

Norris Soldiers Station
Norris Junction
Yellowstone National Park
Wyoming

HABS No. WYO-21

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN NOTES AND SEPARATE

PHOTOS OF INTEREST

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Western Office, Division of Design and Construction
450 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, California

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NORRIS SOLDIERS STATION

Norris Junction, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming

ADDRESS: Situated between the Norris Campgrounds and the
Gibbon River, Norris Junction, Yellowstone
National Park, Wyoming

OWNER: National Park Service

OCCUPANT: none

USE: Storage

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Norris Soldiers Station building is typical of the fifteen Yellowstone Park outposts occupied by the United States Army from 1886 to 1918. These outposts were established by the Army to restore order in the Park after civilian administration had failed to curb the abuses in the area that ranged from trapping and shooting of game to stagecoach holdups.

It was first built and occupied by the army and later when jurisdiction of the Park was turned over to the National Park Service, it served as a ranger station in summer and patrol station in winter for an additional forty-one years, until the earthquake of August 17, 1959 which extensively damaged the fireplace and other parts of the building.

The building remains essentially the same today as when it was built in 1908 or 1909, and is now the last unchanged relic of the remarkable system of outpost stations which guarded and preserved the Park area.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The present Norris Soldiers Station is the third building at this point to serve as quarters for detachments of the U. S. Army which administered Yellowstone National Park from 1886 to 1918. The first was a four-room frame structure built to house two assistant super-

intendents in 1884 while the Park was still under civilian jurisdiction. When Captain Moses Harris took over management of the Park in August, 1886, he sent a detachment of Troop M, First United States Cavalry to Norris.

In the fall of 1887 new quarters were built at Norris for the soldiers stationed there. This story-and-a-half log building served until February 15, 1908, when it was destroyed by fire. Later that year or the next year another Soldiers Station was built on the site; this is the building standing today.

Norris Soldiers Station provided quarters for a small detachment of two to five soldiers who had the task of preserving order in that section of the Park. In some years it was staffed only in the summer with the troops being moved to the northern end of the Park in the winter; other times they remained there through the whole year.

When the Army relinquished control of the Park in 1918, the Station was turned over to the rangers. Through the years since then, few changes were made in Norris Soldiers Station, and it served for forty-one years as a ranger station in the summer and a patrol station in winter. The earthquake in August, 1959, damaged the building and caused it to be abandoned at last.

The Norris Soldiers Station remains as the only Army outpost building essentially unchanged from its condition when occupied by the troops. Aubrey Haines, Park Historian, prepared a report in January, 1961, on the feasibility of restoring it. The proposal was to use the building as a museum to serve as a typical example of the Army outpost station utilized as part of the system of patrolling used by the Army in Yellowstone Park.

The plan of restoring the building and refurnishing the interior to reflect the living conditions of the men stationed here in the early days of the Park have been abandoned. Latest reports indicate that the Norris Soldiers Station, No. 111 in the register of buildings in Yellowstone National Park, will be razed.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL AND REFERENCES

Chittenden, H. M., Yellowstone National Park, Stanford University Press, Stanford Univ., Calif., 1933 ed., with corrections in 1940.

Haines, Aubrey L., "Restoration of the Norris Soldier Station, Yellowstone National Park", Historic Structure Report, 1961.

Hamilton, James M., History of Yellowstone National Park (Previous to 1895), Yellowstone Library and Museum Assn., Yellowstone Park, Wyo.

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

EXTERIOR

Overall Dimensions - A "T"-shaped one story log structure. The front or southeast facade measures 73'-4" x 23'-3". The leg of the building extends to the rear of the structure 36'-10" and is 16'-5" in width. This leg is slightly off the center line of the front wing.

Foundation - Concrete, 14" thick and extending only 4" below grade poured in a shallow trench partially filled with field stones placed on uncompacted black loam. The inability of the foundation to carry the weight of the building caused cracking and settling of the foundation walls.

Wall Construction - Log construction; logs are 8" to 10" in diameter, notched cornering. Logs project or extend from the top to the bottom log or about 12" to 30"+.

Porches - Front porch and steps of concrete (in poor condition). The porch is recessed six feet in the front wall. The present columns are not original; HABS drawings indicate original location of columns that supported the large log beams of the porch roof. The front porch has a flat ceiling of boards.

The small back porch has a wood deck and is in better condition than the front porch. Both are covered.

Openings - Entrance: Main (front) door is 3'-0" x 7'-2" and is constructed of three thicknesses of 3½" tongue & groove pine boards having a total depth of 2¼". Door hinges and latch assembly are hand-forged.

Windows: Wood windows, 12 in all, ranging from 6/6 D.H. to the fixed triple units of 21 lights 7" square each that are set in rectangular window boxes similar to a bay window. These units measure 6'-2" horizontally and 5'-2" vertically with

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frames that extend 12" out from the log wall; glass line extends half this distance.

Roof - Gable roof having a pitch of approximately $31\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$. Three ventilating dormers are located on the roof -- two in front above the front porch and one on the rear elevation of the front wing above the rear doorway of the living room. The roof is presently covered with rolled roofing.

Chimney - Living room fireplace chimney of fieldstone, other (stove) chimneys are of brick.

INTERIOR

Floor Plan - One story "T"-shaped asymmetrical floor plan. The recessed front porch gives access to the living room that contains the large stone fireplace; on the north end of the living room is the officer's room behind which, and connected only to this room, is another officer's room. Probably one of these served as the office and gun rack storage area. On the south of the living room are two rooms, each connected by a door to the living room. The front room served as a sergeant's room and the other as a bunk room.

A wing extends north-northwest and contains a dining room, kitchen, back porch and a small storeroom. A trap door in the floor of the storeroom leads to a basement (probably used as a root cellar) which is under this room only. Ceiling height is 7'-2".

Floor - Hardwood planking. The building has a crawl space approximately 22" clear space revealing the sub-floor structure. A sill-log placed on top of the foundation, the top of which has been adzed flat supports the 2 x 8 floor joists on 24" centers. Log stringers 10" in diameter serve as intermediate supports. These stringers are in turn supported on large rocks at 7' intervals.

Wall and Ceiling Finish - Wood paneling on walls and ceiling.

Doors - Wood.

Trim - Plain, squared planks.

Hardware - Some (particularly that on the front door) is hand-forged. Others were probably maintenance replacements over the years.

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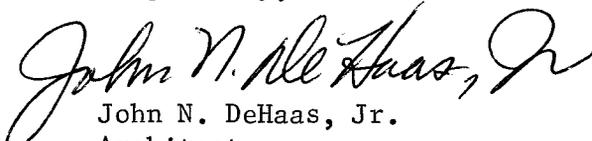
Lighting - None noted.

Heating - Wood stoves in the rooms. Large stone fireplace heated the living room. The fieldstone fireplace tapers from 10' wide at the base to 5'-2" at the ceiling line. The opening is raised 12" above the floor; this distance and the circular arch opening are of brick. The opening is 3' wide and 1'-9" at its highest point. The arch has an iron bar for added support of the masonry.

GENERAL SETTING

The building stands between the Norris Campground and the Gibbon River on an elevated portion of land at Norris Junction, Wyoming. The fence that appears in a 1917 photograph is now gone, as are the barn and corral.

Prepared by,


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Architect

June 1967

Approved:


A. Lewis Koue, FAIA
Supervisory Architect
Div. Historic Architecture
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ADDENDUM TO:

Norris Soldiers Station

Yellowstone National Park

Norris Campgrounds and Gibbon River Vicinity

Norris Junction

Park County

Wyoming

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
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