Part I

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

HISTORIC RECONSTRUCTION

BENT'S OLD FORT

La Junta, Colorado

Prepared by: Dwight E. Stimson, Jr., Historian, Bent's Old Fort
Jackson W. Moore, Jr., Archaeologist, Bent's Old Fort
Charles V. Pope, Supervising Architect, Western Office of Design and Construction

Approval Front

Recommnded by (Acting) Superintendent

Recommnded by /sig/ Charles E. Krueger
Acting Chief, Western Office of Design and Construction

Recommnded by (Sig) Leman L. Carson
Regional Director, Historic Region

Approved by /sig/ John B. Cabot
Acting West. Director, Public and Public Works

11/11/64
12/15/64
DEC 10 1964
2/31/65
# CONTENTS

<table>
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<td>Landscape data</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Furnishing and exhibition data</td>
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<td>Project Construction Proposal</td>
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Historic Structures Report  
Part I  

3. ADMINISTRATIVE DATA  

a. Name and number of structure = Fort's Old Fort, Building #1.  
   Unnumbered site in the Historic Structures Inventory.  

b. Purpose for structure = The interpretive program will be 
   focused at the reconstructed Fort, as the optimal interpretive 
   facility. The building will also house the Park's administrative 
   offices and serve as lieu of a visitor center.  

c. Justification for such use as shown in Historic Plans = The Park 
   has established because of the Fort's historically significant 
   role in the history of American national expansion into the 
   Southeastern quarter of the continental United States from 
   1833 - 1835. Reconstruction of the Fort is considered necessary 
   to present the significance to the visitor in the best and 
   most practical way.  

d. Provisions for maintaining the structure = The reconstructed Fort 
   will contain the primary visitor reception and interpretive 
   facilities. Orientation and interpretation will be provided by 
   uniformed Park personnel at the Fort, through guided tours, 
   talks and publications.  

e. Extensive research, if any, already or proposed for 
   understanding and knowledge of the structure - none.  

f. Brief description of proposed construction activity = The historic 
   Park plans for a complete reconstruction of the building following 
   extensive historical and archaeological research. This will 
   include administrative offices, interpretive exhibits and 
   furnishings, and a parking lot.  

g. FullSized preliminary estimate of cost of proposed 
   construction activity = As yet unknown and will be 
   required to understand Fort's Old Fort, including necessary 
   facilities and furnishings.
a. One plan of the existing condition of the structure, for information purposes only.

b. Copy of DCP B-3 - attached

c. Historical notes:

   Brief statement of local tradition and history concerning the site - local records concerning the structure should parallel the information contained in Headquarters (b.). The most important exception to the idea that Clinton has demolished the fort with explosives upon abandoning it in 1844.

2
b. Total square or breathing area available for conducting business - when the Fort was constructed in 1851 - 33 by 66 feet on the north and south sides and the south and north sides respectively. The ground floor contained small rooms of varying size, all facing upon a central court yard. Two upper rooms were located on the east and west portions, and the entire west side was two-storied. The footprints of the east side were noted, though the building itself rose above the main wall. A water-house and corral on the south side admitted the Fort power on the south side.

From 1853 to 1860 the structure was the main trading establishment of Bent, St. Vrain, and Co. No structural changes are believed to have taken place during this period although when Bent claimed the post in 1860 he set fire to materials in several of the northeast rooms. During the Fort occupancy uses of the various rooms included blacksmith and carpenter shops, dining room, large kitchen, store room, store room, and quarters.

In 1860-65 the Fort was reoccupied by the Indiana-Denver Overland Stage Mail Company. The stage company made a full opening in the east wall to accommodate the passing of vehicles. The company abandoned the post in the late 1870's. By this time, the walls had begun to deteriorate badly. In 1880-85 the Fort was used as a cattle corral. Local ranchers began appropriating materials from the structure for use in their own buildings. By 1900 little was left except the ruins of the walls. A flood in 1911 completed the destruction.

c. Map of architect or designer - Charles Bent.


e. Map of area in historic Period - Bent, St. Vrain, and Co.

f. ARCHITECTURAL WEB

a. Brief description of structural and architectural design including the design of the Fort's form, materials, and construction.

1. The remains of Bent's Old Fort consist in plan of about 4,000 square feet of (ache walls), generally less than two feet high,
as excavated by an archaeology crew of the Western Band. (See
W.B. sheet 2, C.O.D. 22, small corrections will be incorporated in
the Part II report) Drawings of the original fort, recorded by
Lt. Albert in 1869, have been added to the archaeological findings of
1975 to give the size and appearance of the original fort. (See
W.B. sheets 3 and 4, C.O.D. 22)

2. Fort Warren on US 7 30 miles north of Denver, is a rebuilt
structure of the same period as Fort's Old Fort. The Sign a
reconstructed post horizon, (Coloma), was built several years ago
to recreate Fort's Old Fort. Both forts show the problem of
base construction. Typical this details of the period of Fort's
Old Fort are available from many drawings in the W.B collection of
Coloma, books, and from further research.

b. Number of stories - two.

c. Principal construction materials - adobe.

d. Brief description of special features.

1. The first floor room was used for preserving and gun fire
action. It was a flat earth roof on roof beams, the interpretation
of the fort walls for public use so that a roof deck supporting
live loads of 100 lbs per square foot is called for.

e. Brief description of existing conditions of base structure and of
external finishing materials.

1. From the W.B. sheets the following approximate figures are
obtained:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Footings</td>
<td>16,000 cubic foot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adobe walls</td>
<td>61,600 cubic foot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of room</td>
<td>15,500 square foot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of vertical adobe walls</td>
<td>26,700 square foot</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Cost of construction of 64,100 C.F. of walls 0 (2 = $1,070,000
Cost of construction of 59,100 C.F. of walls 0 (2 = $770,000
(Final figure depends on construction materials and methods)

2. The reconstruction of the Old Fort has 3 distinct approaches
that are interrelated. Some alteration must be considered in the
studies upon a Part II report before the final direction of re-
construction is decided upon.
(a) Discussion of the archaeological remains.

(1) A system of reinforced concrete footings and piers can be devised that will support the new work on reinforced concrete or steel lintels that will carry no more than 10 percent of the existing walls. These footings would be placed below the existing footings to provide better frost protection and incidently preserve 90% of the existing masonry. A removable veneer would allow the front of the building to be maintained from the exterior yet provide access to the historical remains.

(2) Complete removal of the existing archaeological remains, walls and footings. Replacement by well designed reinforced concrete footings to a lower depth.

(3) A combination of (1) and (2) above.

(b) Reconstruction of the historic frame.

(1) Authentic reconstruction in adobe blocks with red joints will give the truest picture, but will be costly from a maintenance point of view as described below.

(2) Construction in cement stabilized adobe mortar will be quite satisfactory because the aging process will never be the same as real adobe.

(3) The reconstruction of the roof (decks) in concrete can simulate the original construction.

(c) Future maintenance. Our real problem of maintenance is the future cracking of the 13,330 square feet of vertical wall surface not under the protection of roofing.

(1) Reinforcing exposed walls. At the Fort Restaurant and on west side of the adobe in New Mexico, the exposed surfaces are plastered with adobe or white washed at frequencies approaching yearly. Historic evidence of blistering or white washing at Bent's Old Fort should be further investigated.

(2) Allowing natural deterioration. Fort Vasquez has deteriorated recently and the state historical society of Colorado is in a quandry as to whether or not to completely rebuild the fort. The use of adobe or the new concrete is costly and has not proven completely satisfactory, as the adobe would crumble generally in larger chunks, though at less frequent intervals.
3. The Interior Surface

Research and investigation must be made on this subject.

6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA


b. It is proposed that excavations be carried out that are sufficient to establish the original and subsequent dimensions and elevations of the moats, roads, historic grade levels within and without the fort, plus special features. It is also proposed to recover, record, and analyze artifacts pertinent to all periods, with special treatment provided for those with value as study or exhibit specimens.

c. It is anticipated that all phases of the project shall have been completed between August 25, 1963 and August 25, 1965. The total expenses should approximate $100,000.

7. LANDSCAPE DATA

a. Statement of existing physical evidence of historic condition. The site lies entirely around the fort with the Wellman-Darnell house and the introduction of a road over the excavations has eliminated any physical evidence of historic conditions.

b. Brief statement of purpose and extent of further research proposed. If any, more excavation or any ecological, historical, or architectural research may lead to further landscape research.
8. FURNISHING AND EQUIPMENT ROST

e. List and brief evaluation of historic furnishings now in the
government's care.

f. Statement of principle for creating a furnishing plan -

General selection of the present interior styles will start a
creating plan, taking cues of information contained in the
historical and architectural sections of the last II report.

g. Outline of proposed method of financing any refurbishing - It
is proposed that continuance notes be used to finance any
refurbishing.

d. Estimate of cost of any refurbishing - $40,000
PROJECT CONSTRUCTION PROPOSAL

1. Statement of requirements, proposed work and construction date, justification, etc. (Use additional sheets as necessary.)

Project Title: RECONSTRUCT ELDON'S OLD FORT

This proposal provides for utilization of existing historical materials and resources, located within the structure, to be a modern visitor center and administrative facility.

Construction Notes: The structure to be restored was completed in 1854 and contains 25 1/2 rooms, 7 upper rooms, and 8 battlements. Of the total structural area approximately 90% is roof, 10% walls. A 150' x 170' room contains the main building, within which a 90 square foot parking area will be provided. Within the main building, the facility will be restored and administrative offices, educational and historical exhibits, public and employee restrooms, lobby and exhibit areas, 50 seat AV room with necessary utility and storage space. Restored areas will be equipped with historic furnishings and exhibits in place.

Provide all fixed furnaces, electric heating, water heating, and air conditioning.

(continued on attached sheet)

2. Land Status (if Gov't-owned, what agency), Water Rights, Research, Etc.

Government owned, U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Archaeological and historical research is now underway.

3. PCP Date Prepared by (Name, Title & Date)

For: L. Young, 10-6-64

4. Cross-reference PCP's to (Title Project: 10-6-64)

PCP numbers of previously completed portions:

5. Construction by:

Day Labor □ Contract □

Work supervised by:

Park Reg. Design Office □

6. CLASS ESTIMATE

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7. DISTRIBUTION OF COPIES

No. To

1. L. Young, 10-6-64

8. Recommended by Park Office (Signature, Title, Date)

9. Approved by Regional Office (Signature, Title, Date)

(fgd) Harvey D. Reynolds

10. Reviewed by D&O Field Office (Signature, Title, Date)

11. Location within Area or Terminal

Lack's Old Fort

12. Master Plan No.

17B-WP-5000

13. Bldg. or Rt. a and Sec.

17B/1

14. Region

15. Park

16. Project

RECONSTRUCT ELDON'S OLD FORT

17. PCP Index No.

18. P. S. & S. by

BPR □ NPS □

(County) □

(Title) □

(Site) □

OCT 10 1964

NOV 16 1964

(Stnl) □

(ID) □

(County) □

(Title) □

(Site) □

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<td>Administrative Offices, Archaeological and Historical exhibit</td>
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<td>facilities - Public and exhibition rooms, lobby and exhibit spaces,</td>
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<td>exhibit rooms, 900 sq ft 8 x 10 room and 10 room exhibit to be</td>
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<td>100 sq ft 10 x 10 room</td>
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<td>Room audio equipment and -</td>
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<td>audio equipment for 90 seat room (full program production) 20,000</td>
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<td>Audio exhibit is furnished exhibit room (C) 1,000</td>
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<td>Assembly room, lobby &amp; offices</td>
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<td>700 sq ft (NY room) 3,000 sq ft</td>
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<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
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1. Statement of requirements, proposed work and construction data, justification, etc.

Historic structures report contains restoration data.

Justifications: The area was established to interpret Fort’s Old Port and its role in cultural exploration and expansion. The restored fort will be the major feature of visitor interest and will include virtually the entire interpretive program. In addition to an interpretive program, the fort room will provide facilities for special programs, visiting groups and staff assembly and training.

19. Estimate

Continued

Historic Furnishings (estimate)

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<td>Artisan's Shops (4)</td>
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See Part II for clear copy
Name of Area or Project: Historic Structures Report, Part II
Reconstruction of Bent's Old Fort
Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site

Recommended: Swift E. Tilton Jr. Dates: June 14, 1965
Acting Superintendent

Recommended: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
Chief, WDOE

Recommended: Kenneth J. Martin Date: June 30, 1965
Acting Chief, Resource Studies

Recommended: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
Regional Director

Approved: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
Director
HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

PART II

RECONSTRUCTION OF BENT'S OLD FORT

BENT'S OLD FORT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Midwest Regional Office
Omaha, Nebraska

June, 1965
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section

3. ADMINISTRATIVE DATA, by Foy L. Young

4. HISTORICAL DATA, by Dwight E. Stinson, Jr.

6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA, by Jackson W. Moore, Jr.

9. HISTORICAL-ARCHAEOLOGICAL SUMMARY, by Jackson W. Moore, Jr. and Dwight E. Stinson, Jr.

(NOTE: Detailed Tables of Contents for Sections 4 and 6 are provided at the beginning of the section.)
3. **ADMINISTRATIVE DATA**

a. **Name and number of structure** - Bent's Old Fort, Building #1. Classified AAA in the Historic Structures Inventory.

b. **Restatement of Proposed Use of Structure** - The interpretive program will be focused at the reconstructed Fort, as the optimum interpretive facility. The building will also house the Park's administrative offices and serve in lieu of a visitor center.

c. **Restatement of Provisions for Operating the Structure** - The reconstructed Fort will contain the primary visitor reception and interpretive facilities. Orientation and interpretation will be provided by uniformed Park personnel at the Fort, through guided tours, talks, exhibits, audio-visual programs, and publications.

d. **Estimate of Cost of Proposed Construction Activity** - It is estimated that $454,100 will be required to reconstruct Bent's Old Fort, including necessary facilities and furnishings.

(See PCP B-8 on following pages)
PROJECT CONSTRUCTION PROPOSAL

1. Statement of requirements, proposed work and construction data, justification, etc. (Use additional sheets as necessary.)

Proposed Work: Bent’s Old Fort is an almost completely ruined adobe structure. This proposal provides for restoration with original materials and appearance. Housed within the structure will be a modern visitor center and administrative facilities.

Construction Data: The structure to be restored measures approximately 140' X 170' containing 25 lower rooms, 7 upper rooms and 2 bastions. Of the total enclosed area approximately 9,600 sq. ft. were roofed. A 150' X 170' adobe corral abutted the main building within which a 50 car parking area will be provided. Within the main building modern facilities will provide administrative offices, archeological and historical artifact storage, public and employee restrooms, lobby and exhibit space, 50 seat AV room with necessary utility and storage space. Restored rooms will be equipped with historic furnishings as exhibits in place.

Provide oil fired furnace, electric lights, water heating and air conditioning.

(continued)

Government owned, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Archeological and historical research is now underway.

3. PCP Data Prepared by (Name, Title & Date)

Foy Young, Sup., 10-26-64

4. Cross-reference PCP’s to this Project: A-1, U-3, H-7

H-8

PCP numbers of previously completed portions:

E. C. Alberts

Reg. Chief, Interp & Vig. 84

5. Construction by:

Day Labor / Contract / Work supervised by:

Park / Reg. Design Office /

6. Class C Estimate

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<th>Construction</th>
<th>Plans, Surveys, &amp; Supervision</th>
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<th>Exhibits, Audio-Visual Installations, etc.</th>
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<td>$454,100</td>
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7. DISTRIBUTION OF COPIES

No.

1. WASO

2. WOOG

3. IBM

4. Bent’s Old Fort

5. Recommended by Park Office (Signature, Title, Date)

6. Approved by Regional Office (Signature, Title, Date)

7. Reviewed by D & C Field Office (Signature, Title, Date)

8. (Adapted from Government Printing Office)

9. PCP Index No. 11-26-44

10. PCP No. B-8

11. Location within Area or Terminal

Bent’s Old Fort National Historic Site

12. Master Plan No.

13. Bldg. or Rd. No. and Sec.

Bldg. #1

14. Region

15. Park

Midwest

16. Project

Reconstruct Bent’s Old Fort
(Visitor Center and Administration Office included)

Bent’s Old Fort

17. P. S. & S. No.

BPR NPS #7
1. Statement of requirements, proposed work and construction data, justification, etc.

Continued:

Historic structures report will contain restoration data.

Justification: The area was established to interpret Bent's Old Fort and its role in westward exploration and expansion. The restored fort will be the major feature of visitor interest and will enclose virtually the entire interpretive program. In addition to an interpretive program, the AV room will provide facilities for special programs, visiting groups and staff assembly and training.

19. Estimate

Continued:

Historic Furnishings (estimate)

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tr>
<td>Refurbishments</td>
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<td>Northeast Bastion</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Bent's Quarters</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artificer's Shop (4)</td>
<td>8,000</td>
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<td>Trade Room</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Storage Room</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employee Quarters</td>
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<td>Watch Tower</td>
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<td>Billiard Room and Bar</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 48,000</strong></td>
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Reconstruct Fort Structure

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<td>9,600 sq.ft (approx.) @ $30.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>$288,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Offices, Archeological and Historical artifact storage facilities - Public and employee restrooms, lobby and exhibit space, 50 seat AV room and restored rooms as exhibits to be included.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Museum Exhibits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 @ $1,800 ea.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$34,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Diorama</td>
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<td>$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$44,200</td>
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Audiovisual

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rear screen projection and audio equipment for 50 seat room (Incl program production)</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>$6,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio stations in furnished exhibit room (6) @ $400</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,400</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$8,900</td>
</tr>
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Furnishings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assembly room, Lobby &amp; Offices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 seats (AV room) @ $15</td>
<td>750</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 desks @ $100</td>
<td></td>
<td>$400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 swivel chairs @ $50</td>
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<td>$200</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 side chairs @ $50</td>
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<td>$400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File &amp; cap cabinets</td>
<td></td>
<td>$350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash trays, sets, etc. for lobby and courtyard</td>
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<td>$6,000</td>
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</table>

Historic Furnishings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<td>See attachment</td>
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<td>$48,000</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<th>Cost</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimate Totals</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td></td>
<td>$288,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans, Surveys, and Supervision</td>
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<td>$41,600</td>
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<td>Contingencies</td>
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<td>SUB TOTAL</td>
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<td>Exhibits, Aud. - Vis. Installations, Etc.</td>
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<td>$107,100</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRAND TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>$454,100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
HISTORICAL DATA SECTION

by

Dwight E. Stinson, Jr.
Historian
TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. Historical Resume of Bent's Old Fort
   I. History of the Structure .............................. 1
   II. Land Ownership ........................................... 9

B. Bent Period
   I. Source Evaluation ...................................... 10
   II. Exterior .................................................. 21
       General ..................................................... 21
       Special Features ........................................... 22
   III. Interior .................................................. 25
       Orientation ............................................... 25
       Means of Entry ........................................... 28
       Central Complex ......................................... 30
       Wagonhouse ............................................... 42
       Main Corral ............................................... 44
       Special Features ......................................... 46

IV. Construction ................................................ 51
   Dimensions .................................................. 51
   Adobe ......................................................... 52
   Floors ......................................................... 54
   Walls ......................................................... 54
   Ceilings and Roofs ......................................... 57
   Windows ....................................................... 58
   Doors .......................................................... 58
   Walkways ..................................................... 58
   Fireplaces & Chimneys ....................................... 58
   Interior Partitions ......................................... 58
   Design ......................................................... 58

V. Use, Location, and Description of Rooms .............. 60
   Storehouses ................................................ 61
   Workshops .................................................. 63
   Messing Facilities ......................................... 68
   Living Quarters ............................................ 71
   Business ..................................................... 76
   Recreation .................................................. 79
   Other .......................................................... 80

VI. Possibility of Alteration ................................. 86
I. HISTORICAL RESUME OF BENT'S OLD FORT

The history of the structure known variously as Bent’s Old Fort, Bent’s Fort, and Fort William falls logically into six periods:

Bent Period (1833-1849) during which the Fort was headquarters for Bent, St. Vrain, and Co., a trading company with connections as wide as St. Louis and Santa Fe. From the Fort's location on the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail the firm dispersed American influence and trade goods over a vast area ranging from the northern part of present day Colorado into the mountains of central New Mexico. Situated on the international boundary with Mexico, the Fort played a prominent role in American expansion to the Southwest. Its location in the heart of the Southern Plains Indian country made it a natural contact point between the whites and several major tribes including the Southern Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Kiowa, and Comanche.

First Interim Period (1849-1861) during which the structure was unoccupied and allowed to deteriorate.

Stagecoach Period (1861-1881) during which the structure was occupied by the Barlow-Sanderson Overland Mail and Express Co. as a home station and general repair shop for the line which ran from Kansas City to Santa Fe. Several spur lines also radiated from the Fort.

Cattle Period (1881-1884) during which adobes were carried from the Fort to be placed in the buildings of nearby settlers.

Second Interim Period (1884-1920) during which the remains of the Fort deteriorated virtually unchecked. Midway through the period, the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution began to take an active interest in perpetuating the memory of the old landmark. A monument was dedicated on the site in 1912, and in
late 1920 the DAR was given the site itself.

Terminal Period (1920-1963) The DAR movement to protect the few remaining ruins of the Fort got off to an inauspicious start. In June of 1921 the swollen Arkansas River swept over the Fort site as the Great Pueblo Flood completed the work of destruction. The DAR efforts to maintain interest were retarded by scarcity of funds and it was finally forced to transfer title to the State of Colorado in 1954. The same year the state financed a limited archeological excavation of the Fort and the erection of a low adobe wall which generally marked the outline of the foundation. It was soon realized that a true reconstruction of the old fort could only be accomplished through the funds and resources of the Federal Government. By an act of Congress approved June 3, 1960, the establishment of a National Historic Site at Bent's Old Fort was authorized, and on October 31, 1961 the United States acquired title to the Fort site. The National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior took over the administration of the National Historic Site on March 15, 1963.

This Historic Structures Report has been prepared to provide a portion of the data necessary to reconstruct Bent's Old Fort to its historic appearance. Since the time of major significance was the Bent Period, the report has been largely directed toward the 1833-1849 structure. A brief resume of events and conditions that made the Fort nationally significant is provided below, in the form of a concise history of the Bent Period.

BENT, ST. VRAIN AND CO.: The partners who formed Bent, St. Vrain Co. in 1831 were not new to the West. The brothers Charles and William Bent,
and Ceran St. Vrain had all ventured out from their native St. Louis to take part in the Upper Missouri fur trade.\textsuperscript{1} Armed with experience, some capital, and a willingness to do whatever was necessary to compete with other similarly minded entrepreneurs, they arrived in the Arkansas Valley late in the third decade of the 19th century. Their objective was to locate at a point in United States territory which could serve the dual purpose of tapping the rich Santa Fe traffic as well as the potentially, highly lucrative Indian trade. They constructed a stockade on Fountain Creek (near present Pueblo, Colorado) for this purpose, but it soon became apparent that the location was badly chosen. The site was well off the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail and a considerable distance west of the main buffalo hunting grounds of the Plains Indians.\textsuperscript{2} It is said that Yellow Wolf, a Cheyenne chief, pointed out the latter fact and suggested the company re-establish at the Big Timbers (near present Lamar, Colorado). For reasons not completely clear, the partners compromised with Yellow Wolf's idea, and instead chose to locate at a spot on the Arkansas some 40 miles upstream from Big Timbers, but nevertheless, on the Mountain Branch Trail.\textsuperscript{3}

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE FORT:** It is not certain how long it took to construct the adobe building that would be known, at least among the partners, as Fort William. The historian Grinnell claims the construction began in 1828 and was completed in 1832, interrupted somewhat by an outbreak of smallpox. During this time the company operated out of a stockade on the construction site.\textsuperscript{4} Other, and seemingly more plausible accounts,
have the construction beginning in 1833 and being completed the following year. At any rate, by 1833 the Fort was completed and William Bent installed as resident manager, a position he held until the Fort's abandonment in 1849.

**TRADE OPERATIONS:** The trading activities centered at Bent's Fort may be described as "three cornered." Trade goods of American manufacture were hauled along the Santa Fe Trail from Missouri. A portion of the goods was deposited at the Fort, and the remainder continued down the Trail into Mexican Territory where it was disposed of at the mercantile outlets operated by St. Vrain and Charles Bent in Taos and Santa Fe. This same method operated in reverse, with goods of Mexican and Navajo origin being allocated to the Fort or carried on to Missouri. The third corner consisted of the Indian tribes who either traded their buffalo robes for goods at the Fort or were reached by traders travelling to the Indian camps. The robes were transported to the company's eastern outlets. The Fort also catered to independent Mountain Men who bartered beaver pelts and other furs for the equipment and supplies needed to maintain themselves.

**INDIAN RELATIONS:** The key to such a business as the Bent, St. Vrain Co. engaged in was to maintain friendly relations with the several Indian tribes involved. A serious breach would not only destroy the cornerstone of the business, but might conceivably constitute a very real personal danger to the Fort and its occupants. The situation was plain to William Bent, and his efforts soon placed him in a position of great influence with the Indians which he was to enjoy until his death in 1869.
Southern Cheyennes and their friends, the Arapahoes were the major tribes doing business with the Fort and relations seem to have been excellent throughout the Bent Period. Two reasons stand out, one being that the Fort was in Cheyenne territory, and the other that William Bent took a Cheyenne wife soon after the completion of the structure. Almost as important as the White-Indian relationship were the feelings between the red men themselves. Throughout the 30's Bent found that the enmity between his Cheyenne friends and the tribes south of the Arkansas -- the Kiowas and Comanches -- put the Fort in the center of a potential battlefield. If one faction was reluctant to trade because of the presence in force of the other, business naturally suffered. It is said by some that the peace conference of 1840 which forever abolished the Cheyenne-Comanche differences was Indian initiated, and this may well be true. However, the peace was consummated 3 miles below the Fort, the erstwhile enemies exchanged gifts purchased from Bent, and from that time on, the two tribes could mix at the Fort in an atmosphere of peace. The very nature of the tribal system dictated that there should be occasional flareups, but the 1840 peace provided the wedge Bent needed. After that complaints were often discussed in council at the Fort and settled without resort to violence.

The Federal Government took advantage of the Fort's location to foster relations with the Indians. In 1835 Colonel Henry Dodge's Dragoon Expedition from Fort Leavenworth met with contingents from the various tribes within a few miles of the post. In 1846 Thomas Fitzpatrick,
a former Bent employee, was appointed Agent for the Upper Platte and Arkansas Indian Agency. Fitzpatrick resided part-time at the Fort and often met with the tribes in or near its vicinity.

**NOTED VISITORS:** As an outpost of American civilization, Bent's Fort was a natural stopping place for travelers. Among those known to have visited during the Bent Period were Matthew Field (New Orleans Journalist), Thomas J. Farnham (English Traveler), Frederick A. Wielizenus (German-American Naturalist), Marcus Whitman (Missionary), Francis Parkman (Author-Historian), and George F. Ruxton (English Author). Many figures prominent in the history of the West were associated with the Fort, the most famous of all being Kit Carson, who was employed by the firm intermittently.

**TERRITORIAL EXPANSION:** One, if not the most, nationally significant aspects of the history of Bent's Fort was the role the structure played in the territorial expansion of the United States. Relations between the Company and the U.S. Army entered into a more than casual phase in the summer of 1843 when a contract was consummated calling for the storage of Army provisions at the post. The following year, John C. Fremont's Second Expedition disbanded at the Fort, having completed its "Great Reconnaissance of 1843-1844." In 1845 the Army sent out three expeditions ostensibly to map the Southwest and gather scientific information, but in many respects, simply to compile intelligence to be used in the event of war with
Mexico. Each of the three paused for supplies at Bent's Fort. The first, led by Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny, was a Dragoon column originating at Fort Leavenworth and making a circuit via the Oregon Trail, the eastern slope of the Colorado Rockies, and hence down the Arkansas. The other two expeditions, both under the overall command of Fremont, spent several weeks in early August fitting out at the Fort. Fremont then took the main body through the Rocky Mountains to California while Lieut. J. W. Abert explored the Canadian River country and returned to Fort Leavenworth.23

In the spring of 1846 the long expected war with Mexico broke out. At Fort Leavenworth, Kearny was given command of a force designated the Army of the West. His orders were to march his column to Bent's Fort and use that as a base for an invasion of Mexican Territory. Kearny arrived in late July and remained in and near the Fort for several days.24 Before moving on he had, in effect, converted the Fort into a depot and assigned an Army Quartermaster officer to see that stores were properly stockpiled and forwarded as needed. The Fort continued to serve in this capacity until late 1847.25

Kearny marched into Mexico, raised the United States flag over Santa Fe on August 18th, and pushed on for California. Charles Bent was installed as Governor of the Territory of New Mexico.26

DECLINE AND ABANDONMENT: The successful conclusion of the Mexican War resulted in a changed situation at Bent's Fort. The frequent coming
and going of troops on the Santa Fe Trail, the wheeled armadas of supply wagons, and the increased flow of immigrants heralded the beginning of serious conflict with the Indians. In January of 1847, Charles Bent was killed in an insurrection in Taos, and St. Vrain spent more and more time attending to his New Mexican interests. Having served as a base for territorial expansion, Bent's Fort was beginning to wither as a direct result of it.

The discovery of gold in California, coupled with the desire to settle the newly conquered territory provided the coup de grace. The tide of immigrants became a flood. The constant, seemingly endless, flow of wagons alarmed the Indians as they saw water holes ruined and buffalo frightened from their natural runs. With the immigrants came the dread cholera. Incidents occurred and soon more war parties than bands intent on trading, were in the Fort vicinity. Business fell off to an alarming degree as fear of cholera, combat, or both kept the tribes away from the Fort. By the summer of 1849 William Bent decided the Fort would never again attain its pre-war eminence. Taking his family, some employees, and what valuables he could carry, he set fire to his excess powder and abandoned the Fort, moving down to the Big Timbers to begin again.
II. LAND OWNERSHIP

(United States property to 1870)

UNITED STATES
(September 20, 1870)

JULIA BENT
(April 10, 1872)

HEIRS OF JOHN W. PROWERS
(August 17, 1897)

THOMAS H. MARSHALL
(September 22, 1900)

A. E. REYNOLDS
(February 20, 1920)

BENT'S FORT LAND & CATTLE CO.
(February 8, 1926)

LA JUNTA CHAPTER OF DAR
(April 14, 1954)

STATE OF COLORADO
(October 31, 1961)

TO JULIA BENT
Deed Book 1, Page 134)

TO JOHN W. PROWERS
Deed Book 1, Page 186)

TO THOMAS H. MARSHALL
Deed Book 44, Page 77)

TO A. E. REYNOLDS
Deed Book 52, Page 386)

TO BENT'S FORT LAND & CATTLE CO.
Deed Book 168, Page 443)

TO LA JUNTA CHAPTER OF DAR
Deed Book 275, Page 62)

TO STATE OF COLORADO
Deed Book 492, Page 109)

TO UNITED STATES
Deed Book 556, Page 236)

All records cited above are in the custody of the County Clerk of
Otero County, Colorado.
B. BENT PERIOD

I. SOURCE EVALUATION

Considering the 16 year duration of the Bent Period, it seems at first remarkable that so few individuals saw fit to record their impressions of the structure. Out of numerous documents examined, there emerged a total of but 25 sources that could be considered to have been written by primary informants. However, when it is realized that at least 60% of those who could qualify were nomadic Indians, and a large number of the remainder were illiterate trappers, hunters, and Mexican laborers, it seems perhaps more remarkable that 25 were found.

The 25 sources range from the highly questionable reminiscences of George Bent to the rather meticulous drawings and measurements of Lieut. James W. Abert. They range over a time period almost as long as the Bent Period itself. Generally, the sources fall into three categories, with those associated with the United States Army doubling those of the other two -- travelers and employees. Table A provides the correlation between the time sequence and the type of informant.

Fortunately, 22 of the sources provided their information by on the spot renderings either in journals, letters, sketches, or notes, the latter being used as a basis for books published within a reasonable time of the visit.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>TYPE OF PUBLICATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>DODGE</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>U. S. Army</td>
<td>Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FORD</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>U. S. Army</td>
<td>Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KINOSBURY</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>U. S. Army</td>
<td>Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>HOBBS</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Ransomed Captive</td>
<td>Book</td>
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<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>FARNHAM</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Traveler-Author</td>
<td>Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FIELD WISLIZENUS</td>
<td>August, September</td>
<td>Newspaper Correspondent</td>
<td>Article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Traveler-Naturalist</td>
<td>Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>FREMONT BOOHS</td>
<td>July, Fall (44) - Spring (45)</td>
<td>U. S. Army Employee</td>
<td>Book</td>
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<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>COCKE ABERT</td>
<td>July, August</td>
<td>U. S. Army Employee</td>
<td>Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>EMPLOYEE EMORY</td>
<td>May, July - August</td>
<td>Army of West Employee</td>
<td>Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JOHNSTON EDWARDS</td>
<td>July - August</td>
<td>Army of West</td>
<td>Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OSBON</td>
<td>July - August</td>
<td>Army of West</td>
<td>Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HUGHES ABERT</td>
<td>July - August</td>
<td>Army of West</td>
<td>Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MACOFFIN PARKMAN</td>
<td>July - September</td>
<td>Army of West Traveler-Author</td>
<td>Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>GARRARD RUXTON</td>
<td>Nov. (46) - Spring</td>
<td>Employee Traveler-Author</td>
<td>Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ST. VRAIN</td>
<td>May, July</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>Letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>FORSYTH PALADAY</td>
<td>June, August</td>
<td>Gold Rush Emigrant Employee</td>
<td>Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G. BENT</td>
<td>(From 1843-1849)</td>
<td>Son of Owner</td>
<td>Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The type of information provided varied with the interests, moods, and purpose of the individual. Because of this, it has been thought best for purposes of this report to provide a brief evaluation of each source, which, in accompaniment with Table A, will provide those using the document with ready access to the source of each reference.

DODGE, Henry (Colonel, U. S. Army) visited Bent's Fort in the summer of 1835 while in command of an expedition to meet with the Indian tribes of the region. His observations are recorded in a report of the expedition filed the same year.  

FORD, Lemuel (Captain, U. S. Army) a member of the Dodge Expedition, whose Journal provided the information used.

KINGSBURY, G. B. (Lt. Col., U. S. Army) also a member of the Dodge Expedition, whose Journal was incorporated in Dodge's Report.

HOBBS, James - a young man held captive by the Comanches and ransomed by William Dent, probably in 1838. Hobbs described the incident in a book published some 37 years after the event.

FARMIAM, Thomas J. (English Traveler) visited Bent's Fort in July of 1839 while touring the "Great Western Prairies". A book recording his experiences was published a few years later.

FIELD, Matthew (Newspaper Correspondent) visited Bent's Fort in August of 1839 en route to Santa Fe. His articles were published in the New Orleans Picayune between December, 1839 and October, 1841.
WISLIZENUS, Frederick A. (Traveler-Naturalist) a university trained naturalist of German birth, visited Bent's Fort in September of 1839 while on a journey to the Rocky Mountains. He kept a journal of the trip which was finally published in 1912.36

FREMONT, John C. (U. S. Army) the noted explorer visited the Fort on several occasions during the Bent Period. The reference used was recorded in July of 1844 while Fremont was returning from his famed expedition to the Snake River and South Pass.37

BOOGS, William M. (Employee) 18 year old son of a Missouri governor and nephew of the Bent brothers, worked as a trader at Bent's Fort from the fall of 1844 to the spring of 1845. The references made are sketches with notes (Plates I, II, and III) rendered in 1903, some 58 years after his stay at the Fort. The time lapse and obvious discrepancies between the two original sketches (Plates I and II) cast some doubt as to the accuracy of the information.38

COOKE, Philip St. George (U. S. Army) a Dragoon officer with several known stops at Bent's Fort. The reference made was made in July, 1845 when the Kearny Expedition stopped briefly at the Fort. It was published 12 years later in a book known to be based on a journal.39

ABERT, James William (Lieutenant, Topographical Engineers, U. S. Army) provided references in both narrative and graphic form. His first visit embraced a two-week period in August, 1845 when Abert was fitting out an exploratory expedition to the Canadian River (a subsidiary of
Fremont's 1845 Expedition). His report included two excellent sketches of the Fort (Plate IV). He returned the next summer with the Army of the West, becoming ill on the journey across the plains. The illness necessitated a convalescence period of some six weeks at Bent's Fort, during the latter part of which, the restless young officer resumed his Journal and whiled away time sketching visiting Indians and the structure itself. He went so far as to take the dimensions of the Fort, with a view to showing the military authorities the type of structures that could be built in such country. The various sketches and diagrams made during this stay are Plates VII (Fort Front), VIII (Fort Interior), and IX (Dimensions). He returned in January of 1847, tarrying only long enough to deposit several sick soldiers at the Fort.

As a great deal of the primary evidence is attributed to Abert, an effort was made to propel this shadowy character into prospective, and there examine his qualifications as a writer and artist. The results of this sub-investigation proved to be most encouraging.

Briefly stated, James William Abert was born in 1820, making him about 25 years of age at the time of his visits. He came from a line of military officers dating at least as far back as a grandfather on the staff of Rochambeau during the American Revolution. His father, Colonel J. J. Abert, was Chief of the Corps of Topographical Engineers. Abert prepared for college at a classical seminary in Washington, D. C. and then entered Princeton College, from which he was graduated in the spring of 1838. Appointed to the U. S. Military Academy that summer,
he pursued his military education to graduation with the celebrated Class of 1842.\textsuperscript{42} Considering Abert's prior education, his West Point standing of 55 in a class of 56 is probably more indicative of a difficulty to adjusting to regimentation than a lack of mental capacity.\textsuperscript{43}

After short service with the 5th Infantry, Abert transferred to the Corps of Topographical Engineers in 1843. Routine eastern duties were followed with an assignment to Fremont's 1845 Expedition and his subsequent visits to Bent's Fort. Although Abert's prior experience is impressive in itself, it is perhaps more significant to this evaluation that from 1848 to 1850 he served a tour of duty as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Drawing at West Point, and his drawings were kept as models to students for at least a half century following.\textsuperscript{44}

In summation, it seems certain that Abert was completely competent to make such renderings as are used for reference and that, obvious errors notwithstanding, he is probably the most reliable single source.

\textbf{Employee} - Author of an unsigned newspaper article published in May, 1846. Although the identity of the informant is unknown, his article indicates that it was written at the Fort shortly before publication.\textsuperscript{45}

\textbf{Emory, W. H.} (Topographical Engineers, U. S. Army) commanding a special engineer unit attached to the Army of the West. Emory was a West Point graduate rendering a report based on notes, but the reference used is so insignificant as to require no further evaluation.\textsuperscript{46}
JOHNTON, Abraham Robinson (Adjutant, 1st Dragoons, U. S. Army) another West Point graduate with the Army of the West, with a brief mention of the Fort in his *Journal*.47

EDWARDS, Marcellus Ball (Private, Missouri Volunteers) an 18 year old soldier and erstwhile deputy clerk in a county clerk's office, noted his experiences with the Army of the West in a *Journal*. After the war, Edwards became a medical technician in St. Louis, dying of cholera in 1849.48

GIBSON, George R. (Missouri Volunteers) an officer who kept a journal of his activities in the Mexican War.49

HUGHES, John T. (Missouri Volunteers) a member of the Army of the West published a history of Kearny's Campaign in 1847, from which the references are taken. The title page of the book (*Domiphan's Expedition*) identifies the author as the holder of an A.B. Degree, and a member of the 1st Missouri Cavalry.50

MAGOFFIN, Susan (Wife of Trader) accompanied her husband of 8 months and the Army of the West, passing her 19th birthday at the Fort. Mrs. Magoffin was a Kentucky gentlewoman, educated by private tutors and, in spite of an advanced state of pregnancy, a meticulous diarist. Her excellent entries are the only access we have to a woman's view of Bent's Fort, and her efforts must be considered one of the best of the primary sources. Like Abert, Mrs. Magoffin endured a forced stay due to illness, and was quartered in an upstairs room.51
FARRAHAN, Francis (Traveler-Historian) arrived at Bent's Fort in August, 1846 shortly after the departure of the Army of the West. At the time, he was 23 years of age and Harvard educated. The reference used is from The Oregon Trail published in 1849, which is an account of his travels through the West, including the mentioned brief stop at Bent's Fort. 52

GARRARD, Lewis H. (Employee) a 17 year old adventurer from Cincinnati, went west in late 1846 and worked for Bent, St. Vrain, and Co. until spring of the following year. His purpose in noting his experiences was to "gratify" his elder brothers, and done in an admittedly "desultory style". Garrard returned home in 1847 and, while sick from chills and fever, worked over his original notes while the events were still fresh in his mind. The book Wah-To-Yah and the Taos Trail, from which the references in the report were taken, was first published in 1850. Garrard spent only ten months in the West, but for a considerable portion of that time was resident at Bent's Fort, and at all times was associated with one or more of its partners. 53

RUXTON, George F. (Traveler-Author) a former officer in the English Army who left the service while still a young man, and became a world traveler. He paid a brief visit to Bent's Fort in 1847, and later incorporated his impressions in the novel Life in the Far West. A serialized version of the book first appeared in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine during the summer of 1848, and it is from this version that the references are taken. 54
ST. VRAIN, Caran (Owner) business partner of the Bents was, of course, intimately acquainted with the Fort from its inception. His description of the structure, however, was contained in a letter to the U. S. Army in 1847 in which he offered it for sale. Unfortunately, there are two reasons why it is not as valuable a reference as it would seem on the surface. St. Vrain was trying to sell something, and naturally may have tampered with some of the details to enhance his bargaining position. Also, in his efforts to convince the Army what they could convert the Fort into, he neglected to spend much time on its existing condition.55

FORSYTH, John Robert (Gold Rush Immigrant) visited the Fort for a few days en route to California in the summer of 1849. He kept a detailed Journal of his trip, from which the references in this report are taken.56

PALADAY (Employee) was interviewed by an unnamed correspondent of the Missouri Republican on September 27, 1849. The interview states that Paladay was employed by William Bent at the Fort, and on August 16 was sent to the Moro River on a business trip. He returned on August 22 to find the Fort "burnt down by the Indians." He remained near the ruins until August 24 and then moved on to Missouri.57

BENT, George (Son of William Bent) provided a great deal of information to two historians of the Cheyennes -- George Bird Grinnell and George Hyde. Since the letters, works, and notes of both these men rely (except in extremely obvious cases) on information by George Bent, we
have considered him the primary source and designated accordingly.

It must be remembered that both historians were primarily interested in the Cheyenne Indians, and that their efforts on Bent's Fort were more or less incidental to the main purpose of their research.

George Bent, the son of William Bent and Owl Woman, believed himself to have been born at Bent's Fort in July, 1843, living there until its abandonment by his father. Shortly after the time (which Bent believed to be 1852) of abandonment he was sent to Westport, Missouri to attend school under the guardianship of relatives. The outbreak of the Civil War found George and his younger brother Charles in the Confederate Missouri State Guard. Both boys were captured at Corinth, paroled, and sent west in the custody of their father. They were soon off to join the Cheyennes where Charles steadily, and George intermittently, participated in the Indians' war against the U. S. Army, a fact which obviously intrigued the historians Grinnell and Hyde. Among many engagements in which they took part were the Sand Creek affair and several raids on Julesburg. Charles was killed in a Cheyenne-Pawnee skirmish in 1868, by which time George had settled down with his Indian wife Magpie, a niece of Black Kettle. He moved with the rest of the tribe to Indian Territory and remained on the reservation, an employee of the Bureau of Indian Affairs at times, until his death in 1918.

Grinnell is known to have begun his annual summer visits to the Cheyenne
Reservation in 1890, and it may be assumed that he met George Bent either on his first visit or soon after. At that time, by his own figures, Bent would have been some 47 years of age. Both Grinnell and Hyde maintained a prolific correspondence with Bent (whose letters show a somewhat broken, but far from illiterate, ability in written communication) but these deal almost exclusively with Bent himself or his interrogations of other Indians on various battle details. Apparently it was not until 1908 that Grinnell became interested enough in the Fort to have George Bent dictate his recollections, the results of which appear in Plate X. By that time Bent was 65 years old, and had not seen the structure in some 59 years at which time he was about 6 years old. While granting a singular recall facility, it nevertheless seems unlikely that Bent's recollections are much more than hearsay evidence.

Grinnell published an article on the Fort in 1917 for the Kansas State Historical Society, containing numerous pieces of detail that could only have come from interviews with George Bent. Their value must be appraised in light of the facts in the preceding paragraph. 58
II. EXTERIOR

Because of the sparsity of distinguishing landmarks, Bent’s Fort dominated the immediate terrain. Those approaching from the west noted that the structure was visible for some miles distant "standing with its high clay walls in the midst of the scorching plain". Cottonwoods lined the river bank, marking the line of the stream as it swung north southeast of the Fort and meandered past some 200 yards from the east walls. Located on a small prominence, the ground sloped gently to the water's edge. The scene was such that Captain Cooke was moved to write his feelings on seeing the "national flag, floating amid picturesque foliage and river scenery, over a low dark wall, which had a very military semblance".

Perhaps any structure in such a setting would evoke response from those recently passing over the monotonous flat, unbroken plain. But the very magnitude of Bent's Fort was sufficient to cause some viewers to remark on its striking appearance. The round towers and high walls, to those of a generation steeped in the writings of Sir Walter Scott, brought immediately to mind their concept "of an ancient castle", or as FARNSHAM eloquently expressed it, the towers rose "over the uncultivated wastes of nature like an old baronial castle that has withstood the wars and desolations of centuries". The spell, however,
was broken on closer examination. This transition is apparent in GIBSON’s statement;

At a distance it presents a handsome appearance, being castle-like with towers at its angles ...
But when you approach close, you find the design good but the execution rough ...

SPECIAL FEATURES:

a. Ice House: The fact that ice was served at Bent’s Fort is fairly well established, but the source of the luxury is not clear. MAGOFFIN implies an interior ice house in her description of the various rooms65 and GIBSON claims to have heard of juleps and lemonade being available, but admits he "saw none, nor the ice".66 GEORGE BENT, (Plate X) whose recollections were of the late part of the Bent Period, include an Ice House east of the Fort on "rising ground on river". Through Grinnell he elaborates as follows:

About 200 yards west of south of the fort, (Plate X shows it almost due east) and so toward the river bank, on a little mound, stood a large ice house built of adobes. In winter ... this building was filled with ice, and in it during the summer was kept all of the surplus fresh meat ...

Since the only mention of an exterior Ice House is made by GEORGE BENT, it is felt that such a structure was not built until late in the Bent Period. Its existence is fairly certain, however, since ruins of a structure on the approximate location were still visible during the Stagecoach Period.68 During most of the Bent Period it is likely that ice was stored somewhere inside the Fort.
b. Dairy: Several sources mention that milk cows were kept at the Fort, but only GIBSON implies a separate structure to house them. His statement that "they have a large dairy, and I saw some very fine calves near it", is not specific enough to pinpoint a definite location, or even to establish that there was such a structure. In the absence of any corroboration, it must be assumed that there was no exterior structure used as a Dairy.

c. Race Track: MACOFFIN states definitely that "They have a regular race track", and is supported by BOOGS (Plate I) who shows an oval marked "Race Track" on land due west of the Fort. Although no other evidence has been found, it may be assumed that a track did exist, since a considerable part of activity at the Fort consisted of horse trading.

d. Grave Yard: GEORGE BENT (Plate X) shows a "Graveyard sloping toward the bottom", an unspecified distance northwest of the Fort. ABERT recorded:

   In the evening another volunteer died, and was buried. They were obliged to cover the graves with prickly pear, or rocks, to prevent the wolves from tearing the bodies out of the ground ...72

CARRARD's remarks on the cheerlessness of the Fort walls were compounded by the fact that "Near were some men digging a grave". Neither of these references establishes a location, but they do provide evidence on the fact that people were
buried in close proximity to the Fort, and it is safe to assume that a special area was designated for such purposes.

e. Wood Pile: BOGGS (Plates I and II) shows "wood for Fire Use" piled rather haphazardly a short distance northwest of the Main Gate. No mention of such a pile is found in the other sources, but it is certain that fire wood would have to be placed somewhere, and the BOGGS location was as convenient as any.

f. Acequia: BOGGS (Plate I) shows "An old Ditch" approaching the Fort from the northwest and curving in front of the structure toward the east. ABENT probably speaks of the same ditch in the passage;

"Between the fort and the river there is a low piece of ground that was once cultivated, the traces of the "Acequia", by which it was irrigated, are yet visible ..."
III. INTERIOR

a. Directions: Bent's Fort was constructed somewhat at an angle directionally speaking, a fact which, coupled with the meander of the Arkansas River, caused some difficulty to those describing the structure. Since the Main Gate faces generally north, it has been used as a point of reference for this report, and the directions designated accordingly. In cases where a direct quotation using what is obviously an incorrect direction, the correction is given in parentheses immediately following.

b. General Designations: To avoid constant explanatory information throughout the text, it has been thought advisable to develop a standard terminology in regard to parts of the structure. Diagrams 1 and 2 (and all other diagrams not otherwise noted) are based generally upon a ground plan produced by Dr. Herbert W. Dick as a result of his 1954 excavation. The room designations (E-5, E-7, etc.) are, of course, based on the points of the compass. Certain modifications of Dick's basic plan have been made in the light of new information. The term "Central Complex" is used to refer to the two Bastions, Inner Corral, Alley, and the buildings around the Plaza. Other major areas are designated Alpha-Beta, Wagonhouse,
Diagram #2

Main Corral

Alley

Station
Security was a major factor in the design and operation of the Fort, and it would follow that means of entry would be held to a minimum commensurate with necessity. GIBSON and MACOFFIN both state distinctly that there was but one entrance, that being the one designated as the Main Gate.75 Several others imply the same, yet there is evidence to show that more than one entrance was needed to accommodate the wagons, animals, and people necessary to the proper functioning of the establishment.

a. Main Gate: The Main Gate, which bisected the north wall of the Fort, is shown clearly on all contemporary illustrations of the structure. ABERT gives the dimensions of the opening as 7 feet high by 6½ feet wide (Plate VII). The double doors are described by FARNHAM as "a pair of immense plank doors",76 by FIELD as a "huge gate",77 and by GIBSON as a "massive gate."78 GEORGE BENT states that in his day "Sheet iron was nailed over these doors ... they looked like Iron Doors".79 All illustrations (Plates II, III, IV, V, and X) suggest that the doors opened inward. ABERT (Plate VIII) shows a second set of doors opening into the Plaza, which would mean that having entered the Main Gate, one would pass through the
passageway formed by the east wall of Room E-4 and the west wall of Room N-5, and then through a second set into the Plaza. GARRARD gives some support to ABERT's second set of doors in his story of luring a wild dog into the Plaza by saying, "... the fort gates were opened, and the dog, cautiously passing the first portal, entered the yard... The use of the adjective "first" suggests more than one set of doors.

b. East Gate: HOBBS provides the earliest mention of a means of entry other than the Main Gate in his statement that William Bent, fearing to allow a certain contingent of Comanches into the Fort, displayed his wares "at the back door". GEOIE BENT (Plate X) also recalls more than one means of entry to the Main Complex, but his ground plan is so misoriented as to be worthless for pinpointing the location. ABERT (Plate IV) shows no break in the West Wall, and it may be assumed that it was not in the South Wall because of the presence of the Main Gate. If such a gate existed, it would probably have been in the East Wall, which would provide access to the Inner Corral and the Alpha-Beta area. HUGHES (Plate V) shows such a gate in such a location, but there is no other corroboration. Nevertheless, it is concluded that there was an East Gate, and that it was probably used for wagons and domestic
cattle.  

9. Corral Gate: The very existence of an adobe corral dictated that there must be a means of entry into it. ABERT (Plate IX) shows a break in the wall at a point near the southwest corner of the Fort, but unfortunately, his bird's eye view (Plate IV) does not show that area clearly. However, he shows no gate in the visible wall, which suggests that if one existed, it was in the hidden section. GEORGE BENT states that a gate to the corral was on the river (east) side, and he indicates the same on Plate X, putting it in the same location as ABERT (Plate IX). According to GEORGE BENT, the gate was single, opened outward and, like the Main Gate, was plated with sheet iron and studded with nails.

CENTRAL COMPLEX

a. Plaza: Passing through the Main Gate, one would enter an open space known as the Plaza, which was the center of activity in the Fort. ABERT (Plate IX) gives the dimensions as 91 feet (north-south) by 66 feet (east-west) and GEORGE BENT (Plate X) shows it to have been gravelled, undoubtedly as a measure to prevent dust and mud. WISLIZENUS mentions "many barnyard fowl" were present in the Plaza at the time of his visit, and FIELD suggests that "creatures of the prairie, caught and tamed" might also be found there.
(Fixed objects such as the Fur Press, which may have been in the Plaza at one time or another, will be covered below under SPECIAL FEATURES.)

b. Rooms: The main Fort structure encompassed the Plaza (Plates I, II, III, IV, VIII, & IX), with the rooms opening onto it. ABERT (Plate VIII) shows how the buildings would look to an observer in the center of the Plaza. The west row of rooms (marked #5 by ABERT) was two-story, the remainder being one story, except for single upper rooms on the south and west, and the Watchtower-Belfry over the Main Gate.

The number of rooms on the ground-floor is open to question. MAGOFFIN states there were "some twenty-five in number", but in the absence of a statement to the contrary, she is assumed to be referring to upstairs rooms as well. ABERT (Plate VIII) shows 13 doorways on the ground-floor, opening into the plaza but, of course, does not take into account interior partitions and rooms connecting off the rear. The 1954 excavation revealed foundations of 25 rooms, although one of these is known to have been an open area, and is not considered as a room in this report. Three of the rooms (NW-1, SE-1, SE-1A), by their position, could not have had entrances visible to a person in the Plaza.

(See Diagram 1 - Page 26)
The situation is clearer on the second story. (See Diagram 2 - Page 27) On the east side was a single room (Designated UE-1) near the southeast corner of the main structure. This room appears on the BOGGS drawings (Plates I, II, III) where it is designated as "Capt. St. Vrain's Room on Top of Fort". It is also shown by ABERT (Plates IV, VII, IX) and rather vaguely on the HUGHES drawing (Plates V and VI). The ABERT sketch (Plate VIII) shows the room as having a small overhang and apparently a door on the west side. A ladder to the roof of the room leans on the north wall. He gives the dimensions as 18' 9" x 20'.

The single room on the south side (designated US-1) was generally in the area of Rooms 1-5, 9-6, and 3-7 although to their rear and straddling the Alley. ABERT (Plate IX) gives the east-west dimensions as 31' 6" and the north-south 16', or the span of the Alley. He indicates a walkway 4 feet wide on the east side over the Alley, and a centrally located doorway entering into it. ABERT's sketch (Plate IV) shows the same situation, but suggests that the room sat on two trans-Alley beams rather than directly on the walls of the two sides. The BOGGS sketches show a room in the same area, but he has placed it directly on top of the south rooms. On Plate III he shows 4 windows on the north side and a doorway on the east. However, the BOGGS drawings show no Alley or Wagonhouse, and in order to span open space
the south side of the room would be supported by his main Fort wall. GEORGE BENT also places a single room on the south side, but places it as spanning a "gateway", to be discussed below. Undoubtedly all three sources are speaking of the same room, but the passage of time somewhat dimmed the details for BOGGS and BENT.

On the west side, the upper rooms ran the length of the wall. ABERT gives the dimension of the central portion as 20 feet (Plate IX). This section generally covers the lower rooms W3, W4, and W5. His sketch (Plate VIII) shows 3 doorways and 2 windows in the section. Although his diagram shows no partitions, for purposes of record the section has been divided into three rooms designated UW-3, UW-4, and UW-5. A 10 foot walkway is shown in front of the rooms.

To the south, and connected with the above, was a smaller room (designated UW-6) 16 feet deep, reached by a narrow catwalk from the roof (Plate IX). Both the BOGGS (Plate I, II, III) and ABERT (Plate IV) drawings show a roof of the same size covering the entire two-story portion. To the north, and connected with the central structure were two recessed rooms, 16 feet deep, (ABERT - Plate IX) which ran to the northwest corner of the Fort. These have been designated UW-1 and UW-2. In Plate IV, ABERT shows a window in the north wall of what would be UW-1. HUGHES (Plate V)
shows the two story side coming to the corner, and a door in the UN-1 area. The DOOGS sketches do not show either room, a situation to be discussed later.

On the north side of the Fort, over the main gate, was an upper room (UN-1) visible in Plates IV through VIII. In Plate VII, ABERT gives the height of the room as 6' 3'', and in Plate IX as 11 feet, 6 inches east-west, and 12 feet north-south. Above this room was a Belfry 5 feet high, and 9 feet, 6 inches east-west. ABERT does not give the north-south dimensions. All drawings show it to have a peaked roof. GEORGE BElt's diagram (Plate X) states there was a "Watchtower and belfry over this gate". UN-1 and the Belfry are completely omitted from the DOOGS drawings, which will also be discussed later.

In summation, it appears that there were 9 upper rooms and 24 lower rooms, or a total of 33 rooms around the Plaza. The possibility that some of the partitions were not always present will be discussed in Section V.

9. Ladders and Stairways: The second floor was apparently reached by ladders or stairs from the Plaza. ABERT (Plate IV and VIII) shows two such sets -- one in front of the south rooms, and another on the west side near the northwest corner. The DOOGS sketches (Plates I, II, III) also show
the south ladder, but omit the other. The possibility of one or more interior staircases cannot be overlooked, but the only hint of such structures is found in ABERT's comment that "I had now recovered my health sufficiently to walk down a flight of steps unaided." The tone of this passage -- particularly the use of "walk" rather than "climb", suggests something more elaborate than the ladder shown in his 1845 drawing (Plate IV). However, the Lieutenant's 1846 sketch (Plate VIII) shows a staircase with hand railings at the same point, and his dimensions on Plate IX show it to be 4 feet wide. It is possible that an improvement was made during the intervening year. BOGGS (Plate II) shows a ladder at the same point, but identifies it as "steps to go on top of Fort". Examination of ABERT's plan (Plate IX) shows two other possible stairways from ground-level, one a 6 foot wide outside staircase east of Room SE-1A, and the other a 7 foot wide staircase in Room E-2. Neither of these is supported by any other evidence.

Access to the tops of the bastions was by ladders from the two closest roof points. These are shown on the BOGGS sketches (Plates I, II, and III), and the ABERT plan (Plate IX).

d. Interior Communication: (Diagram 3 is provided to illustrate points discussed in this section.) Access from the Plaza to the Inner Corral seems to have been gained by a narrow
Passageway between the east and north row of rooms. ABERT (Plates VIII and IX) shows the Passageway, as do the BOGGS sketches (Plates I, II, and III). According to ABERT (Plates IV, VIII, and IX), the Passageway was covered by a roof continuous with that over the north and east rows of rooms. FARNHAM mentions "a passage" in the same area. Apparently there was also an open way of some kind between the Plaza and the Alley, in the vicinity of Room 8-7 and the Southwest Bastion. (See Diagram 1, Page 26.)

There is no documentation for this, other than the suggestion of such a passage by ABERT in Plate IX.

The Alpha-Beta area, shown only as a roof top by ABERT (Plates IV and IX), may also have been, in whole or part, a passage by which wagons entering the East Gate could move into the Alley-Wagonhouse area. ABERT's dimensions (Plate IX) show it to be 10 feet wide at the point nearest the East Gate, and expanding to 20 feet when abreast of the Alley.

Mention should be made of an idea advanced by GEORGE BENT, which may be completely unfounded. His ground plan (Plate X) shows a large gateway bisecting the south row of rooms, and generally in line with the Main Gate. Room US-1 is shown over this gateway. BENT's description, as improved on by Grinnell, is as follows.
Through the main vest (south wall of the fort) a door was cut leading into the corral, by which the men might pass into the corral and get horses without going outside the fort and opening the main corral gate. This door was wide and arched at the top. It had been made so large and wide that in case of necessity, if by chance an attacking party seemed likely to capture the corral, the door could be opened and the horses and mules run inside into the courtyard of the fort.

The BOGS drawings show no such gate, and ABERT's sketches (Plates IV and VIII) show nothing more than a series of standard room doors on the south side. George Bent's own ground plan shows the gate opening into the Alley, but the Alley itself is indicated as being between the solid north wall of the Wagonhouse and the rear of the south rooms. Without a passage through the Wagonhouse, it would be impossible to run the animals into the Plaza from the Main Corral. The only indication of a passage through the Wagonhouse is found in ABERT's Plan (Plate IX), which shows dotted lines marking a space 32 feet, 6 inches wide immediately west of Alpha-Beta, and continuing through the Wagonhouse to the Main Corral. Such a passage would have served the dual purpose of permitting cattle access from the Main Corral to the Inner Corral, and allowing wagons entering the East Gate to proceed to the Alley and the Wagonhouse. It is felt that such a passage may well have existed, but the only documentation is that already discussed. As to location, that offered by ABERT is preferred to that of George Bent, for the reasons given.
e. Bastions: Perhaps the most prominent features of the entire structure were the Bastions located at the Northeast and Southwest corners of the Central Complex (Plates I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, and X). With the exception of GEORGE BENT (Plate X), all the visual sources agree as to their location relative to the Main Gate. Each Bastion was, as FIELD states, "pierced for cannon."93 The embrasures are visible on Plates I, II, III, IV, and V, all of which show them to be near the top of the structure or slightly higher than the parapets of the main Fort wall. HUGHES (Plate V) shows a second series of embrasures in the lower part of the Bastion, but there is no support for this. BOOGS (Plates I and II) shows a small opening in the Northeast Bastion at ground level which he labels "Coal Hole", with the notation "Small Port hole where Liquor was sometimes passed out to Indians not safe to be admitted in Fort". No mention of such a hole is found elsewhere. Access to the top of the Bastions was by exterior ladders.

No information has been found as to the interior of the Bastions, although it is certain there must have been doors at ground level. GEORGE BENT states that "guns, pistols, swords, and lances"94 were hung inside, but in the absence of an interior ladder (of which no mention is made), the weapons would have had to be handed up to those on the open top. The same would be true of ammunition for the cannons known to have been located
on top. Considering this, it seems likely that there was some means of passage (possibly a trap door) between the interior and top of the Bastions. Whether the interior of the Bastions housed only weapons and ammunition is not clear either since PALADAY claims to have found "pack saddles and riding apparatus" in them.

f. Inner Corral: The area designated Inner Corral was a wedge-shaped opening with its apex at the Northeast Bastion. The angle was formed by the divergence of the main east wall from the line of the east row of rooms. BOOHS (Plates I, II, and III) shows the "Inside" Corral but omits the angle of the east wall. GEORGE BENT (Plate X) omits the feature entirely. In spite of this, the Inner Corral is believed to have existed as shown by ABERT (Plates IV and IX) and described above. FARNMAM is the only source definitely naming the area as a corral;

From this area (the Plaza), a passage leads between the eastern (north) outer wall and the one-story houses (east rooms), to the corral or cavy-yard, which occupies the remainder of the space within the walls. In the absence of further information, it is conjectured that the Inner Corral was used for personal animals such as the horses of the residents, so that they would not be left in the open with the stock. It may also have enclosed some domestic cattle and fowl, and in an emergency, stock could have been run in as well.
WAGONHOUSE

Wagons were probably the most critical, single item in the operations engaged in by Bent, St. Vrain, and Co., and because of this, the condition of the wheeled transports was a top priority item. The wagons were housed in a structure for protection and repair, and all indications point to the structure being that designated in Diagram 1, or the Wagonhouse. Two reasons are paramount in reaching such a conclusion, the first being the need for a large amount of space, and the second being the availability of such space. Ford observed workers at the Fort "loading fifteen wagons principally of Buffalo robes", but does not mention where the wagons were located. PARNFAM, however, provides clues as to location and size, as well as a definite reason for the need of such a structure:

Beyond the coral (referring to the Inner Corral) to the west and adjoining the wall, is the wagonhouse. It is strongly built, and large enough to shelter 12 or 15 of those large vehicles. The long drought of summer renders it necessary to protect them from the sun.99

FIELD speaks of "... the extensive wagon houses, in which to keep the enormous, heavy wagons used twice a year ..."100

It is apparent, both from the assumed floor-plan of the structure around the Plaza, and the narrow doorways shown by ADERT (Plate VIII), that wagons could not enter any of
rooms from the Plaza, if indeed they could negotiate the Main Gate. Accepting this, the only suitable place remaining is the structure shown so clearly by ABERT (Plates IV and IX) but, like all others, unidentified by the officer. GEORGE KENT (Plate X) shows a "Wagonshed" in the same area, but indicates it by a broken line which, in conjunction with the word "shed", indicates a less imposing structure than the others.

Whether or not the Wagonhouse was a long room or a combination vehicular storage and shop area, cannot be determined. ABERT mentions "... the noise from the wagoner's shop ..." but GEORGE KENT (Plate X) shows repair shops along the main south row of rooms and says, through Grinnell,

The work of the carpenter and blacksmith, whose shops stood at the back of the fort, was chiefly on the wagons ...

ABERT also states that "our wagons were examined, and we took the precaution to obtain an extra axletree ..." which confirms the fact, already mentioned, that full facilities for wagon repair were available.

In the absence of detailed information on the Wagonhouse, it is conjectured that entry was made via the East Gate and Alpha-Beta area as discussed above in Section d. ABERT (Plate IV) shows no openings in the north wall of the Wagonhouse, but does indicate a doorway in the offset
of Alpha-Beta. Since the north wall fronted on an Alley some 16 feet wide, according to ABERT (Plate IX), it is possible that openings were provided to back the wagons in. It is doubtful that openings, other than a possible gate to a passageway (See Section d.), existed in the south wall of the Wagonhouse. Knowledge of whether the structure was sub-divided will depend upon excavation.

**MAIN CORRAL:**

The enclosed area abutting the Wagonhouse on the south has been designated Main Corral. It appears clearly on the ABERT drawing (Plate IV), and the GEORGE BENT plan (Plate X), but is conspicuously absent from the drawings of BOGGS (Plates I, II, and III) and HUGHES (Plate V). Yet, there is no doubt that the large enclosure existed through at least the latter portion of the Bent Period.

FIELD states that "... three or four hundred animals can be shut up in the corral." but this passage is not specific enough to rule out the possibility of a referral to the Inner Corral. Later sources are more exact. According to ABERT, ... On the west side (south) is the cattle yard, which is surrounded by a wall so high as effectually to shelter them. The coping of the wall is planted with cacti, which bear red and white flowers ... MACOFFIN says, "On the South side is an enclosure for stock in dangerous times", 
and GARRARD speaks of turning his horse "in the corral behind the fort to chew dry hay".107 (The last statement could also possibly refer to the Inner Corral), ST. VRAIN's description is even more precise:

Outside the principal enclosure, and joining it on the west, is an enclosure of the same size, having walls of the same material, six feet in height, erected for protecting our animals from the Indians.108

GEORGE BENT's plan (Plate X) shows the Main Corral in proper relation to the Central Complex, and he says:

Another gate was on west (south) side going into the adobe Corral. Corral gate was facing south (east) towards the River, lots of prickly pears were planted on top of the walls of this Corral clear around so no one could climb over it.109

Grinnell follows the above quotation fairly closely, but supplements it with additional material:

On the west side of the fort, outside the main walls, was the horse corral. It was wide as the fort and deep enough to contain a large herd. The walls were of adobe, eight feet high and three feet thick at the top. The gate was in the south (east) wall, facing the river ... To prevent anyone climbing in it by night, the tops of the corral walls had been thickly planted with cactus -- a large variety which has great fleshy leaves closely set with many sharp thorns. This plant grew so luxuriantly that in some places the leaves hung over the walls, both within and without, and gave efficient protection against any living thing that might wish to surmount the wall ....110

The ABENT plan (Plate IX) shows nine small squares within the Main Corral. The GEORGE BENT plan (Plate X) shows only
two, both identified as "Snubbing Posts".

**SPECIAL FEATURES**

a. **Well:** There is definite proof of the existence of a well inside the Fort, as shown in the following extracts:

*FARSHAM:* "A range of two-story houses, the well and the blacksmith shop are on the north (west) side." 111

*GIBSON:* "They have a well the water of which is very good ..." 112

*MAGOFFIN:* "They have a well inside, and fine water it is ..." 113

*ST. BRAIN:* "Inside the walls are an excellent well of water ..." 114

From these statements, the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. There was only one well at any given time during the Bent Period.
2. It was inside the Fort.
3. It was probably on the west side.

b. **Fur Press:** A Fur Press located in the Plaza appears to have been a later addition. The first mention of it is by ADERT (1845), who witnessed a Cheyenne scalp dance in the Plaza:

I happened to be near the press for packing furs, in the centre of the square, and had a fine opportunity for taking sketches. 115

The Press is also indicated by ADERT on his ground plan (Plate IX), made the following year, but is absent from
his other illustrations. The only other references to a press are as follows:

GARRARD: "In the center of the court is the 'robo press' . . ."116

MIXTOWN: "In the center of the square is the press for pecking the furs . . ."117

"The employees . . . are pressing packs of buffalo skins . . ."118

It is somewhat strange that such a conspicuous piece of apparatus was not mentioned by more of the post-1845 sources, particularly KAGOFFIN and GEORGE BENT. However, the fact that DOGS does not indicate the press, and none of the pre-1845 sources mention it, suggests that it was not installed until the early part of 1845. The conclusions drawn follow:

1. A Fur Press was located in the center of the Plaza from at least mid-1845 to late 1847, and probably to the end of the Bent Period.

2. Cannon! There is no doubt that the Fort was armed with several cannon throughout all or most of the Bent Period. The difficulty is encountered in determining the number, type, and location of the pieces. DOGS states that in the summer of 1835 the Fort had "a six-pounder and several small, light field-pieces".119 HOIBS places a "six-pounder at each angle" (probably a reference to the Bastions), and goes on to add "a military company was constantly stationed
there with a small battery".¹²⁰ (HOBBS impression that a portion of the Fort employees were assigned permanent military duties, may have been derived from the fact that he arrived at the Fort with a Comanche war-party.)

FARNHAM and FIELD mention cannon, but not in such a manner as to provide further information, except to place cannon in the Bastions.¹²¹ FREMONT was saluted with "repeated discharge from the guns of the fort ..."¹²² and COOKE was saluted with "Three discharges from a swivel gun".¹²³ EMPLOYEE speaks of "some swivels, and a couple of six-pounder brass pieces, which we have ..."¹²⁴

Noting that all of the above references are prior to the Mexican War, a pattern becomes clear. GARRARD, living at the Fort shortly after the passage of the Army of the West, mentions that "In the center of the court is the "rope press"; and lying on the ground was a small brass cannon, burst in saluting General Kearny".¹²⁵ Since he mentions no other heavy ordnance, it may be concluded that the need for such armament terminated with the American invasion of New Mexico. GEORGE BENT, whose tenure spanned the Mexican War, remembered "one cannon" which was fired to invite friendly Indians to feast at the Fort.¹²⁶ His diagram (Plate X) shows it outside the Main Gate with the notation, "Pulled in at night". Through Grinnell, the story
of the burst cannon in the Plaza is repeated, and "some
time after that a large iron cannon was brought from Santa
Fe, and during the day always stood outside the big gate of
the fort ..."127

The following conclusions are drawn concerning the cannon;

1. As long as there was a serious danger of Indian
or Mexican attack, (that is, to mid-1846) there
was probably a six-pounder cannon on the top
of each Bastion.

2. These were supplemented by several light swivel
guns at undetermined locations.

3. From mid-1846 on, there was a burst cannon barrel
in the Plaza for an unknown period.

4. Late in the Bent Period (1847-49) there was a cannon
placed outside the Main Gate, and apparently, none
in the Bastions.

d. Subterranean Room: The only reference to a basement, or
underground room in the Fort is found in an anecdote related
by PARKMAN. Having described a convalescent soldier bearing
the sobriquet of Tete Rouge, PARKMAN tells how the man was
provided with rations, having

... applied to a quartermaster's assistant who
was in the fort. This official ... (vns) ... in a state of chronic indignation because he
had been left behind the army ... So, producing
a rusty key, he opened a low door which led to
a half-subterranean apartment, into which the
two disappeared together. After some time they
came out again, Tete Rouge greatly embarrassed
by a multiplicity of paper parcels containing
the different articles of his forty days' rations.128
This passage leads to the following conclusions:

1. A "subterranean apartment" existed.

2. It was large enough for at least two men to enter.

3. It was large enough to contain a considerable amount of rations.

4. It was being used to store U. S. Army supplies, at least immediately following the passage of the Army of the West.

5. It was located within the Central Complex, probably on the west side "Storehouse" area.
IV. CONSTRUCTION

DIMENSIONS:

Table B on the following page is provided to show the wide range of dimensions for various sections of Bent's Fort as given by the primary sources. Most, if not all, of the informants based their figures on either eye-estimates or hearsay. The one exception to this is ABERT (figures not shown on Table B), who is known to have made a definite effort to obtain correct figures, as is shown by the following passage:

Tuesday, September 8. - I spent this morning employed in taking the dimensions of Bent's fort. It required some time to complete all the measurements. The structure is quite complex; they may, however, be useful in giving one an idea of the forts that can be built in that country.129

The result of ABERT's work is found in Plate VII (Giving vertical measurements of the north wall, Northeast Bastion, Main Gate, and Room UN-1 area), and Plate IX (Giving horizontal measurements for the entire Fort). The figures will not be restated in the text. However, enough vertical measurements are shown in Plate VII to allow a deduction to be made in regard to the height of the rooms. In discussing the parapet arrangement, ABERT states that the "main walls ... extended four feet above" the roofs.130 His diagram (Plate VII) shows the north wall to be 14 feet high, which, deducting 4 feet for the parapet, leaves a room height of 10 feet. All
illustrations show the east and south rooms to be of equal height with the north. On the west (the two-story side), ABERT shows 5 feet 9 inches between the parapet and roof, which leaves a total figure of 19 feet 9 inches, or about 10 feet height for each tier of rooms. (Ceiling space a part of total).

ADOBE

The basic component of the Fort construction was unquestionably adobe, a fact affirmed by all sources who deemed to mention it. The most common contemporary descriptions are "sun-dried brick" and "unburnt brick". As to composition, FIELD's observation that the adobes were made "of the simple prairie soil, made to hold together by a rude mixture with straw and the plain grass itself", is complemented by ABERT's "clay and cut straw" combination.

(Mention of a popular local idea should be made at this point. GEORGE BENT/Grinnell states that "wagonloads of Mexican wool" were sent up "to mix with the clay of the brick". David Lavender's well-read Bent's Fort also states that "coarse, cheap Mexican wool" was used "as binding for the mud". However, if BENT is discounted, there is no primary evidence to support this theory.)

ABERT refers to the size of the adobes as "about four times as large as our common bricks". EMPLOYEE, however, advances exact dimensions for individual bricks -- "18 inches long, 9 inches wide, and 4 inches thick".
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>OVERALL DIMENSIONS</th>
<th>WALL HEIGHT</th>
<th>BASTION HEIGHT</th>
<th>WALL THICKNESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FARNHAM Field</td>
<td>100 x 150</td>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>6-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOGO (PLATE III)</td>
<td>XXXXXX</td>
<td>&quot;Not less than 15&quot;</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>XXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABENT (45)</td>
<td>XXXXXX</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>XXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMPLOYEE</td>
<td>XXXXXX</td>
<td>&quot;About 20&quot;</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>XXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUGHES</td>
<td>135 x 180</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>XXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GARRARD</td>
<td>100 x 100</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>XXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST. VRAIN</td>
<td>180 x 180</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORSYTH</td>
<td>XXXXXX</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. BENT (PLATE X)</td>
<td>135 x 185</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>XXX</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(NOTE: All figures are in feet)
Evidence points to the fact that the floors of all rooms were dirt. The possibility of planking is present, but none of the informants mention such floors. FARNHAM's description is probably the best:

The lower floors of the building are made of clay, a little moistened and beaten hard with large wooden mallets; the upper floors of the two-story houses ... are made in the same way ... 137

MACOFFIN makes quite a point of the dirt floors, mentioning them no fewer than three times. One of her references states, "They have dirt floors -- which are sprinkled with water several times during the day to prevent dust." In another, speaking of the upper room she occupied -- "Like the others it has a dirt floor ..." 138

WALLS:

The walls of the rooms appear to have been built of adobe. The back walls of the west and north rooms constituted the main wall of the Fort and were, of course, of the same thickness. (ABENT gives the width as "nearly two feet." 139) Other walls, such as room dividing partitions and those on the Plaza, were probably not as thick as the main walls. GEORGE BENT says that the walls inside the rooms were "white washed", but there is no other reference to paint, plaster, or covering.

34
The ceilings of the rooms and the roofs were, as ABERT states, "sustained by poles". MAGOFFIN adds that in the center of some of the rooms "is a large wooden post as a firmer prop to the ceiling which is made of logs". Other informants go into the ceiling-roof combination. FARNHAM says:

...the roofs of all ... are supported by heavy transverse timbers covered with brush. The tops of the houses being flat and gravelled, furnish a fine promenade ...

EMPLOYEE's description is essentially the same, except that he has the roof "covered with adobes". EDWARDS says, "The roof ... is flat, being formed of poles which are covered with earth about a foot thick". GARRARD has the roofs "made of poles and a layer of mud a foot or more thick, with a slight inclination to run off the water".

Grinnell's description is based on a combination of his knowledge of Mexican construction, and information provided by GEORGE KENT. The result appears to complement the primary sources:

...the roofs were made in the same fashion that long prevailed in the Southwest. Poles were laid from the front wall to the rear, slightly inclining toward the front. Over these poles were placed grass, twigs, or brush, and over the brush, clay was spread and tramped down hard. The roof was then covered with gravel. These flat roofs were used as a promenade ...

All visual sources show the roofs of the one-story buildings, as well as the three single upper rooms, to be flat. On the west second-story rooms, BOOGS (Plates I, II, III) shows a
saddle, or gable-type roof, while HUGHES (Plate V) and ABERT (Plates IV, VII) show a lean-to type roof sloping to the west. The Belfry over Room UN-1 is shown with a gabled roof (Plates IV, V, VII).

WINDOWS:

The only written mention of windows by the primary sources is the statement by MACONELL that her room (believed to be UN-1) had "two windows, one looking out on the plain, the other is on the patio."¹⁴⁷ The visual sources show no windows on the exterior wall except one in the north wall of Room UW-1 (ABERT - Plate IV), and UN-1, which was a Watch Tower. Such windows on the ground floor would, of course, compromise the defensive capabilities of the Fort, and apparently it was felt that upper windows as well, would be a possible source of danger. GEORGE BERNAYS through Grinnell;

The various rooms about the courtyard received light and air through the doors and windows opening out into the courtyard.¹⁴⁸

Examination of ABERT's interior sketches (Plate VIII), confirms the above quotation, although the windows are omitted on the sketch of the south row of rooms. However, his bird's-eye view (Plate IV) shows at least two windows on that row, as do the BOGGS drawings (Plates I, II, III). It is possible that the east and south rooms had rear windows as well, since
they were not backed by the main fort wall.

**DOORS:**

The door situation is quite similar to that of windows; they opened onto the Plaza, and the east and north rooms may have had rear doors. The Abert interior sketches (Plate VIII) are again the best source of information. These show for the ground level, as follows:

| North Rooms | 2 Doors |
| East Rooms  | 4 Doors (Possibly 5) |
| South Rooms | 4 Doors |
| West Rooms  | 4 Doors |

The upper west rooms have 4 doors showing clearly, 1 partially obscured, and Room UW-1 omitted. No mention is made as to what the doors were constructed of, but it may be assumed they were wooden.

**WALKWAYS:**

On the ground level, between the rooms and the Plaza, was a narrow walkway. Abert's interior sketches (Plate VIII) show this walkway along all but the north row of rooms. It is partially visible in the Boogs drawings (Plates I, II, III), and the Abert bird's-eye view (Plate IV). From these sources, the overhang is apparently formed by an extension of the roofs and supported by wooden posts. This walkway provided shade for those on the ground floor, while allowing a continuous roof-top promenade for those above.
Despite the obvious fact that there must have been numerous fireplaces and consequently, chimneys, there is almost no evidence regarding them. GARRARD speaks of sitting "by the bright wood fire, in the clerk's office", thus providing the only written reference. HUGHES (Plate V) shows a chimney-type affair toward the rear of the Fort, but ABERT's drawing (Plate IV) is completely devoid of any such structures. The Lieutenant's interior sketches (Plate VIII) show several chimneys protruding from the roofs over the single-story rooms, and on the sides of the upper west rooms. (Location of these features will depend mainly upon the results of excavation).

Little is known of the interior partitions, other than their being almost certainly constructed of adobe. It is quite possible that many of the rooms shown on the diagrams used in this report, were at one time or another, in reality, larger rooms without the partitions that are shown.

Bent's Fort was designed with one primary thought; to construct a building fully utilitarian for business purposes, while at the same time being as impregnable as possible. The defensive system was based upon the two Bastions (providing a field of fire along all four walls), supplemented by parapets with
embrasures extending along a **banquette** or firing step formed
by the roof tops of the one-story rooms, ABERT describes the
system as follows:

The fort is composed of a series of rooms
resembling casemates, and forming a hollow
square, the entrance on the east side. A
round tower on the left, as you enter, and
another diagonally opposite, constitute the
flanking arrangements. The outer walls,
which are nearly two feet in thickness,
intersect in the axes of the towers, thus
permitting their faces to be completely
enfiladed; the outside walls of the enceint
and towers, pierced with loop holes, are
continued four feet above the flat roofs
which serve for the banquette, which being
composed of clay cannot be fired by im-
flammable substances that might be cast
upon it; 151

When the Fort was originally constructed, the main source of
danger was marauding Indians. Since it was not until some
time later that other potential enemies came to the fore,
it is possible that the Fort was altered prior to ABERT's
1845 visit. This question will be discussed separately in
Part VI.
V. USE, LOCATION, AND DESCRIPTION OF ROOMS

No plan or description has been located that assigns a
definite use to all the rooms in the Central Complex. By
bits of information, coupled with efforts to ascertain the
position of the informant, it is possible to make educated
estimates as to the location of most of the room-types known
to have existed. Before discussing these room-types, some
of the general descriptions will be noted.

FARMHAM calls the rooms around the Plaza "the place of business",
and goes on to say that "the owners and their servants have
their sleeping and cooking apartments, and here are the
storehouses".152 EMPLOYEE writes of the same area that there
were "... storehouses, shops for blacksmith, gunsmith, and
carpenters, men's quarters, private rooms for gentlemen,
dining room, kitchen, &c."153 EDWARDS says, "It is divided
into various apartments, such as dwelling rooms and shops of:
all kinds that are necessary for their convenience."154

From these, some generalizations can be made concerning the
rooms. There seems to have been six general categories of
use; although some of the rooms probably served dual purposes.
The categories follow:

1. Storehouses or storerooms
2. Work Shops
3. Messing Facilities (kitchen, dining room, etc.)
4. Living Quarters

5. Business (trade-rooms, offices, etc.)

6. Recreation

STORtHOUSES:

The presence of extensive store or warehouses is mentioned by several sources, but only two attempt to pinpoint location. BOOGS (Plates I, II, III) calls the west side rooms, both upper and lower, a "large store house". He also shows Room E-4 as a "store room". GEORGE BENT (Plate X) indicates the same on the north rooms bracketing the main gate, or Rooms N-2, N-3, N-4 (which he designates as "Warehouse"), and Rooms N-5 and N-6 (which he designates as "Store and Warehouse"). He shows no interior partitions.

Some difficulty is encountered in the differentiation between the terms "Storehouse" and "Store" on the one hand, and "Store" and "Trade Room" on the other. The key, of course, is the writer's personal interpretation of the word "store". To some, the term meant simply a place to store goods and material (i.e. storehouse), while to others it was a place where trade was carried out and items purchased (i.e. Trade Room). Fortunately, two sources, BOOGS (Plates I & II) and GEORGE BENT (Plate X), mention Trade Rooms and also Storehouse and/or Stores.

RUXTON mentions a "large room", one of three, seemingly contiguous
that was "used as a store and magazine,"\textsuperscript{155} He mentions no warehousing facilities. Speculating on this combination, it might appear that the room was used to store material. However, a considerable amount of trade: consisted in the sale of arms and ammunition, and it would be possible to consolidate the storage of powder, etc., at a place where it was available for sale.

MAGOFFIN calls one of the rooms "a little store,"\textsuperscript{156} but she is certainly referring to the mercantile-type, because of a general comment on customers in the same sentence. It must also be remembered that a storehouse or storeroom probably would not be readily identifiable to any observer other than those living at, rather than visiting, the Fort.

There is considerable doubt that DOOGS's recollection of the entire two-story, west side being "a Large Store House" is correct. Storing heavy goods such as buffalo robes, upstairs might put great strain on the ceilings of the downstairs rooms. Using the second story as a storehouse would also be inconvenient for loading, unloading, and handling. It seems more likely that the lower west rooms were the storehouses, and the upper west rooms were living quarters. (The latter possibility will be discussed further on) It is also possible that a portion of the Wagonhouse structure was used for the storage of parts, lumber, etc., for wagon and routine repair, since it
would be convenient to the supposed place of work.

From ABERT (Plate IX), it is known that the lower west rooms had four doors, similar in size and appearance to all others opening on the Plaza. This may account for all witnesses except BOOGS (FARNHAM, FIELD, EMPLOYEE, & GEORGE BENT), using the plural form "storehouses" or "store rooms". This same factor would, of course, apply to any other combination of rooms on the ground floor. That is to say, a section of rooms was probably used for storehouses, and they were probably broken into separate compartments by partitions.

Conclusions reached on the basis of above information are as follows:

1. The lower west rooms probably served as a storage area.

2. One of the east rooms was probably used, at least in part, to store ammunition.

WORKSHOPS:

Operating great distances from any source of help, it was imperative for Bent, St. Vrain and Co. to make its establishment as self-sufficient as possible. Among other things, this meant the employment of resident artisans skilled in providing necessary services. The mechanics would need shops in which to operate, which leads to the questions of what type of shops existed in the Fort, and where they were located.
Ten of the sources mention a Blacksmith Shop, and five mention a Carpenter's Shop. (Interestingly, all five of the latter also mention the Blacksmith Shop.) All of the references are similar to ST. VRAIN's, "Inside the walls are ... Carpenter's and Blacksmith's Shops". That is to say, there is no doubt the two shops were separate entities, and not a combined utility area operated by a man skilled in both trades. GARRARD also helps establish this fact by identifying the Blacksmith and the Carpenter as separate individuals in his description of the partakers of a social night at the Fort:

Captain Enos, Assistant Quartermaster, and Dyer, his clerk, Doctor Hemstead, Mr. Holt, the carpenter, blacksmith, and a few fort and government employees ... .

He also designates a half-breed French and Indian squaw as "the wife of Ed, the carpenter".

Granting that there were indeed separate shops, it remains to define their location. BOOGS (Plates I, II, III), unfortunately, omits the Carpenter Shop, but he places the Blacksmith Shop in the north rooms near the northwest corner (Rooms N2, N3, and N4). This would span all rooms on that line west of the main gate, except NW-1 which he designates "Old Bill's Room - Mr. Bent's old French Cook." FARNHAM places the Blacksmith Shop as follows, "On the east (north) the Blacksmith Shop, the gate, and the outer wall", which is the same area. Strangely, FARNHAM mentions the Blacksmith...
Shop twice, its other location being on the same side as the two-story houses (west). His references, quoted below, should be studied with a view to a possible typographical error by the original printer:

"A range of two-story houses, the well and the blacksmith shop are on the north (west) side; on the west (south) and south (east) are ranges of one-story houses; on the east (north) the blacksmith shop, the gate, and the outer wall ..."

It is extremely doubtful that FARNHAM intended to put the Blacksmith Shop in two different places. Since the second reference so easily coincides with BOGGS, it is possible that the first reference was originally intended as another type of shop, and that the error was made somewhere between the author and the printed document.

GEORGE BENT (Plate X) shows the Blacksmith Shop on the south row (about rooms S-5 and S-6), with the Carpenter Shop west of it (room S-7), the two connected by an interior doorway. This arrangement is supported by Grinnell's statement, previously quoted, that:

"... the work of the carpenter and blacksmith, whose shops stood at the back of the fort, was chiefly on the wagons ..."

The two essentially opposite placements are difficult to reconcile unless extensive alterations took place during the Bent Period. This possibility will be examined separately.
The other references to the Blacksmith Shop contain few clues as to its location. MAcoffIN, from her vantage point in an upper west room, complained that "The clang of the blacksmith's hammer was constant".163 ABERT, from an unknown position, remarked, "The ring of the blacksmith's hammer, and the noise from the wagoner's shop were incessant".164 Almost certainly, the sharp clanging of metal could be heard from anywhere in the Plaza area. ABERT's statement is interesting because of the slight implication that the blacksmith and wagoner were the same person. That is, as in the Grinnell remark, the blacksmith's work was chiefly in keeping the wagons in condition. Accepting this, the GEORGE BENT location of the south row (close to the wagons) seems the more likely of the two possibilities, again barring a change in arrangement.

There are mentions of other types of shops, but they are virtually uncorroborated. The following list shows the type and source:

1. Gunsmith - Mentioned by EMPLOYEE in conjunction with Carpenter Shop and Blacksmith Shop.165

   Implied by ODSON as follows, "... all kinds of accommodations to travelers, such as repairing teams (for which they have a blacksmith shop), provisions, repairing guns (for which they are provided) ..."168

2. Barber - Mentioned by MAGOFFIN in her description of room types - "One is a dining room -- another a kitchen -- a little
store, a blacksmith's shop, a barber's do an ice house ..."167

3. Tailor - Mentioned by Orinell in a manner indicating the original source was GEORGE RENTY:

"The old Frenchman who was tailor at the fort ... The old French tailor had come up from New Orleans. He had a shop in one of the rooms at the fort, where he used to make and repair clothing for men."168

It is possible that, at one time or another, there were rooms used as shops for the Gunsmith and Tailor, but there is lack of substantiating evidence. There is no suggestion of where the shops were located. A Barber Shop is still more doubtful, and it may well have been merely an opportunistic venture catering to the Army of the West. The need for a permanent barber shop in a frontier trading post is practically unsupportable.

In summation, it appears that:

1. There were separate shops for Carpenter and Blacksmith through all or most of the Bent Period.

2. The two shops were probably adjacent to each other.

3. They were probably located in the south row of rooms.

4. Their location may have been changed during the Bent Period, from an original location of Rooms N-2, N-3, and N-4.

5. There was probably a Gunsmith Shop late in the period.
6. A Tailor possibly operated a small shop, probably in a room serving as a residence.

7. There was probably not a permanent Barber Shop.

MESSING FACILITIES:

The storage, preparation, and consumption of food would be an important requirement for self-sufficiency, and would take a significant amount of room space. Two distinct rooms -- a Kitchen and a Dining Room emerge quite clearly from the source material.

FARNHAM speaks of the owners having "sleeping and cooking apartments" in the rooms around the Plaza, and FIELD also uses the plural form "kitchens". Both of these 1839 references infer that the cooking was done on a dispersed basis, that is, the residents were responsible for their own cooking and probably did it in their rooms. None of the later sources bear this out.

The first reference to "a" Kitchen is found in BOOOS (Plate II), who places it clearly in the rooms designated SE-1 and SE-1A. EMPLOYEE states, "Round the inside of the wall are ... private rooms ... dining room, kitchen ..." a statement quite similar to MAGOFFIN's "One is a dining room -- another a kitchen". GEORGE BENJ (Plate X) also designates a corner room as the kitchen and, if he was using his misplaced Bastion as a reference point, it too would be placed in the SE-1 area
similar to BOOCS.

The facilities within the Kitchen are not mentioned, except in ABERT's indirect reference - "I had the coffee all prepared, and enough bread baked to last several days ..." There are also several references to a Fort cook. As mentioned earlier, BOOCS (Plate II) mentions "Old Bill", who he describes as "Mr. Bent's old French cook". He also shows a "Cook's Room" in the same general area as the Kitchen. If "Old Bill" were the cook at that time (1844-45), it may be that the "Cook's Room" near the Kitchen was a pantry of some kind.

GARRARD and RUXTON both mention a Negress named Charlotte, as being cook at the Fort during their visits. This, although showing a change of personnel, supports the idea of a cook's position, and consequently a Kitchen as well.

Several visitors, among them FORD and COOKE, mention dining at the Fort, but do not describe the facilities. Once again, BOOCS (Plate II) is the first to define a Dining Room. He places it as the next room north from the Kitchen area or E-3. (This is assuming E-2 to be the "Cook's Room".) The location is supported by EMPLOYEE's statement, "Over the dining room, and perched on the very top, overlooking all the buildings, is my sanctum". (Since UE-1 is the only upper room known to be a living quarters and still be unconnected with others,
it is assumed that EMPLOYEE was occupying UE-1.) ABENT (Plates IV & IX) places UE-1 further south than BOOGS's drawing, which would put it over E-2 and at least part of E-3, thus coinciding almost perfectly with EMPLOYEE. Further evidence to place E-3 as the location, is found in GARRARD's reference to the "long, low dining room"176 (E-3 was the longest room revealed in the 1954 excavation), and in RUXTON designating the third of "three large rooms" as "the common dininghall".177 GEORGE BENT (Plate X) indicates a Dining Room separated by one undesignated room from the Kitchen, in the direction of the Bastion, which also fits perfectly.

RUXTON goes on to say that the "common dininghall" was used by "traders, trappers, and hunters, and all employees",178 which would, of course, necessitate having a large room. This very size suggests the possibility of a smaller, private, dining room for the owners and important guests, but this can be only poorly supported by PARKMAN's allusion to dining at "a table laid with a white cloth, with castors in the center and chairs placed around it".179 It is perhaps more likely that the room was the same, but the trappings were produced for special occasions. Unfortunately, MACOFFIN's condition was such that she took her meals in her quarters, although she did say that one of the rooms "is a dining-room".180

In summation it appears that;

70
1. There was a separate Kitchen where food was prepared for all residents, by a Fort cook.

2. The Kitchen was located at a corner, most likely in Rooms SE-1 and SE-7/4.

3. An auxiliary room (probably E-2) was between it and the Dining Room. This may have been a pantry.

4. There was one large Dining Room used by all diners.

5. The Dining Room was Room E-3.

**Living Quarters:**

The number of residents at Bent's Fort seems to have varied not only by seasons, but by years as well. Farnham says that at the time of his visit (1839) there were 60 employees at the Fort.\(^{181}\) Hobbs places the number as "100 trappers", but adds that sometimes half or more were gone.\(^{182}\) George Bent recalled 100 employees, most of whom had families.\(^{183}\) Field says that "Two hundred men might be garrisoned conveniently in the fort ..."\(^{184}\)

Despite the seemingly vast numbers of people to accommodate on a regular basis, there is a definite division line present regarding the types of rooms. A few seem to have had private or semi-private apartments, while the mass of employees were quartered in barracks-type rooms. Yet, in one of the references is there any mention of lack of space and, except for Magoffin's understandable comments about the dirt floors, nothing but praise for the accommodations. (Bent had no difficulty obtaining
a "comfortable room" for several sick men in January of 1847. These men were left at the Fort for several months.)185

BOOGS (Plate II) designates Room E-5 as "Men's Room (Employees)", and shows separate rooms for William Bent, Ceran St. Vrain, and Old Bill. Thus the distinction emerges. EMPLOYEE includes among the rooms "men's quarters, private rooms for gentlemen", which was "perched on the very top".186 (A reference seemingly to Room UE-1). Allowing for multiple use, these two sources confirm UE-1 as separate quarters.

NAGOFFIN says "Some of these rooms are occupied by boarders as bed chambers". The room occupied by NAGOFFIN was definitely one of those on the upper west side as shown by her statement, "On one side of the top wall are rooms built in the same manner as below. We are occupying one of these ...". Further descriptions of her quarters include the facts that it was "quite roomy" and it had "two windows one looking on the plain, the other is on the patio".187 On the basis of the latter phrases, a fairly convincing case can be advanced for NAGOFFIN having occupied the upper northwest room (Room UW-1). ABERT (Plate IV) shows a window in the north wall of that room, which would look out over the plain. His interior sketches (Plate VIII) do not show UW-1, but UW-2 does have a window overlooking the Plaza and it may be assumed UW-1 did also. Assuming that ABERT is correct in showing no windows on the west wall, the
only other possibility for her quarters would be Room UW-5 or UW-6, both of which would have had to have windows in the south walls. A person looking out of such a window would have had the Southwest Bastion and Main Corral in their direct line of vision, and would hardly have described the view as "looking out on the plain." MAGOFFIN also remarks that her "situation was very different from that of an Indian woman in the room below me." This would place her above Room NW-1, identified by BOGS (Plate II) as "Old Bill's Room" and therefore, also living quarters. MAGOFFIN, however, had her room equipped with her own furniture "such as bed, chairs, wash basin, table furniture," which might suggest that the room was assigned her merely as an expedient, and its real use was something other than a bed-chamber. However, considering the young woman's condition and her husband's position, it is equally possible that Bent ordered his men to fit the room with her personal furniture. The latter is supported by the fact that on the day the Magoffs left, "all things of any size" had been "moved out to the wagons" and she was using "borrowed property", which may have been the original furniture of the room.

It is probable that ABERT too, occupied an upstairs room during his stay in the summer of 1846. Since his visit overlapped that of MAGOFFIN, it is reasonable to assume that it was not the same room discussed above. The upstairs
occupancy is shown by his statement "I had now recovered
my health sufficiently to walk down a flight of steps unaided". 191
Since this was written after almost a month of days and
nights "passed in delirium", 192 it is unlikely that he was
doing anything other than coming down from his room. Which
room he occupied is another question, since there is a definite
possibility that it was Room US-1 (The Billiard Room). On
September 1, 1846 ABERT mentions that an Indian named Ah-mah-
nah-co "knocked at the door of my room", and posed for a sketch.
The entry for the following day has the same Indian returning
and "seated upon the billiard table", and goes on to describe
numerous Indians coming in to see the sketches until he "soon
had a room full". 193 Despite the great activity accompanied
by the passage of the Army of the West, and the consequent
taxing of the Fort accommodations, it would seem incomprehensible
to billet a seriously ill officer in, of all places, the main
recreation room of the Fort. On the other hand, no other
room could have held a billiard table and numerous Indians.
In short, other than assigning ABERT a private room on the
upper story, it is impossible to localize it any further than
to be fairly certain it was not UW-1.

CARRARD, who spent a somewhat extended period as an employee
at the Fort, says that on his first night he was given a room
"in company with several government teamsters, in which to
sleep”. The next morning he went "on top of the fort”, which suggests that his sleeping quarters were on the ground floor. GARRARD came and went from the Fort on a rather frequent basis, and he makes no further direct mention of his living accommodations, other than the fact that he was sharing a room with at least one other man. He does however, obliquely hint at a private room of one Dr. Hempstead, who seems to have held some position at the Fort in 1846-47. (ABERT describes the man as “one of the residents here”. The following statement suggests that Dr. Hempstead occupied a room which was equipped with his personal library;

... Doctor Hempstead, however, did not join
the festive thing; and his well-stocked library
afforded recreation and pastime during the
dull intervals of the day ... FORSYTH, inspecting the Fort early in the summer of 1849, reports, "Some of the rooms were neatly fitted up. Maps, Books, & lounges". Although not saying so, it would appear that FORSYTH also was referring to separate living rooms.

As resident manager of the Fort, William Bent may also have been expected to occupy private quarters. BOOCS (Plates I, II, and III) places Bent’s apartment adjacent to the Kitchen, that is Rooms 6-2 and 6-3, with entrance through the former. There are no other references.
Others who probably occupied private quarters by virtue of position, were Robert and George Bent (younger brothers of Charles and William) and the Chief Clerk. All of these prospective tenants either overlapped or were widely separated in their stays, making it impossible to do more than generalize on the number and location of the various rooms.

GEORGE BENT's plan (Plate X) shows two rooms marked "Bed R." and one marked "Visitors". He leaves 7 rooms blank. BOOGE (Plate I, II) shows Room E-5 as "Men's Room (Employees)" suggesting a barracks-type room such as implied by GARRARD.

Conclusions reached on the basis of above information are as follows:

1. With the exception of Room UV-6 (which may have doubled as a Clerk's Office), the upper west rooms were probably living quarters.

2. Room UE-1 was private living quarters.

3. Living quarters were also located on the ground floor, and probably included the north rooms west of the Main Gate (Rooms NW-1, N-2, N-3, and N-4), and the area west of the Kitchen (Rooms S-2 and S-3).

4. Lower status employees probably were obliged to bed down in rooms with primary purposes other than living quarters.

BUSINESS

Rooms devoted to business would fall into two types; office and store (or place of exchange). References to the former
are extremely scarce. Only GARRARD and GEORGE BENT (Plate X) refer directly to a Clerk's Room. GARRARD locates the Clerk's Office as follows:

There was a billiard table in a small house on top of the fort ... and in the clerk's office, contiguous, a first-rate spyglass, with which I viewed the caballada coming from the grazing ground, seven miles up the river.

Further on, he mentions that the room had a fireplace --

"Shortly following, did I sit by the bright wood fire, in the clerk's office ..." 198

GARRARD's information places the Clerk's Office as an upper west room, probably UW-6. The reference to using the spyglass establishes that it was an upper room, as does the statement that it was "contiguous" to the Billiard Room.

The fact that he observed cattle coming from "up the river," suggests that it was a room on the west side. The only clue as to appearance is that the room had a fire-place, which also leads to the thought that the Clerk may have used his office as living quarters as well. ABERT (Plate IX) shows a ___ symbol in the southeast corner of Room UW-6, which may or may not indicate such a facility. GEORGE BENT's plan (Plate X) indicates a ground-floor room sandwiched between two bedrooms, labeled simply as "Clerk's", (He does not show a Clerk's Office) which may have been the Clerk's abode.
There are frequent references to a Trade-Room or store where goods could be purchased, apparently over the counter. BOOCS (Plates I, II, III) shows that he calls a "Trader's Room" on the western side of the south rooms, or in the area of Rooms B-6 and B-7. GIBSON mentions "articles from the store, which is filled with articles for the Indian trade". MAGOFFIN also speaks of "a little store". GEORGE BENT (Plate X) shows Rooms N-5, N-6, and N-7 to be a "Store and Warehouse" which, since he fails to indicate any other store or Trade Room, must be referring to the same room. He describes the store through Grinnell as follows:

In the store of the fort -- presumably for sale to trappers and travelers, and for the use of the proprietors -- were to be found such unusual luxuries as butter crackers, Bent's water crackers, candies of various sorts, and, most remarkable of all, great jars of preserved ginger of the kind which fifty or sixty years ago used to be brought from China.

The following conclusions have been drawn concerning rooms used for purposes of business:

1. In the later Bent Period the area of the north rooms east of the Main Gate (Rooms N5, N6, and N7) probably constituted the Trade Rooms as shown by GEORGE BENT (Plate X).

2. Earlier in the Bent Period, the Trade Rooms may have been in the south row of rooms as shown by BOOCS (Plates I, II, and III).

3. Undoubtedly, at least one room served as a company or Clerk's Office. This room was probably UW-6, as suggested by GARRARD.
RECREATION:

a. Billiard Room: There is little doubt that Room US-1 was, for most of the Fort's existence, a Billiard Room used for recreational purposes. It appears, and is so designated, by the ROOMS sketches (Plates I, II, III). MAGOFFIN seemed quite surprised that "they have a regularly established billiard room!" and GARRARD points out that "There was a billiard table in a small house on top of the fort ..." ABENT mentions one of his Indian models "seated upon the billiard table". The GEORGE BENT plan (Plate X) shows a "Billiard Room" over a gate in the center of the south rooms, and confirms the fact of existence by saying "There was a Billiard Hall also when the Fort was in its prime." Again BENT's words are elaborated on by Grinnell:

At the back -- west (south) side -- of the fort, over the gate that opened into the corral, was a second-story room rising high above the walls, as the watchtower did in front. This room, which was thirty or forty feet in length, was used as a billiard room during the later years of the post, and across one end of the room ran a counter or bar, over which drinkables were served ....

b. Parlor: The existence of a Parlor as such is highly questionable despite the rather detailed description by MAGOFFIN:

They have one large room as a parlor; there are no chairs but a cushion next the wall on two sides, so the company set all round in a circle. There is no other furniture than a table on which stands a bucket of water, free to all. Any water
that may be left in the cup after drinking is uncemorniously tossed onto the floor.

When we came last evening, while they were fixing our room, I sat in the parlour with les senoritas (the ladies), the wife of Mr. George Bent and some others.

As in several other cases, it is probable that the "Parlor" was also the Council Room. (Note the similarity of descriptions between MAGOFFIN's and those in the following section.)

OTHER:

a. Council Room: The first mention of a Council Room as an integral part of the Fort is found in ADERT's 1845 report.

On August 9, 1845 the young officer was invited to attend a council between the Cheyennes and the Delawares, concerning the murder of a party of the latter, some months before. He describes the scene as follows:

We were all seated on buffalo robes upon the ground, so ranged around the council chamber that our backs could be supported against the wall ... All the speakers kept their seats whilst addressing the assembly. 209

RUXTON says that there were;

... three large rooms, one used as a store and magazine, another as a council-room, where the Indians assemble for their "talks" whilst the third is the common dininghall ... 210

GEORGE BENT speaks briefly of the room;

... the Fort had big Council room also to hold Council with Indians ... 211
but he fails to show such a room in his ground-plan (Plate X), nor is it shown by BOOCS.

The conclusion that the Parlor and Council Room were one and the same room is based upon several facts extracted from the above, combined with an analysis of the space situation.

1. According to MACOFFIN and RUXTON, both rooms were "large".

2. ADERT, MACOFFIN and RUXTON all mention the lack of chairs.

3. Both MACOFFIN and RUXTON clearly differentiate between the room in question and the Dining Room.

4. Councils could not have been held so frequently as to necessitate the setting aside of one large room specifically for that purpose, when it would be more expedient to combine its function with that of the Parlor.

The only clue regarding the location of the room is found in the RUXTON passage, which causes the implication that the "three large rooms" were adjacent to each other. This is supported by the 1954 excavation, which showed rooms E-3, E-4, and E-5 to be the three largest adjacent rooms. Room E-3 has already been discussed as the probable Dining Room location, leaving E-4 and E-5 as probable locations for the Council Room and the "Store and Magazine". BOOCS (Plates I and II) shows the center room (E-4) as a "Store Room" and designates E-5 as "Men's Room (Employees)". The latter, excluding the possibility of use change, could have been sleeping quarters.
at night and, when the occasion arose, served as a Parlor-Council Room.

On the basis of the above discussion, the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. One room served the dual purpose of Parlor and Council Room.

2. The room was probably E-5.

3. It may also have been used as a sleeping area.

b. Watch-Tower and Belfry: (Room UN-1) placed over the Main Gate, first appears in the 1845 ABERT sketch (Plate IV) and is shown on all later drawings and plans. GARRARD says that "In the belfry, two eagles ... looked out from their prison". 213

GEORGE BENT describes the room in his own words;

Another Tower was built over the big gate for Watch Tower, they had fine Telescope in this Tower ... during day some one was looking out in this Tower. 214

Through Grinnell, the description is further detailed;

Over the main gate of the fort was a square watchtower surmounted by a belfry, from the roof of which rose a flagstaff. The watchtower contained a single room, furnished with a chair and a bed, and with windows on all sides. Here mounted on a pivot, was an old-fashioned long telescope or spyglass ...

In the belfry, under a little roof which rose above the watchtower, hung the bell of the fort, which sounded the hours for meals. Two tame, whiteheaded eagles kept at the fort were sometimes confined in this belfry ... 215
On the following pages Diagrams 3 and 4 are provided as a summation of the conclusions reached in the preceding section.
DIAGRAM 3
VI. POSSIBILITY OF ALTERATION

Through the process of extracting data on Bent's Old Fort from the several primary sources, there has emerged a distinct impression that extensive alteration on the structure may have taken place during the Bent Period. Numerous discrepancies cannot, even by the liveliest stretching of piece-meal information, be logically reconciled. For example, both BOGGS and GEORGE BENT use the Main Gate as a point of reference, yet the former flanks it with a Blacksmith Shop and an empty wall, while the latter brackets it with warehouses. Both men were, of course, recollecting the structure after the passage of half a century, and it would be asking a great deal to have their drawings check out with each other. Yet interjected between the two, are the sketches and plans of ABERT, which were rendered on the spot and which, on all basic points, complement GEORGE BENT rather than BOGGS. This leads to the conclusion that either BOGGS was totally deficient in recalling the structure, or significant alterations were made between the time BOGGS left the post (early spring 1845) and the time ABERT arrived (August 2, 1845), a five month period at the most.

There are five major discrepancies between the BOGGS drawings (Plates I, II, III) and the ABERT drawings (Plate IV, VIII) and plans (Plate IX). Stated simply, ABERT shows each of the five features, while BOGGS does not.

1. Watch Tower and Belfry
2. North-east Rooms (N-5, N-6, N-7)
3. Wagon House
4. Main Corral

5. Upper West rooms extending to Northwest corner of Fort. (Rooms UW-1 and UW-2)

To best resolve the problem, the five discrepancies were analyzed by seeking corroboration for BOGGS in the pre-1844 sources, and for ABERT in the post-1845 sources. Those of the latter mentioning any of the features, all supported ABERT, which is to say, the structure resembled Plate IV from the middle of 1845 on. Whether it resembled Plates I, II, and III before that is another question, the answering of which may resolve whether or not a major alteration took place.

Perhaps surprisingly, strong support for BOGGS was found in FARNHAM's description of the structure as it appeared in 1839. The correlation is so remarkable that Diagram #5 has been provided on the following page, to better illustrate the various points. The diagram is based on BOGGS (Plate II), as are the designation of room use. FARNHAM's description is placed under the diagram, and his directional orientation is shown to the right. By comparing the two, the following points are brought out:

1. Both agree as to general layout in regard to one and two story buildings, Bastion locations, and Main Gate.

2. Both describe the north rooms in a similar manner (except for BOGGS's inclusion of "Old Bill's Room"), that is, the Blacksmith Shop, the Gate, and the Outer Wall are the primary features. There is no mention by either of a Watch-Tower. (Without the west wall of N-5, it would be impossible to have such a room.)
The fort is entered through a large gateway on the eastern side, in which swing a pair of immense plank doors. At the north-west and south-east corners stand two ... bastions ... The interior is divided into two parts. The one and the larger of them occupies the northeastern portion. It is nearby a square. A range of two-story houses, the well, and the blacksmith shop are on the north side; on the west and south are ranges of one-story houses; on the east the blacksmith shop, the gate, and the outer wall. This is the place of business. Here the owners and their servants have their sleeping and cooking apartments, and here are the storehouses ... From this area a passage leads between the eastern outer wall and the one-story houses, to the caravanserai which occupies the remainder of the space within the walls ... Beyond the caravanserai to the west and adjoining the wall, is the wagon-house. It is strongly built, and large enough to shelter 12 or 15 of those large vehicles ...
3. FARNHAM says a "passage leads between the eastern outer wall and the one-story houses, to the coral ..." This agrees with BOGGS, since he shows only wall at that point.

4. FARNHAM says the corral "occupies the remainder of the space within the walls", and that "beyond the corral to the west and adjoining the wall, is the wagon-house". This implies that the Wagon House was an auxiliary structure attached to, but outside, the main structure. BOGGS does not show, or mention such a building, but the angle of his drawing (Plate II) is such that the building might be masked by the south wall of the Fort. Therefore, a dotted line has been placed on the diagram to show the probable location of the Wagon House. By the inclusion of a Wagon House, the two descriptions compare perfectly.

5. Neither mentions a Main Corral.

6. FARNHAM does not describe the upper rooms in detail, so no comparison is possible.

The critical period in regard to an alteration, was, as stated earlier, between the early spring of 1845 and the 2nd day of August of the same year. Nothing has been discovered concerning the Bent, St. Vrain, Company's activities during this period, to suggest that expansion was necessary for business reasons. However, events of great international significance were taking place, which may have had a bearing on the Company, as well as the Fort. Following is a partial chronology of the period:

March 1 - Declaration of a Joint Congressional Resolution for the Annexation of Texas.216

March 4 - Inauguration of James Knox Polk as the 11th President of the United States, elected on a platform calling for, among other things, ... "the re-annexation of Texas at the earliest practicable period ..."217

March 6 - Mexican Ambassador Almonte demands his passport.218

April 2 - American Minister in Mexico informed that Mexico would not continue diplomatic relations with the United States.219
June 4 - Mexican President Herrera proclaims that Mexico will protect her rights in Texas by force of arms. Mexican Congress attaches to proclamation, a provision for calling out the armed forces of the nation.220

June 15 - General Zachary Taylor, U. S. Army, ordered to move from New Orleans to a point on the western border of Texas.221

July 2 - First contingent of U. S. troops embarks from New Orleans, pursuant to order of June 15.222

July 4 - Republic of Texas agrees to terms of annexation.223

July 12 - Mexican Army of the North (California) put on alert status.224

There is no question but that relations between the United States and Mexico had been deteriorating over the Texas question for almost a decade. Yet, the events of March and April were more than mere threatening gestures. The passage of the Joint Resolution for annexation at the end of the Tyler Administration, and the Inauguration of the avowed expansionist Polk were, however, almost certain indications that the two nations were on a collision course, with contact imminent. It was equally certain that Bent's Fort, hundreds of miles closer to Santa Fe than the Missouri settlements, isolated on the very boundary of the disputed territory, would, in some way, become involved. A fort -- built for the Indian trade, and adequately defensible against lightly armed red marauders -- might suddenly be called upon to resist an attack by first class troops equipped with all the accouterments of a modern army. If the Fort was built at the time, as BOOCS claimed, it would have been a very disquieting situation for the responsible parties.
Diagrams 6 and 7 on the following pages, illustrate how the five major discrepancies between DOGGS and ABERT may be resolved on the basis of putting Bent's Fort on a war footing. Diagram 6 shows the defensive situation as per DOGGS. Note that the design depended mainly upon the Bastions. The single Main Gate was covered by a banquette along the wall west of it, and by the Northeast Bastion. By constructing rooms along the north wall east of the Main Gate, three objectives were gained, all of which contributed to better defense:

1. It made possible the installation of a second gate into the Plaza.

2. It extended the banquette along the entire north wall.

3. It made possible the construction of a Watch Tower.

The construction of a new south wall on the Wagon House, and the extension in the Alpha-Beta area improved the situation by:

1. Taking the main responsibility for protecting the south wall away from the Southwest Bastion, by extending a banquette along the entire south extremity of the Fort.

2. Giving some protection to the East Gate by providing a banquette to cover it.

The addition of Rooms UV-1 and UV-2 cannot be explained as a defensive measure quite so easily. It did, however, contribute somewhat by:

1. Converting most of the west wall into a two-story structure.

Diagrams 6 and 7 illustrate the points brought out above. Diagram 6 (DOGGS) shows a structure capable of withstanding any assault Plains Indians might have mounted. Diagram 7 (ABERT) shows (in red and blue stripes) the improvements made in the defensive situation.
Conclusions:

1. The March-July Period was tense, in that war was imminent.

2. Bent's Fort was in serious danger should war break out, in that:
   a. It was exposed geographically.
   b. It was built to withstand Indian attacks only.

3. For these reasons, it was decided to put the Fort on a war footing.

4. Every discrepancy between BOCS (Plates I, II, III) and ADERT (Plate IV) can be explained as a measure to accomplish this.
Two Story Addition Enclosed West Wall

Double Gates

6 foot Adobe Wall (Planted with Cactus)

DIAGRAM #7

94
VII. ABANDONMENT

The facts surrounding William Bent's abandonment of his adobe Fort remain shrouded in mystery. GEORGE BENT remembered the incident well, and through Grinnell gives a brief account of it:

One morning he (William Bent) loaded all his goods upon his twenty large wagons, each drawn by six yoke of oxen, and moved down the river to Short Timber Creek, five miles below the fort, where he camped for the night. The next morning Bent rode up the river alone and set fire to the fort. Those who were with the wagons heard the report of the distant explosion as the powder magazine blew up.

GEORGE BENT believed the date of abandonment to have been 1852, but this is refuted by PALADAY, who places the time as on or about August 27, 1849. The following passage from a newspaper article dated September 27, 1849, not only gives the date but a description of the Fort remains, as well:

Mr. Paladay had been in the employ of Mr. Bent, at the Fort. On the 16th August, he was sent over in the direction of Kit Carson's settlement, on the Moro. In returning, he fell in company with the train of Capt. Keats. While they were encamped at the Hole in the Rock, they heard distinctly a loud report, resembling that of a cannon. They journeyed on - crossed the Arkansas river on the 22nd August, and came up to the site of the Fort, and saw that the rubbish of the buildings was all that was left. It had been burnt down by the Indians, and was still smoking and burning on the 24th, when they left it. They now were able to account for the report, as the magazine belonging to Bent had been fired. The guns and traps were consumed, and it is supposed all the goods, books, etc., of Bent's concern, had shared the same fate. The pack saddles and riding apparatus were not destroyed, as they were still in the bastions. What had become of Mr. Bent, or any one connected with the concern,
they could not tell; there was no trace of them or their whereabouts. As our informant came on down the Arkansas, they saw the trail of the cattle from the Fort ... 227
G. FIRST INTERIM PERIOD

William Bent's abandonment of his Fort marked the end of the Bent Period, and the beginning of what has been designated the First Interim Period. From August, 1849, until the occupation of the structure by the Barlow-Sanderson Overland Stage Mail and Express Company in 1861, it slowly fell into ruin through the dual effects of the Bent-caused fire, and neglect. The burning of the wooden components apparently caused walls to weaken, particularly on the west two-story side, and those who observed it, were almost unanimous in their estimation that it was a "ruin". The following descriptions by those who saw the Fort in the decade of the Fifties, bear this out:

HEAP (1853) - "We rode all through the ruins ... It is now roofless ... The adobe walls are still standing, and are in many places of great thickness ..."227

BECKWITH (1853) - "Mr. Bent abandoned his fort about four years ago, but not until he had destroyed it. Its adobe walls still stand in part only, with here and there a tower and chimney ..."228

CARVALHO (1853) - "... We travelled up the Arkansas, and passing the ruins of Bent's Fort on the opposite side of the river ..."229

RAYMOND (1859) - "... Visited the ruins of Bent's Old Fort -- found that it covered nearly an acre of ground, containing about 25 rooms and a large open Alley on two sides of it. It was ... built of adobes ... The walls were two & a half ft thick and the highest that remained about 14 feet ..."230

WILLING (1859) - "Friday, June 3d ... pass Bent's Old Fort, built chiefly of adobes; having been abandoned now more than five years, it is fast falling into ruins. The Arkansas almost washes its base."231

None of these descriptions indicate anything more than what might be
expected of an abandoned adobe structure left with burned timbers for over a decade.
D. STAGECOACH PERIOD

In 1861, the Barlow-Sanderson Overland Stage Mail and Express Company took over the remains of the Fort. Using it as a "home station" and general repair shop on the line to Santa Fe, the company apparently made such repairs as were necessary for the proper functioning of the establishment. Descriptions of the Fort during this period are surprisingly scarce, although several important things are evident.

From the available evidence, it appears that the deterioration through the decade of the Fifties resulted in the Stage people electing to operate from the Central Complex only -- that is, the rooms around the Plaza. Interior partitions were probably removed in some cases, so that the floor-plan was similar to that shown on Plate XIII. Whether the Main Corral, Bastions, and East Outer Wall were already down in 1861 is not known, but it is certain that the Stage Company made no effort to maintain them. The same is true of all the upper rooms, the supports of which were probably weakened by the 1849 fire. A. E. REYNOLDS recalled in 1920 when he first saw the structure (1867) that:

There was never any two-story building there in the world ... he (referring to a statement on the Bastions) built those round towers out of his imagination ... The walls weren't over eight feet high ... the corral was the inside of this enclosure; there wasn't two separate enclosures ... 232

It also appears that one row of rooms was obliterated. Colonel J. L. SANDERSON, Superintendent and General-Manager of the line, resided at the Fort throughout the period. In 1903, he provided Professor E. W. Cragin with a picture of the Fort, supposedly made in 1865 (Plate XII),
a floor-plan (Plate XIII), and a verbal description. The plan generally corroborates the facts already stated; no Bastions, Main Corral, or East Outer Wall are shown. There is also the statement "No rooms on the West". Orientation again becomes a problem, and it is probable that SANDERSON, like others before him, felt that the Fort faced east. Making the adjustment would place the absent row of rooms on the south side. By doing this, a comparison of the ground plan and the photograph can be made.

Noting the round tower-like affair on the left of the photograph, orients it as being either the north or south wall of the Fort. The latter may be eliminated because of the orientation of the ground-plan -- it is not likely SANDERSON mistook south for east. Assuming then, that the "tower" on the left of the photograph is the remains of the Northeast Bastion, the following factors become evident:

1. The gate shown in the center of the wall is on the site of the original Main Gate. (This corresponds with the opening in the wall shown on the Ground Plan.)

2. No Watch-Tower is shown over the Gate, and the flag appears to be flying from a pole inside the Fort (probably in the Plaza).

3. The wall on the right (the west wall) is only one story.

4. No second story rooms are visible where UE-1 and US-1 would have been.

5. Several windows seem to have been cut in the north and west walls, indicating that rooms remained on the other side. (That is, the north and lower west rows of rooms remained, eliminating those rows from consideration as the obliterated side.)

Accepting the above as correct, the conclusion is reached that during
the Stagecoach Period:

1. The north, east, and lower west rooms were available for occupancy.

2. An outward opening, wooden gate provided access at the same location as the Bent Period Main Gate.

3. Stagecoaches probably entered the Plaza from the large opening in the south side, which may have been fenced and gated. (REYNOLDS remembers the stages "used to come in and drive around the Fort, coming in from the westerly side, into the enclosure." -- With proper orientation the west side would be the south side.)

As to the types of rooms, several are mentioned. SANDERSON's diagram (Plate XIII) designates but two; a Kitchen and a Dining Room. It is of interest that with the proper orientation, the Kitchen is shown as the SW-1 area (Similar to Bent Period), and the Dining Room in the E-2, E-3 area.

The windows on the north row, mentioned previously, suggest that the Living Quarters were probably located there. Those occupying quarters would include Mr. and Mrs. Sanderson and the local employees of the line. The remaining, or west side probably housed the "general repair shop for the line"²³³ mentioned by SANDERSON, which is undoubtedly the same room or rooms as the "blacksmith shop for repairs" described by an 1866 visitor. The latter person states that the Fort also kept "the extra coaches of the Co., stores, forage, etc."²³⁴ P. G. SCOTT stopped at the Fort in 1870, noting that "The stable occupy one side of the square"²³⁵.

The following conclusions as to types of rooms, have been reached on the basis of the above evidence;
1. The East Rooms were used as messing facilities.

2. The North Rooms (biseected by the area of the Bent Period Main Gate) served as Living Quarters.

3. The West Rooms were the utility area, housing maintenance (including Blacksmith) shops, vehicular and animal storage, etc.

4. The South Rooms had been obliterated.

The general appearance, and construction materials were similar to the Bent Period, although it is likely, extensive repairs were necessary to make the structure livable after the fire and deterioration. Scott states:

The fort is built of sun-dried brick, in a square with houses leant up against the wall on the inside the wall is about 10 feet high and the roofs of the shanties slope inward. The roofs of the houses are made of poles covered with a thin stratum of clay.

The 1866 visitor states "... the old Fort has been repaired; roofs mended, and walls whitewashed." A traveler 5 years later was not as impressed, remarking only that:

The fort is 44 years old and built of mud. What is left of it is used as a ranch house and they raise cattle. Living is high. Potatoes 8 cents a pound, butter 50 cents a pound, eggs 75 cents a dozen and milk 10 cents a quart.

For one reason or another, the above quoted immigrant somehow failed to note that the Fort was also a stage station. He mistaking it for a ranch house is interesting however, since the year before Scott mentioned:

There is a large herd of horses and mules, and 400 cattle belonging to Price who lives at the fort.

This may indicate that the separation of the Stagecoach Period and Cattle Period was not as clear cut as is generally believed. Judging by the above references, it appears that the only difference in regard.

102
to use, was that the departure of the Stage Company merely ended that
particular phase of structural use.

Exactly when Bent's Fort ceased to serve as a Stage Station is not clear.
SANDERSON claimed to have lived at the Fort "for 20 yrs or more, beginning
in 1861",240 which would place the date of abandonment as 1881. However,
as early as 1873, the Kansas Pacific Railroad reached West Las Animas,
and in 1876 was joined by the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad
at La Junta. In February, 1880, the first railroad entered Santa Fe.241
It is known that the stage stations retired westward in front of the
railroad, so that by 1880 there were probably no stages running on the
Santa Fe Trail proper. It is quite possible, however, that local
stages on spurs from the main trail, operated from the Fort as late
as 1881.

103
E. CATTLE PERIOD

The abandonment of the Fort as a stage station (probably 1881), marked the beginning of final deterioration. Never again would any effort be made to preserve the walls for a residence or business. On the contrary, local traditions state that adobes from the Fort were carried off by neighboring ranchers for use in their own buildings. By about 1885, the Fort was nothing more than a ruin -- an old landmark on the vast holdings of John W. Powers.242
SECOND INTERIM PERIOD

The Second Interim Period, spanning the years 1884-1920, merely marked the continual process of deterioration on the Fort walls. In 1900, A. E. REYNOLDS purchased the Fort site and surrounding ranch, and noted that:

... the walls at that time were probably -- oh, in places there might be walls there three or four feet high, and there was evidences of fireplaces in one or two of those rooms ... 243

Plates XIV, XV, and XVI, which show local youths enacting a "melodrama" in 1903, provide support for REYNOLDS' statement. Thirteen years later (1916), Professor F. W. CRAGIN journeyed from Colorado Springs to the Fort site, and recorded his impression as follows:

Bent's Fort, 9 mi by road E. from La Junta, Colo., on N. side of Ark R. Walls almost utterly leveled. One point only, stands 8 ft above level of surrounding prairie. Fort encircled fr. S.W. to N.E. by Ark. R. Old acequia comes near gate of fort & goes down river to north curving to east. N.E. of fort is a reed swamp depressed area, good bottom grass above & below it. Gate & fort front looked S.E. toward a group of 3 cottonwood trees. Latter species of tree scattered up & down the river in region of fort - they grow thickest down the river. Mr. A. E. Reynolds, who owns the land on which is Bent's Fort site has placed a fine stone monument (gray granite) in N. corner of the walled Bent's Fort ruin. Little sign of the (N. & S.) fort towers remains. The site should be dug out; measurements & relics preserved for a future museum of early Western history, to be housed in a reconstructed Bent's Fort, made of cement ... 2d highest part of wall is at n.e. of S. corner. 244

The monument referred to, was erected by REYNOLDS in 1910, at the request of the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. 245 (It is now the property of Bent's Old Fort NHS.) By 1920, even the walls shown in Plates XIV, XV, and XVI, had practically disappeared. According
... Now rain has destroyed those walls, since then, rain and cattle running over them and everything else, and they are down there flat, and just show where the bricks have gone to pieces, show a ridge of mud around; the outline is there, all right ... 246

Such was the condition in November, 1920, when the DAR acquired the site

from REYNOLDS. 247
G. TERMINAL PERIOD

The DAR began at once to collect funds to be used "to set out trees by the roadside, build a fence, and eventually rebuild the old fort walls." In April, 1921, the ladies and their husbands planted some 200 elm and ash trees at the site, only to see most of their efforts washed away by the rampaging Arkansas River, as the Great Pueblo Flood struck, two months later.

On July 6, 1923, Professor T. H. Carver of Harvard University, visited the site. Carver made a snap-shot of "the only portion of the wall that stands above the level of the ground" (Plate XVII). He added that the "outline of the rest of the walls are still traceable."

Although the DAR did what it could to preserve the ruins, the site remained a favorite hunting ground for amateur archeologists and souvenir seekers. One of these, a B. S. TEIDMON, noted that on April 19, 1935, he found the Fort --

a complete ruin - outlined by a slight rise of ground on lines of the original foundation - all bricks buried but could be located by digging a few inches into the ground.

(TEIDMON dug a brick up from the southeast wall of the Fort, a specimen which has since found its way back to its original locale, and is now the property of the United States.)

TEIDMON's description of the site is supported by a Bureau of Public Roads photograph (Plate XVIII), made in 1939, in which the most conspicuous
thing at the Fort site is the DAR monument, located near the northeast corner of the Fort. As a DAR member stated in unflattering terms, "...there is nothing left but a gateway, a monument and a pile of dirt".252

In the early Fifties, the State of Colorado began to show an interest in the Fort site, and in 1953, conducted a brief experimental excavation. A newspaper item noted;

During the years many interested persons have dug around the foundations possibly destroying valuable historical data.253

In April, 1954, the DAR donated the site to the State Historical Society of Colorado.254 Under the Society's auspices, a brief archeological exploratory survey directed by Dr. Herbert W. Dick, was conducted between June 20 and July 23, 1954. Having exposed most of the foundation, the site was then back-filled, and a low adobe wall erected to partially outline the Fort. This wall was still standing when the National Park Service took over the administration of Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site on March 15, 1963.255
H. PLATES

I. BOGGS - Bent's Fort in 1844-45
Photo - State Historical Society of Colorado
BEOL - Negative #1522

Original Drawing by Will Boggs drawn circa 1903.

II. BOGGS - Bent's Fort in 1844-45
Photo - State Historical Society of Colorado
BEOL - Negative #1526

Original drawing by Will Boggs drawn circa 1903.
Similar to Plate I except the surrounding terrain has been excluded.

III. BOGGS - Bent's Fort in 1844-45
Photo - Western History Collection, Denver Public Library
BEOL - Negative #1525

IV. ABERT - Bent's Fort in 1845
Photo - Library of Congress
BEOL - Negative #1530

These two drawings were a part of ABERT's 1845 Report.

V. HUGHES - Bent's Fort in 1846
Photo - Library of Congress
BEOL - Negative #1531

This drawing first appeared in the 1848 edition of Hughes' Doniphan's Expedition. In the author's preface he states that "his acknowledgements are also due to his valued and esteemed friend, L. A. Maclean, of the Missouri Horse Guards, who generously and gratuitously furnished most of the designs which embellish this work." In the absence of other evidence it is assumed that Maclean was the artist.
VI. INMAN - Bent’s Fort in 1846
Photo - Western History Collection, Denver Public Library
BEOL - Negative #1533

This drawing has not been referred to in the text since it is simply a copy of Plate V. It’s first appearance was apparently in Inman’s, The Old Santa Fe Trail written circa 1896.

(The following three plates will be commented on as a group, quoting a letter of July 24, 1964 from the Executive Director of the State Historical Society of Colorado to the Superintendent, BEOL):

The originals of the drawings of Bent’s Fort which you have inquired about are not in the possession of the State Historical Society... The elevations are on the same face as a sketch of an Indian called Na-Koo-zi - the left hand; the plan is on the back of the same sketch... I can assure you that the Society staff has made no additions to either the original or the copy and that both the plan and the elevations are, so far as we know, contemporary with the Fort... Personally, I would give a great deal of weight to the ABERT drawings considering their detail, the dimensions, and the obvious connection between the elevations and the plan, which would indicate an on-the-spot rendering.

VII. ABERT - Bent’s Fort Front 1846
Photo - National Park Service (In-Service Use Only)
BEOL - Negative #1527

VIII. ABERT - Bent’s Fort Interior 1846
Photo - National Park Service (In-Service Use Only)
BEOL - Negative #1524

IX. ABERT - Bent’s Fort Dimensions 1846
Photo - National Park Service (In-Service Use Only)
BEOL - Negative #1528

110
X. GEORGE BENT - Bent's Fort Floor Plan - Bent Period
Photo - Grinnell Collection, Southwest Museum
BEOL - Negative #1548

Photograph of a plan traced by Historian, BEOL, November, 1964, found in original notes of George Bird Grinnell. As the notation indicates, Grinnell drew the plan from information provided by George Bent in 1908. It has proved useful despite the obvious error in regard to Bastion locations.

XI. DUNBAR - Bent's Fort Bastion Construction 1852
Photo - Cragin Collection, Pioneers Museum
BEOL - Negative #1521

Photograph of plan traced by Historian, BEOL, in January, 1965, found in original notes of F. W. Cragin. It has not been mentioned in the text because of the doubt cast by the fact that, according to the notations, it was rendered by a nature man recalling a structure he had seen briefly when 5 years old.

XII. SANDERSON - Bent's Fort - Stagecoach Period
Photo - Cragin Collection, Pioneers Museum
BEOL - Negative #1529

This photograph was given to F. W. Cragin by J. W. Sanderson during an interview in 1905. It reputedly shows the Fort during the heyday of the Stagecoach Period.

XIII. SANDERSON - Bent's Fort Floor Plan - Stagecoach Period
Photo - Cragin Collection, Pioneers Museum
BEOL - Negative #1523

Photograph of a plan traced by Historian, BEOL, January, 1965, found in original notes of F. W. Cragin. Believed to have been sketched during Cragin's 1905 interview with Sanderson

(The following three plates will be commented on as a group.
They were taken in 1903 by Roy E. Rockwell (still living in
La Junta) and show boys engaging in an outing at the Fort.
Although the exact portion of wall shown cannot be definitely
ascertained, the pictures do show a good cross-section of
original wall.)

XIV. ROCKWELL  -  Bent's Fort Ruins in 1903
                Photo - Al Miller, La Junta, Colo.
                BEOL - Negative #164

XV. ROCKWELL  -  Bent's Fort Ruins in 1903
                Photo - Al Miller, La Junta, Colo.
                BEOL - Negative #165

XVI. ROCKWELL  -  Bent's Fort Ruins in 1903
                Photo - Al Miller, La Junta, Colo.
                BEOL - Negative #246

XVII. CARVER  -  Bent's Fort Ruins in 1923
                Photo - Turner Collection, Huntington Library
                BEOL - Negative #1463

                Copy of snap-shot taken by T. M. Carver on July
                6, 1923. Shows the condition of the Fort walls
                following the 1921 flood.

XVIII. BPR  -  Bent's Fort Ruins in 1939
                Photo - National Archives
                BEOL - Negative #1532

                Bureau of Public Roads photograph made in January,
                1939. As close as can be ascertained, view is
                looking across Plaza from southwest corner of Fort.

112
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9. Ibid., 46. William Bent's first wife, Owl Woman, died during the Bent Period. He then married her sister, Yellow Woman. Grinnell gives the date as 1847.


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27. Ibid., 124-125.


29. Ibid., 111.
30. DODGE, 111.

31. Felker, Louis, ed., "Captain Ford's Journal of an Expedition to the Rocky Mountains," in Mississippi Valley Historical Review (March, 1926), s66. (Hereafter cited FORD.)

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34. FARNHAM, 35 ff.

35. FIELD, III. The article on Bent's Fort appeared July 12-13, 1840.

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43. Demerits for infractions of Academy regulations were averaged into the academic grades.

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47. Bieber, Ralph P., ed., "Journal of Abraham Robinson Johnston, 1846", in Marching With the Army of the West, (Glendale, 1936), 92. (Hereafter cited JOHNSTON.)

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50. HUGHES, Title Page.


53. GARRARD, Lewis H., Wah-To-Yah and the Taos Trail, (Norman, 1955) 42 f. (Hereafter cited GARRARD.)

54. HUXTON, Introduction.

55. ST. VRAIN Letter.

56. FORSYTH, John Robert, Mss. Journal, (Peoria Public Library, Peoria, Illinois,) (Hereafter cited FORSYTH Mss.)

57. PALADAY Letter.

58. Grinnell, George Bird, By Cheyenne Campfires, (New Haven, 1926). Information on Grinnell is found in Forward to Yale Western American Paperbound - Edition of 1962 by Omer G. Stewart. Information on GEORGE BERT found in unpublished Mss. by George Hyde in Western History Collection, Denver Public Library. (Hereafter cited Hyde Mss.)

60. Exactly how close the Arkansas River came to the east walls of
the Fort, is open to question. BOGOS (Plate II), gives the dis-
tance as "about 250 yards", but on Plate I, gives it as "about
300 yards". GIBSON and ST. VRAIN both put the figure at 100 yards.
GIBSON states the distance was 300 yards. The question is
purely academic, of course, since the closest the river comes to
the Fort ruins now (1965) in the direction the above estimates are
placed, is over 600 yards.

Long-time residents of the area claim that the Great Pueblo Flood
of 1921 altered the course of the Arkansas in the area of the Fort.
This is supported to some degree by a comparison of a present map
of the area (Topographic Base Map, Drawing No. NSO-90F-3006) with
a 1910 Irrigation Map (Glason's Irrigation Map of the Arkansas
Valley, Olason Map Company, Denver, Colo., 1910.) The former shows
the river to be well east of the north-south quarter-section line
of Section 23. The 1910 map shows the left bank of the river west
of the quarter-section line. Since the line itself is 250 yards
due east of the Northeast Bastion, the figure given of "some 200
yards" is considered to be as accurate as possible.

61. COOKE, E17.
62. MACOFFIN, 60.
63. Grinnell, 40. (Passage from FARNHAM quoted by Grinnell.)
64. GIBSON, 167.
65. MACOFFIN, 61.
66. GIBSON, 167.
67. Grinnell, 40.
68. SANDERSON, J. L, interviewed by F. W. Cragin on December 10, 1903.
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69. GIBSON, 168.
70. MACOFFIN, 61.
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73. GARRARD, 73.
74. ABERT (1846), August 31, 14.
75. GIBSON, 167 and NACOFFIN, 60.
76. FARNHAM, 35.
77. FIELD, 145.
78. GIBSON, 168.
79. BENT, George, Colony, Oklahoma, letter, October 5, 1905, to F. W. Cragin. (Cragin Collection, Pioneers' Museum, Colorado Springs, Colo.) (Hereafter cited BENT - CRAGIN Letter.)
80. GARRARD, 131.
81. HOBBS, 48.

82. If the Main Gate dimensions given by ABERT (6½ ft. wide by 7 ft. high) are even close to being correct, it is doubtful that it could have been negotiated by wagons. The HUCHES picture (Plate V) was drawn by a man who saw the Fort in 1846 and made his sketches on the spot. The punitive composition of his work notwithstanding, it seems extremely doubtful that he would include such an important feature as the East Gate without having some basis for doing so.

83. BENT - CRAGIN Letter.
84. Ibid., Plate X shows a single gate opening outward.
85. This area is also known variously as the courtyard, enciente, patio, placita, open square, etc. Use of "Plaza" in this report is merely an effort toward standardization of terms.
86. WISLizenius, 141.
87. FIELD, 144.
88. NACOFFIN, 60.
89. Dick, Herbert W., "The Excavation of Bents Fort, Otero County, Colorado" in Colorado Magazine, (XXXIII, No. 3, July, 1956), 185. Dr. Dick reported the "foundations of 24 rooms, a large rectangular pit and a well were uncovered". The open area is designated Room SW-8 by Dr. Dick. The pit he referred to was in a position where, according to ABERT (Plate VIII), it would have been inside a room.
and would have appeared as such to an observer. It is therefore
carried as Room W-4 in this Report, and with the elimination of
SM-8, the room total on the ground level remains 24. (See Arche-
ological Data Sections for reasons dictating the removal of SM-8
from consideration as a room.)

90. ABERT (1846), August 27, 9.
94. FARNHAM, 35.
92. Grinnell, 40.
93. FIELD, 143.
94. BENT - CRAIGN Letter.
95. PALADAY Letter.
96. FARNHAM, 35.
97. WILLOW, 14, mentions that "In the ample courtyard were many
barnyard fowl". FIELD, 144, states that "the great wall encloses
numerous separations for domestic cattle, poultry, creatures of the
prairie, caught and tamed ... ". If separations existed, it seems
more logical that they would be in the Inner Corral rather than the
Plaza.

98. FORD, 566.
99. FARNHAM, 35.
100. FIELD, 144.
101. ABERT (1846), August 30, 13.
102. Grinnell, 62.
103. ABERT (1846), January 20, 1847, 156.
104. FIELD, 144.
105. ABERT (1845).
106. MACOIFFIN, 60.
107. GARRARD, 73.
108. ST. VINCENT Letter.
109. BENT - CRAOIN Letter.
110. Grinnell, 39.
111. FARNHAM, 35.
112. GIDSON, 167-169.
113. MACOFFT, 61.
114. ST. VRAIN Letter.
115. ABERT (1815).
116. GARRARD, 43.
117. HUXTON, 179.
118. HUXTON, 181.
119. DODGE, 141.
120. HOBBS, 47.
121. FARNHAM, 35 and FIELD, 143.
122. FREMONT, 406.
123. COOKE, 417-418.
124. EMPLOYEE, 167-168.
125. GARRARD, 43.
126. BENT - CRAOIN Letter.
127. Grinnell, 39.
128. FARNHAM, 260.
129. ABERT (1816), Sept. 8, 23.
130. ABERT (1815).
131. FARNHAM, 35 and EMPLOYEE, 167-168.
132. FIELD, 143.
133. ABERT (1815).

126

135. ABERT (1845).

136. EMPLOYEE, 167-168.

137. FARNHAM, 35.

138. MACOFFIN, 61.

139. ABERT (1845).

140. ABERT (1845).

141. MACOFFIN, 60.

142. FARNHAM, 35.

143. EMPLOYEE, 167-168.

144. EDWARDS, 139.

145. GARRARD, 43.

146. Ormiston, 39.

147. MACOFFIN, 61.


149. GARRARD, 73.

150. GEORGE BENT (Plate X) shows only 17 rooms on the ground level, while BOOES (Plate II) shows only 10.

151. ABERT (1845).

152. FARNHAM, 35.

153. EMPLOYEE, 167-168.

154. EDWARDS, 139.

155. RUTXON, 179.

156. MACOFFIN, 60.

157. ST. VRAIN Letter.
158. GARRARD, 73-74.
159. GARRARD, 74.
160. FARNHAM, 35.
161. FARNHAM, 35.
162. Grinnell, 62.
163. MACOFFIN, 69.
164. ABERT (1846), August 30, 13.
165. EMPLOYEE, 167-168.
166. GIBSON, 167-169.
167. MACOFFIN, 60.
169. FARNHAM, 35.
170. FIELD, 1st.
171. EMPLOYEE, 167-168.
172. MACOFFIN, 60.
173. ABERT (1846), Sept. 9, 21.
174. GARRARD, 74 and RUTTON, 180.
175. EMPLOYEE, 167-168.
176. GARRARD, 73.
177. RUTTON, 179-180.
178. RUTTON, 180.
179. FARNHAM, 254.
180. MACOFFIN, 60, 61.
181. FARNHAM, 35.
182. HOBBS, 51.
184. Field, 144.
185. Abert (1846), Jan. 20, 1847, 156.
188. Macoffin, 68.
189. Macoffin, 61.
190. Macoffin, 71.
191. Abert (1846), August 27, 9.
192. Abert (1846), July 22, 7.
193. Abert (1846), September 2, 17-18.
194. Garrard, 42.
195. Abert (1846), August 29, 10.
196. Garrard, 74.
197. Forsyth Mass.
198. Garrard, 43.
200. Macoffin, 60.
201. Grinnell, 62.
202. Garrard, 43.
203. Macoffin, 61.
204. Garrard, 43.
205. Abert (1846), September 2, 17.
207. Grinnell, 39.
208. MacCoffin, 61.
209. Abert (1845), 5.
211. Bent - Cranin Letter.
212. Ruxton, 179.
213. Garrard, 43.
217. Ibid., 139.
218. Ibid., 242.
219. Ibid., 242.
220. Ibid., 242-243.
221. Ladd, Horatio O., History of the War With Mexico, (New York, 1883), 36.
222. Ibid., 36.
224. Ibid., 243.
225. Grinnell, 82. Also in Hyde Mag., Chapter IV, 12.
226. Paladay Letter.
228. Beckwith, E. O., "Report of Lieut. E. O. Beckwith, 3rd Artillery" in Reports of Explorations and Surveys to Ascertain the Most Practical and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean, Senate Executive Document 70, 33rd Congress, 2nd Session, 11, 25.
229. Carvalho, Solomon Nunes, Incidents of Travel and Adventure in the Far West, (New York, 1857), 73-75.
230. Raymond, Samuel D., Mrs. Diary entitled "Trip to Pike's Peak, 1859", (State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver, Colorado.)

231. Willing, George W., Diary, published in Missouri Republican, August 9, 1859. (Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Mo.)


233. SANDERSON Interview.

234. Unsigned article in Rocky Mountain News of January 22, 1866. (Hereafter cited Rocky Mountain News Article.)

235. Scott, P. O., Mrs. Diary, (State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver, Colorado.) (Hereafter cited Scott Diary.)

236. Scott Diary.

237. Rocky Mountain News Article.


239. Scott Diary.

240. SANDERSON Interview.


242. Prowers acquired the Fort site on April 10, 1872. (Deed Book 1, Page 186 - Otero County Land Records.)

243. REYNOLDS Letter.

244. Cragin, F. W., Field notes on visit to site April 11, 1916. (Cragin Collection, Pioneers' Museum, Colorado Springs, Colorado.) Notebook XIII.

245. White, Marjorie Allen, Regent, La Junta Chapter of Daughters of American Revolution; interviewed at Bent's Old Fort NHS on June 5, 1965. According to Mrs. White, the monument was erected in 1910 and dedicated in 1912. (Monument itself confirms 1910 date.)

246. REYNOLDS Letter.
247. According to newspaper clippings, REYNOLDS gave the site to the DAR on November 11, 1920. Land records indicate, however, that a legal transfer of property was not made until February 8, 1926, when the Bent's Fort Land and Cattle Co. (of which REYNOLDS had half-interest) donated the site to the DAR. (Deed Book 275, Page 62 - Otero County Land Records.) For practical purposes, the site was in the hands of the DAR from late 1920 until 1954.

248. Unpublished Minute Book of the La Junta Chapter of Daughters of American Revolution for period November 24, 1913 to May 4, 1925. Entry for May, 1921 shows that a motion was carried to allow certain bills including $88.20 for fence material and $50.00 for trees at Bent's Fort.

249. Walter, Rouben, local resident, interviewed at Bent's Old Fort NHS on September 15, 1963, and at his home in North La Junta on June 7, 1965. Mr. Walter's memory of the site extends to 1912. At one time, he had a 1/4 interest in the Bent's Fort Land and Cattle Co.

250. Carver, T. N., Note on rear of Photograph (Plate XVII). (F. J. Turner Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.) On the rear of a photograph of the DAR marker Carver noted, "At one point inside the old walls a great many pieces of iron, including some hand made nails, mark the position of the black smith shop." In the 1963 Walter interview (Note 249), Mr. Walter pointed out to the NPS Historian that the area of Roc-W-S abounded in surface material similar to that described, but not located, by Carver. This may give some support to the conclusion reached on Page 102 regarding the Stagecoach maintenance area being on the west side.

251. Scharton, Leo G., Principal, Keating Junior High School, Pueblo, Colorado, letter, September 30, 1963, to Superintendent, Bent's Old Fort NHS. (Statement is attachment to letter.)

252. Rice, Carrie Allen, "Bent's Fort". (Transcript of talk given by Mrs. Rice. Undated, but believed to have been given circa 1950.)


255. The first Superintendent entered on duty March 24, 1963.
BENT'S FORT IN 1844-45

(Boggs)

Photo - State Historical Society of Colorado

(BEOI Neg. #1522)

PLATE I
BENT'S FORT IN 1841-45

(Borger)

Photo - State Historical Society of Colorado

(BEOL Neg. #1526)

PLATE II
BENT'S FORT IN 1844-45  
(Boggs)  
Photo - Denver Public Library,  
Western History Collection  
(BDOL Neg. #1525)

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF BENT'S FORT, COLORADO, IN 1844
A Traders' Post on the Arkansas. Conceived by Bent Bros. & St. Vrain, and St. Louis Mo.

Bent's Old Fort, sketched from memory by W. M. Boggs.
Courtesy of Denver Public Library, Western History Collection.

PLATE III
BENT'S FORT IN 1845

(Abert)

Photo - Library of Congress

(BEOL Neg. #1530)
BENT'S FORT IN 1846
(Hughes)
Photo - Library of Congress
(BEOL Neg. #1531)
BENT'S FORT IN 1846

(Immun)

Photo - Denver Public Library,
Western History Collection

(BBOL Neg. #1533)

BENT'S FORT
BENT'S FORT FRONT 1846

(Abort)

Photo - National Park Service
(In-Service Use Only)

(BEOL Neg. 91527)
BENT'S FORT INTERIOR 1846

(Albert)

Photo - National Park Service
(In-Service Use Only)

(BEOL Neg. #7524)

PLATE VIII
BENT'S FORT DIMENSIONS 1846

(Abert)

Photo - National Park Service
(In-Service Use Only)

(BEOL Neg. #1528)

PLATE IV
BENT'S FORT FLOOR PLAN - BENT PERIOD

(George Bent/Grinnell)

Photo - Grinnell Collection, Southwest Museum

(BEOL Neg. #1548)

Bent's Old Fort on the Arkansas River 1837-45,
Described to me by George Bent in June, 1933. Original Sketch.

Wide corral gate

To the feet the ground sloped away to lower land.

DI ATE X
BENT'S FORT BASTION CONSTRUCTION 1852

(Dunbar)

Photo - Cragin Collection,
Pioneers Museum

(BEOH Neg. #1521)

Old Bent's Fort
Top of Bastion

According to J.B. Dunbar's boyhood recollection,

Prof. John B. Dunbar
born in 1847.

Saw the fort (spring) of 1852,
going with his father to Jihua,
stopped at the fort 10 days, returning.

Portholes conical

(2 ft 7"
Earth wall
Pallisades

Section of wall of fort
(a through partition of room)

PLATE XI
BENT'S FORT FLOOR PLAN - STAGECOACH PERIOD

(Sanderson/Cragin)

Photo - Cragin Collection,
Pioneers Museum

(BEOL Neg. #1523)

No rooms on the west.

Kitchen

Dining Room

PLATE XIII
BENT'S FORT RUINS IN 1903

(Rockwell)

Photo - Al Miller - La Junta, Colorado

(BEOL Neg. #164)

PLATE XIV
BENT'S PORT RUINS IN 1903
(Rockwell)

Photo - Al Miller - La Junta, Colorado
(BEOL Neg. #165)
BENT'S FORT RUINS IN 1903

Photo - Al Miller - La Junta, Colorado

(BEOL Neg. #246)

PLATE VII
BENT'S FORT RUINS IN 1923

(Carver)

Photo - Turner Collection,
Huntington Library

(BEOL Neg. #1463)

PLATE XVII
BENT'S FORT RUINS IN 1939
(Bureau of Public Roads)
Photo - National Archives
(SEOL Neg. #1532)
ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA SECTION

by

Jackson W. Moore, Jr.
Archaeologist
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Row of Rooms</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Gate</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Row of Rooms</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE1-A</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Row of Rooms</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Row of Rooms</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W2</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W3</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W4</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W5</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pit & ................................................................. 31
W ................................................................. 32
Walkways ............................................................. 32
East Walkway ....................................................... 32
South Walkway .................................................... 33
West Walkway ..................................................... 33
North Walkway .................................................... 33
Fur Press ................................................................ 34
Passageway ........................................................... 35
Tower Bastions ....................................................... 36
East Tower ............................................................ 36
West Tower ........................................................... 38
INNER CORRAL .................................................. 39
STAGE GATE .......................................................... 41
THE Alley, BILLIARD ROOM, & ROOM ALPHA .......... 41
Alley .................................................................. 41
Billiard Room ....................................................... 42
Room Alpha .......................................................... 42
THE WAGON ROOM ............................................... 44
THE MAIN CORRAL ............................................... 45
THI TRASH DUMP ................................................. 47
REFERENCES ....................................................... 49
INTRODUCTION

The significance of Bent's Old Fort has long been recognized by students of the related themes of westward expansion and the fur trade. For this reason the several generations have practiced and encouraged restraint regarding the ruin, with the DAR eventually acquiring title to the site in 1920. Even so, considerable pothunting has occurred from time to time, even by persons and groups of good will otherwise. Where the above-ground portion is concerned, the damage of cattlemen and pothunter was as nought after the "Great Pueblo Flood" of 1921.

In 1954 the State Historical Society of Colorado accepted the deed from the DAR and sought the means to interest the Federal Government in it. The best way appeared to be to demonstrate that, beneath the sand and the silt remained a substantial amount of the original foundations. They thereupon arranged with the Trinidad State Junior College to sponsor jointly an ambitious project of limited exploratory trenching. Dr. Herbert Dick of the college was put in charge of the project; it was conducted as a summer field school and eight students provided the labor. The goals were to outline the walls of the fort and rooms, take dimensional measurements, and prepare a ground plan. The estimated expenses were somewhat short of the actual ones, but the major walls were traced out and measurements taken. The resulting ground plan was drawn up two years after the fact (the funding had made no provision for a report!), and contains several major errors as well
as not being to scale. The overriding aim of the project was accomplished, however, in that the Federal Government was impressed and accepted the deed, designating it a national historic site on March 15, 1963. The National Park Service decided that extraordinary measures would be required to properly interpret the site to the public. Situated as it is in a flat, barren area with no auxiliary features of interest, its reconstruction would be essential. The reconstructed fort could serve also to house administrative and utility rooms, as well as interpretive displays. Before this could be justified, however, all possible information regarding the construction, historic grade levels, and artifacts associated with specific features and periods should be recovered. This required, in other words, a major archeological project. Such a project was duly approved and begun in September of 1963 and scheduled tentatively through August of 1965.
ARCHEOLOGICAL DATA

In final form, Bent's Old Fort consisted of four main areas. These are a) the compound, b) the inner corral, c) the wagon room, and d) the main corral. The compound is the essentially rectangular core made up of the four rows of rooms. For purposes of this report it will include the plaza, walkways, and fur press. The inner corral is the unroofed area east of the compound roughly the shape of a right triangle. In this report it will include the east outer wall, the stage gate, & Room Alpha. The wagon room is the largest room at the site, and because of the non-conforming orientation of the east outer wall, it is burin or chisel shaped. In this report it will be associated with the alley. The main corral is the area behind (southwest) the wagon room. Four secondary areas outside the fort proper were the ice house, the trash dump, the race track, and the burial grounds.

COMPOUND

The major units of the compound are the four rows of rooms. Exclusive of Rooms W7 and SEL-A, these form a rectangle 122.00' NW-SE, x NE-SW.

The north row of rooms is divided into two sections by the main gate. Rooms NW1, N2, N3, and N4 are on the west of the gate with Rooms N5, N6, and N7 on the east. The west section is 61.70' x 20.70', based on maximum measurements of the remnants. Adding 0.80' to the outer NW wall of Room NW1 to make it an even 3.00', it would become 62.5'.
Similar treatment of the NE-SW dimensions would result in a dimension of 21.00'. The gateway itself is 8.3' wide at its maximum eroded surfaces. The east section, exclusive of the east tower, is 52.6' x 19.5'.

Room NWI occupies the extreme north corner of the fort. Interior dimensions of this room are 11.00' east-west, and 17.80' north-south. There is a circular depression in the south quarter of the room which is 7.2' wide and 0.65' deep. There were numerous wagon wheel parts buried in it, as well as glass and animal bones. No Bent period floor was present in this corner. Elsewhere, a Bent occupation level was in evidence rather than a floor. The Stage period floor equates to level six. It could as easily be called an occupation level, also.

No evidence of the usual plank-and-joist floor was found at all. Rather, it was simply a firm soil level where the various artifacts occurred in a flat plane. These included end sections of tinned cans, eye-bolts, a copper button, and numerous iron wagon wheel parts. The Fireplace had been modified and a limestone hearth provided to match this level. The fireplace had been damaged by a bulldozer blade during plaza levelling after 1955. It was a corner fireplace 8.2' across and 4.65' long from the vertex to the inside of the hearth. The hearthstone is 0.87' wide and 4.0' long, and evidence of the cheeks is missing altogether. The relative elevations for this room are: Top of fireplace 20.4, top of hearthstone 20.26, Stage level 19.9, Bent level 19.40.

Examination of the features and of the cultural material fails to confirm a use pattern during the Bent period. There is some documentary
reference to the room as the location of the blacksmith's quarters. There were doors into Rooms N2, and N2. Fragments of white plaster were found.

Room N2. This room was 18.00' x 14.50'. Doorways were shared with NW1, N2, and N3. A Stage period fireplace in the east corner was most likely modified from an earlier Bent fireplace. The eroded cheeks go well below the later limestone hearth, just as was true in NW1, N5, N6, and N7. There were three noticeable surfaces, but this was not determined by any well preserved floor remnants. Rather, these surfaces were recognized by a relative firmness which caused the overlying soil to separate more or less evenly; cultural material also tended to lie on a plane. There did not appear to be a true burned surface except against the outer NE wall. The wall dividing this room from NW1 is the most eroded wall of the north row. It has remnants of its full width of 1.4' at the bottom level. At this level there was still white plaster intact.

Room N3. This room measured 18.0' x 12.5' and 17.7' x 12.5' in 1954 and 1964 respectively. Dr. Dick had made a test in the south corner of this room. There is a discrepancy in the stratigraphic sequence of this room as reported by Dr. Dick, and as observed by myself. The Bent floor underlies two "floors" by our findings in 1964, and one by Dr. Dick a decade earlier. He places the Stagecoach floor (plank-und-joist) somewhat higher than I do, but his depth is based on the edge, while ours is based on an undulating over-all surface. Between these two, a later
Bent floor was found, although it should be more properly called an occupation level. This level would correspond to the top of Dick's small "forge" which he believes was used after Bent, and before Stagecoach. There were numerous small pieces of iron at this level, but nothing to definitely include or preclude Bent. Beneath the Bent (bottom) floor is the usual pre-structure occupation level.

This room communicated by door with both N2 and N4. The sills of both were raised once and then the doors were sealed up. This same sequence was followed with the rest of the north rooms. I interpret this as accompanying the change of Bent floor levels, with the sealing-off occurring in Stagecoach times.

Room N4. This room, when measured in 1954 was found to be 15.5' x 18.0'. In 1964 it was found to be 15.5' x 17.25'. No Bent period floor was found in this room, although scorched earth was found beneath the Stage period floor. This latter was the finest floor of the Stage period found at the site. Beneath some fallen adobe several planks still ran from NW-SE. These were supported by a pattern of 5 joists which ran NE-SW an average distance of three feet apart. These joists were, in turn, divided evenly by runners. Large cut nails were found driven into the ground through rhomboid pieces of leather. In the west corner was a small (1.4' x 1.1') base associated with a ridge of adobe bricks. It was 0.2' out from the wall shared with N3.

There can be little doubt that this was an important room to the Barlow and Sanderson people.
The North Gate. This feature is bounded by Rooms N4 and N5, whose present separation is 8.3' . The front jamb-posts were an even 8.0' apart, and were 0.7' round posts set in squarish holes 1.1' wide. At the back, or south, an old ditch underlies the southwest wall of Room N4 and continues behind Room N5; since the latter room is of shorter length, this trench is outside, and at the base of its wall. There are several posts in this trench, and three would have served satisfactorily as rear jamb-posts. If so, the dimensions would have been 8.00' x 19.50'. The rear jambs are suggested because of the references to a "double" gate. Had this referred to paired doors at the front only, we would have expected to find a third post, located in the center. Although not essential to a paired-door gate, a center post would certainly have provided stability.

No wagon wheel ruts were found in the gateway at any level, although they were found well east (25 feet) of it in the Trash Dump.

Room N5. This room measured in 1954 as 17.5' x 15.0', and was found to be 17.75 NE-SW x 15.33' at the bottom level. Just beneath the surface (0.25') there was a remnant fire site. It was not a basin, nor was it lined with anything; rather, it was a scorched zone covered with charcoal and small clinkers. Half a foot, or one standard level separated the top of the fire site from the Stage period floor below. This floor was of the usual plank and joist type, with the planks running NW-SE. The fireplace was modified to take a limestone hearth of about 30% more than the usual breadth; this was effected by providing a row of
smaller stones between the main hearth stone and the ends of the cheeks. Material associated with this floor were a broken iron bit, circular harness buckle, pieces of leather, and a heavy iron bar with knuckle-hinges.

The Bent period floors were undulating but were usually 0.4' apart in depth. Among materials associated with both earthen floors were inch-square plates of iron and fragments of flat glass. Limited to floor 2 were burlap impressions in a white matrix, numerous spherical lead bullets and goose shot. Floor 3 also had goose shot in association plus the blade of a hunting knife. The lowest floor was in a poor state of preservation but did not show any sign of severe burning. The artifacts of the floors 2 and 3 reflect no time difference from each other, but do antedate those associated with floor 1. Evidence of white plaster was found in 1954 and 1963.

Room 86. This room was measured to be 15.5' x 15.0' in 1954 and 15.65' x 14.95 E-W in 1963. The walls of this room contained the most area of white plaster at the site with the possible exception of Room E3. The fireplace showed evidence of much erosion or possible abuse, with the firewall indented beyond the line of the room wall. The area of the hearth may have held a stone at one time, but it was a circular pit filled with burned refuse when excavated. The highest of three floor levels was, as usual, a plank and joist floor associated with artifacts of the 3rd quarter of the 19th Century. Rows of cut nails still secured the desiccated planks, which were overlaid by the
remnants of the roof vigas. These latter were oriented NE-SW and were at right angles to the planks. None of the wood at this level was burned.

The second floor was of rammed earth and likewise showed little sign of burning. A short length of charred beam was found near the north corner, as well as small amounts of scattered charcoal. There was considerable in the way of iron wagon parts at this level. It should be noted that all rooms yielded this material to a greater or lesser extent.

Room N7. Nowhere at the site is the sequence of occupation more clearly demonstrated than in this room. The first of three floors occurred at the bottom of level 2. This was one foot below the 1963 surface (see plate 3). Fallen wall comprised the bulk of the debris overlying floor 1. A layer of dirt 0.15' - 0.20' deep atop floor 1 supports a deer skeleton lying on its right side. This total 1.2' depth represents the Cattlo period for this room. The Stagecoach floor was of plank and joist construction and oriented the same as all of the contemporaneous floors of the north rooms. The remnants were not as well preserved as in N4 or N6, but the cut nails and associated planks could be traced. At this level, the fireplace cheeks have been shortened and a limestone hearth stone placed against them. Located in the north corner, this fireplace is oriented with the room and faces the west corner.

Floor 2 is an average of 0.45' below floor 1. Made of prepared earth 0.20' thick, it survived in better condition than any floor at the site.
Charred timbers lay on the floor with only a vague orientation of E-W. This would suggest that the ends of the vigas protruded into the Inner Corral. Indeed, the available sketches show no vigas in the northeast wall east of the gate! Between the fireplace and the east corner was an area 1.6' x 2.4' of a white matrix like that in N5, again with burlap impressions plus charred burlap. The artifacts were of the second quarter of the 19th Century. A quantity of rattan or willow might indicate office baskets.

Floor 3 was 0.7' below floor 2. It too, was covered with burned and charred materials. The viga type beams were fewer and more completely consumed, but were similarly oriented NW-SE. This floor was far inferior to floor 2 but was definitely a prepared floor. In the east quarter of the room lay white ash to a depth of 0.25'. In the west quarter a circular depression was formed which closely resembles that in the south quarter of N51, complete to the iron meat hook at the edge! The pit is formed by the floor itself, but it was overlain by ashes and some charred timbers. At this level some copper lustre ware and black transfer-printed earthenwares were recovered. Both shape and decorative motif puts both wares in the Bent era. The former ware indicates that floor 3 was used at least until copper lustre was developed, probably in 1840.

*Some forms of copper lustre date from 1815; our type is poorly documented.
Room E5 is 20.1' by 20.1' and is bounded on the NW by the Plaza, on the NE by the Passageway, on the SE by the Inner Corral, and on the south by Room E4. Only one floor was encountered in the east rooms probably because of heavy traffic since 1885. It is known that vehicles entered the fort from the old Stagecoach period gate. Some levelling was done by a blade in 1955 and possibly earlier as well. The shallowest fill was adjacent to E4, and the deepest was in the east quarter. The fireplace (F6) is 6.3' wide by 2.3' deep, and 3.2' from the east corner. Both walls, floor, and fireplace had been plastered white several times, at least three white layers being still extant.

There is a wall in the east quarter. The builders' excavation was 6.1', wide and cut into the SE wall. The shaft itself is 2.2' in diameter and is lined with unshaped limestone slabs. This wall was excavated by Dr. Dick in 1954, and it was determined to have a depth of 13 feet. Since we removed four feet of fill in order to reach the water at 13 feet, it could only have been dug to 9 feet in 1954. Dr. Dick recalls that the bottom 3 or 4 feet were determined with a probe. The top of the wall is flush with the Bent floor. Dr. Dick assigned the wall to the Stagecoach period, but his criteria were not included in the published article. The floor of E5 was completely covered with charred timbers, some of which were large enough to be upright supports. Most of the charred beams were oriented N-S. Significantly, the charring was absent only in the 1954 excavations, including the wall. If the wall was post-Bent, then there should have been no burned material over the wall; again,
this was not stated in the report. Dr. Dick confirmed, by correspondence, that no charred materials were found either above or within the wall. (See Plate 4)

This was certain to have been one of the more comfortable rooms, although it was probably not one of the living quarters. The fireplace was one of the larger ones of the Bent period, and only room E3 has more floor space.

In areas selected for deeper tests, two sub-floor post holes were found which were not in use after the floor was made.

Room E4. This room was also measured as 20.0' square in 1954, and presently 20.1' N-S x 20.2' E-W. The divider wall which this room shares with E5 is 0.8' thick, while a wall 1.08' separates E4 from E3. This is affected by the relative wall heights, the former being higher. Both walls have a sill, or portal remnant in the center 1.2' x 2.55'. These may have been open doorways, for if there were jambs, they had to occur at a higher level. As in E5, the floor of this room was covered with burned beams, but these were largely confined to the east and south quarters. A broad, but shallow pot hole was in the north quarter. In the west quarter a double row of rectangular posts 2.55' apart, and 0.30' x 0.25' on the average, extended across the room NE-SW. There were thin wooden runners between the posts which outlined smooth panels of floor 2.85' x 2.8'. (See Plate 5) This occurred 6.0' from the inside of the NW wall and was interrupted on the NE by the late pot hole. This was most like the foundation of a counter used as in a store. The charred
timbers are oriented NE-SW, just as in Rm. E5. Charred cloth was found beneath the beams in the east corner. In the west quarter the brass hardware and charred, cross-hatched fragments of stock from an as yet unidentified shoulder arm were found. Nearby were several heart-shaped iron padlocks and 90% of a brass telescope. Only the objective lens and its housing was missing from the telescope. Numerous variegated glass trade beads were also found. The floor itself was scorched red but well surfaced and preserved. After exposure, however, the weathering accentuated an outline of "settling". Testing revealed a quarter basement-sized pit 15.0' x 16.2' and three feet deep (See Plate 5). There was 0.6' depth of loose fill beneath the floor and the rest was made up of broken adobe bricks. Very little was recovered from among the adobe rubble, but the loose fill at the top was fructuous with trade beads, mostly black. The west quarter, with the counter foundation in the floor, was not excavated. Whatever the purpose of this pit had been, it was earlier than the floor by which it was completely covered.

Room E3. This is the largest room at the site within the compound, and was measured in 1954 as 29.0' x 20.0'. Present measurements are 29.55' x 20.09'. Associated features, at the floor level, are an adobe foundation for an enclosed stair landing in the west corner, (see Plate 7) and a rectangular adobe brick base in the center of the floor (see Plate 8). The landing is 6.0' wide and five feet long, being 7.0' out from the SW wall. The front (NE) of the landing is formed by two shaped corner adobe bricks with a trench 1.1' x 3.1' x 0.8' deep. This trench
is contiguous on the SW and contained three vertical posts. The floor was covered with burned material but these tended to be in "clumps" rather than being aligned. There were semi-melted pots and pans, charred cloth, (both fine textured and burlap) and short, heavy length of beams. One reason for the "clumpiness" became evident as the floor surface was cleared. Scores of not quite parallel striations had been made by a toothed instrument. These striations occurred on both divider walls, the stair landing, the central rectangular feature, and the S-E wall. Similar striations were noticeable on the divider walls between Rooms E4 and E5, but they were shallower and never reached the floor of either room.

In the northeast half of the room a light colored zone of the floor was noticed early; this became increasingly evident as it bleached out from weathering. Half a foot below the floor level a burned outline appeared which formed an assymmetrical pit 10.2' NE-SW x 13.8' NW-SE. As this pit was taken down it was seen to include about half of the rectangular adobe feature, which is four courses deep. The walls of the pit are very straight and regular and the corners quite round. The width of the pit is less on the NW than on the SE. The pit is actually deeper than the buff-yellow soil in this one area, extending up to a foot or more into the gravels of the flood plane. Where this occurs, the gravel is scorched as severely as soil walls. The pit in Room E4 adjacent, was completely contained in the native soil at a similar depth! There was evidence of 2 inch planking (charred) at the NW and SE walls which had the appearance
of joists or purlins... Everything from 0.5' below the floor level to a foot below the gravel was scorched red and black. The bottom foot of debris contained numerous charred barrel ends and staves. Against the edge of the NE wall, at the center, was a charred barrel which held five bottles. Four of these bottles were green wine bottles, two of which had glass seals welded to the shoulders and identifying the contents as Hedoc. This is a red wine from Southwestern France. The other bottle was a light blue and was blown in a three-piece mold (the green ones were blown in a one-piece mold), with a rim which suggests ancestry to the later whiskey and beer bottles. From the westerly half of the pit an 4-gallon salt-glazed stoneware cilla, a wooden churn with wooden dasher, another green wine bottle, and ceramics representative of the second quarter of the 19th century were recovered. Fragments of clay pipes, and hundreds of white trade beads were found throughout but were heaviest on the easterly side of the pit.

The central adobe feature was at least 0.25' higher than at present as was the stair landing. The standard adobe brick had an average height of 0.35' whereas the top course of the central feature and the only course of the landing are less than 0.1' and are unnaturally smoothed. This suggests that, prior to the ultimate destruction of the room, these features were deliberately razed to floor level due to a change in room usage. The presence of burned debris above these features means that they had been razed prior to the burning. The striations were not in any way responsible, for an instrument leveling them would have cleaned off the
burned debris rather than furrowing it into clumps. The rectangular central feature is difficult to interpret with any finality. Its depth suggests that it was a base which was meant to support considerable weight. It could be the remnants of a fireplace, or a stair, but most likely it was a support column. The 29 foot plus length of this room would actually seem to make such a column necessary! The three posts at one end may have been reinforcements. There might also have been matching posts at the other end.

The pit, being severely burned, is not analogous to the pit in Room E4. While a prepared floor, including a built-in counter, covered the latter, almost no "clumped" debris covered the pit in Room E3. The striations referred to above extended well across this pit, but they were more vague because of the looser texture of the soil here. The "clumped" edges of the burned strata within the pit suggest that it was open during, not before the fire. The unscorched half foot of soil which covers the bulk of the pit accumulated later, and was compacted from the heavy traffic which these central east rooms were all subjected to from then on.

Room E2. The heaviest walls of the east half of the compound occur here. The room was measured to be 17.6' x 15.6' in 1954, and 17.7' x 15.6' in 1964. The wall shared with E3 is 1.6' thick, while the NW is 2.05', the SW 2.0', and the SE is 1.95'. The NW is set back 5.4' from the alignment of the SW wall of the other east rooms.

The fireplace against the SW wall is 6.5' wide by 0.8' deep.
edges of the cheeks of this fireplace are very meticulously symmetrical. There are "ghosts" in the floor before each cheek which shows that their length were reduced 1.2'. The walls of the room and the fireplace were first plastered yellow, and later brick red.

The wall dividing E2 and SE1 was high enough that a door sill remnant 2.6' wide was extant. The sill is "stepped" and the wood only occupied half of the wall thickness.

An architectural clue for this room was a charred shutter or door which was secured by an attached large iron hook. The remnant is not complete at 4.3' x 1.5' but would seem to be too large for a shutter.

A sizable quantity of charred paper was found, including a backless book of some sort. This latter was too brittle to permit of much handling, but the inside pages may be unburned. This can only be determined when the outer pages are considered expendable. Several pieces of slate were found which had been inscribed. At least some of the pieces contain portions of a foot and leg clad in a tight, fringed buckskin trouser and a moccasin. A red slate scribe was also found. The slate has been scorched red and tends to be friable. The prepared earth floor contains small and medium-sized glass beads as inclusions. Tests reveal that there is no prepared floor remnant beneath this one.

Room SE1. In 1954 the dimensions recorded were 20.1' N-S x 9.8' E-W (probably a typographical error) and in 1965 as 20.1' NE-SW x 18.09' NW-SE. There is access to this room by doors from the Inner
Corral, Room E2, and Room SEL-A. The fireplace (F8) is the largest at the site and has the largest hearth as well. The hearth is made up of un-cut tabular slabs of limestone which bear no resemblance to the cut and finished stones of the Stagecoach period. The hearth is 9.0' wide and 6.5' long (NW-SE). Most of the wall surfaces had no plaster remaining, but a small area of the NW wall still had some red plaster. The floor is no longer even, and slopes from the center downward to the SW. There may well be an abandoned drainage ditch beneath the floor here to connect with one known to extend from E2 to S7, and probably with one on the other side from SEL-A across the Inner Corral and outside the east outer wall. (see Plates 6 & 9).

Dr. Dick felt that this room was used by William Bent as his quarters. This was probably based on the combination of largest fireplace, largest hearth, and a relatively large amount of ceramic material. This same combination of traits suggests that it might have been a kitchen.

Room SEL-A. This room was measured to be 12.8' N-S x 8.0' E-W, and 13.0' x 8.4' in 1965. Dr. Dick only tested to just below the bottom of the coarsed adobe bricks. From this level down the room was filled in with adobe wasters. Amid the lower levels of wasters sherd of copper lustered white earthenware was recovered. There was special evidence of burning below the top of the wasters, and whitewash had been applied to adobe plaster on the walls, both brick and earth. At the bottom the floor was the usual prepared earth, and some flat
glass and an iron adze-head lay on it. No remains of any stairs were found. Later, it would be found that the ditch referred to above entered this room next to the south corner, but was later filled in and plastered over.

There seems to be little doubt that this room was originally a pantry or root cellar. As such it would have serviced the adjacent kitchen in Rm. SEL. Later, but in pre-fire times, the floor level was raised four feet to bring it to the level of the nearer rooms. It may be that the walls were only raised to full room height at this time, although this seems doubtful. Whether this alteration was accompanied by a like change of use in Rm. SEL is not reflected in the excavations.

The south row of rooms is 60.90' from the south corner of Room SEL-A to the west corner of Room S7; it is 27.89' less on the Plaza side. These rooms were even more eroded than the east rooms, with blade scars along the walls and floors; Dr. Dick noted wagon wheel scars on the walls of Rm. S7. The absence of fallen wall in these rooms, while shared with the east rooms, is in contrast to those of the north and west (see Plate 9).

Room S2. This room was measured to be 19.8' N-S x 10.3' E-W in both 1954 and 1964. It had a congruent corner fireplace a total of 4.15' wide, with one cheek 1.5' long and 0.9' wide; the cheek width is included. The hearth merged with the SE wall in place of
the second cheek.

Another feature of this room is a short wall forming an alcove 4.2' x 1.5' in the east corner. Dr. Dick suggested that it was a closet or a commode, which doesn't leave much else.

This is another room which showed a continuous series of plasterings which included the floor as well as the walls. Both were alternately coated with adobe, red, yellow, and white. Regardless of its use it was not drab! Material recovered from the bottom level includes several large fragments of flat glass near the fireplace. There was probably more, but a Cattle period row of posts was set in a trench which entered the room from the alley near the west corner for a distance of 8.7'. There was considerable evidence of fire on the floor itself, although it apparently did not extend to the walls, where the 1954 exploratory trenches failed to yield any striking evidence of such. Other than the scorched floor plaster, most of this evidence was in the form of charred beams.

There was little among the cultural remains to suggest room use. In view of the physical traits described it would seem best suited to be used as living quarters for one or two persons.

Room 83. In 1954 this room was measured as 19.7' N-S x 7.3' E-W, while it was 19.7' NE-SW x 7.1' NW-SE a decade later. It is, therefore, the narrowest room of the south row. There was evidence of white
plaster of adobe in this room. It had a fireplace of the "H" type back-to-back with that of Room S4. The hearth was 2.4' wide with cheeks adding an additional 1.5' and 1.7' of width and 1.7' of length. Like S2 and S4 there was very little depth, hence little cultural material was recovered. Like Room S2, the small size plus the fireplace limits its use to either a sleeping room or an office. It would seem that almost any sort of shop would require more width than 7.5'.

Room S4. This is the largest of the south rooms, but one of the more poorly preserved (see Plate 10). In 1954 and in 1964 the dimensions were recorded as 19.4' x 18.0', which indicates that the wall remnants were at about the same height. The fireplace was incomplete as found, but since the hearth was the same width as the one in S3 the rest was probably a mirror image of it, especially since they are part of an "H". The shallow fill in this room also provided relatively sparse cultural material, and this has not been examined carefully yet. White, and later red plaster had been applied to the walls and floor. The size of this room would permit a range of alternative uses; the artifacts may reveal some clue as to its use but this is doubtful.

Room S5. Here we have an enigmatic situation. This 19.7' x 10.3' room has no actual wall remnant to separate it from the alloy (A single square post). It is the only room in this row which has no fireplace, although there is a pie-slice shaped feature in the west corner which shows red from severe burning. Its small size (2.1' x 2.15') makes its use as a fireplace or door equally unlikely, although it could be
the locus of a small forge. The largest single quantity of iron hardware at a single level was found on the floor of this room (see Plate 11). Beneath the rubble (which was left by the 1954 trenches inside and outside of the SW wall) was a boarded area seven feet wide extending five feet into the Alley. This is the room most nearly in line with the Pur Press and the Main Gate, hence is where George Bent recalled a gate opposite. On the basis of archeology alone, this is the strongest single candidate for a smithy. The lack of a substantial wall, and the provision of a plank floor on the Alley side are rather strongly suggestive of provision for bringing in vehicles, or animals, for outfitting or repair. The walls retained at least two white-plastered surfaces.

Room 86. At 19.7' x 9.6' in 1954 and 19.65' x 9.48' in 1964, this was the second smallest room of this row. It had a fireplace with a 3.1' wide hearth plus two cheeks each 0.6' thick by 1.6' long; it formed an "H" fireplace, together with that in Room 87. Very little height remained of walls or fireplace and the features were fairly well outlined with floor and whisk brooms used in conjunction with a sharp hoe. With such a shallow overburden there was a correspondingly slight recovery of artifactual material. From fragments of plaster recovered from the floor and some extant plaster in the rounded corners, there were at least three white coats.

There was little about this room to suggest a use. Its narrow width would put it in a similar category with 82 and 83. It does communicate
by door to S7, and together they may have constituted, if only for a time, an apartment.

Room S7. The topography was higher in this room and, as a result, more diversity of fill, features, and quantity of material was encountered. In 1954 the dimensions were measured as 19.7' x 18.5' and as 19.8' x 18.5' in 1964. Like most of the adjacent rooms, the walls were scarred by a blade; a decade earlier Dr. Dick noted the tracks of wagon wheels across these walls as well. To be sure that we were not applying differential interpretations to the same phenomena, photographs and descriptions were sent to Dr. Dick. He affirmed that these were not what he made reference to. The fireplace, which had a 3.6' wide hearth, and cheeks 1.5' thick by 1.8' long, was a poor state of preservation, but was less so than those in S4 and S6. An interesting feature of this room was a door in the north corner facing the Plaza. The sill portion was severely burned, and there was the remains of a stone stoop outside. Iron wheel hub parts, and bones were on the sill.

At the first level a trench entered the room from the alley (see Plate 12). This trench was one of several which contained small (0.50' average diameter) juniper posts, and probably helped form a branding pen of the Cattle period. Also at this level was some late 19th Century, early 20th Century, with some early-to-mid 19th Century material. Below this was a prepared earth floor covered with charred timbers, horse shoes, wheel hub parts, and, an intrusive garbage hole. The floor was white-washed but was scorched red in places.
In testing the sub-floor areas two burials were found. Both were tightly flexed inhumations unaccompanied by grave offerings of any kind. Burial I was oriented with head to the north, face down, arms akimbo, with legs folded behind. This burial had every appearance of haste and of minimal concern. Burial II, on the other hand was a "normal" appearing flexed burial in the tradition of the aboriginal Southeast. This burial was face up, arms folded across the chest, and knees drawn up tightly. Again, there was no burial furnituro of any sort. This burial was disturbed by the row of Cattle period posts referred to above, which ran across its long axis; the damage was mainly to the feet and one hand. The bones were sent to Dr. William Bass, physical anthropologist at the University of Kansas for analysis.

In other areas where sections of the floor were removed, the aforementioned deep trench along the inside edge of the back((SW) wall was found and several post holes. None of these features showed at the floor level.

The West row of rooms, from the line of the inner edge of the NE wall of Room W2, (which is the same as the outer edge of the Plaza side of the North rooms), is 98.06' to the outer edge of the SW wall of Room W6. Room NW1 is excluded, but would add 22.5'. Also excluded is Room W7 because of its discontiguity. There is no Room SW8 on this scheme because we failed to find sound evidence of such a structure. As in the south row of rooms a ditch was found (see Plate 14) which was lower than the walls
of the rooms (which were built across them). The walls of these rooms are necessarily heavy (average width 2.2') since they bore the weight of two stories (see Plate 13).

Room W2. Dimensions were recorded as 18.4' x 16.6' in 1954 and as 18.45' x 16.2' in 1964. There was evidence of white plaster found during both projects. The thickness of the front (SE) wall is less than that of Room W3, but I believe this to be a modification by the Stagecoach personnel. The tops of the room-divider walls were found easily by sweeping and hoeing, and the 1954 trenches helped them to stand out from the sheet of fallen wall. Both wall and rubble had the smoothed, inward-sloping appearance of well-meaning landscaping.

The floor of the Stagecoach period was well below the fallen wall and the associated bovine bones and manure of the Cattle period. It was the usual plank and joist type, with the joists running NE-SW. These joists had been seated in shallow, sand-filled trenches. There was no direct evidence of a Bent period floor in this room other than the deeply scorched earth beneath the later, unburned floor. There was, however, an elaborate wall complex of the Bent period (see Plate 15). This consisted of a rectangular, plank-lined shaft, a non-congruent rectangular wall room, and a stairway leading down into it (see Plate 16). Even assuming the topmost riser to have originally been the highest, its present shallow depth of 0.35' is so much less than the average of 0.75' that we must regard it as a remnant. Clearly, the Stagecoach people built their own floor some 0.3' below the original
Bent floor. The present dimensions of the stairs are 2.6' wide by 3.75' long. The fire tread, average 1.1' in width. Originally the stairs had one more bottom tread within the well-room, and it is represented by scorched remnants which indicate a total length of 4.5'. The well-room was rectangular and consisted of four square uprights in each corner with plank-lined walls. The dimensions of the well-room were 6.0' x 6.2' x 5.5' deep. The well-shaft itself was constructed as follows; a builder's excavation somewhat the shape of the room, but narrowed to 3.3' x 4.0' by 9.75' deep was first dug. A vertical shaft lined with planks was built up, filling in the excavation around it as the shaft rose in height. At the top the shaft was bordered with flat boards 0.3' wide by 3.5' long. The completed shaft was 2.8' x 3.45' x 9.75'. It was off-set 45' from the room, so that the NE edge of the stairs was in line with the W and S corners of the shaft.

Among the numerous artifacts recovered from the shaft was the pump, which was a wooden device with iron straps built like a square barrel. The piston was also of wood, although it undoubtedly had a leather gasket.

The fire here was severe. The articles recovered from the higher levels of the shaft were scorched or charred, although the lower ones were preserved by being waterlogged. The well-room itself indicates a partial collapse at the top which gives it the profile of an inverted boll. The fill from here up (2.65') is a "cap" with associated materials which confirm its Stagecoach period origin.

The well complex is unquestionably of the Bent period.
Since the Bent floor of W2 proper had been removed, there was nothing to suggest the room's use at that level. It had doors communicating with both Room NW1 and Room N2, which could mean that the three shared some use pattern between them. If any one of them could be identified as a smithy, the proximity of a wall would be quite logical.

Room W3. The dimensions recorded in 1954 were 17.2' x 19.1', compared with 17.1' x 19.2' a decade later. The fallen wall was immediately underlain by many bovine skeletons and two deer. Associated with these animal bones were broken plate glass, and such agricultural hardware as pieces of mower feet, blade-holders, etc. The ubiquitous manure here was more heterogenous than usual, some of it being deer and some rabbit. The stagecoach floor was much like that of Rm. W2. The Bent floor was scorched and discolored but, except for a circular depression in the center, was intact. It was of prepared earth with a line of post holes, two covered with support stones. In the center was a slot-like impression made by a half-log laid flat side up. At least two, and possibly three, posts were used as roof supports.

A portion of the divider wall between Rm. W3 and W2 is missing. The wall and floor are scorched a bright red and is accompanied by a bovus humerus and an iron pan. Despite its depth it is intrusive from the Cattle period.

In order to test the cause of the floor having "settled" in the center, the NE half of the floor was removed. A very regular, straight-walled
circular pit was found. It was 11.89' in diameter and 4.5' deep. One half of the pit was excavated, but very little was recovered other than small animal bones. It is possible that it was used as a storage, or cache pit in the early phase of Bent’s occupation. Just beneath the bottom of the SE (Plaza-side, or front) wall was a post hole which had to be earlier than the wall.

The absence of a fireplace in this room would have made it very uncomfortable in the winter for anything but in-and-out work. This is the sort of activity that would be appropriate to a warehouse or storage room, and there is some documentary reference to these west rooms as such.

**Room W4.** This room was enigmatic to Dr. Dick after his limited tests, and remained so until well along 1964. The 1954 dimensions of 14.0' x 16.0' reflect the interpretation of it as a pit. Only a complete excavation could have shown this to have been a full room 17.1' x 25.45', with a stair leading from the walkway down into a basement 14.0' x 16.0' which in turn had a split-level pit 8.5' x 9.5' x 2.0' deep (see Plate 17). The ground level floor would have been of little use unless the basement was roofed over. Apparently it was. Front and back posts were located in the center of the NW and SE basement walls. All four corners of the basement had heavy posts up to a foot in diameter. In addition to two intermediate posts on each of the remaining walls, there was a dark "key" ghost in the centers. All ten upright posts were half recessed, and on a horizontal plane.
The same is true of the keyed beam. Unless there was also a trap door and ladder, the basement had to be entered by stairs from the west walkway outside.

The stairs were 4.0' x 4.66' wide, with treads 1.1', and risers 0.8'. Both treads and risers were plank-covered.

Dr. Dick's single deep test was in the south corner of the basement, where at a depth of 5 feet he felt he had found the bent floor. In a sense he had, since the scorched surface was veneered by an adobe wash left from the "grout" in which the Stagecoach period floor joists were set. The Stagecoach floor was missing in the south and east corners, except as crumbled ruffle in the east. Dr. Dick's interpretation of his test was accurate in that the folk of the Stagecoach and Cattle periods dumped their debris in this "pit." The Stagecoach floor was covered with iron implements, most of which was from agricultural machinery and coach wheels, and a leather shoe with square toe.

The split-level pit became evident only after scraping down around the floor above. It first showed as a black corner (rounded, as usual). Removal of the penultimate floor revealed a pit 8.5' x 9.5', not quite parallel to the basement. The primary function of this pit was for the storage of wooden barrels. The charred remains of fourteen such barrels were found plus two brass bibcocks. The diameters of the barrels were 1.65'. In addition to the barrels and spigots,
hundreds of variegated glass trade beads, a spade, a fireplace tile with pre-1829 glaze, a cartouch case, and seven flintlocks were recovered. Everything was severely burned or charred (including fabric-lined bungs). By peeling back the adobe coating the scorched discoloration extended across the floor of the basement as well, but not the walls.

West 4 was obviously the largest of several storage rooms. It is doubtful that the other items listed above belonged to the pit, but the barrels unquestionably did. There must have been more in the basement than barrels (whether for vinegar, wine, or spirits) if this is the "subterranean storehouse where Tete Rouge and the clerk spent two hours gathering supplies". The ground level floor must have been shelf-lined. There was probably a wooden floor across the basement, but the corner supports probably extended to the main ceiling since this was a long room beneath a second story. There is indirect evidence that the roof of the basement was plastered while; numerous large pieces of gray adobe plaster with white coatings were recovered from the pit. These all contained impressions of latias and larger beams as well. This would probably have been more necessary in the basement than at the ground floor, or the room above where more light was available.

Room W5. In 1954 there was much question about where to measure from and to where, but the dimensions recorded as 22.0(?)' x 19.0(?)'. Our measurements in 1964 were 21.33' x 17.0'.

There was no remnant of the Cattle period in this room for Stagecoach period materials were revealed in the first level. The plank-and-
Joist floor was easily traced out, with the joists laid from NW to SE. An extraordinary thick west corner can only be explained as the remnant of a chimney foundation for the fireplace directly above. The Abert sketch does indicate a chimney for the second story room at this location.

After removing the Stagecoach period floor, the usual ashes and scorched clay and debris was encountered. Charred wood as was relatively light. A slumped, circular area was immediately apparent, even before the entire Bent floor was cleaned off. This later proved to be a subfloor pit. The floor itself had two probable roof-support posts, but not symmetrically located. One was next to the edge of the SW wall, and the other was on a stone base, in line with the other, but well in from the NE wall. Like W3, there was a long thin slot in the center, but closer to the southwest wall. It was ash-filled and oriented NE-SW, which is at right angles to the wood-filled slot in W3.

The pit was shaped like a rounded capital "D" with the straight edge against the northwest wall. It was 9.4' x 10.6' by 4.44' deep. Only a small amount of bone was recovered from the fill, although there were several irregular blocks of limestone, some burned, on the floor. Like the pit in W3, this one suggests a temporary cache pit early in Bent's period which was filled in and floored over later. The pit was earlier than the Bent floor, but younger than the sub-wall trench which it intruded. This trench contained ashes, and also went under the floor of Room W6, and into the open area beyond W6. The 1954 exploratory
trench along the inside of the outer NW wall was directly above but
never cut as deep as the trench.

Except for size Room W5 would seem to offer the same alternatives
of use-pattern as Room W3. It is fairly certain that there was a
chimney foundation in the west corner of W5, but if there was ever
a fireplace the Stagecoach period removed most of what remained. In
my opinion there never was a fireplace at the ground floor in this
room.

Room W5. This is a confusing little room, if room it really was.
Dr. Dick determined its dimensions at 12.0' x 9.0' in 1954. A
decade later we measured it as 10.66' x 10.15', but were uncertain
what to regard as the front (SE) wall. The front wall at 12.0'
would be the 1954 exploratory trench. The floor, at the highest level,
was paved with adobe bricks laid flat. The sizes varied somewhat but
averaged 9' x 16' x 4'. Most bricks were broken, those fronting on
the Plaza being best preserved. The disturbing aspect here is that the
brick floor seems identical on each side of the 1954 exploratory trench
except for height! It could have been an extensive paved stoop, or a
patio. If so, it might have served as a wash house, with little or
no emphasis on the "house." It's immediate proximity to Pit #2 would
make this identification plausible. The floor is younger than the
ditch in back, but since all floors at the site are apparently so, this
is not too significant.
There were two earlier levels of occupation, the higher of which could possibly qualify as a poorly preserved floor. I feel that both were simply open occupation levels, probably not floored, and that the paving was added late in the Bent period. If the pavement is up-dated into the Stagecoach period, it becomes less likely to have been a wash area. Pit #2 is unquestionably a cistern and it is equally certain that it is Bent.

Pit #2. This pit was found as a result of excavating Stagecoach period post holes. When it became evident that several posts showed disturbance in their sides and bottoms, the area was hoed down gradually and swept. After a few such shavings a circular feature appeared. Excavation showed that it was a straight-sided pit 9.85' in diameter and 7.5' deep. From level 4 to level 1? a partial cave-in was evident. At the bottom of the pit the natural gravel had been covered with an exotic clay. This could only have been to enable the pit to hold water either in or out. If the latter was the purpose, it would have served as another cache pit, but if the gravel at the base ever served as an aquifer, I suspect that the walls would have had to be clay-coated also. My feeling is that it was a cistern associated with the wash room in W6. A door leading through the outer northwest wall, with the remains of a stoop outside is enigmatic at this stage.
Room W7. This room was regarded in 1954 as an off-set corner of "Room SW8." Since I found no convincing evidence of such a room, I can only offer the observation that the northeast wall of W6 was clearly in evidence although cut through at the north and east corners. We determined the dimensions to be 6.12' by 6.12'. The floor showed evidence of discoloration from fire, as did the inner edges of the walls. Artifacts were meager, since the floor space was so small. Beyond this, there is little that can be said with any confidence in the way of interpretation. If there was a smokehouse present, this structure would make an excellent candidate.

The walkways apparently were just that, as there was no evidence to suggest planks. There was a subtle, but noticeable difference between the walkways associated with each row of rooms. On the east, a line of limestone blocks set five feet apart, center-to-center, extends from a point opposite the north corner of Room E5 to the junction with the south walkway. The stones are six feet inside to seven feet outside from the edge of the front walls of the east rooms. This provided a six foot width of walking space. A layer of gravel overlain with sand constituted the walkway itself. Protection from the sun and from direct rain was provided by an overhang which was supported by posts seated on the limestone blocks. To prevent water from seeping under the walkway a drain ditch 1.3' x 0.21' deep was dug at the edge of the line of stones. This was filled with loose sand and covered with planks. The latter probably served also to resist erosion from the water which dripped from the edge of the overhang.
The walkway made a right angle turn before the south row, but a single stone post-support offset at 45° indicates that the overhang was beveled as shown in the Abert sketch.

The south row walkway differed in two respects from that of the east; the stone post-supports were not uniformly spaced for the south, and the drain ditch was covered in places with adobe bricks as well as boards. In front of Room S6 the walkway incorporated the stairway to the Billiard Room. The stair landing is 4.5' x 3.8' and extended 15.8' to 19.7' from the wall of the south rooms. There is a narrow (0.5'), shallow (0.3') trench which runs from the east edge of the stair landing to the west corner of Room W3. This trench has not yet been interpreted. The drain ditch does not simply join that of the west row, but intersects with it and continues to the south corner of Room W5.

The west walkway differs from the others in that small stone post supports were recessed in the ground, so that only the post holes and molds are visible. Except for pot hunting disturbance in front of Room W4, the line of posts and the drain ditch are continuous from the south walkway to that of the north. The drain trench was first encountered on this side, where the sand-fill was less adulterated with silt and therefore more striking. It was covered with wood planking all the way, but became badly charred before Rooms W3 and W2.

The north walkway is definite only for that half west of the Gate. Again, there were subtle differences. The posts were larger, set on lager
limestone supports which were recessed deeper in the ground; the drain tube was deepest before Rooms N2 and N3, deeper in fact than the west ditch. As the drain ditch extended southeast it became shallow and surfaced in front of Room N4 for a total length of 17.6'. The drain ditch contained sand which contained a great deal of silt. The posts were 0.6' in diameter and were 6.6' apart, center to center.

A walkway was in evidence in front of the north rooms, but there was no evidence of an overhang. The sidewalk was simply a seven foot wide stratum of the local reddish gravel overlain by ashes, conglomerate scorched rubble, and a yellow gravel walkway of the Stagecoach period.

The Fur Press, it has always been felt, was located at, or near, the center of the Plaza. Of a total of three documented references to it one neglects to imply a location, but the other two specify the center of the courtyard. Dr. Dick apparently had run out of time or had not really scheduled a test for this feature. He did place one of his characteristic 1.5' x 2.5' x 1.0' pick-mattock "pits" near one of the post holes. So near in fact that it cut into the scorched mold of a horizontal beam which connected the two in-line posts below the surface. In so small a test it would have looked little different from the 0.3' average depth of scorched conglomerate which covers the Plaza of the 1849-1859 period level.

There are three posts, each rather massive (see Plate 21). Two are aligned northeast southwest 9.5' apart, edge to edge, and 11.0' apart center to center. They were joined 0.15' below ground by a horizontal
beam. The diameter of the southwest post mold is 1.4' and set 2.4' deep. The opposite post mold is 1.4' in diameter and 1.4' deep. Making an acute right triangle the third post was 11.2' northwest of the first, was 1.54' wide, and 1.44' deep. A builders' trench 0.8' x 15.0' was first made, partly to ease the heavy timbers into position, and probably to arrange some sort of fitting between the two upright posts which were at the ends of the horizontal timber.

The fur press is probably a later addition at the fort. It cuts across a disturbed area. This latter feature cannot be fully excavated without obliterating the press. It was "stepped" down in two tiers to dig a circular pit 3.3' wide to an, as yet, undetermined depth.

Little material of use or index value has been recovered from it. It might possibly the remnant of an early well, a cache pit, or even a flag polo base.

The distance of the press from the west row of rooms is 38.6', from the east 34.4', from the south 39.2', and from the north 44.0'.

The Passageway. At the east corner of the Plaza a passage to the Inner Corral is formed by the northeast wall of Room B5, and the southwest walls of Rooms N6 and N7. It is 4.5' wide and 23.0' long; the length is determined by the width of northeast terminus of the east walkway. There are two good Bent levels, both containing ashes. During the Stagecoach period it was apparently of advantage to raise the level
of the Passageway floor. Adobe bricks were laid flat on top of scorched conglomerate and ashes. By this time the levels of the Plaza and Inner Corral had also become elevated by the accumulation of debris. It may have been the relative softness of the fill that inspired the limited use of paving. A similar phenomenon at a higher level apparently was a Cattleman period effort to make some use of fallen wall.

It had been assumed that the purpose of this feature was to bring cargo wagons, pack animals, etc., from the Plaza to the Inner Corral. It became evident, however, that no such wagon could negotiate the Passageway, and it seems doubtful if it could really enter the Gate. Even a pack horse would probably have to be unloaded to get through without abrading the packs. If it was for strictly emergency use to bring animals from a vulnerable location to one of relative safety, said animals would probably not be carrying packs! This corridor would provide convenient access between the Plaza and the East Tower or Inner Corral for persons on foot.

The Tower Bastions. These towers are not properly rooms which can be assigned to a row of the compound. They were designed to function as citadels, but in actuality they were used more as arsenals.

The East Tower was completely excavated in 1954, the artifacts deposited with the State Historical Society of Colorado in Denver. Dr. Dick found the structure to have an inside diameter of 16.00', with walls 2.2' thick. He also found a trench 0.8' wide and deep and 15.7'
in length. He did not find it to extend to the southwest wall, nor to exit through the east arc, and could not interpret it as a drain (for publication).

Dr. Dick placed the entrance to the Tower high in the wall shared with Room N7. I have studied the photograph and the wall and find no indication of a sealed door. He found Stagecoach period fill above adobe rubble, sterile fill, and then 0.6' of charred fill over an adobe floor. His notes in Denver also reveal that he found six large post-holes averaging 1.0' in diameter. The Tower, after excavation and recordation, was backfilled by machine.

In 1963 the Tower was re-excavated by area and level to insure a cautious outlook. The dimensions were indeed 16.0' in diameter, with walls 2.2' thick. The trench, however, was obviously a drain which made an exit through the east arc of the wall (see Plate 19). The orifice had been a box of cut limestone turned northward at an angle. The confusion resulted, no doubt, from the fact that the top stone had collapsed and blocked the square orifice. There were actually 22 post holes in the floor of the Tower. In view of the fact that a cannon was mounted (albeit a small one) in this tower which fired salutes to visiting dignitaries, Indian Chiefs, etc. (in lieu of any bona fide excitement), these supports were probably necessary floor supports. The doorway was not from Room N7, in my opinion, but from the Inner Corral. Most of the southwest "wall" was simply compact
adobe with excavations on either side. The door way is 6.22' wide, which is adequate for two-way traffic under duress. A sealed opening beyond the outer north-east protective wall is indicated on the Boggs sketch (see Historical Section, Plate 2) and identified as a "coal hole." This term has long been used by many people to refer to any dark, black opening. Such a folk tradition does not preclude the possibility of coal being passed through here, but in the absence of any other evidence of coal, it does make it unlikely.

In examining the artifacts from this feature stored with the Colorado State Historical Society, I was impressed by the number of whetstones. These were of a very fine-grained, compact sandstone usually of brick-size and shape. All showed signs of extensive use. There was also a fair number of ox-yoke pins, meat-hooks, and a small "nozzle" from a powder flask. Unfortunately no indication of depth or association was included with these artifacts. If of Bent provenience, the whetstones indicate that the cutlasses and pikes were kept sharp even when there was no opportunity to use them.

The West Tower tests conducted in 1954 failed to find any more than the beginning of the arc where it joined the outer northwest wall. It was not until the southwest quarter of the loop road was blocked off that test trenches could be cut across it. There, under and past the crown of the road an arc of wall with a chord of 12.9' was found. The outer edge of the wall was crumbled and the thickness varied considerably,
but the inner edge was well marked by the scorched discoloration. No floor features were found other than the fire blackened adobe floor itself. The bulk of the associated material was comprised of the charred remains of a wagon bed (see Plate 20). The diameter, measured from the inside north corner,
corner of Room South 7 to an "L" 6.2' - 9.1' outside the outer east wall. The former trench was used, and lengthened, in Stagecoach times but was not as deep, nor did it join with the other trench. The latter trench paralleled the inside of the back walls of the south rooms, the outside of the front wall of Room Alpha, and underneath and beyond the east outer wall. This trench was abandoned during Bent's period, for all but the lowest laminae of floor plaster were undisturbed by it, and in Room 5EI-A it is sealed over with plaster. Another old trench is a small one at the base of the outer east wall, extending from the south edge of the gate to the trench in front of Room Alpha. It is below the 1954 exploratory trench, and is 53.3' x 1.2' x 0.35' deep. The remaining trench is obviously intrusive, and profiles show it to be later than the features in contact with it. This is a narrow trench extending from the northeast wall of Rm. 5EI-A diagonally past the first-mentioned trench, under the outer wall, joining a parallel trench outside. This trench contained small vertical posts and was probably Cattle period in time.

The Bent level is marked by a compacted clay, ashy gray in color, with elevations which average 19.65'. Numerous post holes were found, mostly in the higher levels. Above this level is a lamina of ash, inconsistent in thickness and distribution, which is in turn overlaid by molten burned fill. Above this is scattered adobe fragments. A short half-wall of adobe bricks, one brick in width, was built in Stagecoach times 6.5' south of the tower. This wall is only 3.8' long (5.5' from the present wall surface) and may have supported a gate to a small pen.
THE STAGE GATE

This feature was measured to be 22.0' in 1954 and 1964. Dr. Dick conjectured that the east rooms were razed to facilitate vehicular traffic through this gate during the Stagecoach period. Nothing in the profiles across this feature indicate that there was ever a wall here, either removed or broken through. Rather, there is the sterile native soil at the bottom, an occupation zone with a scorched surface, light soil and solian overburden which has become compacted, and at the very top, the 1955 adobe bricks. Since the edges had already been excavated earlier, new interpretations must be restricted the gateway. On this basis it is suggested that the Stagecoach period saw a remodeling of an earlier feature, not the construction of a new one.

THE ALLEY, BILLIARD ROOM, & ROOM ALPHA

The term "alley" is somewhat misleading insofar as it connotes an uninterrupted, open-ended corridor. It was a corridor 15.00' wide between the Wagon Room and the south row of rooms, but neither end was entirely free from obstruction. At the easterly end of the Alley was Room Alpha. It was not possible to distinguish a definite wall separating this room from the Alley because of a packed clay floor which appeared to be continuous for both features. Communication between the Alley and the Inner Courtyard was by means of a gate, with heavy wood sill, 8.0' wide. This gate was placed between the south
corner of Room 36-A and the north corner of Room Alpha. There was a recognizable floor level for the Alley throughout its length. Behind Room S4 there was a wall the width of one adobe brick. This wall was 3.3' southeast of a line even with the inside west corner of Rm. S4. This wall did not completely block the Alley at this point, however, for there was a doorway 2.8' in it with posts for jambs. The west end of the Alley, like the west end of the Wagon Room, contains numerous post holes at various levels, and are most numerous behind Room S7. This is as it should be, since this is where the Billiard Room was located. It might well be asked, why post supports in the Wagon Room too? One possible answer is space; 20.00' x 16.00' would have been more than ample for quarters, but barely adequate as a gathering place.

The Billiard Room might have extended at least partly over the west end of the Wagon Room. This, however, runs counter to the Abert sketches! If this topographical engineer can be credited with accurate observations anywhere, it should be here, where all four sides were exposed and where he himself must have spent some time. The room would have required enough support posts underneath to preclude vehicular traffic. A gravel covered stair landing was indicated but no firm remnant was found; this would have further narrowed the space. Only individuals and pack animals would have been at this end in any event, since the access is even more limited between the West Tower to the west and Room W5 and S7 to the north.

Room Alpha was missed altogether in 1954 and its discovery a decade later came as a surprise. It remains at least partially enigmatic for at least
two reasons; 1) it cannot be given strict dimensions because of the absence of firm wall evidence on the northwest, 2) a room in such a location would be part of the structure sketched by Abert, extending from the site of the East Gate to the Wagon Room, but it was separated from both by a substantial wall. There was a Stagecoach floor in this room, but it was almost certainly a larger addition to the older Alpha. The two main roof supports for the Stagecoach roof were two large posts set deeply, resting on shaped limestone blocks 1.6' x 2.4' x 0.5'. The best preserved portion of the late floor was that in the "Beta" section some twelve to seventeen feet north-west of the east outer wall. Horse shoes and "late" mule shoe, harness, etc. were associated. Above this level were several laminae of manure.

Beneath the wood floor of the Stagecoach period was a burned earthen floor. The scorched marks of this floor merged with those on the northeast wall. There was a pattern of six (?) light posts of juniper. If these posts can be assumed to have been centrally located, their position relative to the east outer wall indicates a room 60.15' (NE wall) x 16.00', by 63.0':N-S.

A second prepared earth was found directly below which showed no evidence of burning at all. The support post pattern was only slightly different and there was no difference in post type. The room size indicated is identical.
THE WAGON ROOM

This feature is chisel, or burin-shaped with average inside dimensions of 18.0' x 160.0'. There was a doorway 3.3' wide in the northwest wall (see Plate 18). It is possible that there may have been a door in the opposite end as well, but the loop road destroyed the foundations there. It would seem unlikely that there was a door in the southeast wall since none of the sketches indicate one. It is certain that wagons could not have been brought in from the Alley, for this is where the walls are highest. On the southwest, the wall is very low and access could easily have been provided for. Whether this was intentional or not is speculative; the south corner is missing altogether and the west corner is equally low. The pre-excavation surface indicated a sharp slope downward, indicating that man and nature had sculpted it so. If wagons were parked in this feature, it would have had to be from the Main Corral side simply because it was impossible from the Alley. The westerly quarter of the room had too many posts at the same floor level to have permitted heavy cargo wagons to park. The eastern two-thirds had a sparser post-pattern, however.

The Wagon Room was not among the earliest features at the site. A defile extended from almost the northeast edge of the Alley (in the east) to within a yard of the southwest wall of the Wagon room, and extending from the West Tower to a point behind Room 6EL-1. Before use could be made of this area, it had first to be filled in and levelled. This was, of course, done. The northeast wall may
once have been the back wall of the fort, for it was built to conform with the contours of the defile, rather than across the top of the rubble fill. The fill consisted of adobe wasters, which indicates that considerable construction had already taken place. The bottom of the rubble undulates, but the top was levelled off and compacted. These wasters are of broken bricks made chiefly of the gray adobe. A blue cast is given to the gray floor level by compaction. The west third shows a progressively shallower profile and also a heavier amount of charcoal and scorched over-burden.

THE MAIN CORRAL

Except for the Ice House, no other phase of the project has caused more high hopes, disappointment, resignation, bewilderment, and general frustration than this one. Hope was initially high because Dr. Dick was believed to have picked up the wall in several places in line with the outer east wall of the fort. Several lines-of-sight based on the alignment of the latter wall failed to reveal anything convincing either in plan or profile. Correspondence with Dr. Dick reveals that he found two or three discolored areas in small tests performed during part of a day, as well as several other tests in the same line which showed nothing.

Much later, tests beneath the crown of the loop road revealed a substantial wall which crossed into the field beyond, turned, and behaved otherwise like a corral wall. It was not at all in accord with the Abert sketch, however. Instead of continuing off of the outer east
wall it was set back some eight feet from the south corner of the Wagon Room, and is then generally parallel with the Compound and not with the Inner Corral! The width of this wall varies from 1.2' near the Wagon Room to 0.95' where it makes a south corner. The back, or south-west wall is not really parallel, being 129.25' on the south east and 123.2' near the center. Since all of these remnants were shallow, very little cultural material was recovered and these are of necessarily tenuous provenience. In short, the identification of this feature is vulnerable to challenge. The land across the loop road has enjoyed no such sanctuary as that afforded the fort proper, but had been under cultivation for decades. A very considerable amount of disturbance has obliterated almost all of the historic grade in the Main Corral. From the corral side of the Wagon Room wall, the surface can be traced only to 2.4'. It is easily recognized, since it too was scorched by the 1849 fire. Subsequently excavations have cut curb-like banks in at least two separate operations. Since these follow the plan of the road, both are probably early phases of its construction.

The ground elevation is therefore lower in the field than at the fort. Dr. Dick has expressed his complete faith in the Abert sketch, especially as regards the Main Corral. The sketches themselves could be interpreted either way due to the angle of view and differential wall heights. The plan drawings based on Abert's sketches are quite definite in showing the corral parallel with the Inner Corral. In the meantime, we do have this corral-like feature to consider.
To date, no documentary reference to this feature has been found. Unfortunately, the entire frontage before the fort had been bladed down during the decade preceding excavation. Early trenches (TII, 2, & 3) testing the area in front of, and just east of the main gate were fruitless. Later tests showed that the lower levels were still extant farther north and east, and even extended past the loop road.

From the remnants, the dump was at least 123 feet long x 57 to 78 feet wide and probably was always at least thirty feet from the fort walls. This was not such an offensive situation as it might appear; even at these bottom-most remnants the profiles show lenses of ashes and charred material. Nothing, it seems, was simply dumped and left, but was probably incinerated immediately. This means that the odor of trash fires was fairly constant.

Mr. Baldridge, the former owner of the adjacent land recalls that when the bulldozer levelled the dump area large quantities of leather harness, glass, and general hardware was pushed out into the fields. The greatest damage in this case was to remove all of the material which accumulated during the Cattlemen and Stagecoach periods, and apparently most of the later Bent materials as well. Even under this circumstance the amount of cultural material has been considerable. Trade beads, clay pipe fragments, parts of the hardware of guns, etc. have been as frequent here as anywhere, plus such unique items as a lead plug for
an 1806-1826 one-half or one pound cannister of E. I. Du Pont black powder, and clay pipes of unfamiliar design.
REFERENCES

1. All elevations are relative to N.P.S. Brass Cap "D", which was arbitrarily elevated at plus 20.00 feet. Actually it falls somewhere between 3990 and 4010 feet above mean sea-level.

2. All references to the 1954 excavation are based either on personal communications with Dr. Herbert Dick, or on his article "Excavation of Bent's Fort" The Colorado Magazine, Vol. XXXIII, No. 3, July 1956, pp. 181-196.

3. References to documented occurrences, descriptions, statements, sketches, photographs, etc. are based on discussions with and compilations by Park Historian Stinson.
Photographic Data

The photographs used in this section were taken by the archaeological staff with 4" x 5" negatives. These negatives are numbered by chronological sequence and are permanently filed at Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site. Cut film (Panatomic-X, Plus-X, and Royal Pan) was used for all photos, above #310.

Numbered contact prints are arranged by subject as a cross-index.
Plate 1: Between 1955 and 1963 these modern adobe walls served to "interpret" the site to visitors. Originally 5 feet high all around they were occasionally misplaced. The West Tower, as shown here, would be at the north corner of the Wagon Room; the tower is actually under the far side of the road. View is to the southwest.

Plate 2: Control pillar of Room N7. Note the fallen wall - in the top stratum; narrow dark second stratum is the Stage-coach floor; debris above terminal Bent floor contains charcoal, ashes, & other burned material on the prepared clay floor at tip of arrow; more ashes, charcoal, charred vigas, etc. fill space above early Bent floor, also of prepared clay, at base of arrow.
Plate 3: View of Rooms E4 (foreground), E5, Passageway, N6, N7, and East Tower Bastion. Light area in E4 at bottom left is a pothole. In Room E5 note the Stagecoach wall to right of fireplace. The floors of N6 and N7 (with the door skeleton) are at the Stagecoach floor levels. Note the modern wall at left, above the old wall of N6. View is to northeast.

Plate 4: View of the counter-cabinet foundation in floor of Room E4. This feature is interrupted by the pothunter hole beyond. View is to the northeast.
Plate 5: Early Bent pit, looking South. Bottom of pit is shown at left, the adobe brick wasters, used to fill the pit are shown at right. The west quarter, at right, contained the counter foundations and was not excavated below the terminal Bent floor.

Plate 6: View of east rooms from center of Plaza. Rooms KJ at left, to SKL at extreme right. View is to the Southeast.
Plate 7: Room E3, remnant of stairway in west corner. This feature was razed prior to the fort's abandonment. Note instrument scars.

Plate 8: Room E3, the "rectangular adobe feature" with three posts at one end. Like the stairway, this feature was no longer in use when fort was burned.
Plate 9: View of south corner of compound. Men at left are in Room SE1, those at right are starting work in SE4.

Plate 10: Floor of Room SE4, looking west. Dais-like feature near south corner is a section of fallen wall. Note condition of "H" fireplace at left, and of northeast wall at bottom right. A sub-floor pit is noticeable beneath slate at center-right.
Plate 11: Bent floor being exposed in Room 85. The iron wagon parts are the most numerous of any associated with a Bent floor. The arrow indicate north.

Plate 12: View of Room 87, looking south. The Bent floor has not been reached. Note the "N" fireplace shared with Room 86. The line of small posts in a trench are of cattle period provenience, and intrudes fill which is chiefly Stagecoach. The posts ran across Burial 92; Burial 91 is near the two mule shoes.
Plate 13: View, toward the north, of Rooms W2 (at far right), W2 (with fallen wall segment left at its right center), and W3. Workmen are cleaning out the 1954 exploratory trenches. Note the deer and cattle skeletons of the Cattle period in W3. Room W4 is still unexcavated at the left.

Plate 14: View of the sub-wall, sub-floor trench in backs of Rooms W5, W6, and Cistern (at right). A similar trench runs the length of the South rooms.
Plate 15: Room W2, Bent period well partially excavated.
Note plan and profile of well stairs at left.

Plate 16: Room W2, looking down the stairs toward the well-room. Arrow indicates north.
Plate 17: Room W4; looking southeast. Stair in east corner led from sidewalk to basement floor; split-level pit in foreground contained, among many things, 1½ charred kegs.

Plate 18: View down the Alley, looking southeast. South rooms are at left, and the Wagon Room is on the right. The circular depression near the south corner of Rm. W7 is an old pot-hole. Note Wagon Room door at extreme right, below center. Area in Alley between the two central columns is the area of the Billiard Room.
Plate 19: East Tower Bastion drain tube, looking east.
Note that there is a stone tube exiting the wall although the top stone has collapsed.

Plate 20: West Tower Bastion, looking north. The remnants consist of the single arc of wall at center, and a two-foot long segment joined to the northwest outer wall (not visible). The arc-shaped ditch at upper right is the 1954 exploratory trench. Burned wood & metal on tower floor was a wagon bed.
Plate 21: Fur Press. A triangular pattern is formed by the two post holes in line with the gate (near top of photo) and the large hole at left. The latter hole was enlarged by a gourd root. The rectangular pit near the far post hole is a 1954 test.
6. HISTORICAL - ARCHEOLOGICAL SUMMARY

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The following summary is provided to analyze certain key points brought out in the Historical and Archeological Data sections of this report. It is confined to items having a direct bearing on the basic appearance of the Fort during the Bent Period. Detailed archeological analysis is necessarily deferred to the final report which will be submitted at the completion of the present project.

1. East Gate

**Historical:** Documentary evidence suggests that a large gate in the main east wall, providing access to the Inner Corral, was an original feature of the Fort. (See Historical Data Section, Pages 29-30)

**Archeological:** The reasons for suggesting that this feature is an original feature dating at least to "late" Bent are given on Page 41 of the Archeological Data Section. If this was a later modification of a section of solid wall, the profile should have shown a section of disturbed wall, a builder's ditch where it was torn out, or at least the absence of a Bent surface at all. We have neither of the former phenomena but we do have a scorched surface, not associated with any wall remnant, which is contiguous to the Bent level of the Inner Corral.
2. Alley Gate

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL:** There was no reason to suspect the existence of this feature before its discovery. As described in the Archeological Data Section, it was anchored in the south corner of Room S.E.1-A and in the north corner (to the extent that it can be determined) of Room Alpha. The excavation for seating the sill is itself intrusive to a wide, irregular ditch which contained, at a higher level, a row of small (0.35' diam.) juniper posts. This gate frankly disturbs me, and it cannot be given firm provenience because it was lacking a vertical profile. The entire south corner of the compound lacked such a profile outside the walls, except the easterly half of Room Alpha; this was due to the concave contour of the eroded surface at ground level.

The best basis for ascribing this gate to "late" Bent is the association with that grade level.

**HISTORICAL:** Little has been learned from historical sources concerning the area in question. However, as discussed on Page 36 of the Historical Data Section, it is believed that some type of passageway between the Inner Corral and the Alley existed in the Alpha area. There may well have been a gate to prevent animals from venturing through the passageway.
3. Pits

**ARCHEOLOGICAL:** These features also came as a surprise, except the main basement of Room W4. At least three types of pits are represented: room features (Pits 1, 4, and 5, possibly 9), cistern (pit 2), & storage (3, 6, 7, 8). Pit 9 is rather regular and straight walled but, even so, it probably was dug simply for the disposal of debris during preparation for abandonment, which is my view.

The pits which occur in Rooms 64, 85 & 6 (single pit), and W2, and W5 are unidentifiable. Only small amounts of non-index material was recovered from any of them, but with the possible exception of W5, they appear early. The pit shared by 85 and 86 underlies the wall dividing them. Other than these facts, there is no archeological basis for emphatic interpretation.

**HISTORICAL:** It is possible that in the latter part of 1843, Bent, St. Vrain & Co. was obliged to construct storage pits at Bent's Fort in which to store a large amount of U. S. Army provisions.

On August 23, 1843 the Company contracted with the U. S. Army Quartermaster Department to, receive at Westport, Missouri,
... a quantity of stores and provisions, intended for the subsistence of the Army of the United States, weighing thirty-five thousand pounds or thereabouts ...

and transport the same to Bent's Fort where it (The Company) would be responsible,

... for the care, safety & good order of the aforesaid property for the time of its receipt by them ...

to delivery,

... excepting the danger of a capture by an enemy or other unforeseen accidents not to be obviated by their best care & exertions ... 1

Three days later, August 26, 1843 the Company contracted with the U. S. Army Subsistence Department for,

... Forty-five thousand pounds net of beef Cattle on the hoof ... Also Thirty-Five thousand pounds of unsifted Flour, of good quality and in good condition, to be delivered in bags, the bags after being emptied, to be held subject to the order of Bent, ST. Vrain & Co. Also, upon reasonable notice, such quantities of Onion's and other Provisions as may be required ... 2

The provisions were stored at Bent's Fort,

... to establish a depot of provisions at that point, to meet the contingency of the troops composing the Santa Fe escort wintering there ... 3

As events turned out, The Santa Fe Escort did not winter at the Fort. However, proof that the provisions were indeed stored there may be found in the fact that the Army found itself with 35,000 pounds of provisions on its hands. In
May of 1844, Major R. B. Lee of the Subsistence Department wrote to his superiors:

... Since the return of the Santa Fe escort, I have lost no opportunity to effect a sale of the provisions at Fort William, but as yet have received no offer ...

The provisions were finally used in the summer of 1845 by the Kearny Expedition which included Captain F. St. George Cooke, commander of the Santa Fe Escort for whom they were originally intended. Kearny approached Bent's Fort under the pale of a disquieting rumor that the supplies had been spoiled or used up. On July 29 the column arrived at the Fort and Cooke was gratified to find "the provisions in perfect preservation." (See also Historical Data Section, Pages 47-50 for data on Subterranean Room.)

4. Use of Rooms

HISTORICAL: The conclusions reached as to probable use of ground floor rooms are found on Diagram 3, Page 84, Historical Data Section.

ARCHEOLOGICAL: No archeological evidence has been discovered to date to refute the conclusions reached as to use of rooms.

5. NOTES

1. National Archives - Old Army Section, Quartermaster General's Office, Register of Contracts No. 8, 1841-1844, 440-441.


4. Ibid.

5. Young, Otis E., The West of Philip St. George Cooke; 1809-1895, (Glendale, 1955), 168.
