricks replacing the original logs. By 1860 the root cellar was completed as was a well house; then the gates on the north and south sides of the fort were hung.

In the 1880s the construction of a highway into Stevensville destroyed the north wall and gate, and in 1889 a severe wind-storm ripped off a roof and further damaged the buildings. In the early 1900s the bastions were removed and in 1912 the unoccupied west barracks were leveled.

Only the east wing of the fort remains today. This includes the previous living quarters, bedroom, office, and library of Major Owen in addition to dormitory rooms. Archeological investigations have exposed the foundations for the fort's walls and bastions.

As funds become available, state park authorities plan to reconstruct the bastions, the walls, the south gate, and the west barracks. A small museum is also planned.

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)

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Fort Owen was the site of the first successful farming operation in Montana and probably in the Rocky Mountains. Father Pierre De Smet and six companions came to the area in 1841 and established St. Mary's Mission among the Flathead Indians. They brought along with them oxen, wagons, carts and plows. In the following year, the Jesuits planted a garden near the Mission which produced some vegetables and wheat. In 1846, St. Mary's Mission farm is reported to have produced 7,000 bushels of wheat, between 4,000 and 5,000 bushels of potatoes, and various kinds of vegetables. The stock consisted of 40 head of cattle, horses, and other animals.

This site appears to be Montana's oldest continuously occupied settlement. When Major (non-military title) John Owen arrived in the Bitterroot Valley in 1850, he purchased the grounds and built an adobe trading fort. Trade at the post, mostly with westbound immigrants, was threatened in the mid-1850s by constant harassment from Blackfeet Indians, but flourished again when gold was discovered in the surrounding areas. The town of Stevensville grew around the fort and trading post, but was replaced as a center of commerce in 1865 by Hellgate (now Missoula).

At Fort Owen was the site of the first sawmill, flour mill, cattle herd, irrigation and public school in Montana.

Fort Owen became a state monument in 1956. Measured drawings, photographic coverage and historical and architectural evaluations are recorded in the HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Dunbar, Seymour and Phillips, Paul C., THE JOURNALS AND LETTERS OF MAJOR JOHN OWEN HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
 Rolle, Andrew F., "Italians in the West", MONTANA MAGAZINE

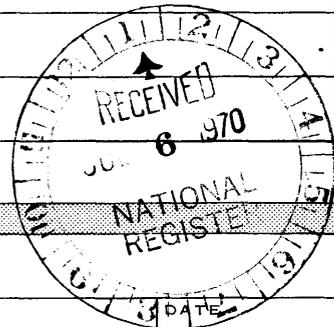
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES							
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE							
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds			
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	46°	31'	10"	114°	05'	43"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **1 Acre**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



No. 4711

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **John N. DeHaas, Jr./Robert A. Murray**
 ORGANIZATION: **Montana State Univ./State Fish & Game Dept.**
 STREET AND NUMBER: **1/69 - 9/68**

CITY OR TOWN: **Bozeman / Helena** STATE: **Montana** CODE: **25**

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 *Wesley R. Woodgerd*
Wesley R. Woodgerd
 Title State Liaison Officer
 Date _____

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

Ernest Allen Connolly
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
OCT 6 1970

Date _____
 ATTEST:
William J. ...
 Keeper of The National Register
AUG 12 1970
 Date _____

Fort Owen
1977

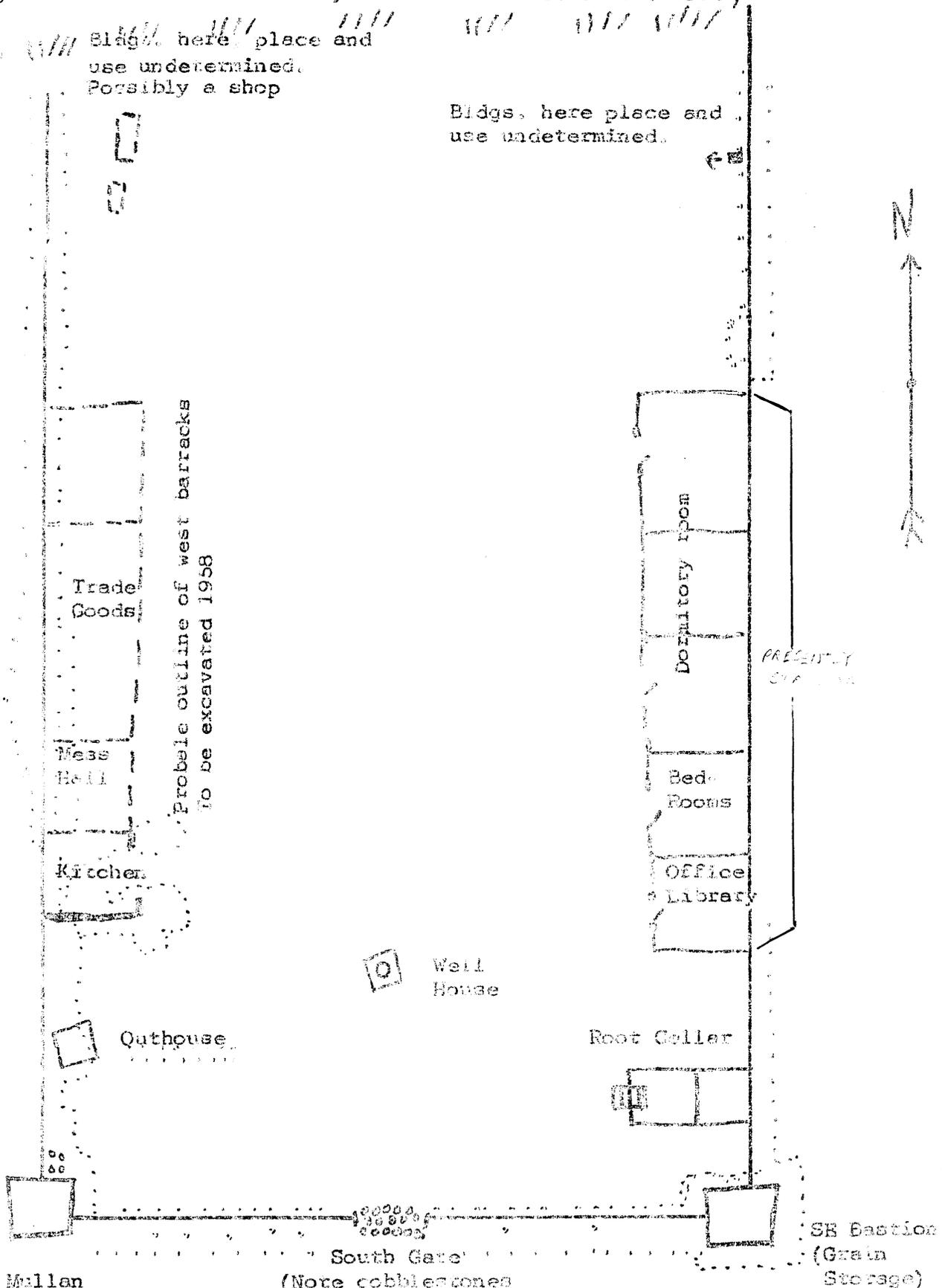
KEY
Archaeological excavations 1957
SCALE 1mm = 1 foot

Roadway construction here destroyed the north side of the fort,

Slag here place and use undetermined. Possibly a shop

Bldgs. here place and use undetermined.

Probable outline of west barracks to be excavated 1958



SW Bastion

Used by Dr. Mallan as drug store and office

South Gate (Note cobblesstones)

SE Bastion (Grain Storage)

FORT OWEN - A CHRONOLOGY

Carling Malouf and William Smurr
Montana State University



Fort Owen had its beginning in 1850 when the Jesuit missionaries at St. Mary's abandoned their project and sold the Mission property to John Owen. Briefly, the sequence of events in the construction and subsequent destruction of the fort was as follows:

1841

St. Mary's Mission was founded by Father Jean DeSmet on a plot of land now located about one-half a mile west of the ruins of Fort Owen. This location was a few hundred yards northeast of the present Bitterroot River overflow channel bridge on the road to Stevensville. The original mission was constructed of cottonwood logs and there are no longer any surface remains to identify its location. An old highway built into Stevensville during the 1880's cut through the graveyard which one adjoined the old mission, thus revealing the grounds where the mission once stood. This old highway bed was levelled in 1956 and the remains of the mission probably lie buried beneath some six feet of overburden. Besides the mission there were small flour and saw mills, and a few cabins built nearby. Burnt Creek which flows into the Bitterroot River from the east, was diverted to provide a stream of water for operating the mills, for gardens and for domestic use. This stream still flows through the McKinley Ranch about sixty yards north of the remains of Fort Owen.

1850

The Jesuits decided to abandon St. Mary's Mission, and John Owen purchased the land and improvements for the sum of \$250. The Bill of Sale, signed by Father Giorde, was dated November 5, 1850. Fort Owen, thus, became a trading establishment named after its owner. Never did it serve as an official military post.

1852

Preparations began for the construction of the fort in its final form. Work in earnest, however, did not begin until 1857. Major John Owen (that was his unofficial title) first constructed a small palisaded fort which contained two or three internal buildings. Cabins, as well as the original mission property continued to be used. The fort itself was constructed a few hundred yards east of the mission grounds where the elevation is slightly higher. At least part of the final adobe wall of the fort was built alongside the earlier palisades. About eight years were required to complete the structure. Here are some extracts from Owen's Journal relating to the work on the fort:

(punctuation and capitalization retained as in the original journals).

April 8, 1852. "fencing adobe yard"
April 20, 21, 1852 "fixing adobe yard"

These references are to the field where the adobe bricks were made. The yard was located just south of the present road to Stevensville. On the side opposite from the remains of Fort Owen. Indeed, part of the road itself crosses the yard. The adobe blocks were molded in wooden boxes, and then they were sun dried and hauled to the site of the fort. References to the fort construction continue:

April 21, 1852 "Building wall"
April 25, 1852 "Building wall and covering shed
Emanuel making adobes."

In this vein many other remarks are entered in the journals. In many cases it is possible to name the individuals who made the adobes, and those who placed them in the walls of the fort.

A sawmill was erected for the purpose of making boards and roof timbers. Later a grist mill was also erected.

During the 1850's there were a few raids by Blackfoot Indians who sought to steal horses from the fort. Besides some property loss and damages a few human lives were lost. Evidently John Owen used the graveyard at St. Mary's for the disposition of the dead.

1857

Work on the fort progressed in earnest beginning this year. Examples of entries are thus:

June 2, 1857 "commenced laying up the foundation."
June 6, 1857 "The foundation about done except leveling."
June 17, 1857 "Laying up adobes Lemprey finished foundation for the South West Bastion which I intend erecting 14 feet square out to out with two wall giving me a ten foot room in the clear."

A similar bastion was built shortly afterwards on the southeast corner of the fort. Although John Owen intended similar structures on the northern corners of the fort they were never completed. However, on July 8, 1857, he reported, "working today in digging trench for northern foundation again." The foundation was made by digging a trench about three feet across and about 18 inches deep. When it was filled with stones and sand. Adobe bricks were then laid on the stone foundations. Possible the foundation extended slightly above the ground level in order to keep the moisture absorbing adobe bricks from contacting the soil.

1860

This year the root cellar was completed. Mr. Higgins built a well house, a flag staff was raised, and the gates on the south and north sides of the fort were hung. In earlier days the south side had the main gate. After Major Owen left the fort, however, the north gate became the main entranceway. In 1957 a party of archaeologists from Montana State University found a metal piece from this south main gate which revealed the manner in which the gate had been hung - a detail which heretofore had been lost in history.

1866

Water from melting snow ran down the slope on the north side of the fort and caused part of the wall to collapse. In September of 1866 the wall was repaired. An ice house with a capacity of 1600 cubic feet was completed. Sawdust from the sawmill provided its insulation. Unquestionably, Major Owen liked his "drinks". Presently, however, scholars do not know the location of this ice house. In fact, it is not even known whether it was outside or inside the fort walls.

1867

This year a pump was installed in the well. Frequent repairs were necessary during subsequent years. The pump which can now be observed in the plaza of the fort was not installed until about 1906.

1872

Major Owen suffered a mental breakdown and was taken to a hospital in Helena, Montana. In 1877 he was taken to his relatives in Pennsylvania where, in 1889, he died. Since he was in debt to E. J. McCormick the property reverted to his ownership. Thereafter the buildings were occupied by employees and renters and relatively little effort was made to keep the buildings in repair. Mr. McCormick himself was killed, however, when he was blown off the roof of the west barracks during a violent windstorm which came in from the southwest. He had been standing on the roof while employees handed rocks up to him in an effort to hold down the roof. A strong gust of wind hurled man and roof into the plaza and here the timbers crushed him to death. This was also in 1889 - the same year that Major Owen died.

1876

The walls of the fort were repaired in haste this year by local farmers and ranchers who retired here in fear of warring Nez Percé Indians. The column of Indians actually passed within 20 yards of the fort with Chief Joseph in the lead carrying a white flag. He was followed by warriors, and then came women and children. Some Indians remained briefly at the fort to purchase flour.

1906

Sometimes after Mr. McCormick was killed the fort property was obtained by six May brothers who used it as a cattle ranch. Still later the property was leased, at least in part, to Mr. Moore and his family who occupied the east barracks. It is primarily for this reason the the east barracks remains standing today for the unoccupied buildings soon deteriorated and fell into decay. Early in the 1900's, possibly before 1906, the bastions and the main front gate were gone. In 1912 F. George May, then a young boy, was directed by his father to level what remained of the roof and walls of the west barracks. Mr. May says that he used a team of horses and logging chains to pull down the remains, and that the refuse was pulled inward, into the plaza. Tests pits here in 1957 revealed old timbers are still beneath the ground here.

1937

One acre of property surrounding Fort Owen was purchased by a small group of historic minded citizens for the purpose of establishing an historic site. Among this group was Dr. Paul C. Phillips and Mr. Charlie Buck who finally donated the land to the State of Montana for a State Monument. During the 1930's this same group succeeded in raising enough money to partially restore the east barracks.

1956

Fort Owen was accepted by the State of Montana as a State Park. It is administrated by the State Parks Division, a part of the Montana Highway Commission. Strong local coordination is given toward the project by various historical and civic groups in the Bitterroot Valley.

1957

Archaeologists from Montana State University, under Carling Melouf, and historians under the direction of William Sturr commence studies of Fort Owen. The archaeologists excavated the exterior foundations of the fort to determine its extent and location. Such excavation are very necessary before actual reconstruction can commence. In 1958 similar work will be conducted to ascertain interior features, particularly room outlines and outbuildings. Hundreds of specimens in the 1957 excavations are being prepared for display in a future museum in the fort.

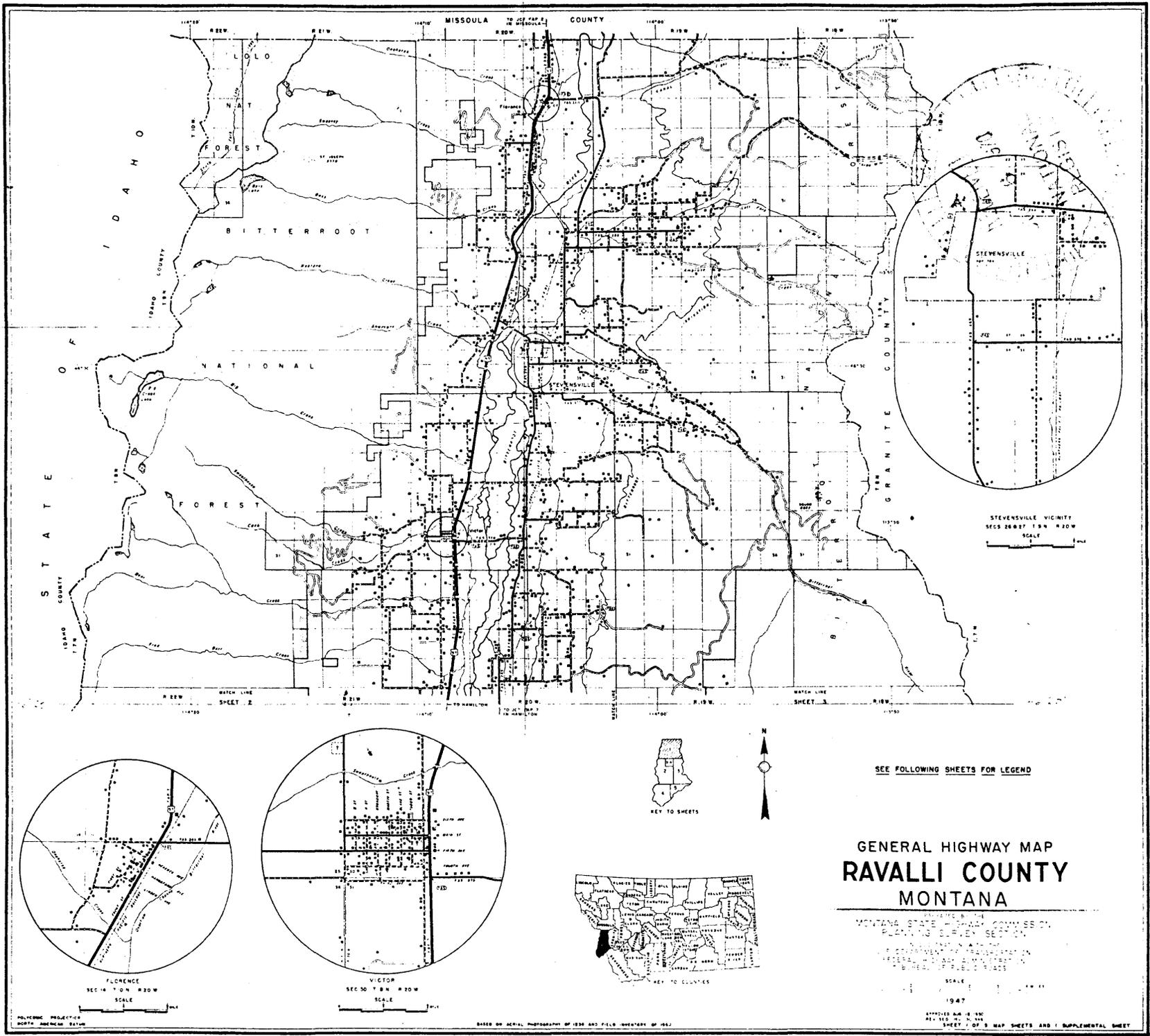
Success of the program will depend entirely on the response of the Montana State Legislature, and on the ability of local drives to obtain adequate funds for the restoration of Fort Owen. Fort Owen, it must be remembered, is not only an historic site in its own right, but it also includes the grounds of the original St. Mary's Mission - the first Indian mission in the Northwest.

W LONG 114 03 43

FLAT C WEN

FLAT C WEN

114° 31' 30"



SEE FOLLOWING SHEETS FOR LEGEND

**GENERAL HIGHWAY MAP
RAVALLI COUNTY
MONTANA**

PREPARED BY THE
MONTANA STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION,
PLANNING SURVEY SECTION
BOZEMAN, MONTANA
GENERAL AND LOCAL TRANSPORTATION
INVESTIGATION DIVISION
MONTANA STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

SCALE
1947

APPROVED AS A 1:50,000
SCALE MAP BY THE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF SURVEY
SHEET 1 OF 3 MAP SHEETS AND 1 SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET

BASED ON AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY OF 1934 AND FIELD INVENTORIES OF 1947

Form 10-301
(Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

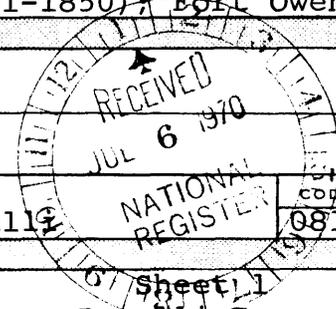
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

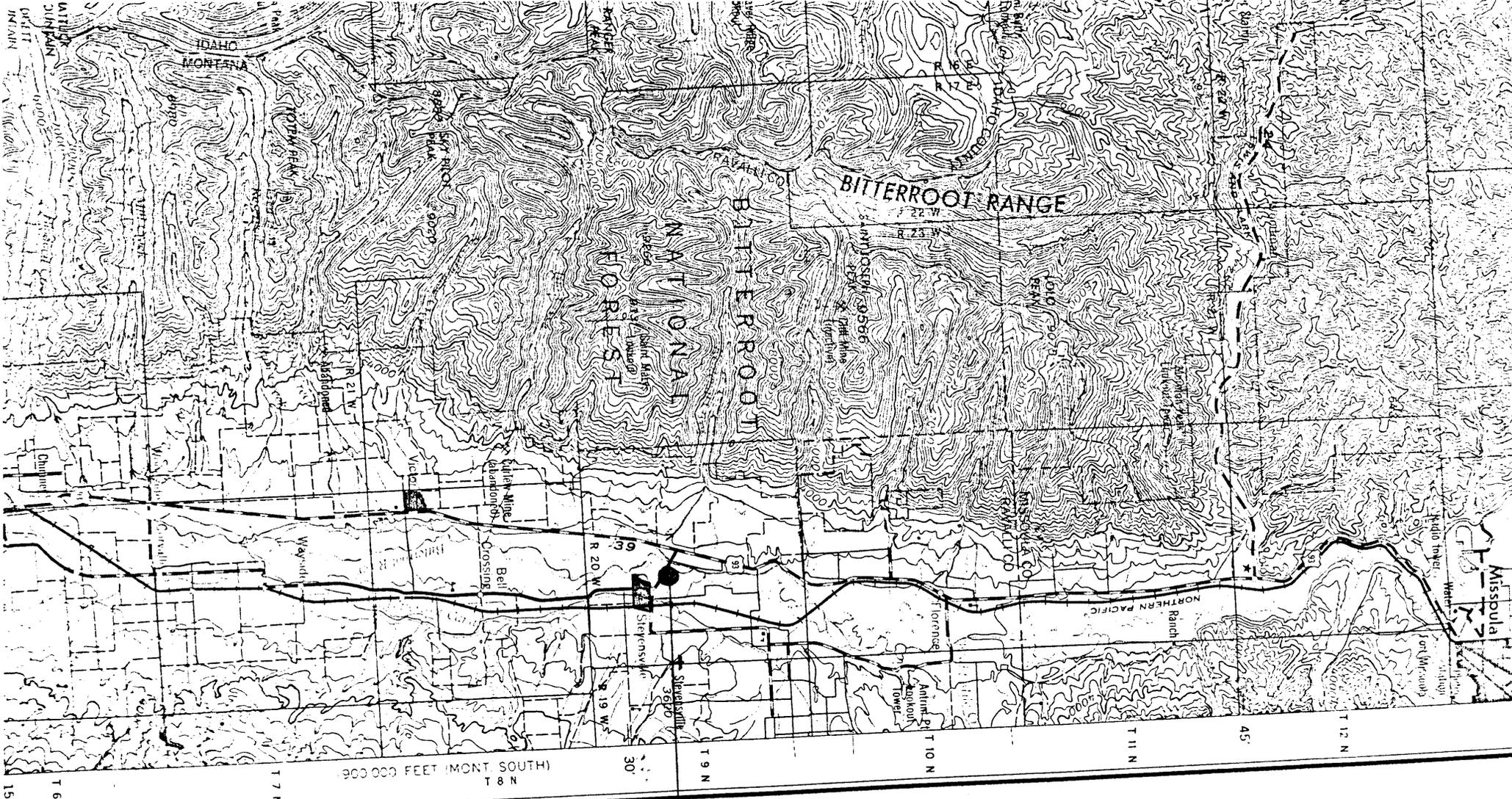
(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE	
Montana	
COUNTY	
Ravalli	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
70.10.25.0011	10/6/70

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

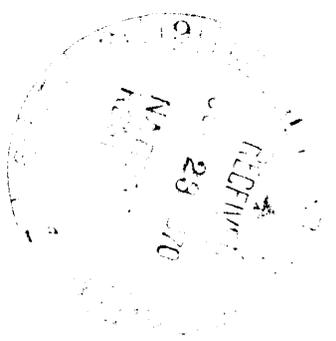
1. NAME		
COMMON: <u>Fort Owen State Monument</u>		
AND/OR HISTORIC: <u>Original "St. Mary's Mission" (1841-1850) - Fort Owen</u>		
2. LOCATION		
STREET AND NUMBER:		
<u>T6N R20W, Sect. 22 (NW$\frac{1}{4}$ of SE$\frac{1}{4}$)</u>		
CITY OR TOWN:		
<u>Approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ mile NW of Stevensville</u>		
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:
<u>Montana</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>Ravalli</u>
3. MAP REFERENCE		
SOURCE:		
<u>Montana State Highway Department; County Maps, Ravalli Co.</u>		
SCALE: <u>7/8 inch--4 miles</u>		
DATE: <u>1947, Revised 1966</u>		
4. REQUIREMENTS		
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS		
1. Property boundaries where required.		
2. North arrow.		
3. Latitude and longitude reference.		





U.S.G.S.
 HAMILTON MONTANA; IDAHO
 NL 11-6
 1:250,000

FERT OWEN
 N. LAT: 46° 31' 10"
 W. LONG: 114° 05' 43"



Form 10-301
(Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

STATE
COUNTY

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

FOR THIS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
70.10.25.0011	10/6/70

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME			
COMMON: Fort Owen			
AND/OR HISTORIC: Original "St. Mary's Mission" (1841-1850); Fort Owen			
2. LOCATION 1850 on			
STREET AND NUMBER: T6N R20W, Section 22 (NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of SE $\frac{1}{4}$)			
CITY OR TOWN:			
STATE: Montana	CODE 25	COUNTY: Ravalli	CODE 081
3. MAP REFERENCE			
SOURCE: U.S.G.S. Hamilton, Montana; Idaho NL11-6			
SCALE: 1:250,000			
DATE: 1964			
4. REQUIREMENTS			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			

