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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Walker Pass

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Highway 178, BLM Bakersfield District, USFS Sequoia NF not for publication

city, town 60 miles east northeast of Bakersfield vicinity

state California code CA county Kern code 029 zip code n/a

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
_____	_____ buildings
<u>1</u>	_____ sites
_____	<u>9</u> structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>1</u>	<u>9</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register n/a

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

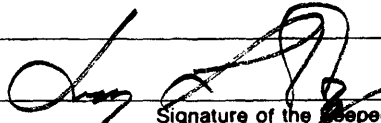
5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): Boundary Definition


Signature of the Keeper

3/20/91
Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/pedestrian related

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/road related

Transportation/other: trail

Recreation and Culture/outdoor recreation

Recreation and Culture/monument/marker

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

n/a

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation n/a

walls n/a

roof n/a

other n/a

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

NAMING OF THE PASS

Walker Pass is named after Joseph R. Walker. John Charles Fremont suggested the name in 1844 when returning from his second expedition to California:

"This pass, reported to be good, was discovered by Mr. Joseph Walker, of whom I have already spoken, and whose name it might, therefore, appropriately bear (Fremont 1988:248)".

Other geographic features named after Joseph Walker include Walker Lake (Mineral County, Nevada) and the Walker River (Douglas, Lyon and Mineral Counties, Nevada) (Bancroft 1886:v:765) which are neither National Historic Landmarks nor National Register properties.

NATURAL SETTING

Walker Pass (5,246 feet) is set in the southern Sierra Nevada mountains of California which were created by the uplift, tilting, and faulting of a massive granitic batholith along a roughly north by northwest to south by southwest axis (Oakeshott 1978). Mountain building began in the Mesozoic Era. In profile, the mountains rise gently toward the east, from California's Central Valley. From their apex the Sierra Nevada drop precipitously into Great Basin valley systems. In the vicinity of Walker Pass the southern Sierra hook to the southwest, lessen in comparative elevation, and present a gradient from the west comparatively more severe than that of the more northerly Sierra Nevada. Walker Pass is one of a number of Sierra Nevada passes that link the Great Basin and Mojave Desert with interior California and the Pacific Coast.

Walker Pass runs northwest by southeast between a symmetrical conical peak (6,366 feet) to the northeast and a set of three smaller, rounded, asymmetrical peaks (5,403 - 5,509 feet) to the southwest (see photos 1-4). The set of smaller peaks rise out of the same base. The Pass is straight and offers a broad view to the southeast down Freeman Canyon to the Indian Wells Valley (2,500 - 3,000 feet) (see photo 5).

Intermittent streams originate on both approaches to Walker Pass, at an elevation of approximately 5,200 feet. A spring rises approximately 3/4 of a mile down the northwest gradient of the Pass in the immediate vicinity of the Bureau of Land Management Walker Pass Trailhead/Campground (Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail) adjacent to State Highway 178. Mean annual precipitation ranges from approximately 5 to 10 inches per year (Oakeshott 1978). Joseph R. Walker and his companions encountered moderate to heavy snow fields in their passages of early Spring 1834 and December 1843.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Exploration/Settlement

Period of Significance

1834-1845

Significant Dates

1834, 1843, 1845

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

Walker, Joseph Rutherford

Architect/Builder

n/a

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

INTRODUCTION

Walker Pass qualifies as a National Register Property and was declared a National Historic Landmark (36 CFR 65) in 1961 by virtue of its association with Joseph R. Walker, a person significant in our past, and Walker's use of the Pass for actions that contributed significantly to the exploration and settlement of California by the United States of America in the years 1834, 1843, and 1845 (National Register Criteria A and B; National Historic Landmark Criteria 1 and 2).

As a Landmark, Walker Pass has been categorized by Theme, Sub-theme and Facet as follows:

X. Westward Expansion of the British Colonies and the United States, 1763-1898

B. The Fur Trade

2. Fur Trappers and Mountain Men as Pathfinders (National Park Service 1987:III-20).

For the purpose of this study, a specific historic context is established within which the subsequent presentation of significant events, comparison of properties, and Joseph Walker's life can be placed.

9. Major Bibliographical References

NOV 01 1989

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

NPS, Western Regional Office

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 111.4 acres

UTM References

A

1	1	1
4	0	7
6	8	0

3	9	4	7	4	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

C

1	1	1
4	0	7
0	0	0

3	9	4	6	5	8	8
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B

1	1	1
4	0	7
3	8	5

3	9	4	6	3	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

D

1	1	1
4	0	6
6	2	5

3	9	4	6	5	8	9
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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Refer to the drawn boundaries on the enclosed USGS Walker Pass, CA 7.5' quadrangle. Briefly, the boundaries of Walker Pass create a quadrilateral. The sides of the quadrilateral are defined as follows with reference to the enclosed map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The Landmark is a mountain pass and the boundaries are based on geographic points which minimally, but adequately, define the Pass. To the northeast the Pass is defined by a single peak (6,366 feet). To the southwest the pass is defined by three peaks (5,403 - 5,509 feet) of a ridge.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mark O. Rudo, Archeologist
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NOV 01 1989

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2

Vegetation at the pass is characteristic of an arid or semidesert climate. Ground cover is sparse and soils are sandy. The Pass itself appears to be transitional between a Lower Sonoran Desert life zone exhibiting Joshua tree and bursage (northeastern side and southeastern approach), and a Great Basin lifezone exhibiting sporadic pine and juniper (southwestern side and northwestern approach). Historic changes in vegetation patterns may have resulted from the introduction of livestock (sheep and cattle) and fire control by Federal land managing agencies.

ETHNO-HISTORIC SETTING

Walker Pass is located within an area once transitional between the boundaries of the Kawaiisu and Tubatulabal Native American peoples. Zigmond (1986:399, Fig. 1) distinctly places the Pass within the ethnographically known Kawaiisu tribal territory, including their Sierra Nevada "core area" and a larger area of the northwestern Mojave Desert and the southwestern Great Basin. The Kawaiisu, a Great Basin hunting and gathering people speaking a language of the Uto-Aztecan family, exhibited cultural traits reflecting both the California and Great Basin cultural areas. Smith (1978:437, Fig. 1) seems to place Walker Pass just within, or adjacent to, the ethnographically known Tubatulabal tribal territory. The Tubatulabal were immediately north of the Kawaiisu in the Sierra Nevada and were also a Uto-Aztecan speaking hunting and gathering people exhibiting both California and Great Basin cultural traits. The Tubatulabal, however, are considered a Californian group.

Recorded instances of intertribal activities are known to have occurred and included antelope drives near Bakersfield, California, attended by Kawaiisu, Tubatulabal, Yokuts and Chumash (Zigmond 1986:399). Intermarriage also took place between the Kawaiisu and the Tubatulabal (Zigmond 1986:404) and the Kawaiisu and American settlers (Zigmond 1986:410) respectively.

Walker Pass was apparently utilized for trade between the Kawaiisu and Tubatulabal. Davis (1974:26 and Maps 1 and 2) cites evidence that concave base and double notch base projectile points were received by the Kawaiisu, but does not mention what the Tubatulabal received in return. Although not mentioned by name it may be reasonably abstracted that Walker Pass was also utilized in the regional and inter-regional trade patterns described by Hughes and Bennyhoff (1986:238-255). Major items probably handled by both the Kawaiisu and the Tubatulabal would include shells and/or shell beads from the Pacific coast and obsidian and/or finished obsidian artifacts from the Coso Range obsidian source approximately 45 miles to the northeast of Walker Pass. The extent and status of trade through Walker Pass during its designated period of historical significance has not been determined. The fact that Joseph Walker was shown the Pass by Indians residing in the San Joaquin valley (possibly fugitive Chumash from the revolt at the Santa Barbara Mission on the coast c.f. Leonard 1966:65 and Bancroft 1886:II:533-534) demonstrates broad native knowledge and use of the Pass during its designated period of historical significance. There is no evidence that Joseph Walker interacted with either the Kawaiisu or Tubatulabal.

NOV 01 1989

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3

CULTURAL FEATURES NOT EXTANT

Neither cultural features associated with the Pass' period of historic significance nor prehistoric sites are known to exist within the boundaries of the Pass (Ridgway and Garfinkel 1984, Garfinkel, Schiffman and McGuire 1980). Archeological survey of the Pass, however, is incomplete and it should be noted that Native American cultural resources have been located in the vicinity. For example, a dry cave has been reported in Freeman Canyon:

"...near Walker Pass, where a prospector had found rush matting, a piece of twined juniper bark textile, and part of a conical burden basket (c.f. Moratto 1984:331)".

INTEGRITY

Walker Pass possesses a high degree of both physical and visual integrity. With the aid of an informed historical imagination Walker Pass can be easily associated, in the mind of the beholder, with the people and events which have made it historically significant. With the exception of unknown changes in vegetation patterns, and the addition of the noncontributing cultural features noted below, there is no evidence that Walker Pass has significantly changed since its designated period of historic significance.

NONCONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES

Noncontributing historic cultural alterations and additions (see Sketch Map) include a paved two lane highway (Photos 4 and 5), the Pacific Crest Scenic Trail (Photos 3 and 4), one road sign (Photo 4), three trail/land management signs (Photo 3), one buried telephone cable, one stock trail (Photo 4), and the stone and concrete monument containing the National Historic Landmark, California Historical Landmark (#99) and E Clampus Vitus commemorative plaques (Photo 6).

NOV 01 1989

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The historic context of Walker Pass is:

"Overland American Exploration and Settlement of California (1826-1846)"

This context is spatially defined by the current boundaries of California and consists of the known locations and routes associated with the first American explorers and settlers to enter California by land, thereby establishing new emigrant routes from the east. The subject time period starts with the 1826 journey of Jedediah Smith and ends with the tragedy of the Donner Party's attempted crossing of the Sierra Nevada in 1846. Individual leaders and associated routes of travel within this context include but are not limited to: Jedediah Smith (1826-27), Alexander McCleod (1828), Peter Skene Ogden (1829?), James Ohio Pattie (1828-30), William Wolfskill (1830), Ewing Young (1830-32), David E. Jackson (1831-32), Joseph R. Walker (1833-34, 1843, 1845), Bartleson - Bidwell (1841), Lt. Emmons (1841), Workman - Rowland (1841), Lansford W. Hastings (1843), Joseph B. Chiles (1843), Stevens - Murphy (1844), John C. Fremont (1844, 1845-46), and John Donner (1846). See Beck and Haase (1974:43-46) for annotated historical maps and Bancroft (1886:III:150-180, 385-413 and IV:256-280, 330-349, 379-400, 434-454) for narrative accounts of the above expeditions.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Walker Pass is associated with Joseph R. Walker on the basis of three significant events which can be placed within the above context. Further details are given within the condensed biography of Walker following "Comparison with Other Properties".

- 1) Joseph R. Walker and his men, part of the Bonneville Expedition, entered California by crossing the Sierra Nevada adjacent to the Yosemite Valley in 1833. They returned through Walker Pass in 1834, which was shown to them by Native Americans. Walker's exit from California is significant as the first known instance of Euro-American passage through Walker Pass, the knowledge of which enabled its military and commercial use in later years. Walker in particular used the pass repeatedly throughout his long life.
- 2) The main body of the Joseph B. Chiles emigrant party was lead safely through Walker Pass into the San Joaquin Valley by Joseph R. Walker in 1843. Chiles and a much smaller group skirted the Sierra Nevada and entered California from north. The Chiles party, under Walker, made the first attempt to bring wagons to interior California but were frustrated in this endeavor, being forced to abandon the wagons at Owens Lake before reaching the pass. The passage of the Chiles party is significant because they were the first American emigrant wagon train to reach the Sierra Nevada, the first American emigrant party to cross Walker Pass, and among the very first overland emigrant parties to reach interior California.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3

3) In 1845 the main body of John C. Fremont's military-topographic expedition was led safely through Walker Pass to interior California by Joseph R. Walker while Fremont and a smaller group crossed the Sierra Nevada to the north. The passage of Fremont's expedition was significant because the well armed government expedition was an instrument of "Manifest Destiny" and played an important symbolic role in encouraging the "Bear Flag Revolt" (1846) by American settlers against Mexican rule, a precursor of the Mexican War (1846-1848) and conquest of California.

COMPARISON WITH OTHER PROPERTIES

Within the physical boundaries of the defined historic context no other natural or cultural features have the documented frequency or strength of association with Joseph Walker that Walker Pass has. Of the other properties associated with Joseph Walker's exploration of California, the Yosemite Valley is probably the best known. In contrast to his brief association with Yosemite Valley, however, Walker utilized Walker Pass throughout his life and it was clearly his passage of choice through the Sierra Nevada. That the pass was named for Walker attests to the strength of Walker's association with it. Further details of Walker's strong and consistent association with the Pass are provided in the following condensed biography.

JOSEPH R. WALKER (1798-1876)

Gilbert (1983) constitutes the most recent and detailed biography of Joseph R. Walker available and, unless otherwise referenced, is the primary source for this life history.

The Walker family was of Scottish-Irish descent and Joseph Walker's paternal great grandparents arrived in Maryland, from Ulster, in 1728. From Maryland they soon left for Pennsylvania and eventually planned to settle in the Shenendoah Valley of western Virginia, on land cleared by great grandfather Walker. Although the great grandparents died before settling, their sons, nephews, and sons-in-law all moved their families to the chosen site and established a community that came to be known as the "Creek Nation" (not to be confused with the Creek Indians). The Walkers thereafter became heavily engaged in frontier exploration, Indian fighting, and raising large families.

Joseph Walker's father, one of the grandsons, married Susan Willis and settled along the Emory River in Tennessee. It was there on his parents' homestead that Joseph Rutherford Walker was born, in what is now Roane County. Joseph's middle name was Rutherford, which was corrupted into "Reddeford" by a local newspaper shortly after his death in Contra Costa County, California. Walker was one of seven siblings in a local extended family that grew to include five of father Joseph's siblings and their families. At ages 15 and 16, respectively, Joseph and his brother Joel fought under Andrew Jackson at the battle of Horseshoe Bend in which the Creek Indians were vanquished.

NOV 01 1989

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 4

In 1819, as part of the Great Migration, Joseph and many of the other Walkers and their relations left Tennessee to settle in Missouri near Fort Osage, an official government fur trading post run by George Sibley. After the Walkers were settled in 1820, Joseph left for New Mexico where he was briefly imprisoned and then ejected by the Spanish authorities. He continued to travel, trade and trap in the area for several years though and the geographic knowledge he gained proved useful in later years.

In 1825 George Sibley was appointed one of three federal commissioners responsible for the survey of a wagon route between Missouri and New Mexico. Joseph, his brother "Big" John, and Bill Williams were among those hired by the commissioners to carry out the survey. Williams and the Walkers assembled a number of Osage Indians at a grove of large trees along the Neosho River about 150 miles from Fort Osage and negotiated an easement for the route. In return for the easement the Osage were provided with \$800 in trade goods. Williams and Joseph Walker both signed the resultant treaty and in commemoration of the event Sibley had "Big" John incise "Council Grove, Aug. 10, 1825" in large letters on one of the white oak trees. The location eventually became the town of Council Grove, Kansas. The survey was completed in 1827, the year in which Walker was appointed Sheriff of Jackson County, Missouri. He was confirmed by popular vote but after serving one and a half years declined renomination.

In 1830 Walker agreed to be a leader of, and informal partner in, Captain Benjamin Bonneville's fur trading expedition to the Rocky Mountains and beyond. The 110 man expedition left Fort Osage township for the Rocky Mountains in May of 1832, traversed South Pass (Wyoming), and established a fortified camp, "Fort Bonneville", at the confluence of Green River and Horse Creek (western Wyoming). Walker then recruited 40 experienced mountain men at the 1833 Green River fur trading rendezvous and departed for California in July. Bonneville had already obtained a passport and visa for Walker from the State Department and Mexican Consul respectively in Washington the previous year. The California party was provisioned for a year and included George Nidever, Bill Williams, the Meek brothers, and Zenas Leonard who later published a full account of the expedition. Regarding Walker's purpose Leonard (1966:33) states:

"The other Division, under the command of a Mr. Walker, was ordered to steer through an unknown country, toward the Pacific, and if he [Walker] did not find beaver, he should return to the Great Salt Lake in the following summer. Mr. Walker was a man well calculated to undertake a business of this kind. He was well hardened to the hardships of the wilderness—understood the character of the Indians very well—was kind and affable to his men, but at the same time at liberty to command without giving offence,—and to explore unknown regions was his chief delight. I was anxious to go to the coast of the Pacific, and for that purpose hired with Mr. Walker as clerk, for a certain sum per year."

NOV 01 1989

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5

Leonard's concise description of Walker is one of the few first person descriptions available. Walker himself wrote little and eventually lost his personal journal in fording a river.

Walker and his men departed from Green River on 27 July 1833 and four days later added 15 to 20 free trappers to their company for a combined total of approximately 60 men. After traveling to the western shores of the Great Salt Lake the party travelled west to the Humboldt River which they followed downstream to the Humboldt Sink. At Humboldt Sink Walker and his men encountered hundreds of Paiute and within two days engaged a large Paiute group they perceived to be hostile. Walker initially tried to avoid violent confrontations but the final result of miscommunication between the Americans and Paiute was a massacre in which Leonard (1966:37) states that Walker and his men killed 39 Indians without suffering any losses. Cline (1963:174) believes this and a later fight between Walker's group and the Paiute to be highly significant as the first organized battles in the Great Basin between whites and Native Americans. The party then proceeded in peace to the south where they encountered what would later be known as Walker River. Walker and his men followed the river to the Sierra Nevada and, being unable to find a suitable pass, began a direct ascent on 1 October. In their difficult passage across the mountains they were forced to kill 17 of their horses for food but became probably the first Americans to look down upon the Yosemite Valley. Unable to descend into the Valley itself the men nevertheless worked their way westward by following the Merced River, and encountered giant Sequoias in the process. Farquhar (1925:6-7) discusses Walker's probable route. Once in the San Joaquin Valley they replenished their supply of horses by trading with the Indians and began trapping beaver.

Walker's group then moved southwest to the coast and camped by the Pacific Ocean at Ano Nuevo, north of Santa Cruz, where they encountered the American ship Lagoda and her Captain who advised Walker to present his credentials at Monterey. The group moved south and made preparations to winter near Mission San Juan Bautista while Walker proceeded to Monterey with two of his men. With the aid of the Lagoda's Captain, Walker met the Governor of Alta California, Jose Figueroa, and received permission to winter, trade, and hunt in California. Trapping on Indian land, and trading with the Indians, however, were forbidden. In the following year, 1834, Walker marshaled his men for the journey back and departed the locale of San Juan Bautista on 14 February with approximately 52 men, 315 horses, 47 head of cattle, and 30 dogs. The group traveled south through the San Joaquin Valley looking for a suitable pass and eventually camped with a large community of Indians who, by Leonard's description (1966:65), were partially assimilated escapees from Mission Santa Barbara, where a major Indian revolt had taken place in 1824 (see Bancroft 1886:II:527-538). The Indians informed Walker of the pass which was to bear his name and Leonard (1966:65-66) describes the evening and subsequent passage as follows:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NOV 01 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

"We passed one night with these Indians, during which time they informed us of an accessible passage over the mountain. In the morning we resumed our journey, hiring two of these Indians as pilots, to go with us across the mountain—continued all day without any interruption, and in the evening encamped at the foot of the passover.

In the morning we continued up the mountain in an eastern direction, and encamped this evening at the lower end of the snow. The next day we found the snow more plenty, and encamped without grass of any kind. We now began to apprehend hard times again. Our horses no longer resumed their march in the morning with a playful cheerfulness, but would stumble along and go just when their riders would force them to do so. We continued travelling in this way for four days when we landed safely on the opposite side of the mountain, in a temperate climate, and among tolerable pasture, which latter was equally as gratifying to our horses as the former was to the men." (See also Bancroft 1886:III:391)

After much hardship, Walker and all his men reached the vicinity of the Carson and Humboldt Sinks in the second week of June (Leonard 1966:70) where they again clashed with the Paiute, slaying 14 of them, while suffering only three wounded. Walker's group then ascended the Humboldt River, crossed to the Snake River, and finally found Bonneville on 12 July along the Bear River, north of the Great Salt Lake. About Walker's California expedition Cline (1963:179) states:

"Captain Walker and his men crossed the Great Basin in its exact center twice and established, in part, the Overland Trail which within a decade was to be used by many parties of homeseekers."

Walker and Bonneville remained partners in the fur trade until 1835 when fur prices went into a steep decline. Despite reduced prices Walker continued to trade in furs, and also horses. He traveled extensively through the Great Basin, Southwest and parts of California.

"[Walker] would go to the coast and trade with the Mexicans for Abolona [sic] shells, a shell highly prized by the Indians, especially by the mountain tribes, then he would start east and go from tribe to tribe trading for other trinkets, furs and skins until he was again loaded for the Eastern market. And perhaps turn up at Taos, New Mexico, or at Ft. Bent or perhaps farther east....Capt. Walker never seemed to have any trouble with the Indians on these trips, they always seemed to be at peace with him (Thomas Breckenridge in Gilbert 1983:156)."

NOV 01 1989

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 7

By 1837 at the latest, Walker was married to a Snake (Eastern Shoshone) woman whose name is now unknown. Sketches of them were made that year by a traveling artist from Baltimore, Alfred Jacob Miller. Walker's wife frequently traveled with him and they were last seen as a couple in 1846. It is known that they had children. Shimkin (1986) provides a detailed ethnographic description of Eastern Shoshone culture, a culture with which Walker must have been extremely familiar.

In 1840 Walker and a band of followers made the first known north to south crossing of the eastern Great Basin by Americans. Starting from Brown's Hole along the Green River (northeastern Utah) Walker and his men crossed the Wasatch Range to Sevier Lake and traveled south to the upper Virgin River which they descended until reaching its confluence with the Colorado River. From the Colorado, they crossed the Mojave Desert to Los Angeles where Walker sold 417 pounds of beaver pelts to Abel Stearns, a prominent American expatriate living in Los Angeles, who became Walker's business agent in purchasing horses. Walker left California with a hundred mares and an unknown number of mules.

After travelling to California in the Bartelson - Bidwell Party of 1841 Joseph B. Chiles returned to western Missouri and organized the first wagon train of California bound emigrants in 1843. At Fort Laramie (Wyoming) Chiles hired Walker to guide the wagon train to California for \$300. Along the trail at Ft. Hall (Idaho), Walker and Chiles decided to split the party in order to make best use of the remaining provisions. After leaving Fort Hall on 16 September, Chiles took 13 men on horseback to Fort Boise (Idaho) for further provisions. If food was not available he was to cross the Sierra Nevada in the vicinity of Truckee River, proceed to Sutter's Fort for food, and bring it across the Sierra to Humboldt Sink where Walker and the wagon train would be waiting. Once reunited they would proceed south through the Owens Valley, along the eastern scarp of the Sierra Nevada to Walker Pass where Walker believed the wagons could cross. Another account (Bancroft 1886:IV:394-395) places the proposed rendezvous at the west end of Walker Pass. The Walker party reached the Humboldt Sink on approximately 22 October. The Chiles group was unable to obtain provisions at Fort Boise and circumvented the Sierra Nevada far to the north, rather than crossing at the Truckee River. Chiles reached Sutter's Fort on 11 November. Walker's group left the Humboldt Sink about 1 November and traded horseshoe nails for fish with the Paiute at what would later be known as Walker Lake (Nevada). Possibly because of inadequate forage (it was a drought year) the animals were unable to pull the wagons beyond Owens Lake (California) where the wagons were abandoned along with a disassembled saw mill (see also Bancroft 1886:IV:392-395). The party proceeded on foot and reached the summit of Walker Pass on 3 December. Thereafter they crossed the San Joaquin Valley and wintered pleasantly in Peachtree Valley on the headwaters of a tributary to the Salinas River in the central coast ranges (Bancroft 1886:IV:395). About the journey Gilbert (1983:197) states:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NOV 01 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

"The overland caravan had done no true exploring but had laid down 500 miles of what was to become the California Trail."

Gilbert's statement confirms Cline's opinion regarding Walker's role in establishing a major segment of one the primary emigrant trails to California across the Great Basin, although Cline credits the accomplishment to the expedition of 1833 rather than 1843. The trail segment referred to appears to extend from Fort Hall (Idaho) to the Truckee River (Nevada and California).

After the expedition dispersed, Walker once again presented his passport to the authorities and was granted permission to trade. As before, he left southern California with a herd of horses and mules in April 1844 along the Old Spanish Trail and overtook John C. Fremont's second military topographic expedition (his first to California) somewhere beyond Las Vegas. The two had met previously in 1842 at Independence, Missouri, when Walker declined Fremont's invitation to guide the expedition. Walker's group travelled with Fremont to Bent's Fort (Colorado) where they went their separate ways.

In 1845 by prearrangement, Walker, with his wife and retainers, joined Fremont's third government expedition at White River (eastern Utah) bound for California and Oregon. Fremont had recruited Bill Williams and Kit Carson but Walker was appointed the chief guide. Walker and his followers had previously camped with one of the first U.S. dragoon units to patrol the emigration trails and was described as follows by Captain Philip St. George Cooke (in Gilbert 1983:210):

"This afternoon Mr. Walker, whom we met at Independence Rock, visited our camp: he has picked up a small party at Fort Laramie; and wild-looking creatures they are—white and red. This man has abandoned civilization,—married a squaw or squaws, and prefers to pass his life wandering in these deserts; carrying on, perhaps, an almost nominal business of hunting, trapping and trading—but quite sufficient to the wants of a chief of savages. He is a man of much natural ability, and apparently of prowess and ready resource."

Walker led the main body of the expedition down the Humboldt River to Walker Lake where they met Fremont and a smaller group who had taken a more southerly route after leaving the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake. The party again divided, with Walker taking the main body through Walker Pass in December while Fremont and a small group crossed the Sierra Nevada in the vicinity of Truckee River, eventually reaching Sutter's Fort (California). The two parties missed their planned rendezvous in the San Joaquin Valley but were reunited in February 1846. Without passport or visa, Fremont and his men were initially allowed to camp in California but were quickly ordered out by the regional military commander Colonel Jose Castro upon news that Fremont was only two days from Monterey. Fremont's response to the eviction order was to position his approximately 60 men in a fortified position on Hawk's peak (now Fremont's Peak)

NOV 01 1990

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 9

overlooking the Salinas Valley and raise the American flag. Castro brought militia, accompanied by light field artillery, to within about 4 miles of Fremont's position. After three days of visible preparation and maneuvering by the Californians Fremont abandoned his position and headed for Oregon, without Walker. Viola and Ehrenberg (in Fremont 1988:ix-xv), Beck and Haase (1974:46,47,48), and Bancroft (1886:IV:594-598 V:1-410) discuss Fremont's controversial role in "Manifest Destiny", the "Bear Flag Revolt", and the conquest of California.

Walker was disgusted with Fremont's retreat from Hawk's Peak and left for southern California with his nephew Frank McClellan, a local resident since coming out with Walker and Chiles in 1843. After selling his pelts Walker left the Los Angeles area in early May with a herd of approximately 500 horses and mules and 7 trail hands. They travelled through Cajon Pass in the San Gabriel Mountains and north across the Mojave Desert to the now familiar trail at Walker Pass which led them north through the Owens Valley to the Humboldt River and across the Great Basin to Fort Hall where they arrived in the middle of June.

After resting the herd Walker drove on to Fort Bridger (Wyoming) where he was reunited with his wife and affinal relatives, encamped nearby with several hundred other Eastern Shoshone. Most of the herd was sold but Walker took approximately 100 animals to Bent's Fort where they were bought by Army units on their way to pursue the Mexican-American War in New Mexico.

Walker journeyed to Independence, Missouri in April 1847, alone, without pelts, and for an extended stay. His actions were not in keeping with his established pattern of living. Gilbert (1983:227) speculates that Walker may have lost wife and relatives in the winter of 1846 and notes that cholera was decimating many of the tribes at the time. In the summer of 1847 Walker determined to go back to the frontier and on 2 September Walker and his nephews Frank McClellan and James (sometimes "Jeemes") Walker left Missouri for the west without trade goods, purpose unknown. Walker never returned to Missouri but neither did he live again with the Eastern Shoshone or any other Native American people. After wintering along the Green River at the site of the first fur rendezvous the nephews departed for Fort Laramie (Wyoming). Walker eventually went back to the Green River where he briefly met another nephew, Mike McClellan, on his way to California with an emigrant party led by Walker's friend Joseph Chiles. Walker was described at that time by Richard May (in Gilbert 1983:229) as follows:

"Left camp earlier than common and traveled 18 miles. At our noon halt Joseph Walker, the noted mountaineer met us. He is a very fine looking man, the very picture of health, and discourses well on most topics. He conducted us through a pass in these mountains by which means we avoided a very steep hill both up and down. Mr. Walker appears to be about 45 years of age and steps off with the alacrity of a youth..."

NOV 01 1999

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

Walker then traveled alone to California where he initially bought a ranch near friends in the southern Santa Clara Valley and went into business supplying livestock to the miners of the California Gold Rush. His brother Joel settled in the Napa Valley that year and Joel's son John along with nephews James Walker and the two McClellan brothers, Frank and Mike, agreed to drive stock to the diggings and act as business agents. Joseph Walker was the buyer and trader and dealt with the supplying ranches in southern California. The business was a success for all concerned and Walker eventually used it to finance further explorations of the southern Great Basin and Colorado Plateau.

In January 1851 Walker left California with seven men via Walker Pass to explore the feasibility of a more direct trail between Los Angeles and Santa Fe, and to visit the Hopi Indians. In the process Walker determined that the Mojave River did not meet the Colorado River, traded with the Mojave Indians, explored Native American pueblo ruins (now Wupatki National Monument, Arizona), and spent a pleasant and informative week with the Hopi. Walker summered around Santa Fe and then returned to California.

As a result of his geographic knowledge Walker was consulted regarding possible railroad routes to California. Upon invitation to speak at the California State Capitol Walker proposed two routes both of which crossed the Sierra at Walker Pass. Although inspected for possible railroad use earlier in the year (Farquhar 1925:10-11) Walker Pass was not selected for a mountain railroad crossing. It did, however, become part of a major Wells Fargo stagecoach route linking the southern San Joaquin Valley to the Owens Valley and Great Basin (Beck and Haase 1974:51).

In 1855 Walker sold his Gilroy ranch and moved to James Walker's expanding Manzanita Ranch near Martinez in Contra Costa County, California. In the same year he also led a party of prospectors east of the Sierra Nevada to the general area around Mono and Walker Lakes. Gold was discovered, although neither the first, last, nor most spectacular strike in the area.

The year 1858 saw Walker head toward New Mexico Territory, purpose unknown, where the Mojave mortally wounded one of his party on the west side of the Colorado River. After bringing the wounded man to Los Angeles Walker guided a U.S. Army unit of 50 men from Fort Tejon on a punitive expedition in which 60 Mojave were killed. At the conclusion of the expedition Walker returned home and the Army established Fort Mojave along the banks of the Colorado.

Walker then led another prospecting expedition through Walker Pass in 1860, this time to the Little Colorado River Basin (Arizona) and beyond. No substantial gold deposits were discovered though, and the group travelled to Colorado where they prospected at recent strikes and avoided Civil War military actions in the New Mexico Territory. In 1862 Walker and a party of predominantly young,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NOV 01 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 11

inexperienced, mining hopefuls left Colorado for New Mexico and further prospecting in what is now Arizona. They were not hindered by the military, probably as a result of Walker's long acquaintance with the territorial military commander, General James Carleton. Walker's party descended the Rio Grande Valley and along the way Walker taught the men how to move and camp in hostile territory. Throughout his stay in New Mexico and Arizona Walker's chief chronicler was Daniel Conner, a young Kentuckian who, as a known Confederate sympathizer, was fugitive from the military authorities. Walker provided him with shelter and an alias.

Beyond Fort Craig (New Mexico) Walker's party was in Apache territory where there was no military protection. Walker's goal was to proceed across the continental divide into what is now central Arizona but he was opposed by Mangas Coloradas a Chief of the Mimbrenos Apache, who wanted to kill the party or at least prevent its crossing. After approximately three months of maneuvering and skirmishing in what is now southwestern New Mexico the season passed to winter and Walker's group rested at abandoned Fort McLane. Walker's leadership and knowledge of the area had been critical in keeping his men alive and relatively healthy but they were still prevented from crossing to Arizona. Walker then decided that in order to secure their safe passage an attempt should be made to capture Mangas Coloradas. Against apparent odds the attempt succeeded and the perpetrators brought Mangas to Fort McLane where apparently by chance a detachment of Federal troops had arrived. Colonel West, the Officer in charge, demanded that Mangas be released to his custody. That evening Mangas was killed by the troops on West's orders. The following morning Colonel West sent troops to the Apache camp at Pinos Altos where 20 Apache were killed. In the meantime Walker and his men headed to Arizona over the Burro Mountains.

Once in Arizona Walker explored the upper San Francisco River and proceeded to Tucson and the Pima villages along the Gila River (south of current Phoenix) where the party bartered for food. Walker then took his men up the Hassayampa River and found substantial deposits of gold in tributaries near the present town of Prescott (Arizona) in the year 1863. Additional supplies were obtained from the Pima and a permanent camp was established and named after Walker, who remained in command until the end of the year when the camp was swollen with hundreds of newcomers. Walker then formally disbanded the expedition and relinquished his duties. Arizona had become a separate territory and, largely as a result of Walker's gold strike, both Prescott and nearby Fort Whipple were established in 1864. Prescott became the territorial capital. The trail from the Pima villages to Prescott became known as the Walker Trail and carried freight and stagecoach traffic to and from Prescott (Walker and Bufkin 1979:40). After taking the new Governor on a tour of the Little Colorado Basin and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 12

satisfying his own curiosity about the South Rim of the Grand Canyon Walker left Arizona in 1867 at the age of 68 with failing eyesight. He returned to Manzanita Ranch in northern California and died in 1876 after a comfortable retirement. Joseph Walker is buried in the Alhambra Cemetery at Martinez, California.

As demonstrated by his life history, Walker was perhaps the most active and long lived of the American explorers, trappers, traders and guides of the 19th century American frontier. By personal action Walker consolidated and significantly expanded the base of geographic knowledge available to Americans regarding the western frontier and especially the Great Basin. He safely guided important expeditions, emigrant trains, and gold seekers to and through the west, and established major routes of travel still in use. Walker's achievements clearly set him apart as a unique and significant figure in American history.

It should not be forgotten that most of the achievements of frontiersmen like Walker were ultimately detrimental to Native American peoples (Malouf and Findlay 1986). Although Walker fought with Native Americans, he nevertheless married into, lived with, and defended the Eastern Shoshone for many years, and generally attempted to prevent violent confrontations between Native Americans and his followers. In so doing, Walker exhibited a relative open mindedness toward Native American societies and cultures that was lacking among most of his white contemporaries and peers.

NOV 01 1989

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

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NOV 01 1989

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

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NOV 01 1989

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 2

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (continued)

Start in Township 26 South, Range 37 East, Section 16, at the peak with a labelled elevation of 6,366 feet (Photo 3). From the peak follow a straight line trending south into Section 20, ending at the peak (Photo 1) with a labelled elevation of 5,403 feet. From the 5,403 foot peak follow a straight line northwest along the ridge to the peak (Photo 4) with a labelled elevation of 5,509 feet, also in Section 20. From the 5,509 foot peak follow a straight line west to the western highpoint (5480+ feet) (Photo 2) of the ridge at the top center of Section 20. From the western highpoint follow a straight line to the northeast, back to the starting peak (6,366 feet) in Section 16.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NOV 01 1989

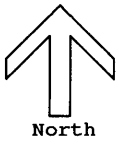
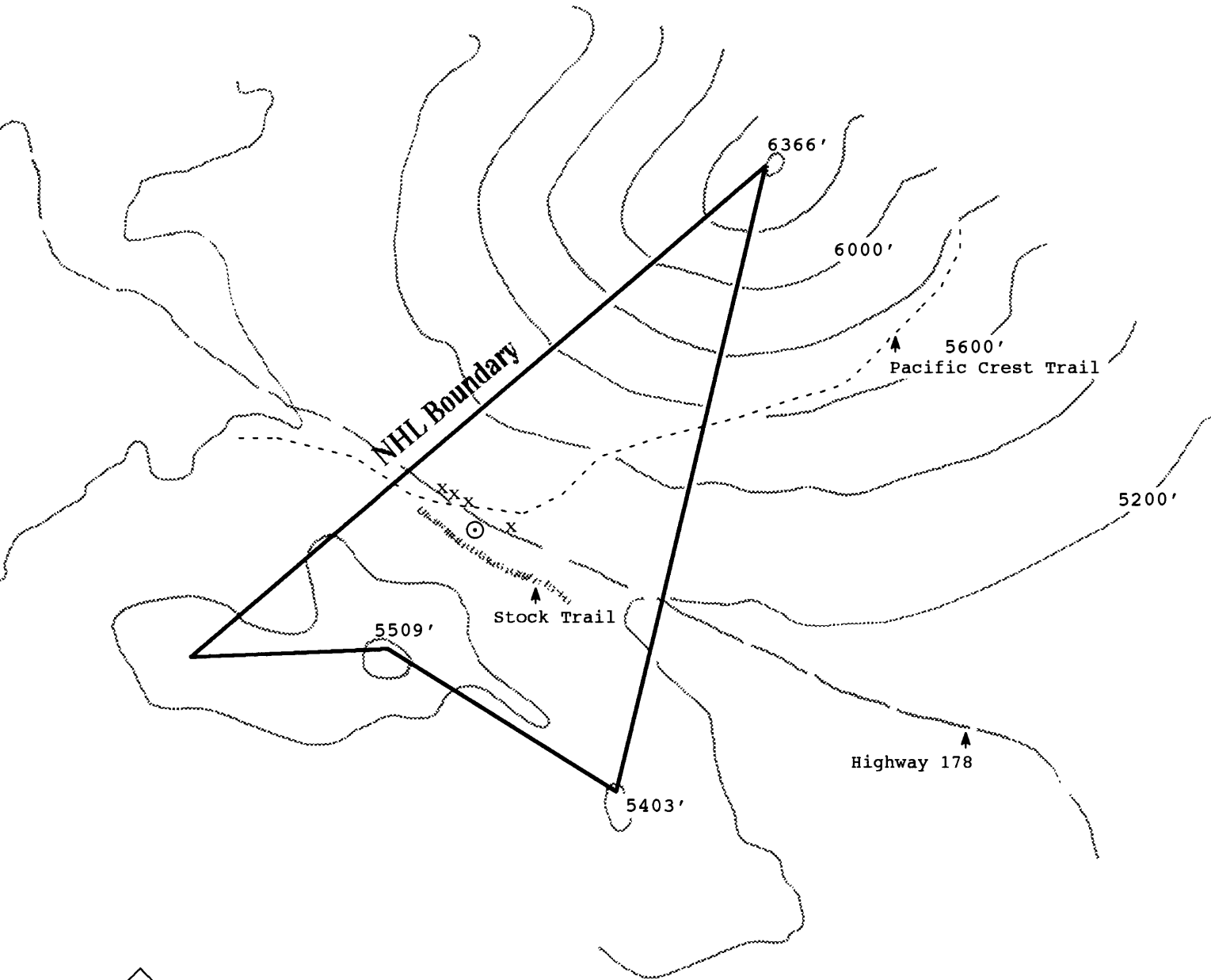
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 3

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (continued)

Straight connecting lines between the peaks, drawn clockwise from the northeast, result in a quadrilateral boundary encompassing the saddle of the pass, and equivalent acreage on either side of the Pass' centerline. The drawn boundaries define a logical, compact, and balanced Landmark with no buffer zones.

Sketch Map of Walker Pass NHL, California



⊙ = Monument
x = Sign
1 mile = 5 3/4''

20 April 1989
Mark Rudo