

# Fort Caspar Museum

## SELF-GUIDED TOUR OF RECONSTRUCTED FORT

- 1.. Sutler's Store—built in 1862 by a civilian trader accompanying the troops. Among the items sold at the store were whiskey, beer, clothing, fabric, tobacco, exotic foods, medicines, and soap.
- 2.. Blacksmith and Corral—one of the busiest men on a post was the blacksmith. Besides caring for army mounts, he also helped repair emigrant wagon trains.
- 3.. Originally this structure was used as the Overland Stage Station. It was later converted by the army (1862) into officers' quarters, a laundry room, and stables. A stockaded corral is in back.
- 4.. The Commissary Storehouse—this building was used to store army issue clothing and food-stuffs. A typical army meal included hardtack, salt pork, coffee, beans and brown sugar.
- 5.. Squad rooms and mess hall used by cavalry and infantry troops stationed at the fort.
- 6.. The north end of this building was originally the Guinard trading post. Later it was used by the Pacific Telegraph as an office and store room. Telegraph Office—in use from 1861 to 1867. The army was stationed here to protect the telegraph line and operators.

### BRIDGE CRIBS

Storage Shed (10)

7.. Guinard's Bridge—built in 1859 by Louis Guinard and used until Fort Casper was abandoned in 1867. This bridge across the North Platte River was 1,000 feet in length and 17 feet in total width. Twenty-eight log cribs, filled with rock and gravel, supported the structure. It is possible to see some of these cribs from the reconstructed section of the bridge. The total cost of construction was estimated at \$40,000. The toll was from \$1 to \$6, depending on the river conditions. Goods and livestock may also have been accepted in payment.

Public Restrooms

(13) Mormon Ferry Replica

(11) Private Residence

(9) Carriage Shed—built in the early 1970s. It serves as storage and houses large artifacts.

(12) Cemetery—site of several burials, both military and civilian. The white markers are of soldiers of the 11th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry; however, they are not actually buried here. They died from disease, accidents, and Indian skirmishes.

Xeriscape Garden Exhibit

Museum

(12) CEMETERY

MONUMENT

Centennial Park

PARKING

PARKING

PARKING

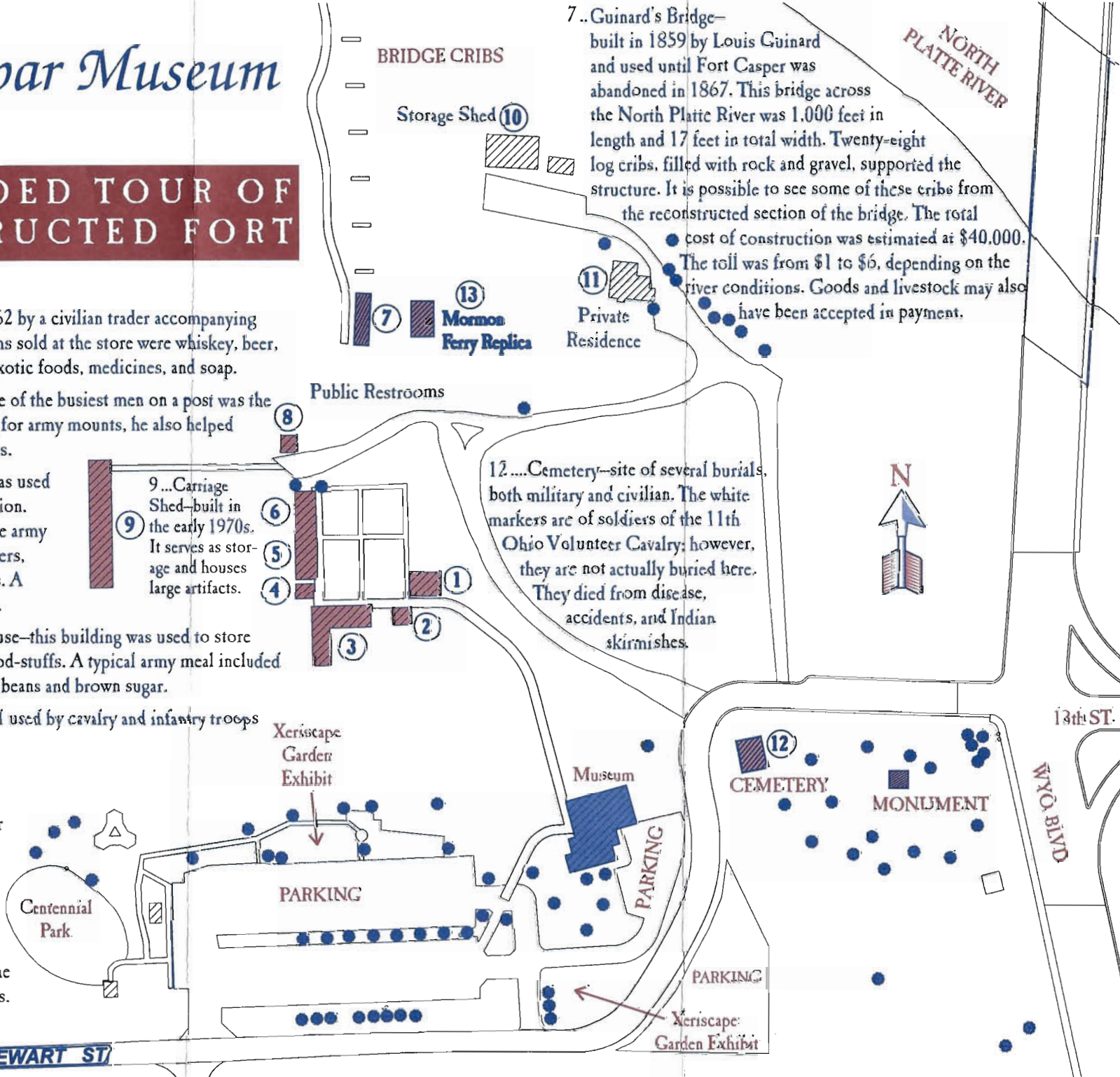
Xeriscape Garden Exhibit

STEWART ST

NORTH PLATTE RIVER

13th ST.

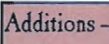
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# F O R T C A S P E R

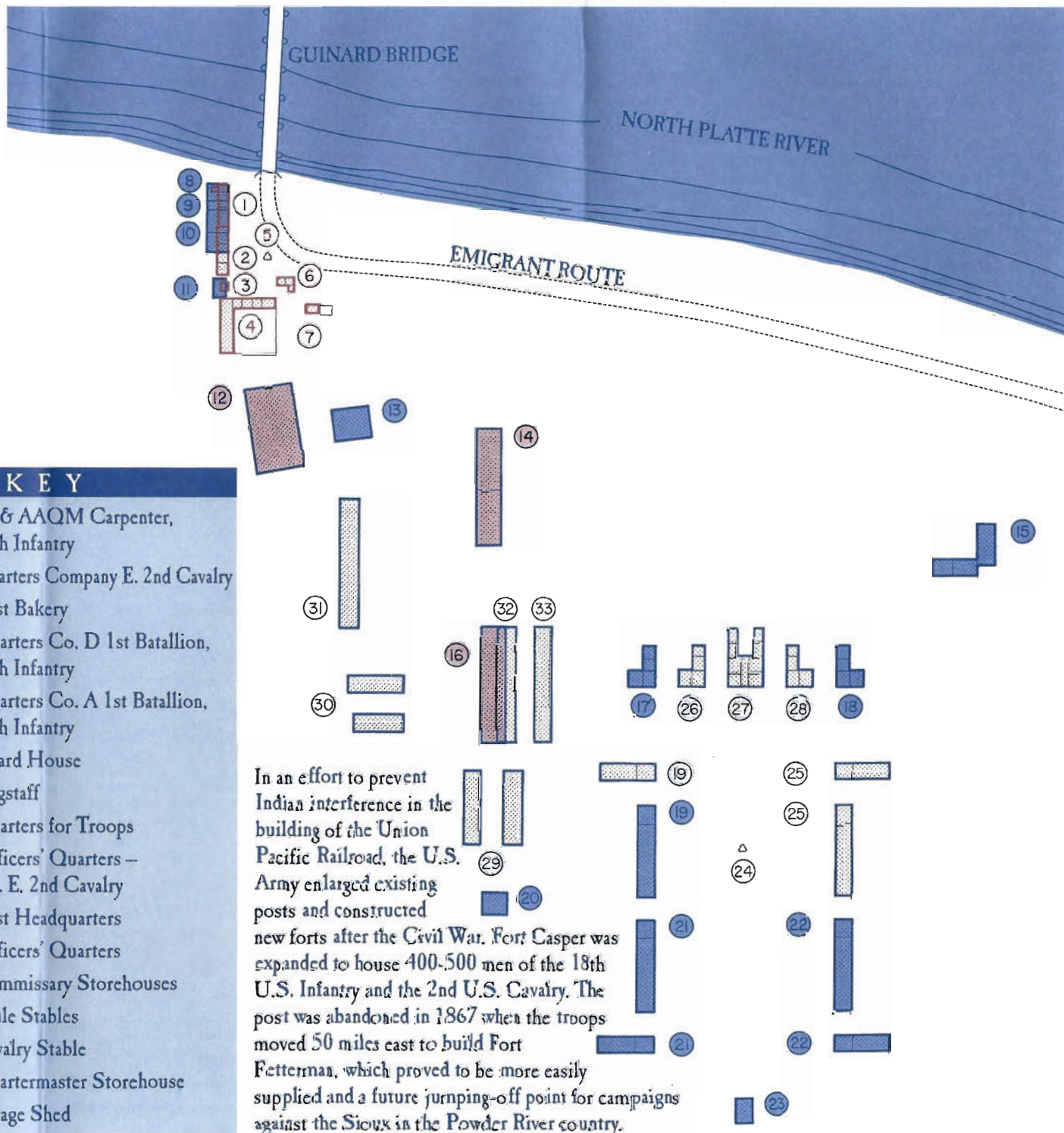
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## LEGEND

	Buildings of Winter, 1863
	Additions - Jan. of 1867 removed by Summer of 1867
	Building which remained through Summer of 1867
	Additions - Summer of 1867

## BUILDING KEY

1.. Original Guinard Store Complex	18 .. Lt. & AAQM Carpenter, 18th Infantry
2.. Company Quarters	19.. Quarters Company E. 2nd Cavalry
3.. Commissary Storehouse	20.. Post Bakery
4.. Stable/Corral/Quarters	21.. Quarters Co. D 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry
5.. Flagstaff	22.. Quarters Co. A 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry
6.. Sutler's Store	23.. Guard House
7.. Blacksmith Shop	24.. Flagstaff
8.. Boarding House & Ranch	25.. Quarters for Troops
9.. Pacific Telegraph Office	26.. Officers' Quarters - Co. E. 2nd Cavalry
10.. Bridge Proprietor's Dwellings & Store	27.. Post Headquarters
11.. Mormon Supply Depot	28.. Officers' Quarters
12.. Block House	29.. Commissary Storehouses
13.. Post Sutler's Store	30.. Mule Stables
14.. Quartermaster Building	31.. Cavalry Stable
15.. Post Hospital	32.. Quartermaster Storehouse
16.. Commissary Building	33.. Forage Shed
17.. Major Morris' Quarters	



## TRAILS WEST

Native Americans, mountain men, fur traders, emigrants, and the U.S. Army all visited or lived in the Casper area during the mid-1800s. The North Platte River valley was the pathway for the Oregon/California/Mormon Pioneer & Pony Express Trails across the plains.

The Wyoming Plains were the home to the Shoshone, Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe in the 1840s when wagon after wagon of western-bound settlers followed the North Platte to this site, crossed the river, and followed the Sweetwater River west.

In 1847, Brigham Young led the Mormons from Winter Quarters in present-day Nebraska to their new home in the Great Salt Lake Valley. In the Casper area, they established a ferry service for Mormons and other emigrants along the trails. The ferry operated through 1852.



In the late 1840s and early 1850s, Native American and emigrant conflicts were few along the trails. By 1855, hostilities increased and U.S. troops established a fort at John Richard's (Reshaw's) bridge. Soldiers were also stationed there during the "Mormon War" in 1858-59.



### TOLL BRIDGE to ARMY POST

The first permanent occupation at the site was in 1859 when Louis Guinard built a bridge and trading post. Guinard's post also became an overnight stage stop, a Pony Express relay station, and a telegraph office.

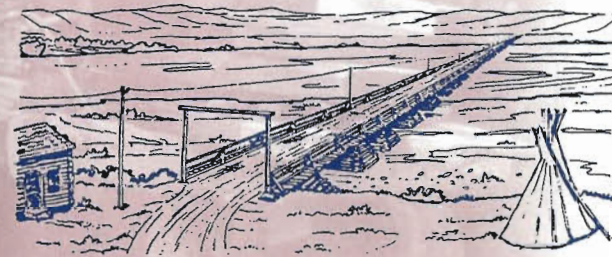
In 1862, a 6th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry regiment was ordered to man telegraph stations between Fort Laramie and South Pass, including the one at Guinard's bridge. From 1862 to 1865, Platte Bridge Station was outfitted as a one-company military post.

In response to the 1864 Sand Creek Massacre in Colorado Territory, Plains tribes increased raids along the trails the following spring. Troops of the 11th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry and 3rd U.S. Volunteer Infantry at Platte Bridge Station were then reinforced with the 11th Kansas Volunteer Cavalry and 6th U.S. Volunteer Infantry.

In July 1865, Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe gathered to attack Platte Bridge Station. On July 26, Lt. Caspar Collins led a small detachment from Platte Bridge Station to escort an Army supply train traveling from Sweetwater Station. Upon crossing the bridge, Collins' men were ambushed and had to fight their way back to the fort. Five soldiers including Collins were killed in the Battle of Platte Bridge. Sgt. Amos

Custard and 24 men with the supply wagons were later attacked within sight of the fort. Only three soldiers survived the Battle of Red Buttes.

In 1865, the Army officially changed the name of Platte Bridge Station to Fort Casper to honor the fallen lieutenant. The fort was closed in 1867 and troops relocated to Fort Fetterman.



### FORT CASPAR MUSEUM

Casper citizens reconstructed Fort Caspar on original foundation sites in 1936, using sketches made by Lt. Caspar Collins in 1863. The Museum opened in 1983 and offers exhibits featuring the cultural history of central Wyoming from prehistoric occupation through recent regional development. Outdoor exhibits include a reconstructed Mormon ferry and Guinard bridge section, Carriage Shed, Xeriscape Garden, Memorial Cemetery, and Centennial Park.