

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Fort Robinson and Red Cloud Agency

AND/OR COMMON Fort Robinson and Red Cloud Agency

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Crawford

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Third

STATE Nebraska

VICINITY OF
CODE 31

COUNTY Daves

CODE 045

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Nebraska State Historical Society,
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the University of Nebraska

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Lincoln

--- VICINITY OF

STATE Nebraska

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Dawes County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Chadron

STATE Nebraska

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic Sites Survey

DATE 1960

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Historic Sites Survey

CITY, TOWN Washington

STATE D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Approximately 49 buildings constructed during Fort Robinson's period of major activity, 1874-1912, still stand. Another 22 buildings date from the post's remount activities, 1919-1948. These buildings are administered by various state agencies, including the Nebraska State Game and Parks Commission, the Nebraska State Historical Society, the University of Nebraska, and Chadron State College. There are about five structures which are considered non-contributing to the National Historic Landmark District.

The Red Cloud Agency Site is located approximately 1.5 miles east of the fort on the top of a small hill. Although no structures remain at the site, archaeological investigations have revealed foundations and post holes from the 200 ft. by 400 ft. log stockade. Wagon ruts from the Sidney to Deadwood trail are visible to the east of the agency site, heading in a northwesterly direction through a small valley. Chief Red Cloud's village was located on the side of a hill directly east of the agency site. The site of the Red Cloud Agency is currently marked by small signs indicating the location of various sections of the stockade, and by a large marker giving the history of the agency. The site is maintained by the State Historical Society.

The Prisoner of War Camp is adjacent to the Red Cloud Agency site on the south side of the road. Two cement block structures used to store weapons are the only remaining buildings on the site. Foundations of what is believed to have been the camp headquarters have been located, but the site is generally overgrown and the foundations are not visible. This area is owned by the Nebraska State Game and Parks Commission.

The State Historical Society also owns the site of the Fort Robinson Cemetery, located to the southwest of the fort. Although the graves were removed in 1948, a fence still surrounds the site, and the Historical Society has placed a marker on the site. The campground is located next to the cemetery site.

The accompanying map A shows the location of the existing buildings at the fort, and the sites of all demolished structures. The following is a list of the contributing and non-contributing structures within the boundaries of the National Historic Landmark District:

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES

1873-1948

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Red Cloud Agency and nearby Fort Robinson were focal points of Indian-White conflict on the northern plains during the final years of Sioux and Cheyenne resistance, 1873-1890.

Red Cloud Agency was created by the Treaty of 1868 to provide annuity goods such as food, clothing, tools, and cattle to the Sioux and Cheyenne in exchange for land ceded to the United States Government. Originally located in the North Platte River Valley, the agency, which consisted of Chief Red Cloud and some 13,000 Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Oglala and Miniconjou Sioux, was moved to the White River area in 1873 where it remained until 1877. The Indians were required to live within three miles of the agency, a stipulation which they did not like, and they continually harrassed the agents, collecting supplies in the winter, then returning to their hunting grounds in the spring.

Hostilities between the Indians and government agents intensified until it became necessary to provide military protection for the government employees and property. In February of 1874, 949 men were sent from Fort D.A. Russell and Fort Laramie to the Red Cloud Agency and another agency nearby. Arriving in March, four infantry companies and one cavalry unit set up a tent camp next to the agency. The camp became known as Camp Robinson, in honor of First Lieutenant Levi H. Robinson of the 14th Infantry who had been killed earlier in 1874 by Indians from the Red Cloud Agency. In May, the camp was moved 1½ miles west to its present location near the confluence of Soldier Creek and the White River.

The troops at Camp Robinson played a key role in the 1876 campaign against the Powder River Sioux, who had united under Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse to contest the influx of miners into the Black Hills and also construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad. In April 1877, Dull Knife surrendered with his Northern Cheyenne at Camp Robinson, and a month later, War Chief Crazy Horse and the Oglala Sioux followed suit. On September 5, 1877, War Chief Crazy Horse was killed by the soldiers at the camp when he reportedly tried to escape. In October, the Red Cloud Agency was moved to a new location on the Missouri River, and in 1878 they were moved again to the Pine Ridge Agency in South Dakota.

(see continuation sheet)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Ferris, Robert G., ed., Soldier and Brave: Historic Places Associated With Indian Affairs and Indian Wars in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1971.
- Mattison, Ray. "Fort Robinson." Historic Sites Survey Report. 1959.
- Grange, Roger T. Fort Robinson, Outpost on the Plains Nebraska State Historical Society, Nebraska History, September, 1958, Vol. 39, No. 3.
- Nebraska State Historical Society, "Fort Robinson," educational leaflet, 1970.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2500

UTM REFERENCES See Continuation Sheet

A	1,3	6,2,7,9,3,0	4,7,2,6,7,0,0	B	1,3	6,2,7,9,1,0	4,7,2,5,6,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
c	1,3	6,2,8,7,6,0	4,7,2,5,8,9,0	D	1,3	6,2,8,3,5,0	4,7,2,4,3,1,5

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See Continuation Sheet)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Steven Lissandrello, Landmarks Review Project - Updated by Sarah J. Pearce, 7/20/83

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

Rocky Mountain Region

9/27/76

National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

1100 "L" Street, N.W.

TELEPHONE

(202) 523-5464

Denver, CO

(303) 234-2560

CITY OR TOWN

Washington, D.C.

STATE

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

3/8/84

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

**United States Department of the Interior
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Buildings #42-47. Adobe Officers' Quarters--constructed in 1874, these six identical buildings are the oldest structures at the fort. They are located on the original post grounds, facing the old parade grounds. They are adobe, covered with wood siding, and feature decorative fishscale shingles in the gable ends. The State Game and Parks Commission owns these buildings which are used as tourist accommodations.

Building #138. Adjutant's Office--this is a reconstruction of the original 1874 building. It is maintained by the State Historical Society as an exhibit area. The building was reconstructed based on archaeological information and historical sources.

Building #140. Guard House--a reconstruction of the 1874 structure where Chief Crazy Horse was killed. The building is operated as an exhibit area by the State Historical Society, and was reconstructed based on archaeological and historical evidence on the site of the original building.

Buildings #4-9. Officers' Quarters--built in 1887, these six adobe structures housed the post's officers and their families. One of the buildings is owned by the State Historical Society and a portion of the building has been restored to a 1880s residence. The remaining five structures are owned and operated as tourist cabins by the State Game and Parks Commission.

Building #229. Wheelwright's shop--this 1884 building is the oldest frame structure left on the post. It displays the various wagon wheel parts and tools used by the wheelwright. The State Historical Society owns the building.

Building #49. Bandleader's Quarters--this frame structure was built in 1886 and is owned by the State Historical Society.

Building #302. Water Tower--one of the two towers was built in 1889, and the other in 1903.

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Building #109. Annual handling chute building, more commonly known as the conditioning and issue barn, built in 1942. This structure is owned by the Game and Parks Commission.

Building #223. Quartermaster's Stores--built in 1892, this frame structure is now used as a playhouse by Chadron State College.

Building #220. Granary--built in 1895, this brick structure is owned by the State Historical Society. The exterior has been restored.

Building #221. Granary addition--owned by the State Historical Society, this metal structure was built about 1941.

Building #201. Powder Magazine--this brick structure was built in 1894, and is owned by the Game and Parks Commission.

Buildings #10, 12. Officer's Latrines--these frame structures were built in 1891 and have been moved three times from their original location near the fire house, to a pasture near the buttes and finally to their present location. They have been converted into living quarters and are owned by the Game and Parks Commission for use as tourist cabins.

Building #38. Barracks--this brick structure was built in 1909, and now serves as the Game and Parks Commission's lodge, information center and restaurant.

Building #27. Fire Station--built in 1910, this brick structure is owned by the Game and Parks Commission.

Building #311. Hospital Steward's Quarters--this brick structure was built in 1910 and is now owned by the Game and Parks Commission for use as a residence.

Buildings #103-106. Cavalry Stables--these four brick buildings were built in 1908 and are all owned by the Game and Parks Commission. One building retains the original stalls, one is empty and in the third the stalls were rebuilt in 1975. The fourth building is used as an activities center for visitors.

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Buildings #119, 121. Stable Guards--these two brick residences were built in 1908 for use by soldiers near the stables. They are owned by the Game and Parks Commission.

Building #113. Harness Repair Shop--this restored brick building was built in 1904 and housed the blacksmith shop until 1906 when it was converted to a harness shop for the cavalry. The State Historical Society owns the building and has an exhibit in the building.

Building #115. Blacksmith Shop--this brick building was built in 1906. The State Historical Society owns the building and has an exhibit inside.

Building #124. Veterinary Hospital--constructed in 1909, this brick structure is owned by the State Historical Society. The operating room and stalls have been restored as an exhibit area.

Building #101. Post Gymnasium and Theatre--constructed in 1904, this frame structure provided entertainment for the soldiers. It is now owned by the University of Nebraska and houses a natural history museum.

Building #17. Commanding Officer's Quarters--this brick structure was built in 1909, and is the only Commanding Officer's Quarters still standing at the fort. The Game and Parks Commission uses the house for tourist accommodations.

Building #1. Bachelor Officers' Quarters--this large brick structure was built in 1909 to house the unmarried officers at the fort. It is owned by the Game and Parks Commission, and is used for tourist accommodations.

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Building #239. Quartermaster Shop--half of this brick structure was built in 1906 and the other half was added in 1971. It was used for storing supplies by the quartermaster. The west half of the building is owned by the Game and Parks Commission and the east half is owned by the State Historical Society.

Building #310. Post House--this frame structure was built in 1901, its use is unknown. It is currently owned by the Game and Parks Commission and used as a residence.

Building #309. Non-Commissioned Officers' Quarters--this 1902 frame structure is owned by the Game and Parks Commission and is used as a residence.

Buildings #15,16,19. Officers' Quarters-- These three buildings were built in 1909 to house the officers of the fort. The area in which they are found is called Officers' Row. Now used as tourist accommodations, these structures are owned by the Game and Parks Commission.

Building #32. Post Headquarters--this 1905 frame structure is owned by the State Historical Society as their branch office and museum. It was one of the few frame structures built on the fort between 1900 and 1912, and served as the headquarters for the fort.

Building #222. Quartermaster's Store--built in 1900, this frame structure was used as a warehouse for supplies. It is owned by the Game and Parks Commission.

Building #240. Quartermaster Shop--built in 1906, this frame structure was another supply warehouse. It is currently owned by the Game and Parks Commission.

Buildings #40,70. Garages--built in 1936, these two frame structures were used by the officers living in the 1887 Adobe Officers' Quarters.

Building #123. Veterinary Hospital Annex--built in 1941, this frame structure was part of the army's remount activities during World War II. It is owned by the Nebraska State Historical Society, but used by the Game and Parks Commission.

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Building #31. Flag Pole--erected in 1930, this was the third flag pole at Fort Robinson.

Building #33,35. Monuments--these two stone monuments were erected in 1934 to commemorate Crazy Horse, who died at the fort, and Levi Robinson, killed by Indians, and for whom the fort is named.

Building #48. Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Swimming Pool--built in 1935 for the members of the CCC who were stationed at the fort. It was concrete and can no longer be used without extensive repairs.

Building #172. Tennis Court--built in 1935, the court is now used by tourists staying at the Lodge or at one of the tourist cabins. It is owned by the Game and Parks Commission.

Building #241. Wagon Shed--built in 1929, this frame structure is owned by the Game and Parks Commission.

Building #242. Shop--this frame structure was built in 1944 and is owned by the Game and Parks Commission.

Building #244. Implement Shed--this 1930 frame structure is owned by the Game and Parks Commission.

Building #245. Oil Storage--built in 1945, owned by the Game and Parks Commission.

Building #304. Broodmare and Shipping Stable--built in 1928, this frame structure is owned by the Game and Parks Commission. It represents part of the Remount Depot.

Building #305. Sale Barn--this frame structure was built in 1936 and is owned by the Game and Parks Commission. It was part of the Remount Depot.

Building #307. Sleeping Quarters--built around 1930, this frame structure is owned by the Game and Parks Commission.

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Building #308. Assembly and Mess Hall--this brick building was built in 1931. It is now used as a residence and is owned by the University of Nebraska.

Other Buildings on the grounds of the fort:

The Farm, which consists of a slaughterhouse, hog pen, dairy barn, and hay barn, was built around the early 1920s. Horses were slaughtered and the meat fed to the dogs of the K-9 Training Center during World War II.

There are also three frame hay barns, date of construction unknown, which are located to the west of the veterinary hospital and stables.

All of these structures are owned by the Game and Parks Commission and are used for their concessions.

Non-Contributing Structures:

Swimming Pool - Built during the 1970s, the pool is owned and operated by the Game and Parks Commission.

Sutler's Store - construction date unknown, this building is an intrusion. It is owned by the Game and Parks Commission and serves fast food.

Log Homestead - this structure was the Percy Homestead house, built in 1886, about 11 miles northwest of Crawford. It was moved to the fort and serves as the director's office for the playhouse. It is owned by Chadron State College. It has no association with the fort.

Jeep Rides Shed - this frame structure is privately owned and jeep rides around the fort originate from this point. The building is a recent construction.

Campground restroom - located near the reconstructed Adjutant's Office and Guard House, the building is an intrusion. It is owned by the Game and Parks Commission.

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The camp was renamed Fort Robinson in January 1878, and was the scene of the outbreak of the Northern Cheyenne under Dull Knife in January 1879. Having fled their Indian Territory (Oklahoma) reservation a month earlier, this band of Indians had traveled 1500 miles north in 45 days before being captured and interned at Fort Robinson. In October, Dull Knife and his Indians tried to escape, following the river to the southwest, and then into the nearby buttes and canyons. Most were either killed or recaptured.

For several years following the end of the Indian Wars, Fort Robinson served primarily as a frontier outpost. Troops stationed at the fort performed the routine duties of repairing telegraph lines, patrolling the area, and pursuing stagecoach and train robbers, as well as carrying out the training of soldiers.

In 1878, several large ranches were established in the vicinity of the fort. However, following the arrival of the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad in 1886, many homesteaders moved into the area, leading to conflicts between the ranchers and homesteaders. The presence of Fort Robinson was a big factor in preventing a full-scale range war.

The railroad brought expansion to Fort Robinson and led to the eventual abandonment of Fort Laramie, which did not have direct access to a railroad line. Fort Robinson was enlarged, and its functions were changed to a regimental headquarters cavalry post.

In 1885, the 9th Cavalry, one of the army's all-black regiments, was stationed at Fort Robinson, and under Major Guy V. Henry's command, participated in the campaign against the Sioux to end the Ghost Dance during the winter of 1890-91. Fort Robinson's soldiers were not involved in the Battle of Wounded Knee, but helped to restore peace and order on the Sioux Reservation following this last major conflict of the Indian War era.

The garrison was reduced to a minimum during the 1895 Spanish American War, and four consecutive cavalry regiments were stationed at Fort Robinson after the war. The fort remained a cavalry post until 1919.

During World War I, a Signal Corp Training Center was planned for the post, but the war ended before it could be established. In 1919, Fort Robinson became a Quartermaster Remount Depot. Horses were received, conditioned, and issued to army units and civilian breeders. The depot eventually became the world's largest remount depot with thousands of horses and mules at the fort. Many famous race horses were at the fort following their careers, and the 1936 U.S. Olympic Equestrian team trained at the fort.

During World War II, Fort Robinson's remount facilities were expanded. The War Dog Reception and Training Center was activated in October 1942, where dogs were trained for different duties including sentry, train, tactical, sledge, pack, and hospital service.

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In March 1943, a prisoner of war camp, with space for 3000 prisoners, was added to the fort near the site of the Red Cloud Agency. The prisoners arrived at the fort by train from the east and included members of Hitler's Youth Army and Hitler's Band. Musical instruments were not confiscated, and the band members provided entertainment for other prisoners. The POW camp remained active until 1946.

Seventy-four years of continuous military operations came to an end July 1, 1948 when Fort Robinson was declared surplus and the reservation was transferred to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for an experimental beef station. During the 1950s, the USDA tore down many of the structures at the fort, particularly those associated with the Canine Center, and many of the stables. In recent years, several organizations have taken over buildings on the property, which is now owned and operated by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. The Nebraska State Historical Society, the University of Nebraska, and Chadron State College own buildings at the fort, in addition to those owned by the Game and Parks Commission. There is also a private concession on the post.

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UTM Reference Points:

- A. 13 627930 4726700
- B. 13 627910 4725600
- C. 13 628760 4725890
- D. 13 628350 4724315
- E. 13 627800 4724520
- F. 13 627910 4724820
- G. 13 626880 4724700
- H. 13 627040 4724500
- I. 13 626810 4724280
- J. 13 626550 4724490
- K. 13 626000 4723830
- L. 13 625870 4723760
- M. 13 625640 4724140
- N. 13 625670 4724530
- O. 13 624550 4725030
- P. 13 624520 4727700

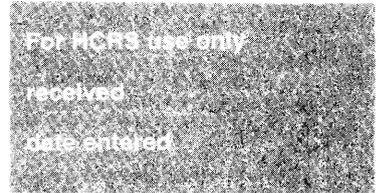
Verbal Boundary Description

Boundaries are described as follows: Beginning at the confluence of Soldier Creek and the White River (Point K), follow the fence around the site of the Fort Robinson Cemetery, then northwest to the point where the creek meets the right-of-way of the Chicago and North Western Railroad, then along the south bank of Soldier Creek in a northwesterly direction to the Dawes-Sioux County Line. Follow the county line straight north to the boundary of Fort Robinson State Park. Turning east, follow along the top of Red Cloud Buttes in a southeasterly direction to the most eastern extremity of the buttes, then straight south along an imaginary line to the White River. Follow the White River 1/2 mile east, then turn south along the side of a hill to the fence surrounding the POW camp. Follow the fence line to an unimproved road, turning northwest then northeast to the junction of the road between Fort Robinson and the Red Cloud Agency site. Follow the south side of the road west to the point where the road crosses the White River, then in a southwesterly direction along the south bank of the river to the point of beginning.

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The boundaries have been drawn to include all of the existing structures associated with Fort Robinson, as well as the sites of known Indian and military encampments. The Red Cloud Buttes, which form the boundary to the north, provide not only a visual boundary, but are significant to the history of the fort as the area where Dull Knife and his Cheyenne Indians escaped to during the Cheyenne Outbreak in 1878. The area between the buttes and the grounds of the fort was used as a grazing pasture during the remount depot period, and as a target range throughout the entire history of the fort. The remains of the target backstop are still visible just north of the water tanks.

The White River and Soldier Creek form natural boundaries on the south and were significant as general routes for fur trappers and travelers between Fort Laramie and Fort Robinson. The Cheyenne followed the river after breaking out of the guard house in 1878. The southern boundary also encloses the site of the Fort Robinson Cemetery, started in 1875 and moved when the fort closed in 1948.

The boundaries on the east side were drawn to include the POW camp, surrounded by a fence; the site of Red Cloud's village which was located immediately to the west of the boundary line on the side of a small hill; the wagon ruts of the Sidney-Deadwood Trail which are visible between the Red Cloud Agency site and the Indian village running in a northeasterly direction; and the site of the first Camp Robinson, located between the river and the railroad right-of-way, just north of the Red Cloud Agency site. The agency site is on top of a small hill and archaeological excavations have revealed the general location of the stockade. Camp Canby, used as an outlying post during the 1870s, is located a short distance from the site of the first Camp Robinson.

The western boundary follows the county line between Soldier Creek on the south and the Red Cloud Buttes on the north. The area enclosed by these boundaries includes all of the known remaining cultural resources associated with the National Historic Landmark.