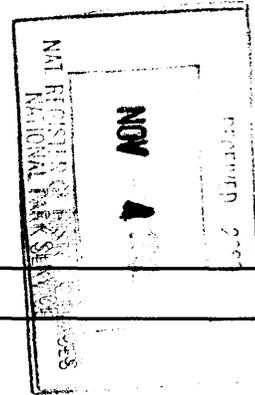


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

15749



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Moncure Tipi

other name/site number: 24BH2443

2. Location

street & number: Highway 212

not for publication: na
vicinity: na

city/town: Busby

state: Montana code: MT county: Big Horn code: 003 zip code: 59016

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally.

Mark F. Gaumer / State Historic Preservation Officer 11/1/2002
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency or bureau

(_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register see continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register see continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register see continuation sheet
- removed from the National Register see continuation sheet
- other (explain): _____

Edson R. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action
12/20/02

5. Classification

Ownership of Property:	Private	Number of Resources within Property	
Category of Property:	Building	Contributing	Noncontributing
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:	N/A	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> building(s)
Name of related multiple property listing:	N/A	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: RECREATION/CULTURE/hall
COMMERCE/specialty store, restaurant

Current Functions: VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification: OTHER: Tipi

Materials:
foundation: N/A
walls: WOOD/shingle
roof: WOOD/shingle
other: N/A

Narrative Description

The Moncure Tipi is a landmark building that stands along Montana Highway 212 on the southwestern edge of the small community of Busby, Montana. Busby is located within the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation in southeastern Montana, in the Rosebud Creek valley. The town has a population of just over 400 and is set against a rural ranching landscape of orange-tan hills, sandstone buttes and ponderosa pine forests.

Built in 1931 by trader W. P. Moncure, the Moncure Tipi is a two story conical wooden building clad in continuous courses of wood shingles from the top of its peak down to ground level. It is constructed following the basic format of the traditional hide-covered lodge indigenous to the Plains. This format consists of supportive lodge poles covered with an outer protective sheathing, and is erected free-standing on the bare ground.

The supporting framework of the Moncure Tipi follows the traditional format for plains lodge construction with the exception of a center post. The building is supported by a conical pole structure, made of 30 peeled lodgepole pine or ponderosa pine timbers, joined to a center pole at the peak of the tipi. Rather than the traditional hide or canvas covering, the conical pole frame is sheathed with standard roofing technique, the sheathing is a wooden board substrate covered with coursed cedar shingles. The tipi is about 20 feet in diameter at the ground level, the poles are spaced 6-8 feet apart at the base and are approximately 70 feet in length. The center pole measures about 2 feet in diameter at the base, the others are 10-12 inches in basal diameter. The pole structure is reinforced at the base with poured concrete. At the peak, the logs join together, and pole braces radiate up from the pole to the exterior wall.

The main entrance to the building is a recessed doorway that is located on the northwest side. The entry has a single, hinged wooden door. The second story is accessed through a projecting doorway set halfway up the side of the building. The doorway has a wooden door, a very shallow gable roof covering and is sided with the same cedar shingling as the rest of the building. At one time, a very steep wooden stairway ran up the exterior to this doorway.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria:	A, C	Areas of Significance:	ETHNIC HERITAGE/NATIVE AMERICAN ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION; SOCIAL HISTORY; ARCHITECTURE
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):	N/A	Period(s) of Significance:	1931-1952
Significant Person(s):	N/A	Significant Dates:	1931
Cultural Affiliation:	Northern Cheyenne	Architect/Builder:	Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Moncure Tipi is one of three permanent tipi shaped buildings known to have been constructed in Montana during the early 20th century. Built in 1931 by trader Preston Moncure, the Moncure Tipi was a site of tribal give-away ceremonies and dances. In addition, it housed CCC work crews during the 1930s construction of the Busby School. An expression of Northern Cheyenne culture and a gathering place for the small town of Busby, the Moncure Tipi is both architecturally and historically significant to the local community. Though the building's design is reminiscent of roadside architecture often constructed in an effort to entice automobile travelers to stop and visit, the Moncure Tipi was not designed as a tourist attraction. Rather, it recalls the traditional tipi design used by the Northern Cheyenne, and is indicative of the import of cultural tradition in the community. For these reasons, it is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, according to Criteria A and C.

Creation of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation

The Cheyenne people originally lived in the Great Lakes woodlands until moving westward during the 1600s. By the early 1800s, they had moved to the plains near the Black Hills in South Dakota. Shortly after signing the 1825 treaty at Fort Pierre, South Dakota, a large portion of the tribe separated and moved to the Arkansas River area, while the other portion of the tribe remained on the plains of northern Wyoming and southeastern Montana. The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 formally recognized the division into what has become known as the Northern and Southern Cheyenne.

The Northern Cheyenne joined the Sioux in 1876 against the U.S. Army, participating in the defeat of Custer and the 7th Cavalry at the Little Big Horn. In the aftermath, General Miles led a campaign to retaliate against these plains tribes and vanquish their resistance. After months of fighting and eluding the Army, the Northern Cheyenne under Two Moons, Crazy Horse, Brave Wolf and White Wolf surrendered at Miles' Cantonment (which became Ft. Keogh in 1878), and were exiled to Darlington Agency, Oklahoma. Starvation conditions in Oklahoma finally drove a group of the Cheyenne to break out and flee northward, led by Chiefs Morning Star and Little Wolf. Many were killed or died along what is now known as the 1200 mile "Northern Cheyenne Exodus Trail." Differences of opinion soon divided the group, with some (mostly women, children and elderly) following Morning Star toward the Old Red Cloud Agency in northwestern Nebraska. The rest continued on toward the Powder River Country of southeastern Montana. Those that survived reached Ft. Keogh in March of 1879.¹ Bands of Cheyenne that had fled to the Pine Hills area also returned to Ft. Keogh, and in

¹ Ralph Andrist, *The Long Death: The Last Days of the Plains Indians* (New York, New York: Collier Books, 1964), pp. 318-330. The Northern Cheyenne Exodus Trail between Darlington, Oklahoma and Fort Keogh, Montana, is currently being considered for listing as a National Historic Landmark, as part of the National Park Service's "The Clash of Cultures Trails Project." For a brief history and description of resources associated with the trail, see Western History Association and National Park Service, *The Clash of Cultures Trails Project: Assessing the National Significance of Trails Associated with the U.S. Army/American Indian Campaigns in the Trans-Mississippi West*, (Denver, Colorado: National Park Service, Intermountain Support Office, Cultural Resources and National Register Program Services, 2002), pp 56-64.

Moncure Tipi
Name of Property

Big Horn County, MT
County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other -- Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Less than one

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	13	347120	5043430

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): SE ¼ SE ¼ SE ¼ of Section 31, T 3S, R39E, MPM

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is located in the platted street between Blocks 11 and 14 of the Busby Original Townsite.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn, according to legal boundary lines, to include the tipi, garage, and land surrounding the buildings with which they are associated historically.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Chere Jiusto	date: May 2002
organization: MT SHPO	telephone: 406-444-7715
street & number: PO Box 201202	zip code: 59620
city or town: Helena	state: MT

Property Owner

name/title: Lemuel and Christina Small	telephone: (406) 592-3670
street & number: Kirby Rte	state: MT
city or town: Busby	zip code: 59016:

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There are four shed dormer window openings that project from the planes of the first story walls at each of the cardinal directions. The dormers each contain paired casement windows, separated by a central vertical light window. The casements are four-pane units with wood frames. The dormers are sheathed with coursed shingles. At the top of the tipi peak, a tin smoke stack protrudes. There are also two smoke holes located at the halfway point on the south and northeast sides of the building.

On the interior, the space is divided into two stories. The interior floor is composed of concrete, and the board floor of the second story forms a ceiling for the first story at approximately the 20-foot level. Joists that radiate out from the center pole to the exterior wall support this floor. The building originally served as a community meeting and dance hall and is an open space on the first floor. The second story formed a sleeping loft and storage space. The inside walls were painted white, with a band of turquoise running around the base. An old wood heating stove and stovepipe running up along the center ridgepole remain inside.

West of the tipi there is a collapsed dugout garage that dates to the 1930s. Built into a low hillside, the garage has log walls and a low pole roof covered with dirt. A double ridgepole and 2 log purlins supported a sheathing of small poles and the dirt covering. On the interior, the log walls were chinked with cement.

Although the Moncure Tipi and garage are in a state of disrepair, the buildings retain the elements of design, workmanship, and materials sufficient to relay their purpose as a meeting/ dance hall. The buildings also retain a high degree of integrity of location, setting, association, and feeling.

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1881, General Miles released them to return to the Tongue River region of southeastern Montana, where they settled back into familiar country to live and hunt. A few claimed land under the Indian Homestead Act of 1875, and built log cabins.²

On November 26, 1884, a tract of land encompassing the Tongue River and Rosebud Creek valleys was split off from the Crow Indian Reservation and set aside for the Northern Cheyenne. An Executive Order issued in 1900 expanded the reservation to its current size. Three hundred fifty log houses were counted that year and the Northern Cheyenne people were encouraged to adapt to a farming and ranching lifestyle; efforts were made to build those industries on the reservation. The high plains of southeastern Montana were suited to raising livestock, and the Cheyenne, expert horsemen, rapidly adapted to raising cattle on their land. Under a Congressional appropriation, the Cheyennes began a cattle herd with 1000 cows and 40 bulls; in 1907 another thousand head were added. By 1912, there were 12,000 head of cattle and 15,000 horses on the reservation and the outlook on the reservation was promising.

Corruption, ineptitude and mismanagement of tribal affairs at the hands of the Tongue River Indian agency caused the prospects of the Northern Cheyenne reservation to decline. Agency incompetence led to enormous losses in the tribal livestock herd, and by 1929 only 3,000 horses and just over 4,000 head of cattle remained. Farming was unsuccessful, due to aridity and poor soils.

Far more than aboriginal cultures had, non-Indian BIA officials sought to alter and use the landscape in order to fit their vision of order and success. Their ideals were inspired by agrarian communities in the European tradition and included gridded patterns of land ownership, rights and status implicit of that gentry system, stratified society, specialized skills, large-scale resource extraction, engineered transportation systems, homogenous economy, and a large, distant, central government. Extending that vision to native cultures the United States government instituted policies whereby Euro-American philosophies pertaining to religion, government, and subsistence became the framework for society, and natural law was regarded as largely irrelevant.

Due to the large scale of some projects and a striving to place mechanized order onto the landscape, the foreignness of Eastern ideals and federal programs is conspicuous. The Northern Cheyenne Reservation is littered with the architectural and engineering remains of failed projects instituted by government agents. The architecture of the reservation log cabin, for example, designed to suit a more stationary white society, was greatly disliked by the tribe. By 1888 there were 35 log cabins on the reservation, but they were considered woeful housing and most Cheyenne remained in tipis. The Northern Cheyenne much preferred their more adaptable, "warm, well-lighted, mobile" and well-ventilated tipis. Described in 1891 as "a dismal dungeon," the cabins featured only one window and one door, a veritable fortress against nature.³ Yet ever resilient, the Cheyenne adapted to log cabin living as necessary. Photographs from early reservation years, and extending well into the 20th century clearly depict the mixing of the traditions on the newly created reservations. Tipis and log buildings standing alongside one another, medicine bundles on log cabin walls, women drying fruit and meats in traditional racks against a background of log buildings; these images tell a story of people with a long-standing tradition of adaptation and pragmatism in a changing world.

2 Northern Cheyenne Planning Office, *A Chronicle of the Northern Cheyennes in the Reservation Era: 1876-1942* (Lame Deer, MT: Historic Project Resource & Data Department, September 1982), pp. 9-16.

3 Resource and Data Department, Northern Cheyenne Planning Office, *A Chronicle of the Northern Cheyennes in the Reservation Era: 1876-1942* (Lame Deer, Montana: Northern Cheyenne Tribe and Montana State Historical Project, November 24, 1982), pp. 14-15. (Hereinafter referred to as *Chronicle of the Northern Cheyennes*.) See also Carroll Van West, "Acculturation by Design: Architectural Determinism and the Montana Indian Reservations, 1870-1930," *Great Plains Quarterly*, vol. 7 (Spring 1987): 91-102.

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In 1929, a Congressional inquiry into the condition of Indian reservations across the country revealed much dysfunction on the Tongue River Indian Reservation. Testimony from numerous tribal members and an investigative report by Walter W. Liggett, on behalf of the senate subcommittee, was a diatribe on the impoverished state of the reservation. The report found that the Cheyenne lived in a remote and unimproved setting, lacking sanitation, drinking water, and good medical care. Poverty and starvation were widespread, as were resulting high levels of disease and infant mortality. Jobs were non-existent and farming and livestock industries had been criminally mismanaged at the hands of Indian agents, and debts charged to the tribe creating huge deficits against the tribal programs.⁴

Settlement of Busby

At the time the Tongue River Reservation was established, various bands of the Northern Cheyenne settled together, creating small villages and government centers. The White River Cheyennes settled near Busby; the Black Lodges lived near Lame Deer; the Shy People settled near Ashland; and those that lived near Old Birney were known as the Scabbies. The families lived a subsistence lifestyle as best they could within the reservation confines, raising cattle, hunting, farming and gardening. There was no electrical or telephone service at this early time. Animal powered transportation, on horseback or in wagons, occurred along the two dirt roads that crossed the reservation. A sawmill at Greenleaf near the Ashland Divide provided lumber for buildings.

In 1904, the Tongue River boarding school was established at Busby (in the 1950s, the last remnants of the original building were razed). Construction of the school prompted families to move their tipis into the vicinity; and soon after trader Sheridan I Busby constructed a log house and a store. Located on a bluff just west of Rosebud Creek, this trading place was built within the original Busby town site.

Cultural life was centered within the communities, and with the exception of Busby, the villages built round or octagonal dance halls for traditional dances and celebrations. At Busby, a circus tent, known as "pot-bellied" to the locals for a time was used as a dance hall. Dances were also held at the fair grounds pavilion during summer months.

The Busby store and log house was sold to Walker P. Moncure in 1907. A native Virginian, Moncure proved a successful rancher and trader, befriending Chiefs Two Moon and Black Whiteman, and gaining the confidence of Cheyenne people who eventually adopted him into the tribe. Moncure traded at Busby until 1941, and contracted for mail delivery on the reservation from 1924-1932.⁵ Moncure held a great interest in Cheyenne traditions. In the late 1920s, he offered to record the Sun Dance ceremony so knowledge of the ritual would not be lost with the passing of the elders.⁶ On June 28, 1938, Moncure dedicated a stone obelisk monument to his friend Chief Two Moons approximately a quarter mile east of his store and tipi, on property he purchased from town founder Sheridan L. Busby.

In 1931, Moncure built what has become known as the Moncure Tipi across from his store, to be used as a community gathering place and dance hall. The 50 poles used in the construction were harvested at nearby Dry Creek.⁷ Two years later, as part of the New Deal's Emergency Indian Conservation Work Act, five Civilian Conservation Corps camps were

⁴ Report of the Senate Subcommittee of the Committee on Indian Affairs, 1929, pp. 12779-128550. See Liggett, Walter *Report on the Tongue River Reservation*.

⁵ Burlingame & Toole, *A History of Montana*, WP Moncure biography, p. 28; MHS Library Busby Vertical File.

⁶ John Stands in Timber and Margot Liberty, *Cheyenne Memories*, (New Haven: Yale University press, 1967), pp. 94-95.

⁷ Details on the inspiration for building the tipi and the actual construction do not appear to be on record.

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established on the Northern Cheyenne reservation. The tipi was put to use shortly thereafter, housing CCC work crew members upstairs, while Harry and Winnie Small cooked and provided meals for the crews on the first floor.⁸

While the 1930s were years of widespread depression around the United States, on the Northern Cheyenne reservation they are remembered as years when jobs were plentiful and a number of construction projects were completed.⁹ The CCC developed much-needed infrastructure on the reservation, including truck trails, lookout towers, fences and reservoirs. In 1934, Congress passed the Indian Reorganization Act, seeking to reverse the government's disastrous Indian policy. The act's expressed purpose was "to rehabilitate the Indian's economic life and give him a chance to develop the initiative destroyed by a century of oppression and paternalism." During this era, the tribes moved to regain independent self-governance and reclaim traditions that had been actively suppressed for decades. Crews of the CCC were employed on some reservations, such as Fort Belknap, in the construction of community halls, with the encouragement of the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Division of Extension and Industry.¹⁰

When the Indian CCC program was abandoned, the Moncure Tipi was again used for dances and ceremonies. In her memoirs, Belle Highwalking recalled a Native American Church gathering there for her family following the death of her son: "The peyote people invited us to Busby where they gathered at the dance hall. They made us two tables and we ate in the center of the Hall... During this ceremony men got up and spoke to us... Then they gave away to us."¹¹ W.P. Moncure retired in 1941, the building was sold to Northern Cheyenne tribal members. Harry and Winnie Small used the building as a restaurant. In 1954, the tipi was converted into a furniture store. During the years since, the tipi has passed out of active use, but it has remained a local landmark for Northern Cheyenne people and for travelers driving across Highway 212. Largely unaltered since its construction, the Moncure Tipi and Garage property remains an excellent representation of the community spirit at Busby, and a celebration of the architectural form so intrinsic to the Northern Cheyenne culture.

Architecture in the Round

Native American building forms on the Northern Plains were oriented around the circle, from traditional times into the historic era. From the tipi to Sun Dance lodges to sweat lodges to ceremonial stone circles, the circle was favored for its symbolic meaning, its functionality, and its aesthetic qualities.

During the early reservation era in Montana, administrative complexes, housing, schools, farm buildings, churches and community halls were erected in reservation settlements. Gradually the tipi lodge gave way to log and wooden homes, as well as brick agency and commercial buildings. Native building traditions were not lost however, as tipis, ceremonial lodges and other buildings continued in use. Traditional forms were also translated into wood, a variety of round-formed buildings were built on Montana's Indian reservations, particularly for use as community centers and dance halls.

⁸ Interviews and Surveys with local informants, Lemuel and Christina Small, Josephine Tallbull, Torrey Johnson.

⁹ Weist, *History of the Cheyenne People*, pp. 192-193.

¹⁰ Johnson, National Register nomination for Lodgepole Community Hall, Section 8.

¹¹ Highwalking, *The Narrative of a Northern Cheyenne Woman*, p. 42.

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Simple in design and highly evocative, the traditional tipi form also was adapted by non-native builders in the early 20th century. The tipi shape was highly recognizable and easy to construct, lending itself to variations in wood and even concrete. The Moncure Tipi relates to other large wooden, concrete and stucco tipi forms built during the early 20th century, however, many of them were strictly commercial and not affiliated with native people. Two examples of these “roadside architecture” buildings are still standing in Montana, one is a large stucco building, constructed during the early 1940s as the Teepee Cafe near the resort town of Big Fork on Flathead Lake. The other is a concrete tipi that was originally the Wigwam Conoco gas station in Browning. In contrast to these kitschy roadside attractions, tribal people used the Moncure tipi as a gathering place for community and traditional activities.

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Busby, MT Orthophoto Quardangle Detail



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Historic Photographs

Moncure Tipi
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Page 1

LARGEST IN THE WORLD



THE TEEPEE

Moncure Tipi, date unknown

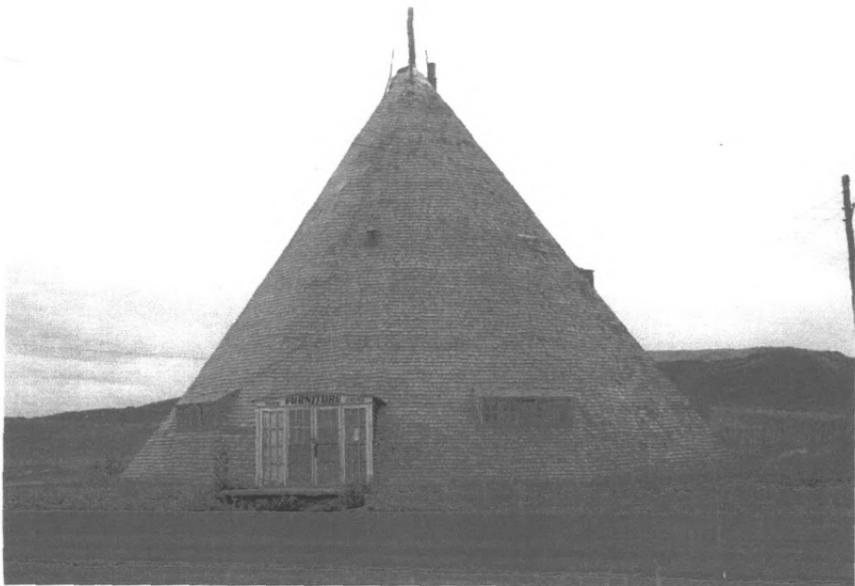
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National Park Service

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Historic Photographs

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Moncure Tipi, October 1954