

PH0368296

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUL 16 1976
DATE ENTERED	NOV 7 1976

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

1 NAME

* ↓

HISTORIC

Name Rock

AND/OR COMMON

Initial Rock (preferred) *NR*

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

SE of Medora
Custer National Forest
Little Missouri National Grasslands
Medora Ranger District

CITY, TOWN

Medora

VICINITY OF

---NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

22 1st

STATE

North Dakota

CODE
38

COUNTY
Billings

CODE
007

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (if applicable)

USDA Forest Service
Northern Region

STREET & NUMBER

Federal Building

CITY, TOWN

Missoula

--- VICINITY OF

STATE
Montana

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Billings County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Medora

STATE
North Dakota

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

State Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1974

---FEDERAL STATE ---COUNTY ---LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historical Society of North Dakota

CITY, TOWN

Bismarck

STATE
North Dakota

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

Present: Initial Rock is located in the Davis Creek drainage about eight miles southeast of the town of Medora. There is an exposed sandstone rock with two names of men assigned to General Custer's 7th Cavalry carved in soft brown sandstone.

F. Neely	W.C. Williams
M 7 th Cav.	H 7 Cav.
May 1876	1876

The rock is approximately 6 feet high by 10 feet long and projects from a hillside. The topography behind the rock is hilly with a gentle flat in front of the rock. The flat extends to Davis Creek and beyond. The vegetation is varied with grass and sagebrush predominant in the flat and grass, sagebrush, shrubs and bare soil on the hills.

The names have been protected by a plate glass shield since 1964. In 1966 a road was built into the area and a shelter was constructed over the rock to prevent further deterioration from weathering. Also, a fence was put up for protection against vandalism. A sign was erected at the site in 1967. Other names and initials have been carved in the rock in recent times.

Original: This was a camp site for General Custer on the Custer Trail of 1876. There is no visible evidence of the camp other than Initial Rock.

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 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 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 May 28, 1876

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

General George Armstrong Custer left Fort Abraham Lincoln near Bismarck, North Dakota on May 17, 1876 as regimental commander of the 7th Cavalry and under General Alfred H. Terry's command. Their mission was a campaign against hostile Sioux in the Montana Territory. Initial Rock was the twelfth camp site selected on "Custer's Trail." Camp was made on May 28, when a wagon was lost off a bridge. This was about 200 feet downstream from Initial Rock. One night was spent at that site and camp was broken at 5:00 am. on May 29.

General Custer made his famous "Last Stand" on June 25, 1876 on the Little Big Horn River. Privates Frank Neely and William C. Williams were not assigned to General Custer's battalion at the time of the massacre. Private Neely's Company M was under Major Reno's command and Private Williams' Company H was under Captain Benteen during the battle. Many historic accounts of the Battle of the Little Big Horn are available.

The signatures of Neely and Williams appeared on a petition on July 4, 1876 which was circulated at the regimental camp among the survivors of the battle. The petition was addressed to the President and Congress requesting that Major Reno be promoted to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Custer and that Captain Benteen be then promoted to fill Reno's vacancy.

The names carved in the rock may have been done as a desire to be recognized, a form of recreation, or a lack of something better to do by F. Neely and W.C. Williams. The rock definitely forms a landmark on Custer's Trail and records General Custer's travels leading up to the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

- Graham, Colonel W.A., The Custer Myth, Stackpole Company, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1953, pp. 283-285.