

# Fort Laramie

National Historic Site  
Wyoming



# Crossroads of a Nation Moving West

For more than 50 years, the forces of Manifest Destiny swept past the doors of the fort on the Laramie. Indians, trappers, traders, gold seekers, overland pioneers, soldiers, and Pony Express riders, each in their turn, found within its borders an outpost of white civilization in the midst of the ancestral hunting grounds of the Plains Indians.

The cottonwood log stockade fort, built in 1834 by fur trade entrepreneur William Sublette, was the first permanent society of white men on the great plains. From Fort William, Sublette sent runners to the Sioux and Cheyenne to tell them of his willingness to trade for buffalo robes.

However, it was not until the fort was sold to the American Fur Company in 1836, that it became a major fur trade center. In 1841, the old log fort was replaced by a larger adobe structure, one mile up the Laramie River. It was named Fort John, but was always known simply as Fort Laramie.

The promise of free land in Oregon and the lure of gold in California drew thousands of emigrants up the Platte River valley by the late 1840s. To protect these argonauts and

emigrants from increasingly frequent conflicts with the Indians, the US Army built a string of outposts along the Oregon Trail.

The location of Fort John near the confluence of the North Platte and Laramie rivers assured the army command of not only the east-west route, but also trails leading south along the Front Range of the Rockies, north into Sioux country around the Black Hills, and northwest into Montana. Purchased by the army for \$4,000, the old fur trade post soon stood at the edge of a growing complex of new military buildings.

For the next 40 years Fort Laramie was the staging point from which troops were sent into the Indians' last strongholds, and twice was where Indian and soldier came to make peace.

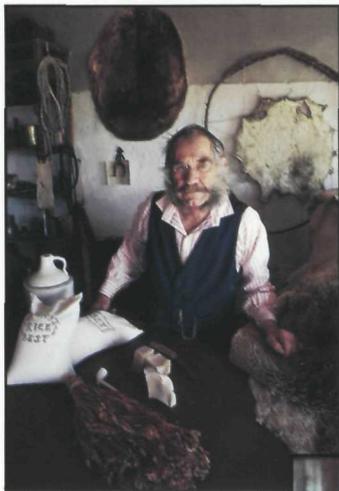
In the end, this post, which for so long had aided travel to the west, was bypassed by the nation it had helped expand. With the end of the Indian Wars in 1890, the post was abandoned and sold at public auction to the homesteads it had made possible.

*Each summer Fort Laramie comes alive as park rangers, dressed in period costume, portray the lives of the soldiers, laundresses, and civilians who inhabited the fort in the 1870s.*



*Interpretive programs and fort tours are available during the summer season from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Check at the visitor center for the day's schedule.*





*During the summer season, reproduction items are available for sale through the Post Trader's Store.*

Photos by David Hiser



*You, too, can quench your thirst at the Enlisted Men's Bar with a cool glass of rootbeer, apple cider or sarsaparilla.*

The primary goal of the Fort Laramie Historical Association is to support historic and educational activities at Fort Laramie National Historic Site.

This non-profit cooperating association provides interpretive materials to park visitors. A sales area/bookstore is open year-round in the park visitor center. Interpretive sales items include slides, videos, theme related items and books dealing with the fur trade, westward migration, women on the frontier, natural history, the frontier military, and the American Indian.

For membership information or a catalog of sales items contact 1-800-321-5456

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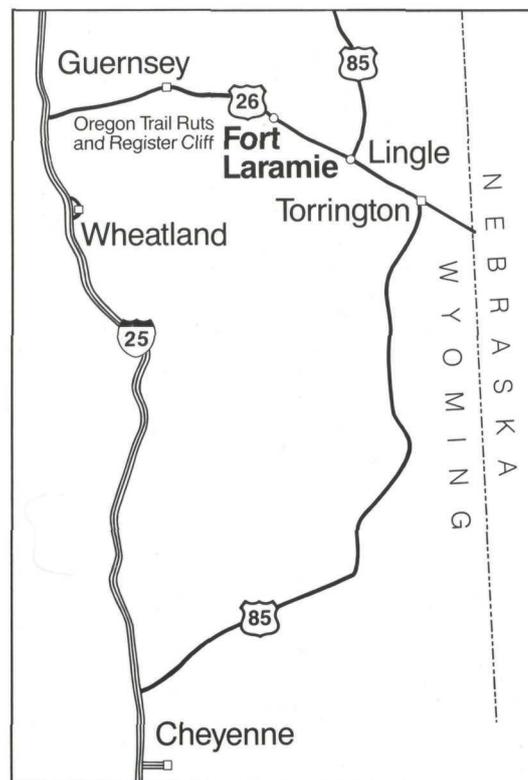
Is located 3 miles southwest of the town of Fort Laramie, Wyoming, off U.S. Route 26.

The visitor center is open every day from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., except federal holidays between October and April.

From Mid May to late September, visitor center hours are extended.

The fort grounds are open till dusk every day of the year.

Historical information and literature are available at the visitor center.



Fort Laramie National Historic Site  
Fort Laramie, WY 82212  
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This brochure is made possible through contributions from the Fort Laramie Historical Association and the Goshen County Lodging Tax Board. Cover and inside photos by James Milmoie.

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