Form 10-300 (Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

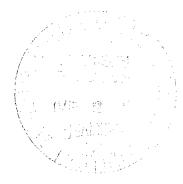
STATE:	
Wyoming	
COUNTY:	
Platte	•
FOR NPS USE O	NLY
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

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	STATE Wyoming		49 code	_{UNTY:} Platt	ë	03	
3.	CLASSIFICATION					,	
	CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBL	
	District Building	Public 🗀	Public Acquisition:		Occupied	Yes:	
	Site Structure	Private	· I	ed 🗀	Preservation work in progress	Unrestricted	
	PRESENT USE (Check One or	More as Appropriate	e)			L	
	Agricultural Govern		Park	☐ Trat	nsportation	Comments	$\overline{\Box}$
	Commercial Industr		Private Residence		er (Specify)		
	Educational Military	y 🗀 R	Religious	Ra	nch Property		
	Entertainment Museum	n 🗌 S	cientific	□ <u>St</u>	ate Historic	Site	
4.	OWNER OF PROPERTY						
	OWNERS NAME:						
	State of Wyoming,	administered	l by the Wyomir	ng Recre	ation Commiss	ion	
	State of Wyoming,		l by the Wyomir	ng Recre	ation Commiss	ion	
	State of Wyoming,		l by the Wyomir	ng Recre	ation Commiss	code	
	State of Wyoming, STREET AND NUMBER: 604 East 25th Stree		l by the Wyomir	STATE:			
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7.	DESCRIPTION										
	CONDITION	(Check One)									
	CONDITION	Excellent 🗌	Good	🗴 Fair 🗌]. Deterior	ated 🗌	Ruins 📋	Unexposed 🔲			
	INTEGRITY		(Che	eck One)		(Check One)					
INTEGRITY		Altered		Unaltered	X	Mo	ved 🗌	Original Site 🙀			
	DESCRIBE THE PE	ESENT AND OR	GINAL ((if known) PHYSI	ICAL APPEA	RANCE					

Register Cliff consists of a soft, chalky, limestone precipice rising over 100 feet above the valley floor of the North Platte River. The horizontal features of the cliff were created thousands of years ago by the erosive action of the river waters cutting through layers of soft sedimentary deposits. Below the cliff exists a level grass covered plain extending to the edge of the river. The processes of nature, primarily through the effects of wind and water erosion, are still slowly effecting changes in the cliff's features and surroundings. Some rock cleavage has occurred over the years, however, Register Cliff remains essentially the same as it did during the days of 19th century westward migration.



5	IGNIFICANCE					
	PERIOD (Check One or M	lore as	Appropriate)			
	Pre-Columbian		16th Centur	у 🗀	18th Century 🗌	20th Century
	15th Century		17th Centur	у [19th Century 🕱	
	SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If A)	pplical	ble and Known)			
	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANC	E (Ch	eck One or More as	Appro	priate)	
	Abor iginal		Education		Political 🔲	Urban Planning
	Prehistoric		Engineering		Religion/Phi-	Other (Specify)
	Historic		Industry		losophy 🔲	Overland migration
	Agriculture		Invention		Science A Science	transcontinental
	Art		Landscape		Scolpture	<u>travel</u>
	Commerce		Architecture		Social/Human-	
1	Communications		Literature		(tarlan -	
	Conservation		Military		Theater	
-			Music		Transportation 🔲	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

Register Cliff is a definite link to the romantic era of overland migration in Western America. It was an important mid-19th century landmark along the route of travel to Oregon and California and a place where countless emigrants inscribed names, dates, origins and messages in the soft limestone cliff faces. Emigrants passing through what is now Wyoming spent less than thirty days in the State and left behind little evidence of their passage except for a few place names, wagon ruts, inscriptions on trail-side cliffs, and some graves. Although inscriptions are found at numerous places along the trail, Register Cliff represents one of the three best known "registers of the desert" -- the other two being Independence Rock and Names Hill. Register Cliff was the first night camp west after leaving Fort Laramie. Under the shadow of the chalky bluffs on the south bank of the Platte River the emigrants paused to set up camp, to pasture their animals, and to rest and recoup from the hardships of trail travel. This stopover gave the wayfarers time to record the names and dates which have now become an enduring aspect of an historic era.

Many of the names and dates at Register Cliff are well over one hundred years old and relate to the peak years of travel along the trail during the 1840's and 1850's. Several states are well-represented in the carvings with Ohio seemingly in the majority. It is likely that the cliff and its surroundings were a familiar stopping place during the fur trade era but inscriptions dating to this period that may have existed at one time have apparently weathered away. The earliest known date reads: "1829 This July 14", perhaps placed there by some French trapper or explorer to commemorate Bastille Day. One unusual series of names, representing three generations of Register Cliff scribes, are those of T. H. Unthank dated 1850, O. N. Unthank, 1869, and O. A. Unthank, 1931.

For some trail travelers Register Cliff became a final resting place. In crossing the plains during the peak years about one in every ten is estimated to have died en route. A number of graves have been discovered near the Cliff in recent times and these are now being protected.

Over the years various types of activity took place at Register Cliff. Ward and Gurrier established and operated a small trading post near the Cliff. This endeavor ended when Gurrier was killed by an exploding keg

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9.	MAJOR	BIBLIOGRA	PHICAL R	EFERE	NCES									
Henderson, Paul C., <u>Landmarks on the Oregon Trail</u> . (The Westerners, New York, N. Y. 1953) p. 24. , <u>Annals of Wyoming</u> (Wyoming State Historical Society, Cheyenne, Wyo,)														
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STATE	
Wyoming	
COUNTY	
Platte	
FOR NPS USE C	NLY
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
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Register Cliff

(Continuation Sheet)

(Numbe	r all	entrie	9)

8. Statement of Significance - page - 2

of black powder. The site of the trading post later became Sand Point, or Star Ranch Pony Express Station. All that remains of this station today is the base of a stone chimney.

Still visible on the cliff is the outline of a painted red horse and rider for use as a target. According to tradition, passing soldiers would fire at the target from a distance of about 200 yards. The bullet marks scattered over the painted figure reveal widely varying degrees of marksmanship.

Charles A. Guernsey, a pioneer cattleman after whom the town of Guernsey, Wyoming is named, established his ranch buildings a short distance from Register Cliff in the 1890's. Guernsey's successor to the ranch, Henry Frederick, donated the site to the State of Wyoming to be preserved as a memorial to the spirit and accomplishments of the pioneers. Though a relatively small area its historic significance is of sufficient magnitude to warrant recognition as a nationally registered historic landmark.



