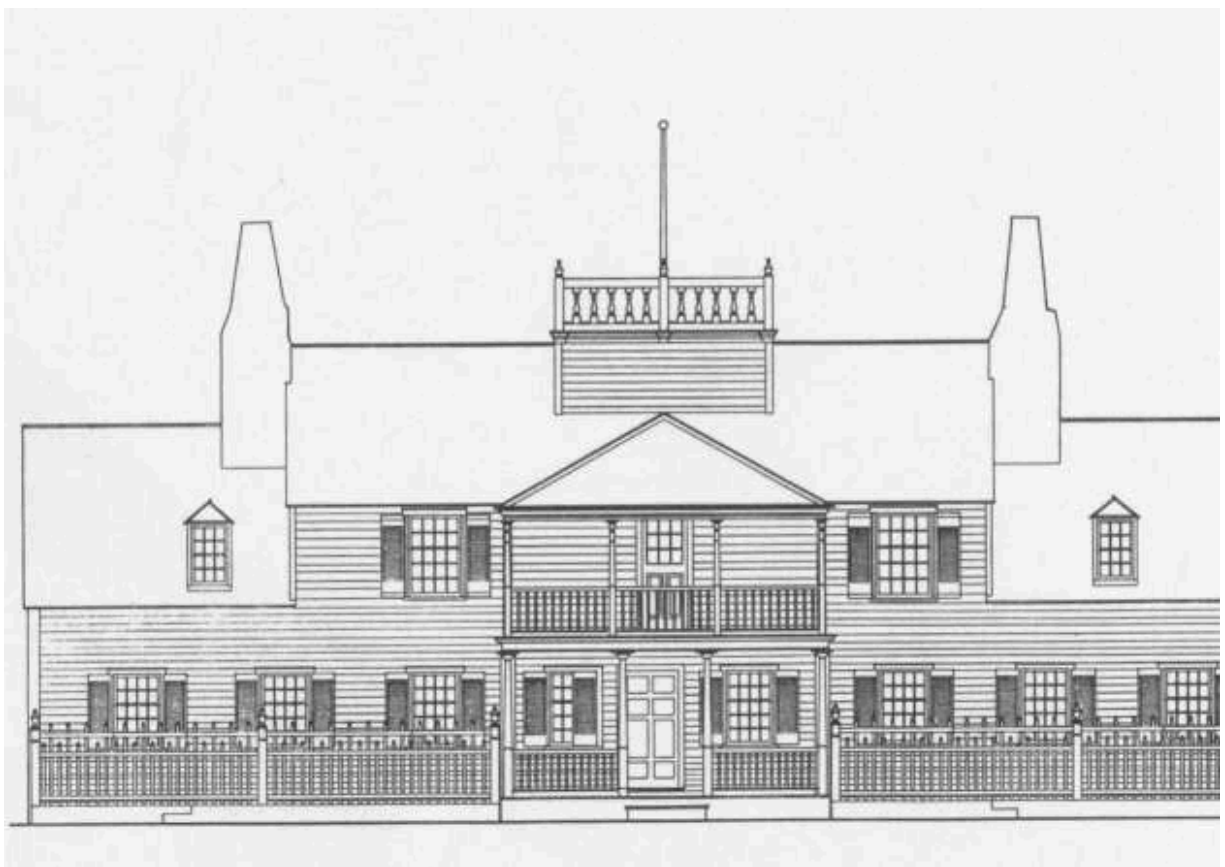


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National Park Service  
Cultural Landscapes Inventory  
2012



Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site  
Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site

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## **Table of Contents**

Inventory Unit Summary & Site Plan

Concurrence Status

Geographic Information and Location Map

Management Information

National Register Information

Chronology & Physical History

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Condition

Treatment

Bibliography & Supplemental Information

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## **Inventory Unit Summary & Site Plan**

### **Inventory Summary**

#### **The Cultural Landscapes Inventory Overview:**

##### **CLI General Information:**

###### **Purpose and Goals of the CLI**

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI), a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the national park system, is one of the most ambitious initiatives of the National Park Service (NPS) Park Cultural Landscapes Program. The CLI is an evaluated inventory of all landscapes having historical significance that are listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources through a public planning process and in which the NPS has or plans to acquire any legal interest. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, condition, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, as well as other valuable information useful to park management. Cultural landscapes become approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into a national database. In addition, for landscapes that are not currently listed on the National Register and/or do not have adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer or the Keeper of the National Register.

The CLI, like the List of Classified Structures, assists the NPS in its efforts to fulfill the identification and management requirements associated with Section 110(a) of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Park Service Management Policies (2006), and Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management. Since launching the CLI nationwide, the NPS, in response to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), is required to report information that respond to NPS strategic plan accomplishments. Two GPRA goals are associated with the CLI: bringing certified cultural landscapes into good condition (Goal 1a7) and increasing the number of CLI records that have complete, accurate, and reliable information (Goal 1b2B).

###### **Scope of the CLI**

The information contained within the CLI is gathered from existing secondary sources found in park libraries and archives and at NPS regional offices and centers, as well as through on-site reconnaissance of the existing landscape. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in context of the site's overall significance. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features, and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's overall integrity and an assessment of the landscape's overall condition. The CLI also provides an illustrative site plan that indicates major features within the inventory unit. Unlike cultural landscape reports, the CLI does not provide management recommendations or

treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape.

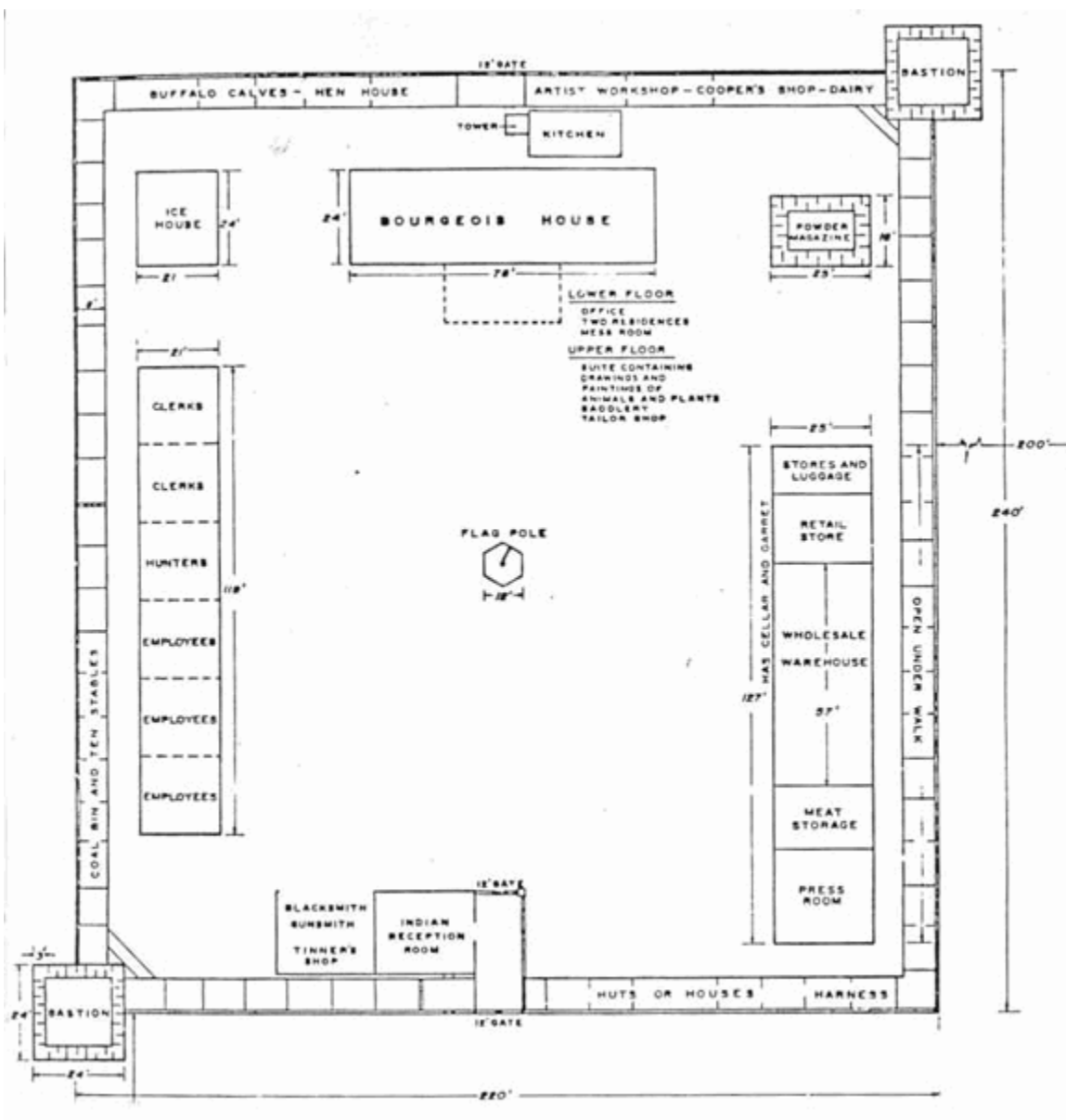
**Inventory Unit Description:**

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site is situated just north of the confluence of the Missouri River and Yellowstone River in present-day western North Dakota and Montana. The fort is within twenty miles of Highway 2 MT (Highway 1804 in North Dakota) and 85 and within 70 miles of Interstate 94. There are no major population centers around Fort Union, contributing to the relatively undeveloped surrounding landscape.

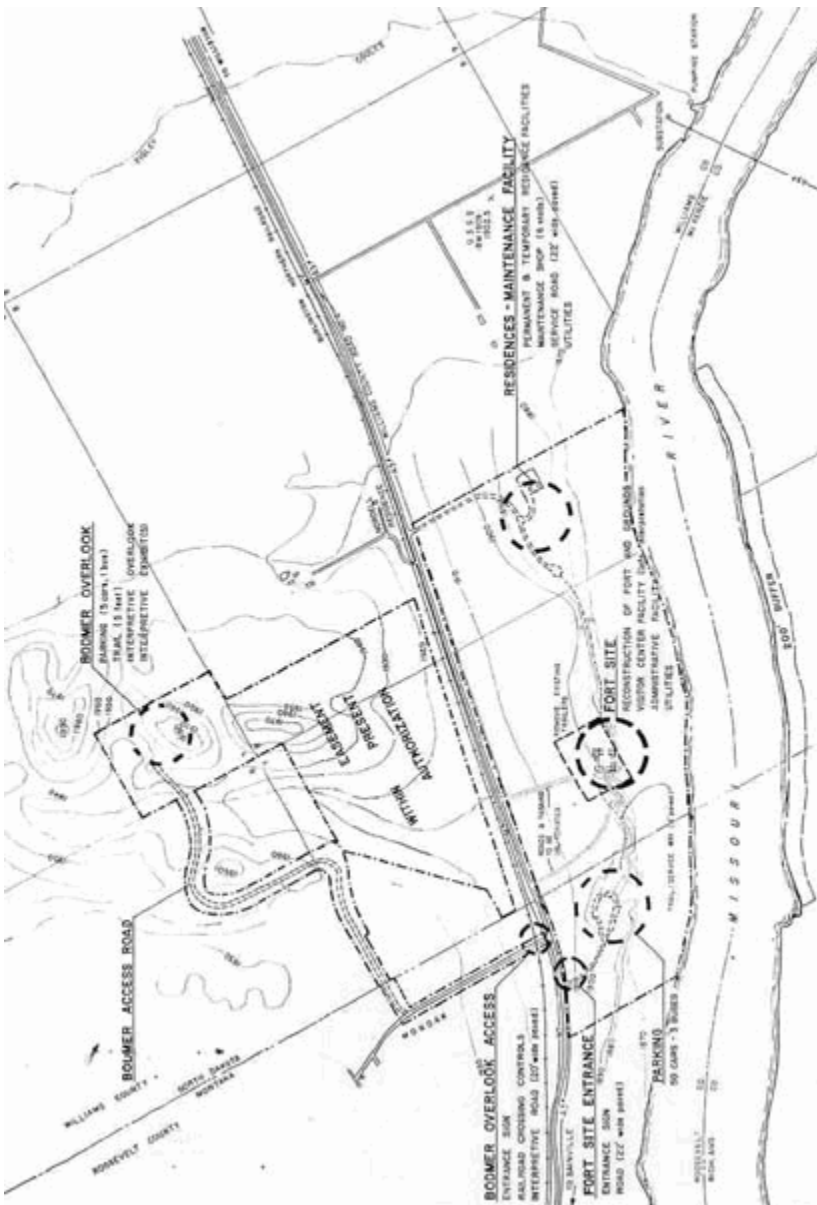
The park boundary encompasses 240.54 acres of former prairie. Currently, restored prairie and agricultural fields surround most of the park. A small area of native prairie still exists in the Bodmer Overlook locale. The Missouri River is a major feature of the landscape. The river is now dammed and no longer meanders between the fort site and the bluffs on the south shore.

Although the buildings and structures currently associated with the Fort Union Trading Post are reconstructions, they were built on the footprints of the original structures. The accuracy of their placement has re-established the original design intent and spatial character of the fort. The vegetation surrounding Fort Union retains the overall character of the historic period but has been impacted by the introduction of various exotic species. In general, the landscape of Fort Union retains integrity of location, setting, feeling and, association.

Site Plan



1843 site plan of Fort Union. Edwin Denig, 1843.



Modern site plan for Fort Union NHS including the fort, Bodmer Overlook, Maintenance and Housing, and roads. (Development Plan, CLI files)

### Property Level and CLI Numbers

<b>Inventory Unit Name:</b>	Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site
<b>Property Level:</b>	Landscape
<b>CLI Identification Number:</b>	450011
<b>Parent Landscape:</b>	450011

### Park Information

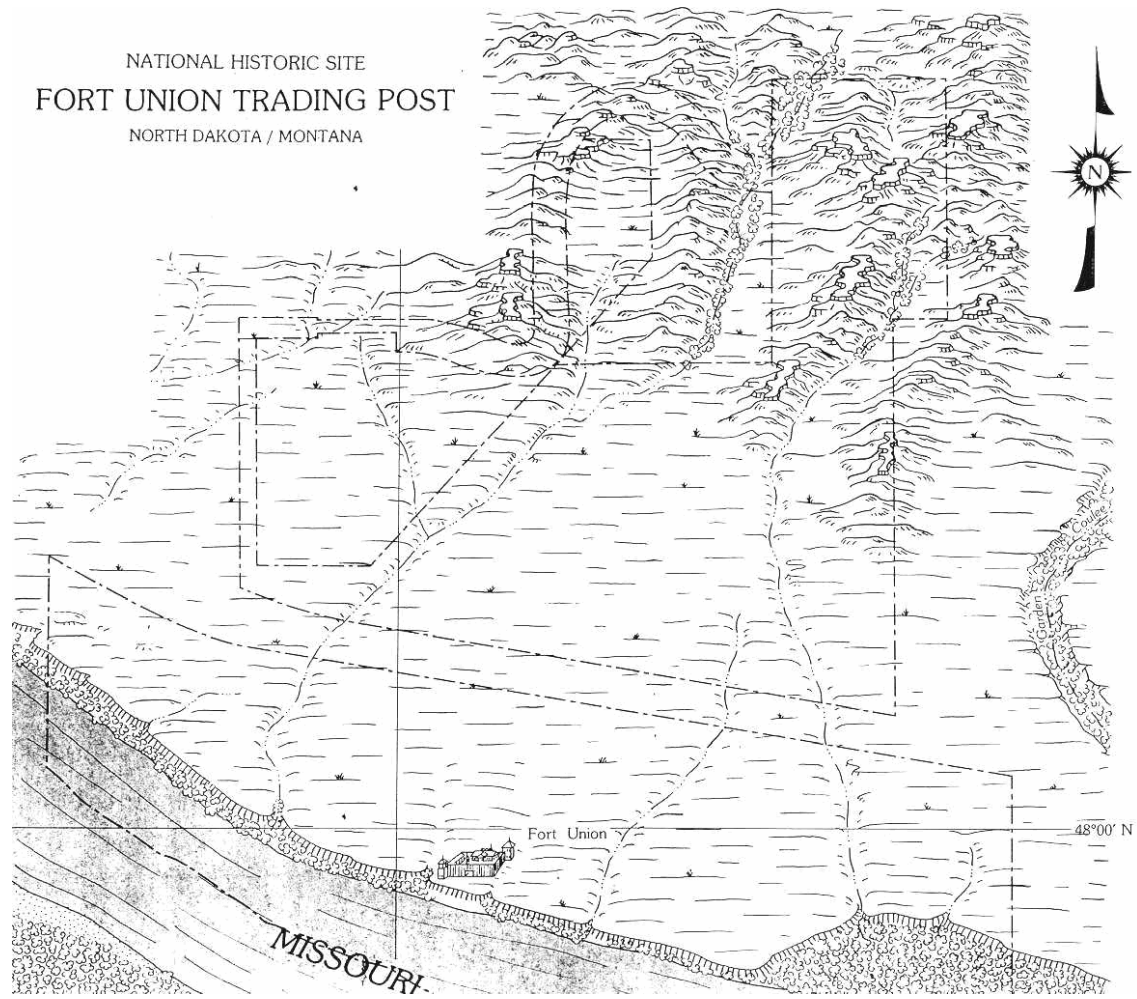
<b>Park Name and Alpha Code:</b>	Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site -FOUS
<b>Park Organization Code:</b>	1549
<b>Park Administrative Unit:</b>	Theodore Roosevelt National Park

### CLI Hierarchy Description

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site consists of one landscape. The discussion of landscape and associated features includes those within park boundaries and the contributing adjacent landscape. Features include the reconstructed Palisades, Bourgeois House, and Indian Artisan House. Adjacent views maintain the feel of large open spaces originally produced by native prairie and currently by cropland. Fort Union retains integrity in setting, location, association, and feeling due to the placement of the parking area, maintenance complex and staff residences well away from the site of the trading post itself. The parking area, maintenance complex, and staff residences are non-contributing features.

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site  
Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site

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*Map of Fort Union Trading Post. (NPS, 1980)*



## Concurrence Status

**Inventory Status:** Complete

**Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:**

Baseline fieldwork at the park and initial data entry for this inventory unit took place in 1998. Data entry was accomplished by Kathleen Fitzgerald during FY FY00.

**Concurrence Status:**

**Park Superintendent Concurrence:** Yes

**Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:** 10/22/2001

**National Register Concurrence:** Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination

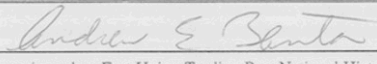

**Date of Concurrence Determination:** 10/15/1966

**National Register Concurrence Narrative:**

SHPO concurrence on the cultural landscape occurred on 9/26/2001

**Concurrence Graphic Information:**

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site  
 Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site

CONSENSUS DETERMINATION			
NPS UNIT: FORT UNION TRADING POST NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE			
PROPERTY/LANDSCAPE NAME: FORT UNION TRADING POST NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE			
LOCATION: Montana and North Dakota; Richland / Roosevelt Counties, MT and McKenzie / Williams Counties, ND			
TRACT NUMBER(S): NPS TRACT #S: 01-119, 01-128, 01-127, 01-107, 01-102, 01-103, 01-101, 01-136, 01-100, 01-129, 01-134, 01-124, 01-126, 01-112, 01-108, 01-137, 01-130, 01-131, 01-132, 01-104, 01-133			
DATES OF CONSTRUCTION/DEVELOPMENT: 1828 original structure(s); 1986-91 reconstruction based on archeological record.			
INFORMATION RESTRICTED?: Y ___ N <u>X</u> ___			
CLI#: 450011			
LCS#: 50576-50590, 50592, 52147, 52148, 52764			
<small>*The CLI and LCS are internal NPS databases</small>			
THIS DOE EVALUATES:	YES	NO	N/A
STRUCTURE(S)			
LANDSCAPE(S)	X		
<u>NATIONAL PARK SERVICE</u>		<u>STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE</u>	
Individually eligible	_____	Concur	Do Not Concur
Eligible as a contributing resource	_____	<u>  ✓  </u>	_____
-Contributes to:		Notes:	
NR Property	_____ <u>X</u> _____		
NR District	_____		
As a Potential Cultural Landscape	_____ <u>X</u> _____		
Potential District	_____		
Not eligible	_____		
Insufficient documentation, treat as eligible	_____		
		10-22-01	
Superintendent Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site		Date	
		9-26-01	
State Historic Preservation Officer		Date	

*Superintendent and SHPO Consensus Determination 10/22/01.*



United States Department of the Interior  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Fort Union Trading Post  
National Historic Site  
15550 Highway 1804  
Williston, North Dakota 58801

REPLY REFER TO:  
H3023 FOUS

*September 21, 2012*

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Midwest Region  
From: Superintendent, Fort Union Trading Post  
Subject: Cultural Landscapes Inventory and List of Classified Structures Updates

I have reviewed the assigned condition and management categories for the FOUS Cultural Landscape and each of the Classified Structures.

The condition and management categories for both the CLI and the 19 LCS properties are unchanged.

The reference view ability in the IRMA system should be:

- reference viewable to Public, and

A hard copy will follow.

Attachment

*2012 Park Concurrence*

**Revisions Impacting Change in Concurrence:**

Other

**Revision Date:** 09/20/2012

**Revision Narrative:**

2012 update seeks park concurrence and permission for the document to be posted on IRMA.

**Revision Date:** 08/06/2001

**Revision Narrative:**

Revisions were made to reflect the changes and suggestions made by the North Dakota SHPO Review Board for the State Historic Preservation Office.

**Revision Date:** 07/05/2001

**Revision Narrative:**

Revisions made as per ND SHPO office for review board.

**Revision Date:** 07/05/2000

**Revision Narrative:**

Editorial comments received from the Park and Richard Cronenbeger were entered by Kahlleen Fitzgerald in FY00.

**Revision Date:** 09/16/1999

**Revision Narrative:**

Initial research conducted by seasonal Kathleen Fitzgerald during FY99 determined that the number of landscapes for the park which are presented in CLAIMS as of this date are correct. Cultural Landscapes Program Leader Sherda Williams and Historical Landscape Architect Marla McEnaney reviewed the landscape hierarchy presented in CLAIMS. Data entry will continue for the inventory unit as scheduled by the CLI Program. The initial information is part of the FY99 upload to the National Center.

## Geographic Information & Location Map

### Inventory Unit Boundary Description:

There are essentially two boundaries for the cultural landscapes of Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site, the physical and the visual. The physical boundary follows the boundaries set by the National Park Service. The main portion of Fort Union lies within Williams County in North Dakota and Roosevelt County in Montana. It stretches North from the Missouri River to the Burlington Northern Railroad Line. The fort, maintenance building, and park housing are in this portion of the park. The Bodmer Overlook area is just north of the Burlington Northern Railroad Line approximately north for approximately 3500 feet. The overlook is within the historic view shed to and from the fort. The western edge of the section follows a roadway to the overlook. Two small properties looped in by the roadway do not belong to the Park Service but are within the cultural landscape boundary. The Scenic Protection Zone on the south shores of the Missouri River is within McKenzie County, North Dakota and Richland County, Montana. The southern edge of the boundary follows the bluffs, approximately 500 feet from the river. The visual periphery is all that can be seen in each direction from the fort. This includes the views and vistas of the park, such as the rolling hills to the north, the river and bluffs to the south, and the surrounding prairie.

**State and County:**

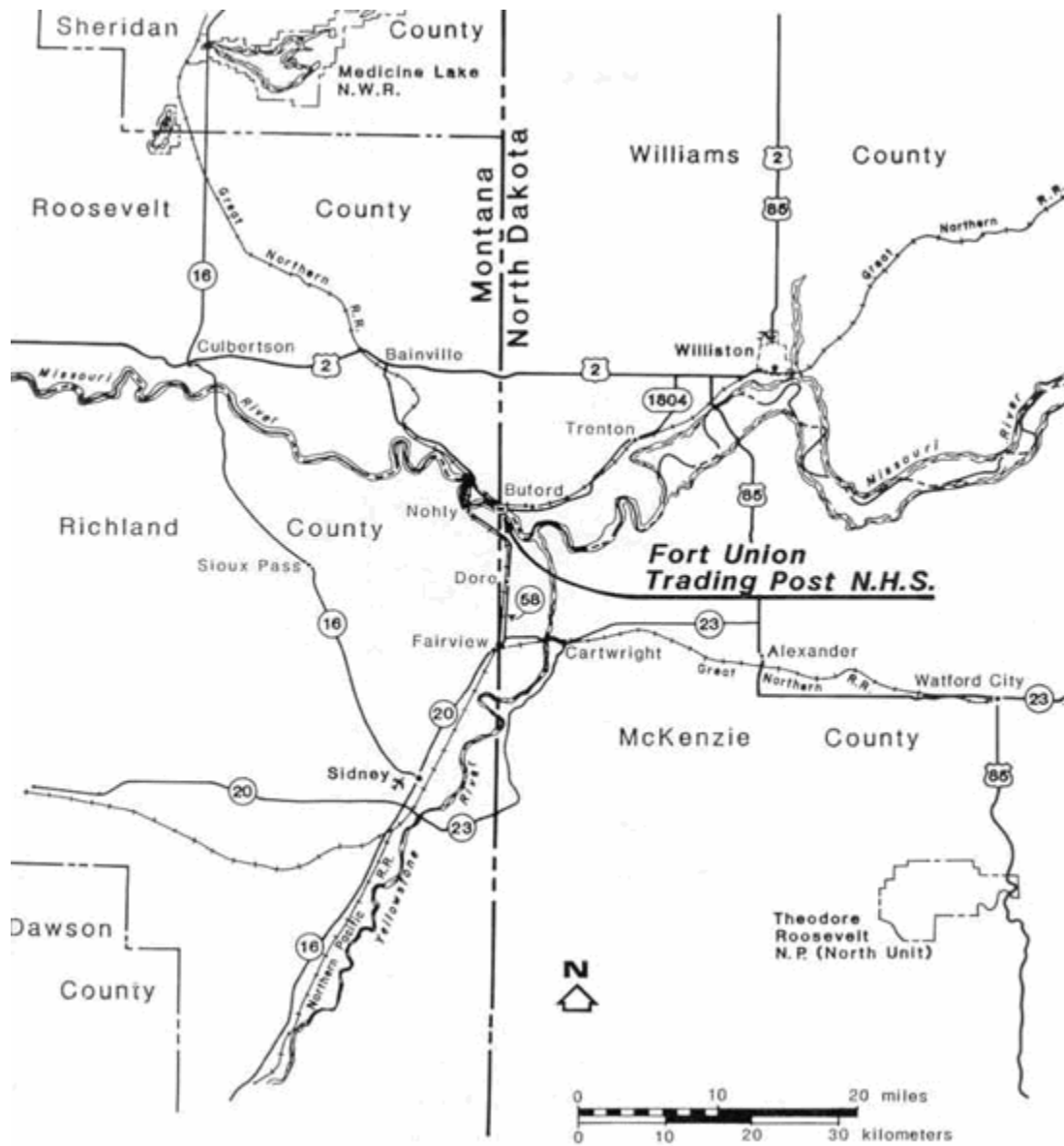
**State:** ND  
**County:** McKenzie County  
**State:** MT  
**County:** Richland County  
**State:** MT  
**County:** Roosevelt County  
**State:** ND  
**County:** Williams County

**Size (Acres):** 433.80

**Boundary UTMS:**

**Source:** USGS Map 1:24,000  
**Type of Point:** Point  
**Datum:** NAD 27  
**UTM Zone:** 13  
**UTM Easting:** 570,920  
**UTM Northing:** 5,316,900

**Location Map:**



*The vicinity map for Fort Union. (RMRO, 1984, CLI files)*

**Regional Context:**

**Type of Context:** Cultural

**Description:**

Fort Union Trading Post was one of the largest and most important fur posts on the upper Missouri. Historian Hiram Chittenden described Fort Union as "... the best built post on the Missouri, and with the possible exception of Bent's Fort on the Arkansas, the best in the entire west." Founded by Kenneth McKenzie, an employee of the American Fur Company, the post received accolades from travelers for its accessibility to excellent hunting areas.

Fort Union was an important focal point for the Assiniboin, Cree, Blackfeet, Chippewa, Sioux, Arikaras and Crow tribes who came to trade, receive annuities, and inquire about Euro-American activities. The financial success of the post depended upon the hunting and trapping efforts of these Indians, who brought in bison robes and other animal pelts to trade for European goods. The success of the post was directly related to the natural resources of the area. (Weist 1980)

In 1985, the fort reconstruction, based on archeological evidence and historic drawings and photographs, began with the raising of the 63-foot high flagpole. Reconstruction of the Bourgeois House began in 1986 and was finished and dedicated in 1987. The Palisades and Bastions were reconstructed in 1989. The Indian/Artisans House was finished in 1991. Park Housing and the maintenance buildings, originally near the fort location, were moved east about 1000 feet from the western park boundary below the river bank, hidden from the view of the fort. Parking is located in gravel quarries, 500 feet west of the fort.



*Setting a trap for Beaver, by Alfred Jacob Miller, ca. 1837. Thompson, 1994*

**Type of Context:** Physiographic

**Description:**

Kenneth McKenzie, first Bourgeois of Fort Union, had reason to believe that the fort was well located. McKenzie picked a high spot on the north bank above the Missouri about five miles by water above the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers. There was considerable growth of the trees on points immediately above and below this site, which would supply both building timbers and firewood. The site was at least twenty feet above the river, high enough to be safe from the annual floods. The ground here was a level prairie that stretched away to the north for about a mile, thus providing ample space for Indian camps at trading time. Farther off to the northwest was a sizable coulee that led down from the high prairies beyond the skyline; this coulee would have provided an avenue of approach to the fort for the Assiniboin. And, perhaps most importantly, the river ran close to the bank thus allowing boats to tie up near the fort and reducing portage of cargo to only a few feet. Rick Cronenberger, Historical Architect, recalls a picture of a riverboat tied to the bank with a plank extending from the fort to the top deck. Archeological digs found remains of steps near the bottom of the current embankment.

This was the country of the big sky, the immense herds of buffalo, the high plains, and the Indians of the tipi. But it was not entirely paradise. Strong winds regularly tore across the prairies, mosquitoes plagued man and beast in the spring and summer, and the winters were



long and bitterly cold. One employee wrote that the post was “exposed to every wind that blows from any point of the compass, is said to be the coldest place of all the posts belonging to this company – even as cold as those situated on Hudson Bay.” (Thompson 13, 1986)

The confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers occurs in northwestern North Dakota three miles east of the Montana-North Dakota boundary. Their valleys are carved from the clays and gravels of the glaciated portion of the Missouri Plateau section of the Great Plains province. Between the two rivers, moderately prominent bluffs up to 300 feet high indicate the plateau, while the valley of the Missouri is flanked on the north by rolling hills. The flood plain of the Missouri is only a mile and a half wide, while that of the Yellowstone is twice that and shows more evidence of meandering and flooding. Both floodplains are now protected by levees and subject to cultivation and irrigation. Flood channels, old sandbars, and cottonwood groves still occupy a considerable part of the floodplains. North of the Missouri and south of the hills, is a gravel bench two to five thousand feet wide and about thirty feet above the low water of the river.



*Map of the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers. (MO. R. Comm. Sheet, 1894)*

**Type of Context:** Political

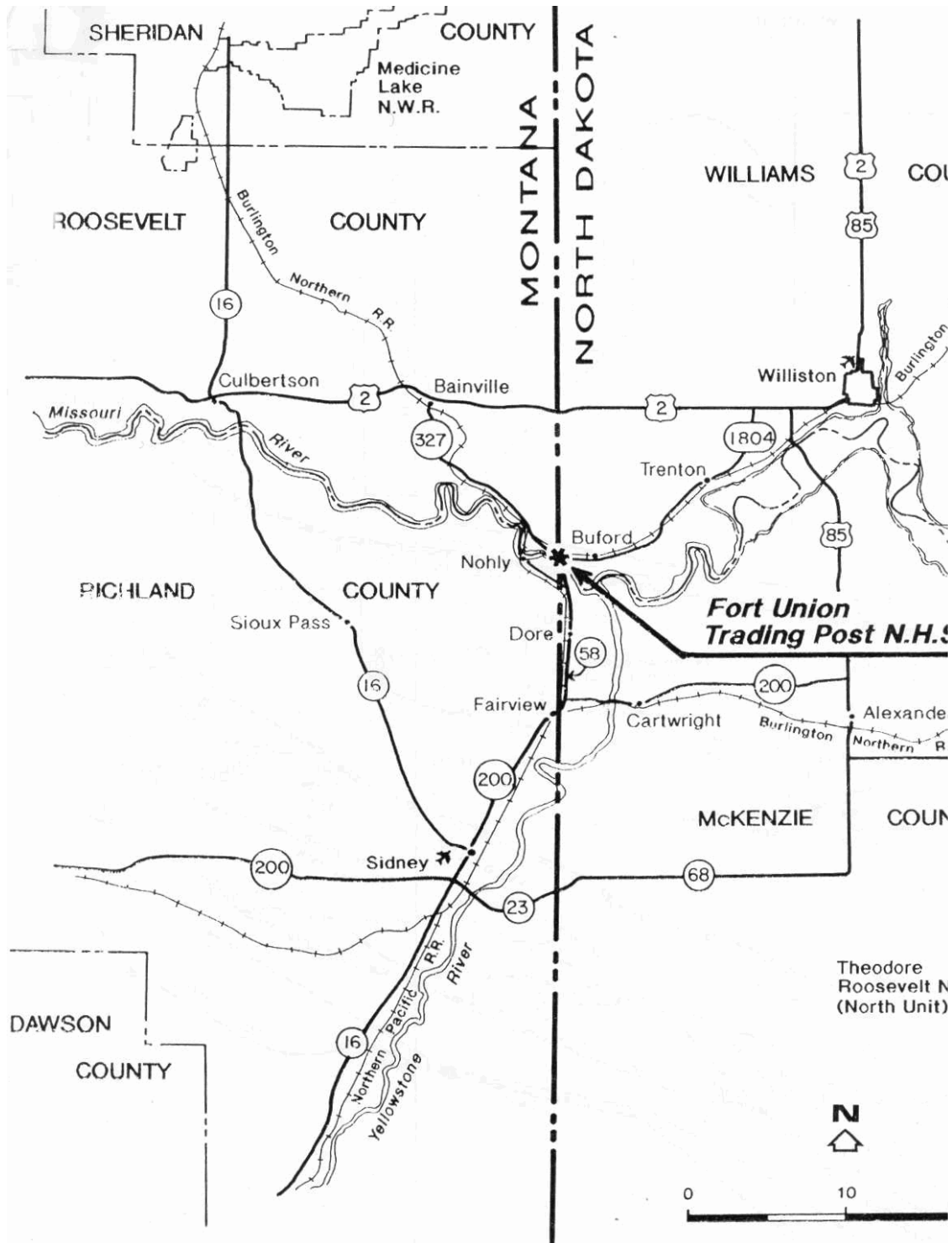
**Description:**

The nearest sizeable community to Fort Union trading Post is Williston, North Dakota, twenty-five miles east via US 2. Both Amtrak and Burlington Northern & Santa Fe serve Williston by rail with twice-daily passenger trains and frequent freight trains. Williston is also served by Great Lakes Airline, a commuter service to Dickinson and Denver. Sidney, Montana is located twenty-four miles south of the park on MT 200. Bainville, Montana, northwest on US 2, is accessed through a gravel road.

From the park entrance a 1/2-mile road, located in former gravel quarries, leads to the parking

areas and trailhead. A 1/3-mile-paved interpretive trail along the Missouri River winds to the fort site where the palisades, bastions, Indian/Artisan Trade House, flagpole, and Bourgeois House are reconstructed. The latter structure serves as the park visitor center, housing for museum exhibits, information desk, cooperating association sales area, public restrooms, and administrative office.

The park's maintenance shop, wellhouse, and residential houses are located 1/2 mile east of the fort site in the Garden Coulee area. Fort Union offers limited picnic facilities, but no shelters, campgrounds, or concessions. Both the visitor-use area and the residential/maintenance area have leach fields to handle sewage. The radio used in the visitor center is a two-channel base station with two mobile units and three handitalkies. (Statement for Management, 1991)



Map of Fort Union trading Post. (Statement for Management, 1989)

**Management Unit:** Fort Union  
**Tract Numbers:** 01-119, 01-128, 01-127, 01-107, 01-102, 01-103, 01-101, 01-136, 01-100,  
01-129, 01-134, 01-124, 01-126, 01-112, 01-108, 01-137, 01-130, 01-131,  
01-132, 01-104, 01-133

## Management Information

### General Management Information

**Management Category Date:** 03/27/2000

#### Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

The inventory unit must be preserved and maintained because it is nationally significant as defined by National Historic Landmark criteria and the landscape itself serves as the setting for a nationally significant structure.

#### NPS Legal Interest:

**Type of Interest:** Fee Simple

##### Explanatory Narrative:

NPS FEE TRACT #'S: 01-107, 01-102, 01-103, 01-101, 01-136, 01-124, 01-126, 01-137,  
01-130, 01-131, 01-132, 01-104, 01-133

**Type of Interest:** Less than Fee Simple

##### Explanatory Narrative:

NPS LESS THAN FEE TRACT #'S (Easements): 01-119, 01-128, 01-127, 01-100, 01-129,  
01-134, 01-112, 01-108

#### Public Access:

**Type of Access:** Other Restrictions

**Type of Access:** Unrestricted

### Adjacent Lands Information

**Do Adjacent Lands Contribute?** Yes

#### Adjacent Lands Description:

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site  
Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site

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Lands surrounding Fort Union Trading Post contain the same general feeling as during the hey-day of the fort. Today the landscape is no longer virgin prairie but used for farming. However, the changes have been minimal and limited development has occurred within sight of the fort. Fort Union and the area surrounding the site were part of the Fort Buford Military Reservation. As a result of the development restrictions of the reservation, establishment of a regional center at the convergence of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers was not possible. The lands surrounding Fort Union are, therefore, much the same as they were during the fort's most dynamic period. To the north, the view is largely virgin prairie. Mineral rights in and around the park and intensive agricultural activities threaten the viewsheds. Adjacent lands still offer the same open viewsheds experience by the fur traders.



*1977 view of the fort site and teepee display from Bodmer Overlook. National Park Service*

## National Register Information

### Existing National Register Status

#### National Register Landscape Documentation:

Entered Inadequately Documented

#### National Register Explanatory Narrative:

The Fort Union Trading Post site was determined to be nationally significant in 1961 when it was designated a National Historic Landmark. Further national recognition of the site took place when it was authorized as a historical unit of the national park system in 1966 and automatically listed in the Register by law as required by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Actual documentation of the site's national significance was entered in the Register in 1982 with the completion of a National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination form. At the time the nomination was written, reconstruction of the fort had not taken place, but was planned and mentioned. Therefore, consideration E was not referenced at that time. However, since the reconstruction is now complete and defines spatial features of the cultural landscape the consideration is being applied. The National Register information has been revised through a National Historic Landmark Nomination addressing the boundaries and possibly other resources.

This consensus determination was prepared because the existing National Register Nomination which did not adequately describe the cultural landscape. The cultural landscape contains features that have been previously identified in the existing nomination and those that have not. It is the combination of these contributing features that provides the context for this nationally significant site, which is potentially eligible for the National Register as a cultural landscape.

#### Existing NRIS Information:

<b>Name in National Register:</b>	Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site
<b>NRIS Number:</b>	66000103
<b>Primary Certification:</b>	Listed In The National Register
<b>Primary Certification Date:</b>	10/15/1966
<b>Other Certifications and Date:</b>	Additional Documentation - 3/4/1977

### National Register Eligibility

<b>National Register Concurrence:</b>	Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination
<b>Contributing/Individual:</b>	Individual
<b>National Register Classification:</b>	Site
<b>Significance Level:</b>	National

**Significance Criteria:** A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

**Criteria Considerations:** E -- A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived

**Period of Significance:**

**Time Period:** 1834 - 1866

**Historic Context Theme:** Developing the American Economy

**Subtheme:** The Fur Trade

**Facet:** John Jacob Astor And The American Fur Company, 1808-1840

**Other Facet:** None

**Area of Significance:**

**Area of Significance Category:** Exploration - Settlement

**Area of Significance Subcategory:** None

**Area of Significance Category:** Archeology

**Area of Significance Subcategory:** Historic-Non-Aboriginal

**Area of Significance Category:** Commerce

**Area of Significance Subcategory:** None

**Area of Significance Category:** Ethnic Heritage

**Area of Significance Subcategory:** Native American

**Statement of Significance:**

Fort Union Trading Post was the most important site on the Upper Missouri River associated with the western American fur trade. Its establishment and operation had a vital impact on the fields of exploration, frontier transportation, and economy as well as the economic and social interaction with the



American Indian. Its setting near the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers has been a focal point in American history from the time of Lewis and Clark's exploration of 1803-06. From 1828-1865 the trading post was a primary depot for the entrepreneurs of the fur trade based in St. Louis. The fort was visited by many of the noted European and American explorers, traders, artists and travelers who followed the great river for nearly four decades. (GMP, 1978)

Construction of the fort began in 1828 by the American Fur Company (Upper Missouri Outfit) near the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers. The selection of this strategic location gave the fort a commanding position. In 1834, Pratt, Chouteau and Company of St. Louis purchased the fort, considered to be the principal and most elaborately furnished of all the Upper Missouri posts. The location of this principal trading post, was already an established meeting place for Blackfeet, Assiniboin, Arikara, Sioux, Mandan, Hidatsa, Plains Cree, and Crow. (1982 Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site National Register Nomination Form)

The artifactual materials recovered during excavations and their contextual information constitute a major aspect of this resource. The archeological evidence, along with paintings, drawings and descriptions, helped to determine size and location of the fort palisades and interior buildings. (GMP, 1978)

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site is listed under Significance Criteria A, for the broad pattern events associated with Native American and Euro-American interactions and westward expansion from 1828 to 1866. The site is included in two themes: "The Original inhabitants," Indian Meets European subtheme, Changes in Social and Political subdivision; and "Western Expansion, 1763-1898," the period of significance is from 1828-67. Fur Trade subtheme, Upper Missouri subtheme. Fort Union was placed on the National Register on October 15, 1966.

Criteria consideration E, reconstructed properties, is applicable because the fort has been reconstructed based on the archeological record and historic documentation in the identical location and setting of the original fort. The fort is the only feature of the cultural landscape which has been reconstructed and merits application of consideration E. Other landscape features, such as natural systems, views, and spatial patterns exist much in the same way they did when the fort was established and have been further defined with the addition of the reconstruction. Only a small portion of the physical landscape has actually been completely restored to prairie. The remaining landscape has largely been left in a natural state and is managed for exotics. In many ways the site exhibits the characteristics that were present during the period of significance.

## Chronology & Physical History

### Cultural Landscape Type and Use

**Cultural Landscape Type:** Historic Site  
Vernacular

**Current and Historic Use/Function:**

<b>Primary Historic Function:</b>	Commerce/Trade-Other
<b>Other Use/Function</b>	<b>Other Type of Use or Function</b>
Military Facility (Post)	Historic

**Current and Historic Names:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Type of Name</b>
Fort Union Trading Post	Both Current And Historic
Upper Missouri Outfit	Historic

**Ethnographic Study Conducted:** No Survey Conducted

**Associated Group:**

<b>Name of Group:</b>	Assiniboin and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation
<b>Type of Association:</b>	Historic
<b>Name of Group:</b>	Chippewa-Cree Indians
<b>Type of Association:</b>	Historic
<b>Name of Group:</b>	Crow Tribe of Montana
<b>Type of Association:</b>	Historic
<b>Name of Group:</b>	Standing Rock Sioux Tribe of North and South Dakota
<b>Type of Association:</b>	Historic
<b>Name of Group:</b>	Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation (aboriginal land)
<b>Type of Association:</b>	Historic
<b>Name of Group:</b>	Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians of North Dakota
<b>Type of Association:</b>	Historic

**Physical History:**

1805

The use and function of the landscape can be traced back to early Native Americans who utilized the land for the various amenities it had to offer. The archeological record in North Dakota indicates that the area in and around Fort Union was used by prehistoric people. This is most likely due to the location of the site at a river cross road which would have served as a geographic location indicator and a mode of transportation which could have become a hub for Native American Trade. It is possible that the Euro Americans favored the site for the same reasons, and possibly took advantage of locating the fort among an already active trading place.

In 1805, Meriwether Lewis described the Yellowstone-Missouri convergence as “highly eligible for a trading establishment.” In the next decade, other Euro-American visited the area but none lingered. Andrew Henry and William H. Ashley established a small short-lived trading post at the river junction in 1822. (RMP, N.D.)

1827 - late 1830s

John Jacob Astor had nearly secured control of the fur trade west of the Mississippi by either destroying his competition or by absorbing rivals into his American Fur Company. In 1827, an agreement was made to incorporate one of “The Company’s” ( as the American Fur Company was often called) rivals, the Columbia Fur Company. The Columbia Fur Company’s name was changed to the Upper Missouri Outfit (U.M.O.) and Kenneth McKenzie, one of the former owners of Columbia Fur Company and now partner in the Company, was charged with the construction of a new trading post. McKenzie, lured by trading prospects with the Assiniboin, Blackfeet, and Crow, drew upon his experience as a fur trader to select a strategic location that would promote control of the trade. He selected a site at the confluence of the two major rivers in the region, the Missouri and the Yellowstone. This location had played a prominent role in regional trade for some time. It also provided relatively easy access into the Rocky Mountains by way of the natural water routes and their tributaries. The Missouri also functioned as a means of transporting supplies to the fort and furs to St. Louis. The fort’s location was also selected with the possibility of future steamboat travel in mind. In 1832, four years later, steamboat transport became a reality when a Company-built boat, the Yellowstone, made the first of many landings at the fort (Mattison 1962). The Yellowstone brought George Catlin, the first of a series of artists and intellectuals, including Prince Maximillian of Wied, Karl Bodmer, John James Audobon, Rudolph Frederick Kurz, Father Pierre DeSmet, and John Mix Stanley. (RMP, N.D.)

In 1828, McKenzie built his fort, naming it Fort Union; possibly in honor of the new American control of the region, or possibly to commemorate the "union" of the two fur companies. Four years under construction, Fort Union’s seventeen-foot four-inches tall palisade, two-story stone bastion, storehouse, dwelling range, and lavish bourgeois house quickly cast the outpost as the largest and most imposing trading depot on the Missouri River (RMP, N.D.)

Fort Union had a powerful influence on Native American acculturation. The fort was situated

along traditional Native American trade patterns and encouraged Indians to gather and prepare furs for the Upper Missouri Outfit. Trade articles – formerly subsistence and perishable goods – soon comprised an array of manufactured and durable goods that transformed the Indians’ traditional material culture. So, too, did the smallpox, alcohol, and sugar obtained in contact and trade.

The far-sighted selection of site location, insightful application of trading skills, along with the power inherent in the wealth of the American Fur Company, placed McKenzie in such a powerful position that he soon became known as the “King of the Upper Missouri.” By the late 1830s, his control of the Northern Rocky Mountains east of the divide and the Northern Plains was virtually uncontested. This attainment of economic control marked the end of the initial phase in Fort Union’s history. It was a time of consolidation of economic control and expansion of the fort. (Thiel 1998)

#### 1830s - 1850

The second phase of Fort Union’s history lasted from the late 1830s to about 1850. During this decade, Fort Union served as a focus of American economic power and wealth, which the fur trade had not witnessed or was to experience in the future. Trade was centered on the buffalo robe instead of the small furs of the earlier period. Physically, little new construction took place at the fort. This was generally a time of maintenance and remodeling of physical structures, like the expanded Bourgeois House. Such remodeling reflects the continued commercial strength of the U.M.O. as well as the Company.

In 1832, fire destroyed the Dwelling Range. By 1833, the burned Dwelling Range was replaced and a stone powder magazine was completed.

In the summer of 1833, Robert Campbell and William Sublette began building Fort William. This fort would offer the primary competition to Fort Union and was built two and a half miles from Fort Union on the same side of the river. (Thompson, 1994) In 1833, Fort Union shipped 50,000 bison robes, 25,000 beaver pelts, and an array other furs to St. Louis. By the 1840s bison robes almost singularly dominated the trade at Fort Union. (RMP, N.D.)

In 1835, Charles Larpenteur’s journal states that though the fort was six years old, it was by no means finished. At this time it also appears Larpenteur was responsible for a garden. The first seeds were planted May 11 in two growing areas: a vegetable garden in or near the Garden Coulee and a field across the river. In his journal, "Forty Years a Fur Trader", Larpenteur mentions traveling to the garden, which he said was “three-quarters of a mile distance from the fort.” A fence was erected around the garden and a “walk” laid. A small third area was planted in the Distilling House yard on June 10.

In 1837, small pox swept Fort Union. Within a few days, twenty-seven people lay sick within the fort, four died. Acting bourgeois Jacob Halsey, the first to fall ill, estimated that ten out of twelve Indians who caught the disease would die. The Mandan were almost completely wiped out. D.D. Mitchell estimated that four-fifths of the Assiniboin and the Blackfeet had died. It was a threat of vengeance by Assiniboin leader, Le Vieux Gauche, which led to building the

double gate at the main entrance. The outside doors could be opened, Indians could come in and enter the Indian/Artisan House. As long as the interior doors remained close no one could enter the main part of the fort. A wicket was also built into the wall and was used for trading alcohol to visiting Indians. The liquor, not a desire for revenge, caused the few shots fired through the window. (Thompson, 1994)

In 1843, Edwin Denig described the fort as such:

On the east side of the fort, extending north and south, is a building, or range, all under one roof, 127 ft. long by 25 ft. deep, and used for the following purposes. A small room at the north end for stores and luggage; then the retail store... where all Euro-American persons buy or sell... Adjoining this is the wholesale warehouse, in which is kept a principle stock of goods intended for the extensive trade, this room is 57 ft. in length. Next is a small room for the storage of meat and other supplies. At the end is the press room, where all robes, furs, the peltries are stored. The dimensions [of this room] extend to the top of the roof inside, which roof is perfectly w waterproof. It will contain from 2800 to 3000 packs of Buffalo robes [10 robes per pack]. All this range is very strongly put together, weather-boarded outside, and lined with plank within. It also has a cellar and garet. The cellar depression may still be seen, but nothing else of this structure remains above ground. (Thompson, 1994)

1850 - 1860

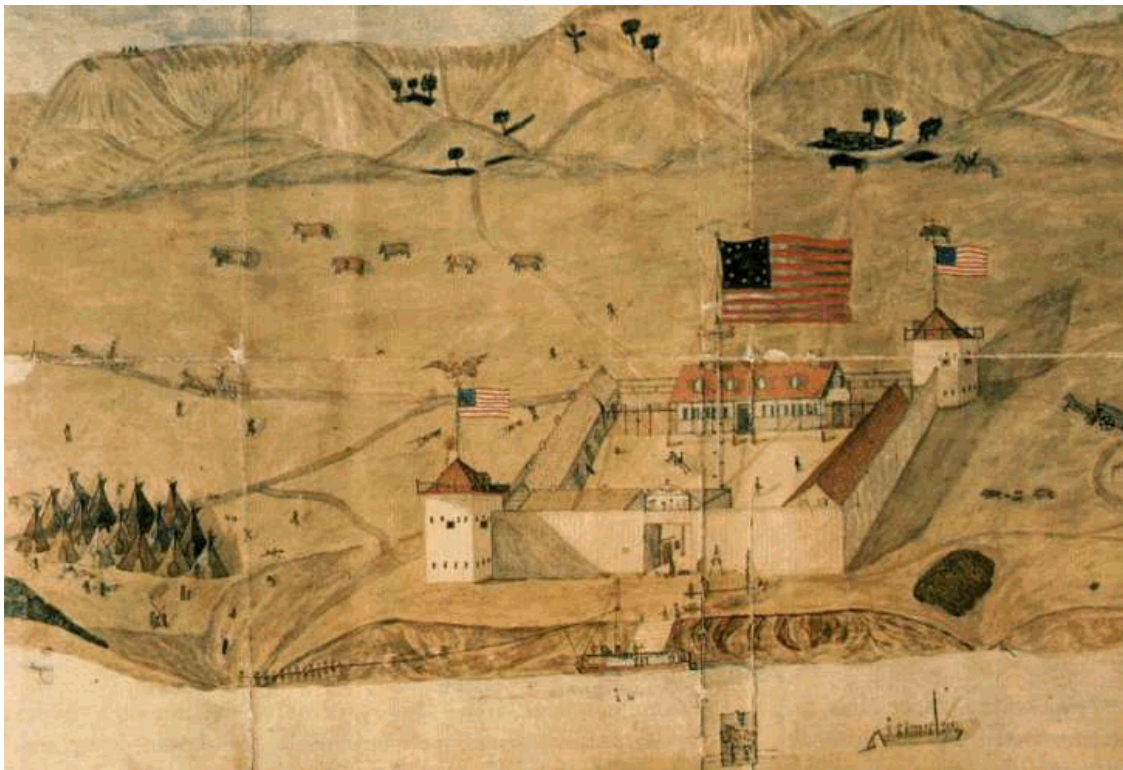
The third phase, the decade of the 1850s, was a period of slow decline. The Sioux were gaining in strength at this time and began to put considerable pressure on the trading community.

In 1851 the St. Ange docked at the Fort Union landing, marking the first time a Euro-American woman saw the fort – Mrs. LaBarge, wife of Joseph LaBarge, captain of the St. Ange. It is not recorded if she even stepped ashore or was entertained by the bourgeois, Edwin Denig. Also on board was the Swiss artist Rudolph F. Kurz. To support himself, he signed on with the American Fur Company. His first job at Fort Union was to paint the bourgeois's house, whitewashing was not exactly his kind of painting. At this time, Kurz remarked that the walls were beginning to show old age and were in need of repairs. A section of the palisades on the west side were badly decayed and blew down before new beams could be made.

In 1857, new bourgeois James Kipp reported another small pox epidemic. The Crow, who missed the outbreak of 1837, suffered greatly. The disease began to spread among the Assiniboin in November. By January, an estimated 300 had died. In addition to the smallpox, a party of 400 Sioux arrived and stole the fort's horses and wounded or killed several Euro-American and an Assiniboin. (Thompson, 1994)



*Bourgeois House sketched by Rudolph Kurz in 1851. This is the earliest representation showing a full second floor, a two story porch and a widow's walk. (The Jesuit Missouri Province Archives, St. Louis, MO)*



*View of Fort Union, 1843. (Fort Union Trading Post, A Pictorial History, MWRO. Original in Province Archives, St. Louis, MO.)*



*View of Fort Union prepared by John Mix Stanley, official artist of the railroad survey of 1853. It is depicting the Assiniboins receiving their annuities outside the fort. (Fort Union Trading Post, A Pictorial History, MWRO)*





*Fort Union on the Missouri by Karl Bodmer. (Fort Union Trading Post, A Pictorial History, MWRO. Original in the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, NE.)*

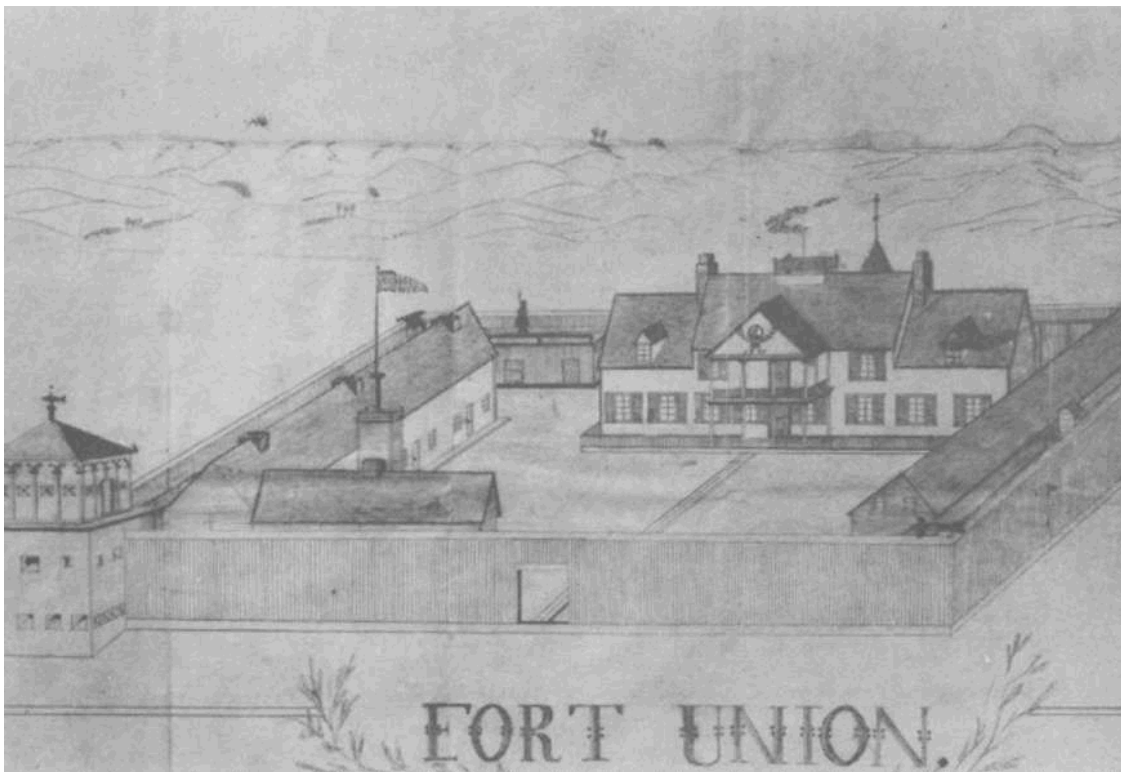
1861-1867

The beginning of the Civil War marked the onset of the fourth phase of Fort Union's operation. The fur trade was no longer economically viable and was in decline. Several factors led to this situation. Widespread disease and epidemics resulted in the decline of the Native American populations, the initial link in the system of securing and marketing furs. Another factor may have been the changing world fashions and the depopulation of the beaver; though this seems to have been accommodated by a shift in emphasis to the buffalo robe. Perhaps the most important factor in the decline of Fort Union was the advance of the frontier, accompanied by the strengthened Sioux Nation and the depletion of the buffalo herds.

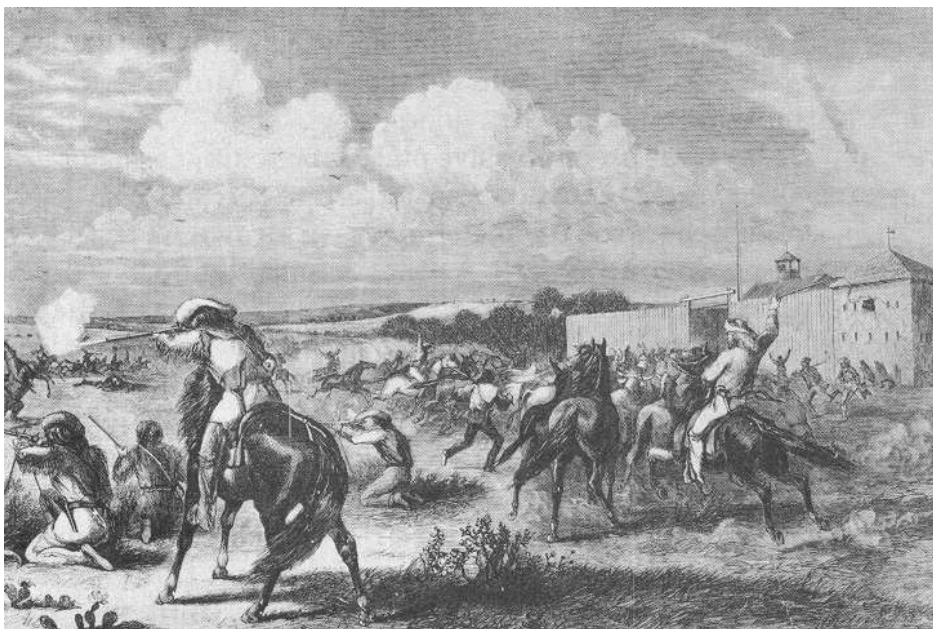
In 1864, General Sully of the US Army kept his troops for four days at Fort Union, which he declared was "an old, dilapidated affair, almost falling to pieces"(Athearn, 1967). On June 17, 1865, word reached Fort Union that Pierre Chouteau, Jr., and Company had finally sold Fort Union. This news had little impact on the day-to-day operations at the fort. The men continued in the fur trade preparing packs of robes for shipment, whitewashing the building and palisades and new shelves were ordered for the store. On July 14, the Fort Union Frontier Scout was first published. The first issue recognized a major problem at the fort: under the heading "Latest News," the editor explained that there was none. (Athearn 144, 1967)

Political pressures placed on the Company during the Civil War exacerbated the economic problems. Officials in Washington D.C. suspected Pierre Chouteau was a Confederate sympathizer. Whether Chouteau supported the south or not, the rumor raised suspicions and caused a general weakening of the Company's lobbying power in Congress. In 1865, the Company surrendered to political and economic pressure and sold the forts on the upper Missouri to the Northwest Fur Company.

On September 17, 1865, Larpenteur, a former clerk and eventually the bourgeois of Fort Union, were suddenly out of a job. In 1867, the fort was sold to the U.S. Government and the Army tore down the fort to recycle the building materials for the expansion of Fort Buford military post, which was located east of Fort Union. The building materials left behind by the Army were used for fuel by passing steamboats and travelers on their way to the Montana gold fields.



*Soldier's drawing of Fort Union, 1864. Benjamin Franklin Griffin is the artist. National Park Service, Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site*



*This is the only known drawing depicting a Sioux raid on Fort Union. It appears to be a negative illustration, the back gate is shown, therefore the bastion should be on the left east. By William Cary. (Thompson, 1994)*

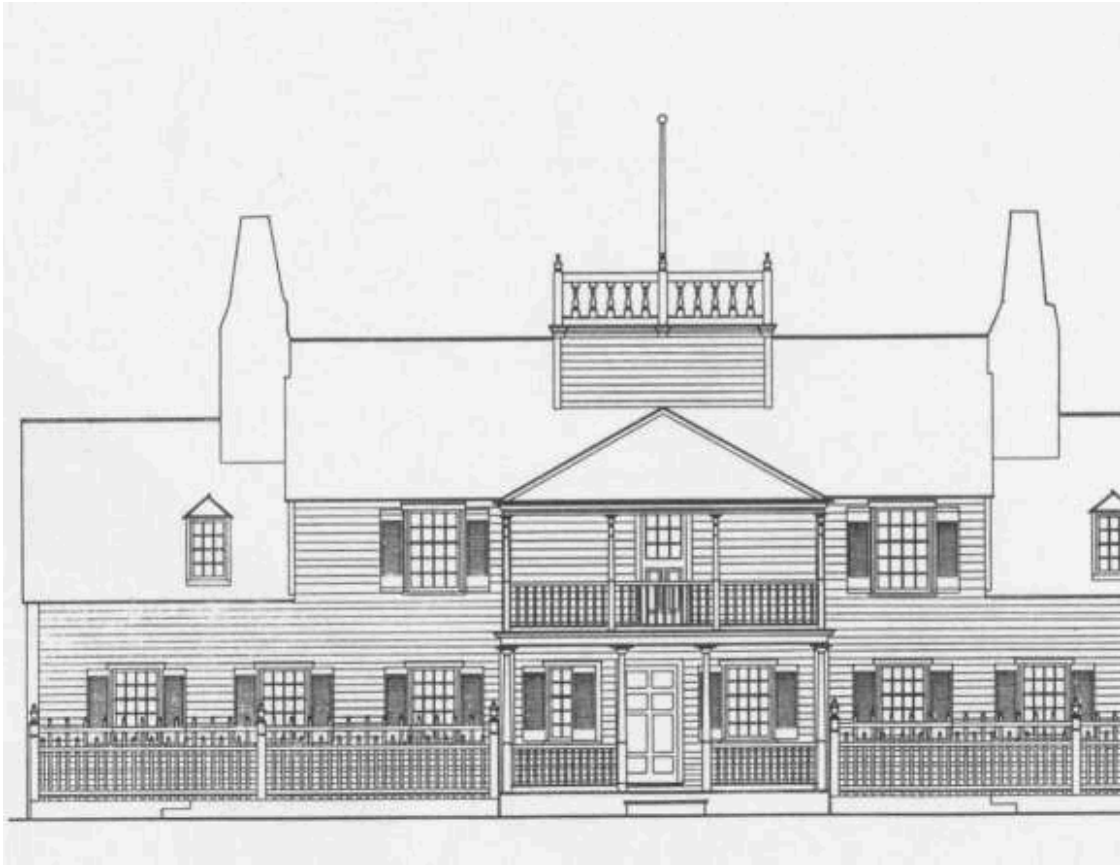


*View of the North Palisade, 1866. Deterioration is becoming evident, especially the northeast (left) bastion. (Fort Union Trading Post, A Pictorial History, MWRO. Original is with the Montana Historical Society)*

1868 - present

A dissident band of Hidatsa occupied the area periodically between 1869 and 1884 until removed by army troops. In 1887, the Great Northern Railroad passed within 200 yards of the old Fort Union. By then reservations confined the Indians, leading to Fort Buford's abandonment in 1895. Fort Buford had a thirty-square-mile military reservation surrounding its land holdings, so no town could be built at the Yellowstone-Missouri confluence, the natural location of a regional center. Thus, the area around the confluence remained undeveloped, and the landscape surrounding Fort Union continued to look relatively unchanged since original construction in the 1820s (Matzko). Agricultural settlement and North Dakota's prohibition spurred the short lived border town of Mondak (1904-1928), whose red-light district and garbage dumps lay within the Fort Union Site. Gravel quarrying threatened the Fort Union site in the mid-twentieth century before North Dakota intervened in the 1940s, preserving the fort's remains pending designation of the Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site (RMP, N.D.). Public Law 89-458 authorized the establishment of Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site on June 20, 1966, commemorating the significance as a fur trading post on the upper Missouri River. Reconstruction of the fort began in June 1985 with the raising of the sixty-three foot high flagpole. In 1986, reconstruction of the Bourgeois House began based on

archeological and graphic evidence. The house was completed and dedicated in 1987 (GMP, 1978). The Palisades and Bastions were built in 1989. The Indian/Artisan House was constructed in 1991.



*Architectural rendering of Bourgeois House. (Fort Union Trading Post, A Pictorial History, MWRO)*



*Bourgeois House under construction in 1987. (Fort Union Trading Post, A Pictorial History, MWRO. Photo by Richard Cronenberger, NPS.)*



*The completed reconstruction of the Bourgeois House and the flagpole. (Fort Union Trading Post, A Pictorial History, MWRO. Photo by Richard Cronenberger, NPS.)*

## Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

### Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

The landscape of the Fort Union Trading Post is primarily defined by the presence of the reconstructed palisades, bastions, and bourgeois house and is surrounded by generally open lands. The structures rebuilt on the site are based on extensive archeological research, written descriptions, and various paintings, sketches, and photographs made during the period of significance. Thus, the reconstructed structures possess a high degree of accuracy. Circulation patterns, views into and from the fort, and surrounding vegetation and natural features help to depict an accurate historic character. The landscape of the Trading Post and its immediate environs retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. The palisades, bastions, Indian/Artisan House and bourgeois house exhibit an accurate design due to the planning, materials and workmanship employed, but the overall integrity is diminished because the structures are reconstructed. However, they do contribute to the visitor experience and define and punctuate the cultural landscape.

The expanse of prairie that once surrounded the fort was a profoundly important defining characteristic. While this expanse has been altered due to the introduction of invasive and exotic vegetative species and the conversion to agricultural pursuits, the overall vastness of the adjacent landscapes remains. Current efforts focus on restoring and managing native prairie species. Thus, the open landscape surrounding the fort retains moderate integrity.

Following are features and descriptions of the cultural landscape features. These features are presented alphabetically and do not reflect a hierarchy of importance.

<b>Aspects of Integrity:</b>	Location
	Setting
	Design
	Feeling
	Association

### Landscape Characteristic:

#### Archeological Sites

Archeological (Archaeological) Sites inventoried by the CLI include the "location of ruins, traces, or deposited artifacts in the landscape and are evidenced by the presence of either surface or substance features" (Robert Page, et al. *\_CLI Professional Procedures Guide\_* 1997, 78). The CLI takes every precaution not to disclose the location of sensitive archeological sites and works with representatives from the Midwest Archeological Center to ensure the protection of the resources and their locations. All archeology completed on the site has been conducted by the National Park Service Midwest Archeological Center (MWAC) or contracted with the University of Colorado.



The first archeological investigations were conducted under the supervision of J.W. "Smokey" Moore of the Midwest Archeological Center. This work took place from June 3 to July 31, 1968. Moore succeeded in locating several Palisades (HS 1) elements, the Bourgeois House (HS 7), the Blockhouses (HS 2 & 3) and also recognized features later described by Wilfred Husted also of MWAC. These included the Powder Magazine (HS 12, a "stone wall" (the north foundation of the Store Range, HS 11), a "rectangular stone-paved area" (the northern fireplace in the Dwelling Range, HS 9), "a stone based chimney base" (forge foundation in the Blacksmith Shop, HS 10), the Kitchen (HS 8) and a fence running north to south that was attached to the northeast corner of the Bourgeois House (HS 7). In addition, Moore took a series of aerial photographs of the fort area.

In 1969 Husted took charge of the Fort Union excavations. His report describes the architectural features exposed during these excavations. This includes the Palisades (HS 1) in the vicinity of the Front Gate (HS 4), the Southeast Bastion (HS 2), the Indians' and Artisans' House (HS 6), and features excavated by Moore.

In 1970, Husted returned to Fort Union and began removing backfill from previous excavation units. In his report, Husted suggested that another structure may be located under the Indian's and Artisans' House (HS 6). Investigations suggested evidence of a wooden foundation and fill underlying the excavated structure.

Investigations made in 1972 located the Flagstaff, the Bell Tower, and the Milk House-Dairy which was excavated to the flagstone floor.

In 1977, Tom Theissen of MWAC recorded a number of cultural deposits that may relate to the occupation of the fort consisting of a possible dump or road fill in a shallow ravine on the West Side of the fort. Another feature of interest is a stain to the north of the fort suggestive of a trench line. Material recovered indicates that this feature dates to the fur trade period and may represent the fenced area outside the north wall (HS 28).

In 1985, Doug Scott of MWAC and crew excavated the site of the Fort Union flagpole. The area around the base was also excavated and the trace of a picket fence was discovered (Thiel, 1998).

In 1986, William Hunt of MWAC was assigned to direct the archeological excavations at Fort Union. The focus of the archeological efforts was to gain architectural information as an aid to accurately reconstruct Fort Union. (Hunt 1, 1986)

The characteristic of archeological sites retains integrity of location, setting, materials, feeling, and association.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature: BLACKSMITH SHOP

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site  
Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site

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Feature Identification Number: 106217  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 50585  
LCS Structure Name: BLACKSMITH SHOP  
LCS Structure Number: HS-10

Feature: BOURGEOIS HOUSE

Feature Identification Number: 106218  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 50582  
LCS Structure Name: BOURGEOIS HOUSE  
LCS Structure Number: HS-07

Feature: DWELLING RANGE

Feature Identification Number: 106219  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 50584  
LCS Structure Name: DWELLING RANGE  
LCS Structure Number: HS-09

Feature: FENCED AREA - HS 28

Feature Identification Number: 106220  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: INDIAN-ARTISAN HOUSE

Feature Identification Number: 106221  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 50581  
LCS Structure Name: INDIAN-ARTISAN HOUSE  
LCS Structure Number: HS-06

Feature: KITCHEN

Feature Identification Number: 106222  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site  
Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site

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IDLCS Number: 50583  
LCS Structure Name: KITCHEN  
LCS Structure Number: HS-08

Feature: NORTHEAST BASTION  
Feature Identification Number: 106223  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 50578  
LCS Structure Name: NORTHEAST BASTION  
LCS Structure Number: HS-03

Feature: PALISADE  
Feature Identification Number: 106224  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 50576  
LCS Structure Name: PALISADE  
LCS Structure Number: HS-01

Feature: POWDER MAGAZINE  
Feature Identification Number: 106225  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 50587  
LCS Structure Name: POWDER MAGAZINE  
LCS Structure Number: HS-12

Feature: SOUTHWEST BASTION  
Feature Identification Number: 106226  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 50577  
LCS Structure Name: SOUTHWEST BASTION  
LCS Structure Number: HS-02

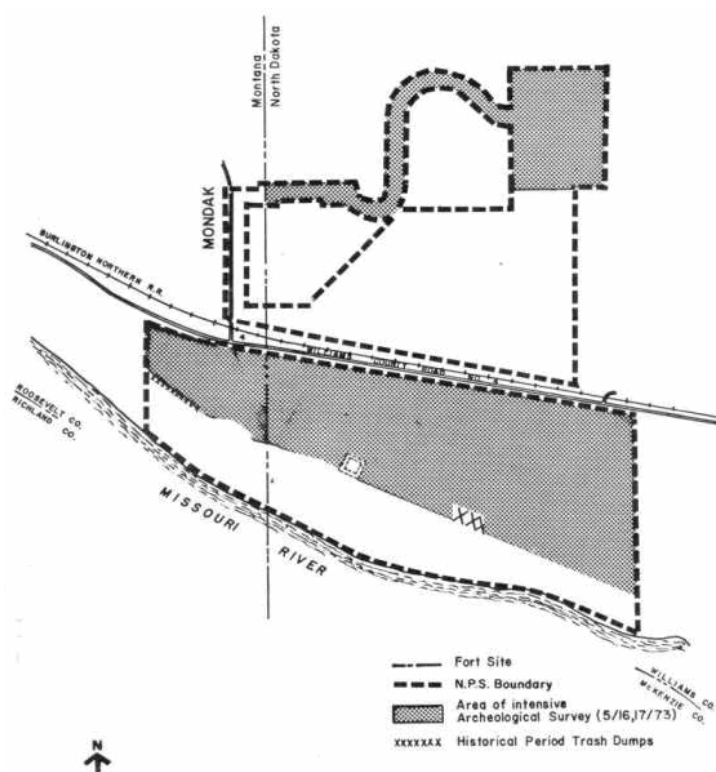
Feature: STORE RANGE  
Feature Identification Number: 106227

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site  
Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site

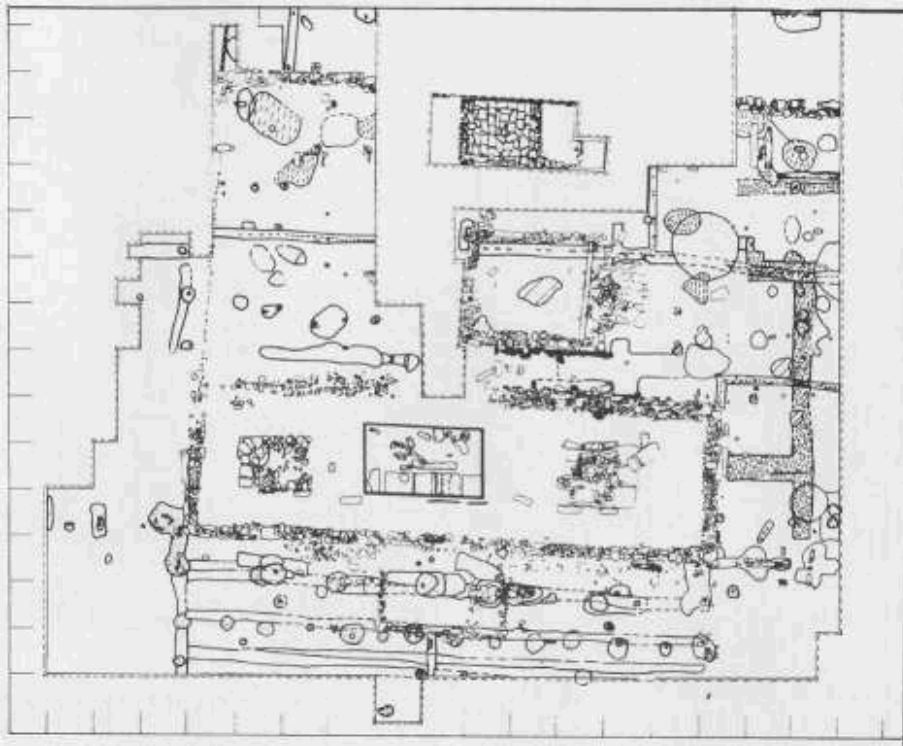
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Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 50586  
LCS Structure Name: STORE RANGE  
LCS Structure Number: HS-11

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Map of Fort Union Trading Post national Historic Site archeological investigations. (GMP, 1978)*



*Archeological base map of Fort Union Bourgeois House and Dairy. (National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center.)*

### **Buildings and Structures**

The List of Classified Structures (LCS) Program is the National Park Service's inventory for buildings and structures. It provides details that are not typically found in the Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) and should be reference for more definitive structure information. The CLI references the LCS and records buildings and structures as features of the landscape. As features, buildings and structures contribute to the spatial organization, circulation, and integrity of the landscape. For purposes of the CLI, buildings are defined as "elements primarily built for sheltering any form of human activity." "Structures are functional elements constructed for purposes other than sheltering human activity. Engineering systems are considered structures and include both mechanical and structural systems" (Robert Page, et al. *\_CLI Professional Procedures Guide\_* 1997, 75).

No prehistoric structures are known to have existed in Fort Union parklands, though the well-known "Assiniboin Medicine Sign" cairn is on private property nearby. A park neighbor closely guards this important symbol of Native American History.

The Fort Union Trading Post site is devoid of any significant standing historic remains of the fort or associated outbuildings. Only one historic structure survives fairly intact on parklands due to the under ground nature of the feature, a rock-lined water well near the path to the parking lot - the well is secured for safety. Structural remains of the fort include the floor of the dairy and a few foundation walls. A combination of factors contributed to the loss of the

physical structure. Among those factors was a general decline in the fur trade, which made the operation of the fort uneconomical. In 1867 the post was sold to the U.S. Army and became a source of building material for the nearby Fort Buford and for buildings in Mondak.

Between 1986 and 1991 Fort Union was partially reconstructed based on historic and archaeological evidence. The palisade, two stone bastions, flagstaff, bourgeois house, and Indian/Artisan House were reconstructed. The structural members of the fort's kitchen were "ghosted" to interpret the site and to protect the exposed foundation. The dairy floor was roofed to protect the exposed flagstone flooring. Major unexcavated sites and unreconstructed buildings were outlined with ten-by-ten inch timbers to identify the sites and more fully define interior spatial relationships. Historic stones remain in original configuration at the main gate and north gate.

Three surviving Mondak structures are contiguous to the park and are accessible via the road leading to the Bodmer Overlook. They however are not considered part of this study.

A Visitors Center is located in the Bourgeois House. Park Housing and a Maintenance Building are near what once was the Garden Coulee.

The integrity of the fort's buildings and structures is questionable due to the reconstruction, but may be potentially eligible under consideration E if presented as a group. The new structure is located in its original location and contributes to the setting, feeling, and association of the site by defining space in the landscape. Design of the reconstruction is based on archeological and historic evidence in accordance with the National Park Service planning process. Materials and workmanship, although not original, convey the appearance of the original structure. It must be noted that buildings and structures are just one feature of the cultural landscape. Low integrity of one feature (due to reconstruction) does not significantly detract from the cultural landscape as a whole.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature:	BACK GATE
Feature Identification Number:	106228
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
IDLCS Number:	50580
LCS Structure Name:	BACK GATE
LCS Structure Number:	HS-05
Feature:	BELL TOWER
Feature Identification Number:	106229
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
IDLCS Number:	50590

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site  
Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site

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LCS Structure Name: BELL TOWER  
LCS Structure Number: HS-23  
Feature: ENTRANCE SIGN  
Feature Identification Number: 106230  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 52764  
LCS Structure Name: ENTRANCE SIGN  
LCS Structure Number: HS-50  
Feature: FLAGSTAFF  
Feature Identification Number: 106231  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 50588  
LCS Structure Name: FLAGSTAFF  
LCS Structure Number: HS-13  
Feature: FRONT GATE  
Feature Identification Number: 106232  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 50579  
LCS Structure Name: FRONT GATE  
LCS Structure Number: HS-04  
Feature: ICE HOUSE  
Feature Identification Number: 106233  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 50592  
LCS Structure Name: ICE HOUSE  
LCS Structure Number: HS-30  
Feature: KILN  
Feature Identification Number: 106234  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site  
Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site

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IDLCS Number: 52147

LCS Structure Name: KILN

LCS Structure Number: HS-27

Feature: MILK HOUSE, DAIRY

Feature Identification Number: 106235

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 50589

LCS Structure Name: MILK HOUSE, DAIRY

LCS Structure Number: HS-19

Feature: WELL

Feature Identification Number: 106236

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 52148

LCS Structure Name: WELL

LCS Structure Number: HS-42

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**





*Bourgeois House and flagpole, 1987. (Fort Union Trading Post, Photographic History, 1987. Photo by Richard Cronenberger, NPS.)*

### **Circulation**

Circulation within a landscape is defined as "spaces, features, and applied material finishes which constitute systems of movement in a landscape" (Robert Page, et al. *CLI Professional Procedures Guide*, 1997, 75).

Kenneth McKenzie's selection for a site for Fort Union was near the confluence of the two major rivers in the region, the Missouri and the Yellowstone. This location had played a prominent role in regional trade for some time. It also provided relatively easy access into the

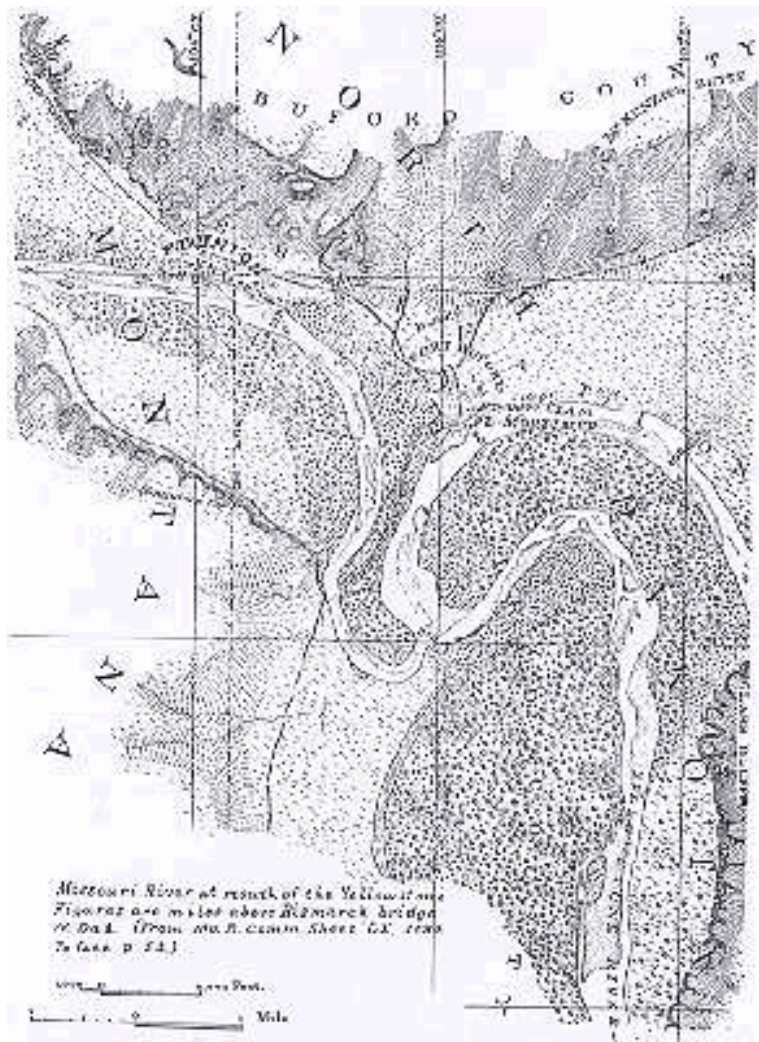
depths of the Rocky Mountains via the natural water routes and their tributaries. At the same time, the Missouri River functioned as a transportation route for supplies from and furs to St. Louis. The fort's location was also selected with the possibility of future steamboat transport. Four years later, in 1832, steamboat transport became a reality when a Company-built boat, the "Yellowstone", was the first of many steamboats at the fort (Theil, 1998). There is also a road trace from Fort Union to the boomtown of Mondak.

The modern parking lots are located to the west of the fort in the gravel pits. The pits, a result of 20th century gravel excavation, would typically be seen as a scar upon the historic scene. However, in this case they were converted to accommodate the visitor parking lot and actually screen the lot from view while providing immediate access to the visitor center.

Other modern circulation patterns are evident. A paved highway provides access to the site where once only water and foot/horse traffic was evident. A maintenance road to the east of the fort provides access to park housing and maintenance buildings in what was once a garden area. A railroad bisects the property separating the fort from Bodmer's overlook. These modern features do not contribute or detract from the historic scene because they are fairly level linear and do not interrupt the openness of the landscape.

During the period of significance circulation or travel to the fort was by water, foot or horse. The presence of the river is still a commanding feature of the landscape, but it is no longer used as the transportation corridor it once was. The circulation patterns that remain contribute to the setting, feeling, and association of the landscape.

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Map of convergence of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers. (Missouri River Commission 1890 series, Sheet 60.)*

### **Cluster Arrangement**

The cluster arrangement of a landscape refers to "the location and patterns of buildings, structures, and associated spaces" (Robert Page, et al. *CLI Professional Procedures Guide* 1997, 76). Examples include village centers, farmsteads, crossroads, harbors, and ranching or mining complexes.

Historically, two cluster arrangements would have been present at the fort, interior and exterior. The exterior arrangement would have been defined by the fort's walls, fences, outbuildings, and other temporary small-scale features such as teepees and fur press. Dr. Washington Mathews, post surgeon, visited the site around 1872 and mentioned a cemetery about "one hundred paces east of the ruins of Union and separated from them by a little ravine." The ravine is still there, but all traces of the cemetery are gone. While he was there Dr. Mathews also mentioned "the ruined adobe walls to the west of the old fort," the store Larpenteur built in 1867 after Fort

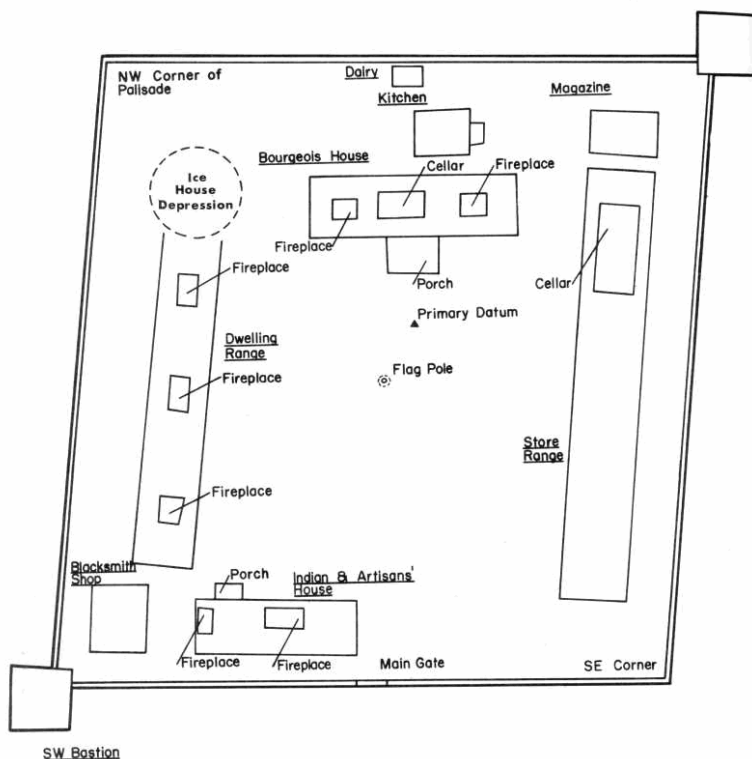
Union was sold. This building has also disappeared with time. (Thompson 94, 1994) Although some of these features have been confirmed through archeology and the historic record they are no longer evident on the surface and would not contribute to the cultural landscape.

The interior cluster arrangement has been some what restored through the reconstruction of the Fort's walls and buildings and the outline of structures that have not been reconstructed. However, even with some structural reconstruction and definition, the integrity of the interior cluster arrangement is not particularly strong due to a lack of vertical definition from missing structures. The interior cluster arrangement is believed to have been fairly compact with activity occurring within the confines of the fort and its structures. In 1843, Edwin Denig described the fort as such:

"On the east side of the fort, extending north and south, is a building, or range, all under one roof, 127 ft. long by 25 ft. deep, and used for the following purposes. A small room at the north end for stores and luggage; then the retail store... where all white persons buy or sell... Adjoining this is the wholesale warehouse, in which is kept a principle stock of goods intended for the extensive trade, this room is 57 ft. in length. Next is a small room for the storage of meat and other supplies. At the end is the press room, where all robes, furs, the peltries are stored. The dimensions [of this room] extend to the top of the roof inside, which roof is perfectly waterproof. It will contain from 2800 to 3000 packs of Buffalo robes [10 robes per pack]. All this range is very strongly put together, weather-boarded outside, and lined with plank within. It also has a cellar and garet (sic)." The cellar depression may still be seen, but nothing else of this structure remains above ground. (Thompson 41, 1994) Fort Union also had a double set of gates, common among trading posts. Above the gates on the exterior, decorated with a painting depicting a peace treaty between Indians and Euro-American, opened into a reception room. When tribesmen came to trade the inner gate remained closed and transactions occurred through a window. Although normal differences in opinion occurred between buyer and seller, which led to occasional violence, the system worked well. (Athearn 22, 1967)

The characteristic of the exterior cluster arrangement retains some integrity in terms of setting, feeling, and association due to the primary feature the fort punctuating space in the landscape. The interior cluster arrangement also retains some integrity in terms of location, setting, feeling, and association because of the reconstruction.

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



Archeological map of the arrangement of the interior of Fort Union. (National Park Service, CLI files)

### Natural Systems and Features

Natural Systems and Features are "the natural aspects that have influenced the development of a landscape and include geomorphology, geology, hydrology, ecology, climate, and native vegetation" (Robert Page, et al. *\_CLI Professional Procedures Guide\_1997, 72*).

The Fort Union Trading Post sits upriver from the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers in northwestern North Dakota, on the Montana line. The surrounding valleys are carved from the clays and gravel of the glaciated portion of the Missouri Plateau section of the Great Plains region. Between the two rivers, moderately prominent bluffs up to 300 feet high indicate the plateau, while the valley of the Missouri is flanked on the north by rolling hills. The flood plain of the Missouri in this location is only a mile and a half wide, while that of the Yellowstone is twice that and shows much more evidence of meandering and flooding. Both flood plains are now in part protected by levees and subject to cultivation and irrigation. Flood channels, old sandbars, and cottonwood groves still occupy a considerable part of both rivers.

Throughout history the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers played an importance role in defining the context of Fort Union and the surrounding area. These waterways provided direction, water, and a describable location for Native American travelers and traders and American explorers prior to modern maps. Because of these major rivers Fort Union Trading Post and other small posts developed to take advantage of trade and the relative

ease of transporting goods via steamboat. The ease of transportation worked both directions. When boats arrived to bring supplies they often brought important visitors to the area some who are known today for some of their work conducted at the fort and descriptions of the area. (G. Catlin, Prince Maximilian of Weid, K. Bodmer, J.J. Audubon, P.J. DeSmet, J. Mix Stanley, and an Assinaboin known as "The Light")

The nature of water is to meander, often taking the path of least resistance, eroding soil from one side of its bank to deposit it on the opposite side. Many things contribute to the meandering process. The quantity of water can cause flooding and increase velocity, which in turn effect the erosion and build up process that naturally occurs. In the winter ice jams can entirely alter the water channels by temporarily blocking the flow direction. This results in an increase in soil deposition ultimately causing a permanent diversion of the water channel. This shift was last seen in the 1930s when the Yellowstone shifted one-mile north of its original location. As a result the location of the fort in relation to the confluence has changed. Aerial photography verifies that the actual confluence has moved from its original location over the years. The fort is believed to have originally been eight miles from the confluence. According to Park Ranger Mike Casler today it is six miles away. National Park Service researchers are studying the movement of the rivers and the implications of the movement on historic resources. This study, however, was not available at the time of this analysis.

Humankind's influence on the rivers is also evident in aerial photography. Dams and levees control the flow of water. These systems which are beneficial to mankind in terms of flood control, hydroelectric power, and water supply often disrupt the ecosystems downstream. The lack of water flow typically allows for vegetation to root in the silt-covered bottomlands typically covered by water. This increase in vegetation can become invasive and can be disruptive to native plant and animal life. Two water control structures are located on the Missouri in the vicinity of Fort Union, Fort Peck Reservoir and the Lake Sakakawea Garrison Dam. Both have the potential to adversely effect the Fort, but according to park staff have not had such effects to date.

By definition a cultural landscape is the combination of dynamic elements and features. In some cases natural processes take place that alter the appearance of a site effecting the location, setting, feeling, and association. In such cases the natural systems must be evaluated to determine if it is the physical location or the relationship of the dynamic resource to the landscape feature that is most important to the integrity of the landscape. In the case of Fort Union it is a combination of both the physical location and the relationship. Fort Union Trading Post would most likely not be where it is today had the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers not been present. Today the distance of the fort to the confluence has decreased. However it is not the actual distance that is as important as the relationship to the confluence. The fact that the Missouri River still flows in front of Fort Union Trading Post and the confluence is still present represents the important relationship between river and fort. This relationship conveys the setting feeling and association of the site regardless of the actual physical location in distance.

The soils around Fort Union range from medium-textured silts and sands on the upland prairie, to deep silty clay loams on the hardwood bottoms. The bottoms developed river sandbars, while the uplands are composed of shallow low-lying hills (RMP, NP). The people of the fort provided for some of their needs by gardening on what was once drainage to river bottomland. There was close proximity to water, protection from winds, and decent soils deposited from the meandering riverbed.

North of the Missouri, between the river and the hills, is a gravel bench two- to five-thousand feet wide and about thirty feet above the low water level of the river. On this bench the fur traders and later the military found the best sites for their forts. Three miles west of the present mouth of the Yellowstone and directly on the bank of the Missouri is the site of Fort Union Trading Post.

Two and half miles to the east and almost directly opposite the mouth of the Yellowstone, a wider portion of this bench furnished the sites of the short lived competing trading posts -- Fort William, 1833-1834, and Fort Mortimer, 1843-45. These sites are partially eroded by the waters of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers (Department of the Interior, 1962). The gravel bench at the Fort Union site is located approximately five feet below the soil surface and was partially excavated during the 20th Century. These excavations, although a negative impact to the land, do not significantly detract from the historic resource.

The climate of North Dakota ranges from semi-arid extension of the cool and humid continental zone to the arid northern plains zone. High winds and relatively low precipitation are characteristic. Temperature variations from 102 to -60 degrees Fahrenheit contribute to making North Dakota a land of extremes. Arctic winds from the McKenzie Valley bring blizzards and bitter cold, while warm air from the Gulf of Mexico make for hot summers. Prevailing winds and the threat of tornadoes are constant reminders of the harsh conditions that exist in the area. Drought is a perennial threat and is common in the western part of the state where rainfall is lighter. Excessively cold winters are moderated by an occasional warm Chinook wind, which might bring a rise of sixty degrees within a single day (Barbour, 1993).

The characteristic of natural systems and features retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association regardless of their dynamic nature.

### **Spatial Organization**

Spatial organization is defined as "the three dimensional organization of physical forms and visual associations in the landscape, including the articulation of ground, vertical, and overhead planes that define and create spaces." Spatial organization features include "circulation systems, views and vistas, areas of land use, natural features, cluster of structures, and division of property" (Robert Page, et al. \_CLI Professional Procedures Guide\_ [Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1997], 72).

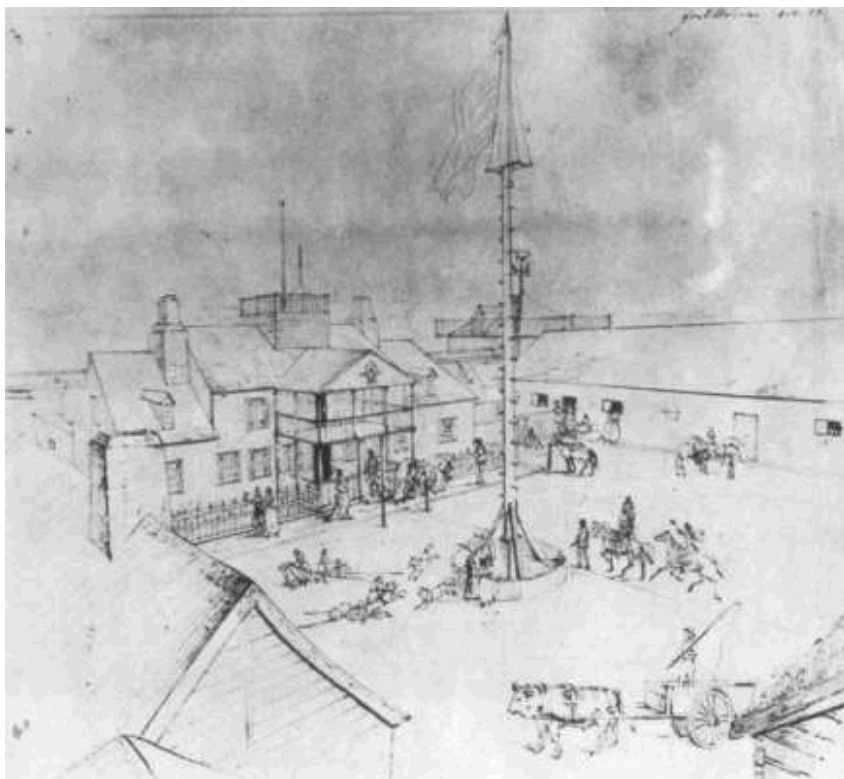
Spatially the cultural landscape of Fort Union retains many characteristics that were present during the period of significance. The fort itself punctuates space among the backdrop of

rolling hills and distant bluffs. Views and vistas remain similar to the historic condition. Modern land use, although different than earlier times, does not impact the site and the relationship of the fort to the natural features remains the same although subject to the dynamic forces of nature. The following historic description of the site can easily be applied to the modern day condition.

In the evening of June 24, 1833, Prince Maximilian viewed Fort Union for the first time. He described the site: "Fort Union, on a verdant plain, with the handsome American flag, gilded by the last rays of evening, floating in an azure sky, while a herd of horses grazing animated the peaceful scene." In further descriptions of the fort, Maximilian stated that the river was only fifty to sixty feet from the front of the fort. He estimated the pickets to be fifteen or sixteen feet high, "squared, and placed close to each other, and surmounted by chevaux-de-frise," or a barrier of spikes.

Currently, the spatial arrangement of Fort Union's landscape maintains the same layout through the reconstruction of fort structures. Additions of park housing and the maintenance building have expanded the spatial organization to the east. The characteristic of spatial organization retains integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association.

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*View of the Interior of Fort Union from the South West bastion by Rudolph Kurz in 1851.  
(Fort Union Trading Post, Photographic History, 1987)*



### **Topography**

Topography is "the three dimensional configuration of the landscape surface characterized by features (such as slope and articulation) and orientation (such as elevation and solar aspect)." Features documented under topography include "earthworks, drainage ditches, knolls and terraces" (Robert Page, et al. \_CLI Professional Procedures Guide\_1997, 74).

The topography immediately surrounding Fort Union is relatively unchanged since the nineteenth century. The confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers occurs in northwestern North Dakota east of the Montana boundary. The valleys are carved from the clays and gravel of the glaciated portions of the Missouri Plateau section of the Great Plains. Moderately prominent bluffs up to 300 feet high signal the plateau. The valley of the Missouri is delineated to the north by rolling hills. The flood plain of the Missouri is one and a half miles wide. The flood plain of the Yellowstone is closer to three miles wide and demonstrates greater indication of meandering and flooding. (Department of Interior, 1962) The fort, itself, is on a relatively flat tract of land with rolling hills to the north, around Bodmer's Overlook. The Garden Coulee is at a lower elevation than the fort.

The characteristic of topography retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association.

### **Vegetation**

The vegetation analysis included "deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs, vines, ground covers and herbaceous plants and plant communities, whether indigenous or introduced in the landscape." "Examples of vegetation features include functional ornamental trees and shrubs, orchards, groves, woodlots, pastures, garden allees, shelter belts, forest, and grasslands" (Robert Page, et al. \_CLI Professional Procedures Guide\_1997, 74).

Fort Union is located on the southern edge of the glaciated subsection of the vast Missouri Plateau. The area – a segment of the Badlands Vegetative Zone – is a mixed grass prairie, with river bottoms encompassing mixed grasses, riparian, a mixture of native plant communities and remnant or invasive exotics.

The discontinuous landholdings comprising the park are in varying condition. The "Scenic Protection Zone" on the south bank of the Missouri River, the components of which are still privately held, is a mix of riparian bank and bottom land and tilled fields. The active floodplain between the north bank of the river and the fort-level terrace is relatively unimpaired though partially managed for screening and aesthetic purposes. The terrace upon which Fort Union and its opposition posts stood was seriously disturbed in the mid-twentieth century by cultivation and the introduction of hay grasses, and is the focus of ongoing prairie restoration. The fee and less than fee holdings north of the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railroad are a checkerboard of wheat fields and native prairie.

Beyond park boundaries the condition of the landscape varies. To the north the land is generally undisturbed native prairie. Though power transmission lines and roadways bisect this view shed, the land retains considerable natural integrity. East and west of the park are narrow

but dense stands of ash and cottonwood. These form a natural-looking buffer that shields the intensive agricultural and oil or gas extraction common in both directions. South of the Missouri River, dense stands of ash and cottonwood trees in the park's legislated "Scenic Protection Zone" generally screen the intensive agricultural pursuits. This zone is marred by a distinctive clear cutting that occurred in the late-1970s, exposing the impulsive rush of modern-day farming. The existing trees do not screen the oil extraction developments on the distant river bluffs. These pump sites are visible within the fort's view shed.

At Fort Union the transformation from a frontier to an agricultural environment led to the reduction and extirpation of native plant species, followed by the introduction of invasion exotics. The most notable exotics at Fort Union are crested wheat grass and smooth and Japanese brome on the transformed fort-level terrace; and scatterings of kochia, yellow sweetclover, and spotted napweed. (RMP, 1999)

Like water, vegetation is subject to the dynamic forces of nature. Plant materials that were present during the period of significance have spawned new plants and died as part of a natural process. In terms of integrity it becomes necessary to evaluate the relationship and the type of plant materials to the site to determine the contribution and integrity. In the case of Fort Union many of the same plant species are still in existence. The introduction of agricultural and exotic species has had some impact visually and ecologically. Steps have been taken to restore native vegetative conditions. However, the impact has not been so great that it can not be restored or mitigated. Therefore, the site's vegetation retains moderate integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association.

### **Views and Vistas**

Views and vistas are "the prospect afforded by a range of vision in the landscape conferred by the composition of other landscape characteristics and associated features. Views are typically expansive or panoramic, while vistas are more controlled and linear" (Robert Page, et al. *\_CLI Professional Procedures Guide\_1997*, 76).

Although the topography immediately surrounding Fort Union is relatively unchanged since the nineteenth century, oil and gas production and agricultural pursuits have dramatically reshaped sectors of the view shed. Wheat and sugar beet fields adjoin park boundaries and are seen to the horizon in three directions. Oil and gas developments are imminent on the northeastern and southern horizons. In 1995 a need for a view shed analysis was suggested by NPS Historical Architect Rick Croenberger who in his filed notes wrote that "views from the park to adjacent land has lots of integrity, but [a] new oil strike has wells within two miles [of the fort]." The Resource Management Plan for the park was completed in 1996 and notes the "natural looking buffers shield the intensive agricultural and oil or gas extraction common in both directions..."and "the existing trees do not screen the oil extraction developments on the distant river bluffs." The report further states that "these pumps are visible within the fort's view shed."

The National Park Service owns few mineral royalties, especially on lands designated as buffer zones or owned by inholders within park boundaries. This means the potential for in-park oil

development by inholders and those individuals with mineral rights is not unrealistic. (RMP, 1996) However, if mineral rights were to be exercised the National Park Service would be actively involved in protecting the historic resources in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act.

The views and vista at the fort have been well documented throughout history. The famous American naturalist Audubon looked back to the fort from the hills just north of the site and described the views, “From the top of the hills we saw a grand panorama of a most extensive wilderness, with Fort Union beneath us and far away, as well as the Yellowstone River, and the lake across the river. The hills across the Missouri appeared quite low, and we could see the high prairie beyond, forming the background.” The view is very much the same today, with agriculture in place of virgin prairie. (Thompson 51, 1994)

The limited development that has taken place around Fort Union does not detract from the experience of the cultural landscape. Many views remain the same as those during the period of significance. With few intrusions. Therefore the characteristic of views and vistas retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association.

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*1977 view of the Fort Union site. (National Park Service, CLI files)*

## Condition

### Condition Assessment and Impacts

**Condition Assessment:** Good

**Assessment Date:** 07/17/2012

**Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:**

Condition of the cultural landscape is presumed to be good, pending Supt. confirmation from 2012 update. Condition date will be changed to match Superintendent Concurrence Date once received.

**Condition Assessment:** Good

**Assessment Date:** 10/25/2006

**Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:**

Re-vegetation efforts have been completed, park landscape is stable and well preserved. No immediate corrective action is required beyond routine maintenance activities.

**Condition Assessment:** Fair

**Assessment Date:** 06/14/2006

**Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:**

Condition Verification 2005

**Condition Assessment:** Fair

**Assessment Date:** 09/30/1998

### Impacts

**Type of Impact:** Adjacent Lands

**External or Internal:** External

**Impact Description:** Oil drilling rigs and intensive agricultural activities outside of Park property negatively influence the integrity of the site with the loud noise they generate and the unsightly view they create. Reactionary work has been done to screen the view with a "naturalistic" vegetation line.

**Type of Impact:** Erosion

**External or Internal:** Internal

**Impact Description:** Erosion is accruing along the banks of the Missouri River.

**Type of Impact:** Vegetation/Invasive Plants

**External or Internal:** Both Internal and External

**Impact Description:** Invasive vegetation has had an impact the appearance of the site. The most notable exotics at Fort Union are crested wheat grass and smooth and Japanese broom on the transformed fort-level terrace; there are also scatterings of kochia, yellow sweetclover, and spotted napweed. Measures have been taken to minimize and stop the spread of the invasive plants.

**Landscape Stabilization Cost Explanatory Description:**

Information from the July 16, 1999 List of Classified Structures. The FOUS LCS should be updated by 2006.

**Treatment**

**Treatment**

**Approved Treatment:** Reconstruction

**Approved Treatment Document:** General Management Plan

**Document Date:** 07/07/1978

**Approved Treatment Document Explanatory Narrative:**

Reconstruction of the fort was based on archeological evidence and numerous artists renditions. Reconstruction began in 1979. The flagpole was raised in 1985, raising momentum for the project. The Bourgeois House was completed in 1987. The Palisades and Bastion were built in 1989, the Indian/Artisan House was constructed in 1990.

**Approved Treatment Completed:** Yes

**Approved Treatment Costs**

**Cost Date:** 07/07/1978

**Cost Estimator:** Park/FMSS

**Landscape Approved Treatment Cost Explanatory Description:**

Information from the List of Classified Structures.

**Bibliography and Supplemental Information**

## Bibliography

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- Citation Title:** Current and Historic Natural Resources of the Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site
- Year of Publication:** 1980
- Source Name:** CRBIB
- Citation Type:** Narrative
- Citation Location:** A copy is in the Cultural Landscape Inventory file at the Midwest Regional Office.
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- Citation Author:** Barbour, Barton H.
- Citation Title:** Fort Union and the Upper Missouri Fur Trade, 1830-1865
- Year of Publication:** 1993
- Source Name:** CRBIB
- Citation Type:** Narrative
- Citation Location:** There is an abbreviated copy of the dissertation in Cultural Landscape Inventory Files.
- 
- Citation Author:** De Vore, Steven LeRoy//Hunt, William J=, Jr.
- Citation Title:** Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site (32WI17) Material Culture Reports, Part IX: Personal, Domestic, and Architectural Artifacts
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- Source Name:** CRBIB
- Citation Number:** 016405
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**Citation Author:** Hunt, William J.  
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**Year of Publication:** 1982  
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**Citation Type:** Narrative  
**Citation Location:** A copy of the dissertation is at the Fort Union Trading Post NHS Library.

**Citation Author:** Thompson, Erwin N.  
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**Year of Publication:** 1994  
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**Citation Type:** Both Graphic And Narrative  
**Citation Location:** This book is in the Cultural Landscape Inventory files.

**Citation Author:** Matzko, John  
**Citation Title:** Ralph Budd and Early Attempts to Reconstruct Fort Union, 1925-1914  
**Source Name:** CRBIB  
**Citation Type:** Narrative  
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**Citation Author:** Thiel, J. Homer  
**Citation Title:** Worked Bone Artifacts Recovered During Archeological Excavations at Fort Union Trading Post national Historic Site, 32WI17, North Dakota  
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**Citation Type:** Narrative  
**Citation Location:** A copy is in the Cultural Landscape Inventory file at the Midwest Regional Office.

- Citation Author:** Athearn, Robert G.  
**Citation Title:** Forts of the Upper Missouri  
**Year of Publication:** 1967  
**Source Name:** Library Of Congress/Dewey Decimal  
**Citation Number:** F598 A79  
**Citation Type:** Narrative  
**Citation Location:** This book is located in the Midwest Regional Office Library.
- Citation Author:** Larpenteur Charles  
**Citation Title:** Forty Years a Fur Trader  
**Year of Publication:** 1933  
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**Citation Number:** F598 L33  
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**Citation Location:** This book is located in the library at the Midwest Regional Office.
- Citation Author:** Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
**Citation Title:** Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site  
**Year of Publication:** 1987  
**Source Name:** Other  
**Citation Type:** Graphic  
**Citation Location:** The book is on file in the Midwest Regional Office Cultural Landscape Inventory file.
- Citation Author:** NPS  
**Citation Title:** Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site Cultural Sites Inventory  
**Year of Publication:** 1985  
**Source Name:** Other  
**Citation Type:** Narrative  
**Citation Location:** Located at the Midwest Archeological Center



**Citation Author:** NPS  
**Citation Title:** General Management Plan  
**Year of Publication:** 1987  
**Source Name:** Other  
**Citation Type:** Both Graphic And Narrative  
**Citation Location:** A copy is in the Cultural Landscape Inventory file at the Midwest Regional Office.

**Citation Author:** NPS  
**Citation Title:** Statement for Management  
**Year of Publication:** 1989  
**Source Name:** Other  
**Citation Type:** Narrative  
**Citation Location:** A copy is in the Cultural Landscape Inventory file at the Midwest Regional Office.