

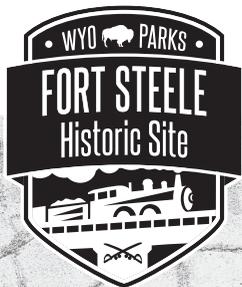
\$ FEES & PERMITS

Fort Steele charges no daily use fee. We do gratefully accept donations to help with site programs.

✓ RULES

- Please pack out your trash.
- Overnight camping is not allowed.
- Digging is prohibited.
- Use of metal detectors is prohibited.
- Fireworks are prohibited.
- Pets must be leashed and under control at all times.

For a complete listing of State Park rules and regulations, visit <http://wyoparks.state.wy.us> or contact Park Headquarters at Seminoe State Park. Phone: 307-320-3013. Park Headquarters is located in the North Red Hills Camping Area. From I-80, take exit 219, then North on Carbon County Road 351 for 33 miles.



This frontier Army post has a fascinating history interlacing transportation with the military and the growth of the lumber and livestock industries in Wyoming.



Fort Fred Steele State Historic Site is administered by the Division of State Parks, Historic Sites and Trails; Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources.



⌚ HISTORY

On June 20, 1868, Colonel Richard I Dodge selected this site on the west bank of the North Platte River and named the fort for Major General Frederick Steele, 20th U.S. Infantry, a Civil War hero. Fort Steele was occupied until August 7, 1886, by soldiers who were sent by the U.S. Government to guard the railroad river crossing and assist in the settlement of the West. It would be the railroad itself which would lead to the abandonment of the fort in 18 short years.

The construction of the transcontinental Union Pacific Railroad across southern Wyoming in 1867-1869 brought the Army, loggers, tie hacks, miners and speculators. Those pioneers created a path for merchants, sheepherders and cattlemen who in turn ushered in the modern era of towns,



Photographs courtesy of National Archives.

automobiles and the mighty Lincoln Highway. It would be the modernization of the automobile which doomed the town of Fort Steele in 1939 as the highway would move out of town and close to its present day location.

Although married to the transcontinental railroad, Fort Steele, the town or fort, covers most historical themes in Wyoming. From historic pioneer trails (transportation) to Wyoming politics (Post Trader Fennimore Chatterton was the 3rd Secretary of state and the 6th Governor of the State of Wyoming) and the agricultural and mining interests which came to define the state early on – livestock, coal, gold and timber.

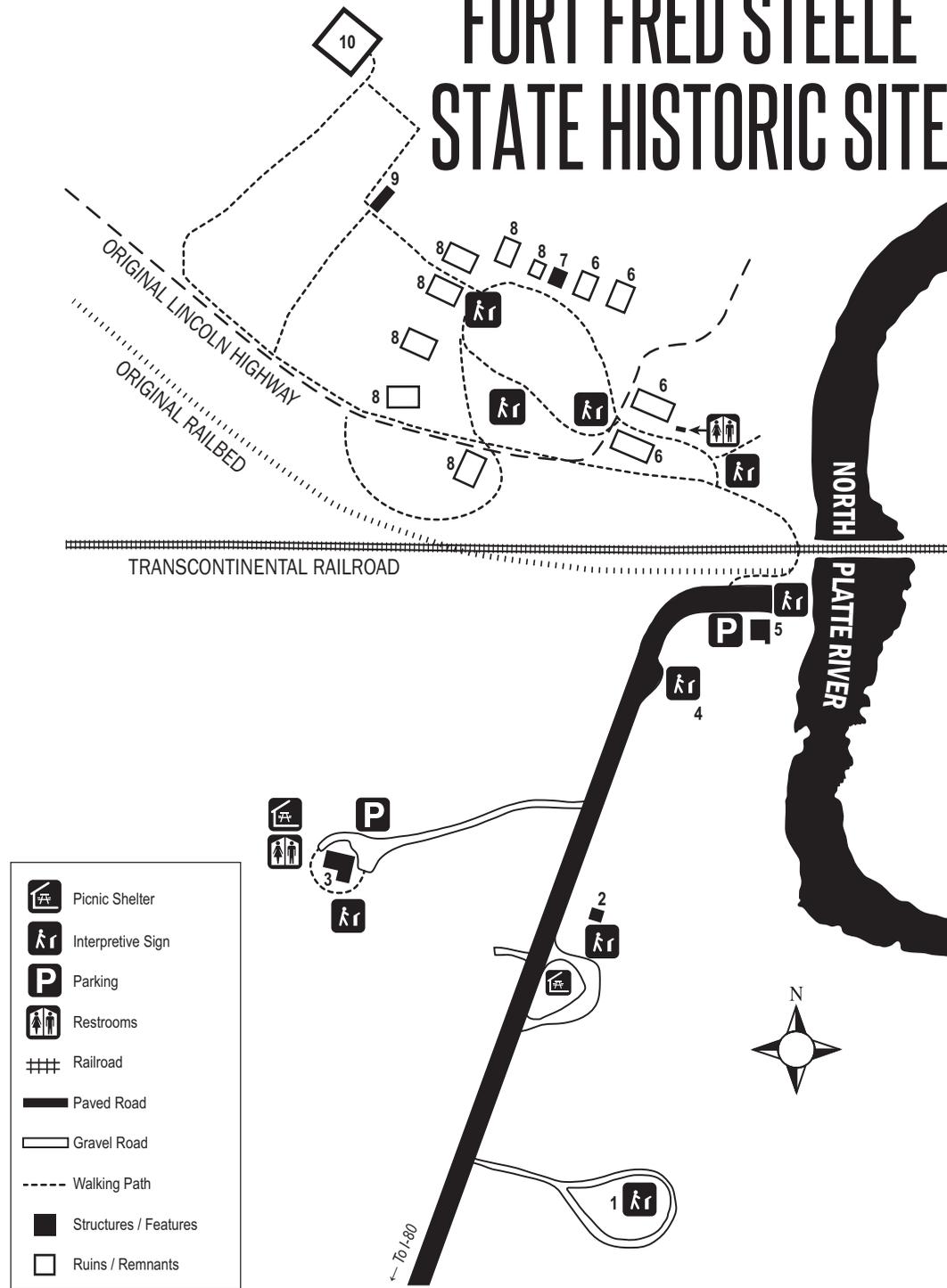
👁️ A VIEW INTO THE PAST

Today many of the foundations are visible but very few structures are intact. Fort Steele State Historic Site offers an excellent opportunity for the preservation and interpretation of Wyoming's diverse cultural heritage. Although the number of structures has declined over the years, what remains standing is living testimony to the flourishing and subsequent passing of several frontiers.

📍 LOCATION

This frontier Army post, which served as a hub for both the military and Wyoming's lumber and livestock industries, is located just off I-80 at Exit 228.

FORT FRED STEELE STATE HISTORIC SITE



1. Cemetery: The cemetery served soldiers, their dependents and civilians during Army occupation. When the post was decommissioned, the Secretary of the Interior declared the cemetery exempt from sale or transfer to the public because soldiers were buried there. In 1892, the graves of the soldiers and their dependents were moved to Fort McPherson National Cemetery in Nebraska.

2. Powder Magazine: The Powder Magazine housed the fort's ammunition and therefore was located away from the main military complex. Ironically, it is one of the few fort structures remaining. The structure was built in 1881 from locally quarried stone and from materials fabricated in Omaha and shipped by rail to Fort Steele.

3. Post Trader's House: Originally built by J.W. Hugus, who held the post trader position for most of the army occupation of Fort Steele, it was later occupied by Fenimore Chatterton who bought out Hugus around the time the army abandoned the post. Unlike the stone and wood structures of the army, this building was constructed from a lime grout material, or an early type of concrete. It is one of a very few structures remaining in the west today with that particular construction.

4. Ranching: Sheep herding in this area started in the 1870s and grew to be an important part of Wyoming's economy during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Fort Steele played a pivotal role in this industry as it was one of the shipping points for raw wool heading to the east coast for processing. James Candlish, a local blacksmith from Rawlins, Wyoming, was credited with building the first sheep wagon in 1884.

5. Bridge Tender's House: The Bridge Tender's House was constructed by the Union Pacific Railroad to serve as an employee surveillance point. The bridge tender could respond quickly to locomotive caused fires and could remove flood debris that might damage the bridge, causing interruptions to railroad traffic.

6. Barracks: Two stone foundations and chimneys are all that remain of the five enlisted men's barracks. The walls were constructed of logs squared on three sides, boards and battens, while a shingled roof protected pine board floors. Tarpaper covered interior walls. Kitchens doubled as mess and washrooms, while iron bedsteads took up most of the floor space.

7. Quarter Master's Building: The main part of this structure is from the military period and matches the dimensions of the office building in the quartermaster's complex. We believe this building was moved to its current location during the period when the fort acted as the community of Fort Steele (c. 1890-1940).

8. Officer's Row: With the availability of good building stone and good saw mills and other milling equipment, Fort Steele had Officers quarters that were better than many posts of the period. Four of the five houses were what we would call duplexes today. The Commanding Officer Quarters stood centered among the Officers quarters. It was superior to the others in space and designed as a single living quarter.

9. School House: During the community era of Fort Steele (c. 1890-1940) this structure served as the schoolhouse. Although it stands in the same location of the second post hospital, it is unclear if it was part of an original wing of the hospital modified into a school or if materials were scavenged from other structures to build a new school.

10. Stone Corral: Upon completion by the fall of 1876, the enclosure consisted of stonewalls, with buildings lining three of the interior sides. The Northeast side held a small stable and a blacksmith shop. The Northwest side contained a three-room carpenter shop and the Southwest side a wagon shed. The term corral is confusing, but all evidence shows that quartermaster stock was kept in nearby stables.