

*Already listed*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 5 1982

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Buford Route

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Williston, North Dakota — VICINITY OF North Dakota at large and Montana Eastern

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE Dist.

North Dakota - Montana 38 & 30

Williams & Roosevelt 105 & 085

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)*

National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

655 Parfet

CITY, TOWN

Denver

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Colorado

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Williams County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Williston, North Dakota

CITY, TOWN

Roosevelt County Courthouse

Wolf Point, Montana

STATE North Dakota

Montana

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

National Register of Historic Places

DATE

October 1966

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

National Register of Historic Places

CITY, TOWN

Washington, D.C.

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site comprises 392.03 acres of prairie land adjacent on the north bank of the Missouri River, three miles west of the confluence with the Yellowstone River. The site is 25 miles southwest of Williston, North Dakota and straddles the North Dakota/Montana state line.

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site is located both north and south of Williams County Road No. 4 with easements and the Bodmer overlook being on the north side of the road and the area which contributes to the historical significance being on the south side of the road. The historically significant area that is to be included and cited as National Register boundaries is approximately 240.54 acres.

The historically significant area is located at the edge of a terrace which roughly bisects the area in an east-west direction. The area is divided into two distinctive vegetative zones by the terrace which separates the ancient flood plain of the Missouri River from the present flood plain. Along the terrace edge and in the western portion of the active flood plain, thick growths of trees and shrubs are found; mostly cottonwood, green ash, chokecherry, and red osier dogwood. The remainder of the flood plain is covered by grasses, and some cases, stands of willow trees.

Fort Union itself was the single most important structure within the site although other structures relating to fort activities i.e. corrals, gardens, temporary housing, to include Indian teepees and roughly built shelters, docks and fur presses were in the immediate vicinity.

Fort Union was initially built in 1828-1829 and demolished in 1867. The cottonwood palisaded fort with two bastions was constructed by the American Fur Trade Company in a typical Upper Missouri fort plan, the bourgeois house flanked by a dwelling range and store range. The fort's enceinte also contained the other necessary structures, Indian artisan-house, kitchen, dairy, ice house, powder magazine, stables, etc.

The fort site is devoid of any standing remains of the fort or associated outbuildings. A noncontributing interim visitor contact facility and parking lot are located 40 yards north of the fort site. Four noncontributing house trailers, three used as residences and one used for maintenance, are located east of the fort site. A series of gravel pit operations were located near the fort site and represent an intrusion on the historic scene but only one located along the south and west wall of the fort endangers the primary resource. Half of the foundation of the southwest bastion has been lost. The remaining foundations have been backfilled with earth for protection. A series of partially buried trash dumps from the historic town of Mondak, Montana, are located along the terrace edge in the west portion of the park. The town of Mondak, located 3/4 mile northwest of the fort site on the state line, was active between 1900 to 1930. There is also a historic period trash deposit in the banks of a road cut through the terrace edge east of the fort site. The road was constructed in the 1950's but is no longer used.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

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### SPECIFIC DATES

1828 - 1867

### BUILDER/ARCHITECT

American Fur Trading Company

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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Fort Union, the principal trading post on the Upper Missouri, played a vital role in commerce, westward expansion of settlement and culture, scientific exploration, frontier transportation and economic and cultural relations with the Indians. The site of Fort Union Trading Post is a reminder of the post's significance in the history of the American West.

Construction of the fort began in 1828-1829 by the American Fur Trade Company near the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers. The selection of this strategic location gave the fort a commanding position for nearly four decades. The fort, considered to be the most important and most elaborately furnished of all the Upper Missouri posts, was purchased in the 1830's by Chouteau and Company of St. Louis. As the principal Upper Missouri trading post through the transition from beaver pelt to buffalo hide trade, it became a primary meeting place for Blackfeet, Assiniboine, Arikara, Sioux, Plains Cree, and Crow Indians.

The native Americans had been a source of curiosity and interest for several centuries and as the Upper Missouri region opened up to travelers, Fort Union played host to many Europeans, including royalty. Prince Paul of Wuttermberg stayed at the fort during the summer of 1830 followed by another German prince in 1833, Maximilian of Wied. The Swiss artist, Karl Bodmer, accompanied Prince Maximilian and today the art produced during their travels ranks as Western Americana classics. The prince's journal is an enlightening document of Upper Missouri life. In the 1850's another Swiss artist, Rudolph Kurz, depicted Indian and fort life on both canvas and in print. Other European visitors of note were Lord Richard Grosvenor, Sir William Drummond Stuart, Prince William Nicholas of Nassau, Lord George Gore and General Phillippe de Trobriand.

Fort Union served as an outpost as American civilization moved westward. The Manifest Destiny movement was expressed in the change in architectural style at the fort. Initially the fort was a combination of Hudson's Bay log construction with the dominate structure, the Bourgeois House, being French Provincial. By 1851, the Bourgeois House was altered to the then popular Greek Revival style and painted in a red, white, and blue motif.

The interest in the land west of the Mississippi reached several fields. Besides the attention shown by the fur traders, Fort Union attracted artists, scientists, government surveying teams, miners, and west coast bound emigrants.

Fort Union could be considered the first Transmississippi field museum. Many scientists collected specimens in the area and made study skins at the fort before sending them to the East. Specimens collected near Fort Union by Dr. George Stuckley and James G. Cooper

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Thompson, Erwin. Fort Union Trading Post. Historic Structures Report.  
Washington, D.C. National Park Service

Fort Union Trading Post - General Management Plan - August 1978.  
National Park Service

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 240.54  
UTM REFERENCES

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**  
**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

A | 1,3 | 5 7 09 2 0 | 5,3 | 1,6 | 9 0 0 |  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
C | 1,3 | 5 7 25 4 0 | 5,3 | 1,5 | 8 6 0 |

B | 1,3 | 5 7 25 4 0 | 5,3 | 1,6 | 6 0 9 |  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
D | 1,3 | 5 7 05 4 0 | 5,3 | 1,6 | 9 2 0 |

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The northern boundary follows a line from Point A just south of the Burlington Northern Railroad track 1680 meters eastward to Point B. From Point B the eastern boundary follows a southward direction for 720 meters to Point C or the north bank of the Missouri River at that point. The southern boundary follows the northern bank of the Missouri River from Point C 1760 meters to Point D. The western boundary starts at Point D and follows a line 400 meters north to Point A.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
North Dakota	38	Williams	105
Montana	30	Roosevelt	085

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE: Mary Shivers Culpin - Architectural Historian DATE: September 1, 1981

ORGANIZATION: National Park Service TELEPHONE: (303) 234-2764

STREET & NUMBER: 655 Parfet Street CITY OR TOWN: Denver STATE: Colorado

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

### STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ NONE \_\_\_

### STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is  National \_\_\_ State \_\_\_ Local \_\_\_

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE: [Signature] DATE: DEC 10 1981

TITLE: Acting Assistant Director

**FOR NPS USE ONLY**

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

William H. Bravaman DATE: 1-21-82  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The General Management Plan prepared by the National Park Service calls for the reconstruction of the fort and a Reconstruction Analysis Study has been completed. It is possible that the fort will be reconstructed. The management of the cultural resources will follow the Cultural Resource Management Guidelines NPS 28 and the management policy of the National Park Service.

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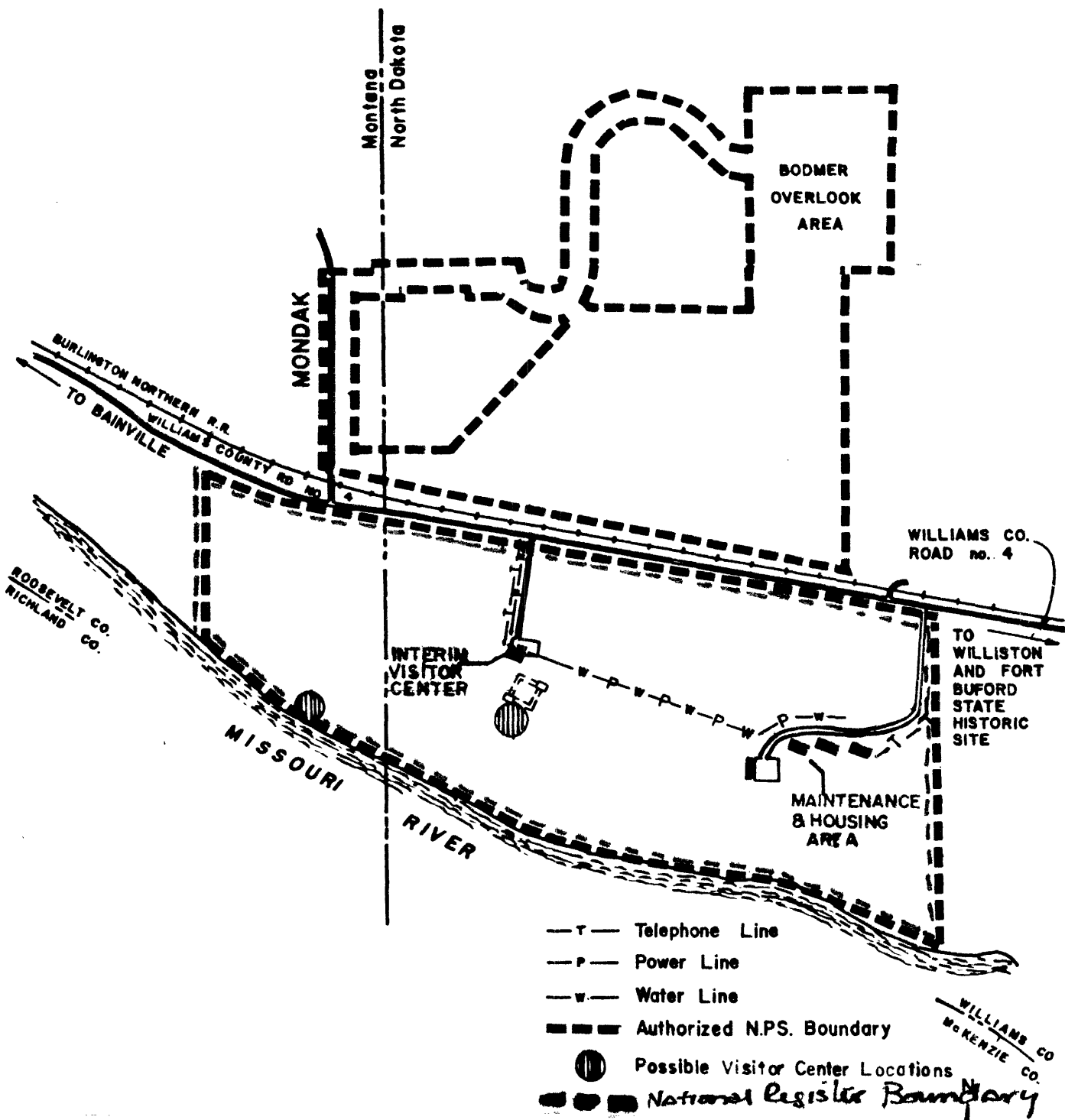
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

of the Pacific Railroad Survey of 1835 and of Thaddeus Culbertson are now housed in the Smithsonian Institution. Ferdinand V. Hayden, who later was associated with the U.S.G.S. studied in the area in the 1850's. In 1843, John James Audubon finding the area rich in flora and fauna based his party at Fort Union. Many of his drawings were done at the fort or nearby. Isaac Sprague, an artist who assisted Audubon in drawing plants and background for the Audubon fauna, also did drawings of the fort. Accordingly, Fort Union or persons associated with the fort are listed as the type locality for some species such as Audubon grasshopper mouse, Hayden masked shrew, Maximilian pocket mouse, Audubon bighorn, etc.

Fort Union witnessed advancements in frontier transportation. Due to the amount of business transacted at the fort and the inefficiency of the keelboat, steamboat service from St. Louis was eminent. A new shallow draft designed steamboat made its first successful trip to Fort Union in June 1832, with the artist, George Catlin on board. Catlin lived at the fort for some time recording on canvas and in his journal life at the fort and of the Indians. For many years the steamboats provided service for the fur trade companies, emigrants, miners, and military as far up the river as Fort Benton. The fort welcomed members of several government expeditions involved in transportation advancement. In 1853, the Pacific Railroad Survey led by Isaac Stevens and accompanied by John Mix Stanley, the artist, stayed there to be followed by several Army units who were exploring the possibilities of converting the fur trade post into a military garrison. Not finding Fort Union suitable, the army used it temporarily then built Fort Buford a few miles downstream. During its final years, Chouteau and Company sold the fort to the North Western Fur Company and in 1867 the fort was demolished. A portion of the fort was used as building material for Fort Buford.

Fort Union's significance has been expressed in various ways: subject of many classic Western American paintings, described in the journals of famous 19th century travelers, recognized in the scientific field by its name being given to geologic formations, flora and fauna of the region, and its overall importance in the advancement of the western frontier and the fur trade by its inclusion into the National Park System.



- T — Telephone Line
- P — Power Line
- W — Water Line
- — — Authorized N.P.S. Boundary
- Possible Visitor Center Locations
- National Register Boundary

## CONSTRAINT MAP

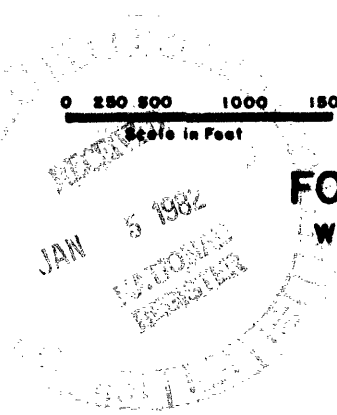
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Scale in Feet

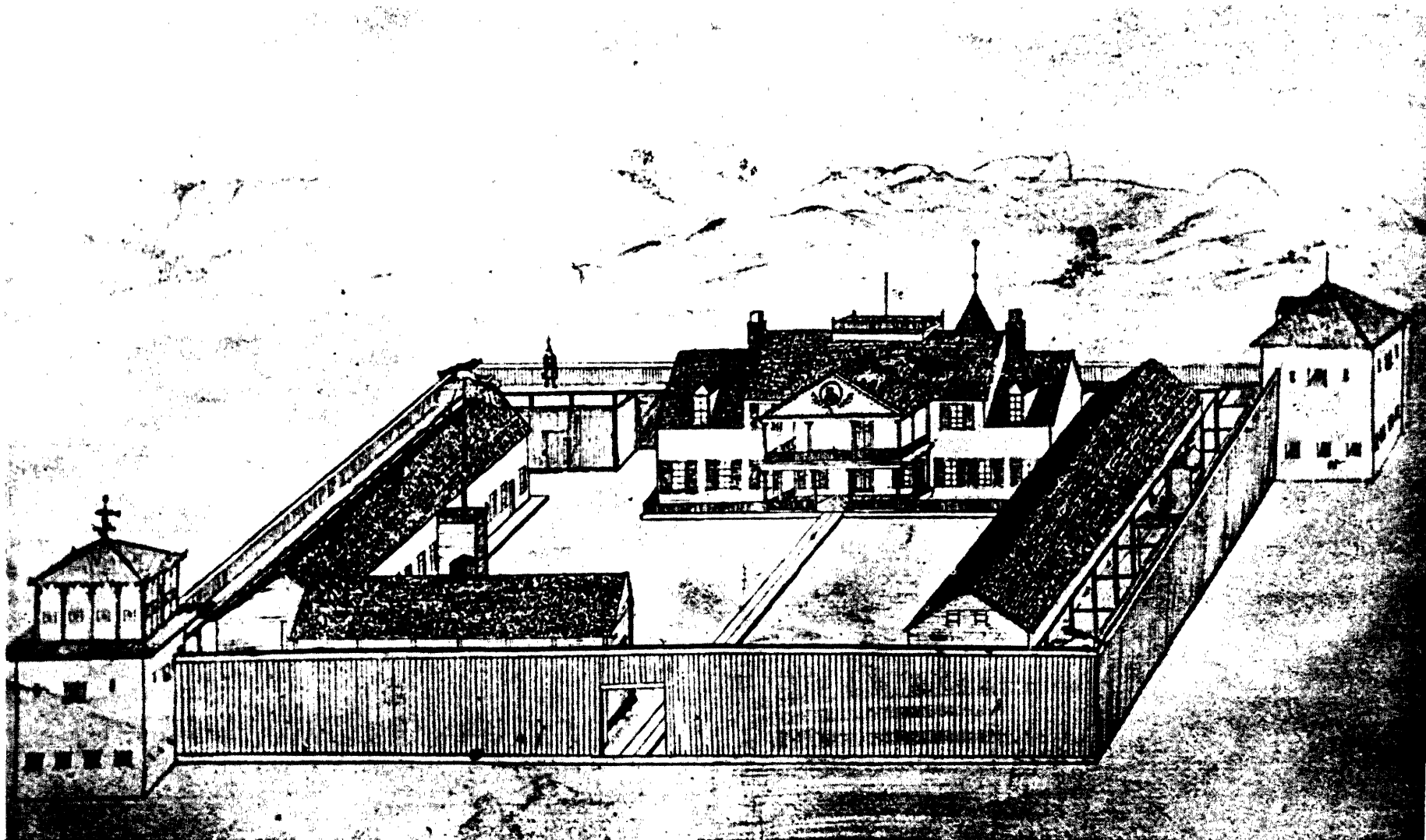
### FORT UNION TRADING POST N.H.S.

Williams Co., North Dakota. and Roosevelt Co., Montana

SFM-6a

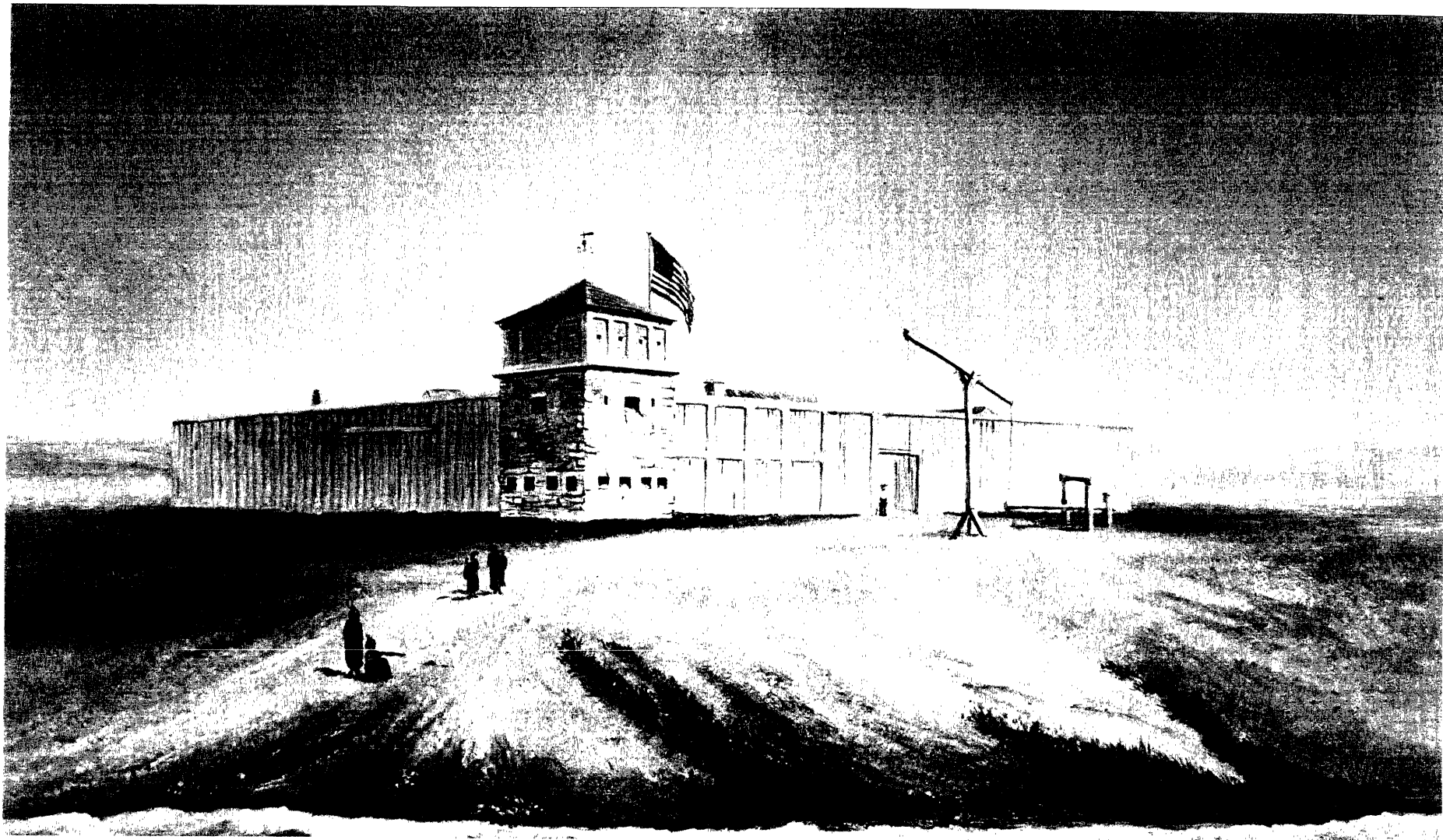
436 | 80013-A  
6-78 | R.M.R.





Fort Union in 1864. From a contemporary sketch by an unknown soldier.





FORT UNION

~~Warren, Neb.~~

Nat. Hist. Site

N. Dak./Mont.

~~B. J. ...~~  
Painting Date;

Original 13" x 22"

Oil on Canvas (Stretcher,  
backed with wood panel.)

For Permission to Publish;  
Glenbow Foundation  
902 Eleventh Ave. S.W.  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada