

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED JUN 20 1978  
DATE ENTERED EC1 1978

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 Yellowstone Crossing, Bozeman Trail  
AND/OR COMMON Yellowstone Crossing, Bozeman Trail

LOCATION

SE1/4SW1/4, SW1/4SE1/4 Sec. 7, NE1/4NW1/4, N1/2NE1/4 Sec. 18,  
STREET & NUMBER T.1S., R.13E.

CITY, TOWN Springdale VICINITY OF X  
STATE Montana CODE 030 COUNTY Sweetgrass CODE 097 ✓  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CLASSIFICATION

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

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Arche Marcotte / Mrs. Elizabeth Wood Marcotte (wife)  
STREET & NUMBER 511 Sixth Avenue  
CITY, TOWN Hayre VICINITY OF STATE Montana

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Sweetgrass County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER  
CITY, TOWN Big Timber STATE Montana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Montana Historic Sites Inventory: Robert A. Murray  
DATE September, 1968 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL X  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Recreation & Parks Division, Department of Fish and Game  
1420 East Sixth  
CITY, TOWN Helena STATE Montana

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

---

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Yellowstone Crossing of the Bozeman Trail lies 21 miles east of Livingston and 12 miles west of Big Timber. Here the river crosses tertiary age deposits of waterborne volcanic sediments and passes small areas of volcanic flows. The riverbed is lined by bluffs and cliffs 30 to 100 feet high, and the Crossing is one of the only cuts for many miles through which wagons could descend to the river.

This stretch of river is among the prime trout-fishing streams in the nation and is home to the rainbow, brown and unique Yellowstone cutthroat trout. Mule and white-tailed deer, coyote, fox, beaver and a wide variety of waterfowl and game birds are also common to this area. Bald eagles are occasionally spotted wintering in the vicinity.

The only known contemporary description of the crossing was written by Ellen Gordon Fletcher in 1866. In her diary entry for July 19, she stated:

"A large rope isstrung across the river and the boat is swund across by means of ropes and pulleys. The price for ferrying across is \$10 per wagon and 50¢ for each mule or horse. A small cabin on this side of the river is occupied by the ferryman."<sup>1</sup>

The site is a corridor 200 feet wide and approximately a mile long; it can be divided into three distinct areas.

The first area, the actual ferry crossing at the north end of the site, includes the north and south bank of the river, nearly 300 feet wide at this point. The corridor runs across the river in a northwesterly-southeasterly direction. The riverbanks are lined with cottonwood, willow, birch and aspen. Annaul flooding changes the contours of the bank, and any remains of the ferry or Trail have long since disappeared.

The second area extends from the river bank southeast for about 200 feet and includes a gently sloping bank about 20 feet high. Identifiable remains of the Trail are indistict here, as this section has been severely disturbed by the construction of an irrigation canal and a section of Burlington Northern Railroad track. However, this section of the site represents the most direct link between the remains of the trail above and the river below. This is also the only place where the bluffs, on the north-bank are sufficiently low and gentle to permit the passage of wagons for several miles in either direction.

The third and longest section of the site - nearly 3/4 mile - lies on top of the bluffs and extends for 100 feet to either side of the ruts of the Bozeman Trail. The coridor runs south, southwest paralleling a coulee. Then coulee levels out and here the corridor turns abruptly east for 1/2 mile. The depressions made by the wagons are plainly visible through the cover of native short grasses, gumweed, prickly pear cactus and sage brush. At the curve, the ruts lie nearly a foot below the pasture surface. The area is currently used as a pasture and has never been cultivated. A dilapidated stock shed stands near the curve. No remains of the cabin which supposedly stood near the ferry crossing have been identified. The corridor ends at the Thruway right of way.

# 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 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input 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      1864-1868      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      -

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In the 1860's, the discovery of gold in south-central Montana triggered an influx of settlers and adventurers to the Ruby, Madison and Gallatin Valleys. Most travelers journeyed to the gold fields via the Missouri River or the longer overland route from the Oregon Trail through Wyoming and Utah. In 1865, John Bozeman and John Jacobs of Montana set out to locate, map and popularize a shorter and faster route. Their road came to be know as the Bozeman Trail. From 1864 to 1868 an estimated 20,000 emigrants - sometimes guided by Bozeman himself, and sometimes by the famed fur trapper and guide Jim Bridger - traveled to the Montana gold fields along this route. The Bozeman "cut-off" left the Oregon Trail near Deer Creek, Wyoming, skirted east of the Big Horn Mountain to the Yellowstone River, then followed the river on its south bank to the river crossing east of present-day Springdale. One of few locations for many miles where wagons could descend the steep bluffs north of the river. Once across the Yellowstone, the Trail headed due west, passing through the Mountains near the present Bozeman Pass into the Gallatin Valley.

The Bozeman Trail passed through land claimed by the Sioux and the Crow. As the number of travelers increased, the Indians took steps to protect their land. Attacks on the invasion of emigrants became more and more frequent. Territorial politicians and business interests pressured for military protection and the Army became involved in a three-year minor war to protect the emigrants. The effort to keep the trail open and the resultant Indian hostility brought the trail to national prominence and earned for the route the label "Bloody Bozeman". The closing of the Trail & the abandonment of the forts along it by the Army represents one of the few definite victories of the Indian over the white man.

The Bozeman Trail ceased to be a major route of westward emigration in 1868-69, when the Union Pacific Railroad reached Corrinne, Utah, and easier (and much safer) passage could be obtained on the Montana-Utah road.

The Yellowstone River Crossing of the Bozeman Trail added the danger of drowning to the other perils of the trail. Although bedrock provided stable footing - in contrast to the sandy riverbed at other areas of the river - the Yellowstone flowed with such force here that wagons, livestock and people were frequently washed downstream. In May of 1866, N.P. Langford (U.S. Internal Rvenue Agent for Montana) and John Bozeman corresponded regarding the need for a ferry across the river. Bozeman undertook to build one and notified Langford the following month that it was in operation. The ferry's first day of service, June 24th, 1866, was a disastrous one. According to Bozeman, the river was so high and the current so strong that the tree to which the ferry ropes were attached was pulled out by the roots. A man, a boy and a horse were drowned. Within the next two days, however, Bozeman reported that 53 wagons had crossed without incident.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Dailey, Benjamin, Diary, Manuscript, Montana State University, Bozeman
- Fletcher, Ellen G. A Bride on the Bozeman Trail, 1866 Francis Haines, ed. Medford, Oregon, Grandee Printing Center. 1975.
- Hebard, G. Brinninstool, C. The Bozeman Trail Cleveland. A.H. Clarke 1922
- Johnson, Dorothy. The Bloody Bozeman. New York. McGraw-Hill. 1971
- Creigh: Thomas. "Diary" in Nebraska History, Vol. XXIX
- Billings Gazette , 12/8/74 "Bozeman Letters",/ (see continuation sheet)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 19+

UTM REFERENCES

A	12	564440	5067280	D	12	564600	5066520
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	12	565440	5066575	B	12	565520	5066690
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

From the North Bank of Yellowstone in t1s, R13E, Sec. 7, SE1/4SW1/4, a corridor 200 feet wide runs southeast across river and up bank, crossing railroad. The corridor at top of bank runs due south in section 18 then wouth west, following a coulee. At the stock shed, the corridor turns abruptly east so3theast and runs across the field, ending at the junction of highway 10 with the section line between section 17 & 18.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Susan W. Curtis, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Division of Parks & Recreation, Dept. of Fish and Game

DATE

September 1976

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1420 East Sixth

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Helena

Montana

# 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Kym Kelleher*

TITLE

DATE

Jan 23, 78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Smith*

DATE

12/1/78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *Bill Osborn*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE: *Nov 20, 1978*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUN 20 1978
DATE ENTERED JUN 1 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

Item #8 Significance, page 2

It is not certain how long the ferry remained in operation at this location. One traveler, Thomas Greigh, noted in his diary for September 17, 1866, that he found the ferry deserted "on account of Indians". His group forded the river, and several oxen drowned in the process.

As traffic on the Bozeman Trail declined in the late 1860's, it appears that this treacherous crossing fell into disuse in favor of an easier ford at Benson's Landing several miles upstream.

Item #9 Major Bibliographical References

-Interviews: Susan Curtis with Warren McGee, Livingston & Byron Grosfield, Big Timber, September, 1976.