

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 3 1979

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

Boothill Cemetery

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Swords Park

CITY, TOWN

Billings

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2

STATE

Montana

VICINITY OF

CODE

30

COUNTY

Yellowstone

CODE

111

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER: *Historic*

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Billings

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 1178

CITY, TOWN

Billings,

VICINITY OF

STATE

Montana

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Yellowstone County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

North 27th St. and 3rd Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Billings

STATE

Montana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

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

Boothill Cemetery, burying ground for the Yellowstone River Town of Coulson, is located on a small hill at the east end of the 500-foot rocky outcrop bordering Billings, Montana, on the north. The land encompassing the cemetery was once buffalo country where Indians camped, hunted and fought. The small hill became a cemetery with the establishment of Coulson, named for the Coulson Packet Line which operated steamboats up the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers from St. Louis.

Coulson existed from 1877 to 1882 when the Northern Pacific Railroad pushed its tracks west and established the City of Billings. But during those five years of life, Coulson was a wild and woolly settlement. Hardly a night passed without a gunfight or two.

Following the arrival of the railroad and the move of Coulson residents, lock, stock and barrel to Billings, Boothill Cemetery was no longer used. Its wooden, crudely lettered grave markers sagged with time and weather, and native grass waved high in the wind almost hiding the depressions of the graves.

The area containing Coulson and its cemetery, along with other sections bordering the railroad route, was acquired by the Northern Pacific and its subsidiary, Minnesota & Montana Land & Improvement Company. A few years after establishment of Billings in 1882, the company constructed an irrigation canal. Water to turn the alkali flats into cropland was taken from the Yellowstone River above Billings and carried 39 miles to a discharge point well below Coulson. Grateful for the aid of a pioneer farmer and irrigation specialist, the late I.D. O'Donnell of Billings, Minnesota & Montana Land & Improvement Company gave title to the cemetery site to him.

Aware of its historical importance, Mr. O'Donnell was instrumental in Boothill's preservation, and he erected a rock and mortar obelisk on the cemetery's hilltop. Midway up the obelisk's west side a concrete plaque was embedded with the carving: "Died, 1877-1882."

Cut into marble on each of the four sides of the obelisk's base are verses written by Mrs. B.F. Shuart, Wife of the first minister of Billings Congregational Church:

"This monument marks a historic site
Where thirty-five lie buried.
They played the drama called life for fortune and fame
Lost their lives; lost their game."

"Upon this rugged hill,
The long trail past,
These men of restless will
Find rest at last."

"The stream flows on but it matters not
To the sleepers here by the world forgot.
The heroes of many a tale unsung,
They lived and died when the West was young."

"In memory of those who blazed the trail
And showed to us our West
In boots and spurs they lie
And on this hill find rest."

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With Billings living up to its nickname, The Magic City, and stretching east and west along the Yellowstone River, Mr. O'Donnell felt best preservation for Boothill was ownership by the City. In the late 1920's he deeded the cemetery to the City of Billings, and Boothill is now a city park and an "Approved Old West Trail Attraction."

In 1970, Billings' City Park Department erected a large steel sign supported by massive concrete blocks at the cemetery entrance. The sign's pierced lettering tells briefly the history of Couls on and its Boothill, citing one of the most important historically to be buried there as H.M. (Muggins) Taylor, who, July 1-3, 1876, carried Gen. Alfred H. Terry's dispatch of the Custer defeat from Terry's camp near the Battle of the Little Bighorn to the Army post, Fort Ellis, above Bozeman. Later Taylor was a deputy sheriff at Couls on and was Fatally wounded in a struggle with Couls on's town drunk, Henry Lump.

In addition to the steel sign, Billings Park Department and the Billings Heights Kiwanis Club have erected a wooden pole fence along Boothill's west side; have kept native grass mowed; have put replicas of the original headboards at most of the graves, and on September 30, 1978, dedicated a new marker at the grave of H.M. (Muggins) Taylor. The marker is a large granite stone bearing a bronze plaque and set in a concrete base. It was donated by the Billings people interested in the historical significance of Boothill Cemetery as the burial site of the courageous scout and lawman, H.M. (Muggins) Taylor.

The Rev. John F. McClland, retired minister of Billings First Congregational Church, gave the eulogy. First minister of the Church, the late Rev. B.F. Shuart, had officiated at Taylor's funeral.

Mike Hink, Park Superintendent of Billings, was master of ceremonies and introduced Billings mayor, William A. Fox; Yellowstone County Sheriff Dean S. Betzer, who represented the law Taylor served; Billings Heights Kiwanis Club President Clinton Bishop, who placed a wreath on the grave, and members of historical organizations interested in Boothill's preservation.

A 12-gun salute was fired and Taps sounded by members of the American Legion Post, headed by Clifford Hanson.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) <i>Montana History</i>
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The only vestige of the Yellowstone River Town of Coulson is its Boothill Cemetery, now a part of the park system of the City of Billings, Montana

Significance of Boothill is that it is evidence of settlement in this area of Yellowstone Valley just a year after George A. Custer's defeat, June 25, 1876, at the Battle of the Little Bighorn. And also, that Boothill contains the grave of H.M. (Muggins) Taylor, civilian scout for the Army, who alone rode through wilderness teeming with victory-flushed Indians to take news of the Custer disaster to Fort Ellis, Army post above Bozeman.

In the months following the battle there were no communities along the Yellowstone, except for Coulson. A trading post was operated by Horace Countryman near the site to become Columbus, Montana. Fort Keogh was to the east, a military post built in 1877 near where Miles City, Montana, was to rise. And there was Fort Custer, built in 1877 on a bluff overlooking land Hardin, Montana, would be built on. But all else was considered hostile territory as the Indian victors at the Battle of the Little Bighorn and their tribes refused to return to their reservations.

Into this area fraught with danger, came some entrepreneurs--among them P.W. McAdow. He was a Bozeman, Montana, merchant who foresaw the importance of an established town along the 1873 survey route of the Northern Pacific Railroad.

McAdow set up a sawmill and a store on a portion of Section 34-IN-26E between the Yellowstone River and the NP track route. Others followed McAdow, and it wasn't long before Coulson--named for the Coulson Packet Company whose steamboats plied the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers from St. Louis--was a thriving settlement. It had a post office, newspaper, three general stores, a hotel, a brewery, five saloons, three restaurants, livery stables, barns, homes, a deputy sheriff of Custer County, then encompassing what would become Yellowstone County, and a cemetery, Boothill, whose graves were marked by crudely lettered wooden headboards.

Research by the late I.D. O'Donnell of Billings, pioneer agriculturist-irrigationist, who served as Commissioner of Irrigation in President Woodrow Wilson's cabinet, has preserved the accounts of several Boothill burials.

They included: Infant child born to Mr. and Mrs. Harry Reed; Mrs. John J. Alderson, wife of a prominent Coulson citizen; Dave Courier, killed in the Nez Perce raid of 1877; Joe Redmond, "waiter at Skillen's Saloon murdered by Dutch Charley, a gambler;" thirteen U.S. soldiers, whose bodies were put in a mass grave after being found by Coulson residents near the NP survey route;

Hugh Smith, "accidentally killed" at his cabin; William Stooltz, known as "Dutch Bill", a Coulson saloon employee who died in a "drunken fit"; William Preston, a saloon owner, shot by Dan Leahy in an argument over use of a corral; Clarence Toplift, killed when he fell from his horse during a race July 4, 1882; Thomas Christie, NP track layer, whose pistol "accidentally discharged"; Billy Nedham, mail carrier, whose gun "accidentally discharged" when he pulled off his mail sack in McAdow's store;

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 165' x 170'

QUADRANGLE NAME Billings East

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES 830

A 12 695 450 501749815
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Boothill Cemetery is boarded on the west by County road right away; to the north by a vacant lot, Tract 1 of Certificate of Survey 884 and to the East and South by a vacant lot, Tract II, of Certificate of Survey 884.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Kathryn Wright (Charter Member)

ORGANIZATION

Yellowstone Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

2019 St. Johns Avenue

CITY OR TOWN

Billings

DATE

October 27, 1978

TELEPHONE

1-406-656-7264

STATE

Montana

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

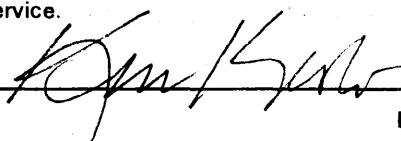
NATIONAL

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



TITLE

DATE 12-4-78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

for Charles W. ...

DATE 4-17-79

ATTEST: William H. ...

DATE 4-17-79

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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Mrs. Louisa Carter, who committed suicide when she was 25 by walking into the Yellowstone River; James D. Russell, killed in a saloon brawl; Patrick Dwyer, NP section hand, shot in a "quarrel;" unknown soldier run over by a wagon; Ben Walker shot in a quarrel; Ed Prebble, suicide; Louis Johnson, NP employee, killed in a construction camp near Coulson; Judge Foulkes, former justice of the peace, struck by an NP locomotive; and H.M. (Muggins) Taylor.

Taylor, sandy-haired, medium build, was of Scottish descent. He was born in 1830 in the eastern United States and well educated for his time, often quoting Shakespeare and Robert Burns as he sat around campfires in the West. He'd come West at an early age, staying a while in Utah and later in Dakota Territory, meat hunting, fashioning gloves, jackets, coats from hides and gambling. His favorite game was muggins, hence his nickname.

Coming into Montana Territory in 1870, he became a civilian scout and meat hunter for the military posts in the area. And when Col. John Gibbon led his command toward the Battle of the Little Bighorn, Taylor was a scout in the group headed by Gibbon's chief of scouts, Lt. James H. Bradley.

They were the first to come on "Last Stand Hill" and see the naked, mutilated bodies of Custer and his dead. Taylor volunteered to take this news to Gen. Alfred H. Terry, camped at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Bighorn rivers. Later, he helped bring Maj. Marcus A. Reno's wounded down from its battle position to Terry's camp for conveyance on the steamboat Far West, to Fort Abraham Lincoln, Dakota Territory.

The night of June 30, Terry asked for volunteers to take his message of Custer's defeat--"It is my painful duty to report..." to the officer in charge at Fort Ellis. Not one of the military stepped forward. After all, the area was teeming with Indians and the sight and word of the mutilations of the Seventh Cavalry troopers and officers instilled fear in the hearts and minds of both new recruits and battle-hardened veterans.

Then, from the back of the men grouped around Terry, a 46-year-old-buckskin-clad scout stepped forward. "I'll take it, General," said Muggins Taylor.

Next morning at dawn, July 1, 1876, Taylor started out from Terry's camp. Often with Indians hard on his heels, he made the 100 miles to Horace Countryman's trading post on the Stillwater River. There he was given a meal, a night's lodging and a fresh horse by Countryman and his partner, Col. W.H. Norton. The next morning, July 3, he started out again with Countryman riding along, a copy of Terry's dispatch in his saddlebag to take on to the newspaper in Helena, Montana. Taylor, as ordered by Terry, took the news to Fort Ellis, arriving there the night of July 3.

Had it not been for Muggins Taylor, riding alone through hostile wilderness, Countryman would not have known of the Custer disaster.

After that, Taylor became a meat hunter for Hoskins and McGirl, who had a trading post at the site to become Huntley, Montana. Later, Custer County Sheriff Tom Irvine named Taylor a deputy sheriff with headquarters at Coulson.

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The morning of September 27, 1882, Henry Lump, whose wife was Coulson's laundress, returned to John Skillen's saloon on the town's main street. He'd been drinking heavily in all of the Coulson saloons, and when he entered Skillen's, he was abusive to some of the patrons. Bartender, P. Fobger, threw Lump out. Lump went to the laundry, where he beat his wife for a while, and then returned to Skillen's. He carried a Winchester rifle and fired a shot at Fobger.

Deputy Sheriff Taylor took after Lump, who ran to safety of the laundry. When Taylor demanded he open up, Lump came to the door, rifle in hand. They struggled for the rifle; it discharged and Taylor slumped to the ground. He was taken to the home of Coulson's ferryman, John Schock.

Fobger siezed Lump, bound his wrists and took him in a wagon to Billings where he turned him over to Deputy Sheriff Manuel Torres. Then the bartender got two Billings; doctors, Bole and Parker, and took them to Coulson.

The doctors said the wound, through Taylor's left side just about the hip bone was "clean" and he likely would recover. But peritonitis set in and Taylor died October 1, 1882.

The Rev. B.F. Shuart, first minister of Billings' First Congregational Church, officiated at the funeral October 2, 1882. It was the largest funeral Coulson had ever known. Later, Taylor's grave was marked with a large wooden headboard and surrounded by a wooden fence.

Lump, meanwhile, had been taken to Miles City where he was tried on a charge of second-degree murder. He was found guilty and sentenced to seven years in the penitentiary at Deer Lodge, Montana. His wife followed him; took in laundry and gave the money to her husband when authorities would permit. Following Lump's release, he contracted pneumonia and died.

As the years passed, the wooden headboard and fence at Taylor's grave sagged with time and weather. But a photo of it in 1899 was taken by the late Lloyd Lipp of Billings to show the grave on the east slope of Boothill Cemetery facing toward what was once the site of Coulson.

Then souvenir hunters and/or vandals carted away the marker and fence. After that Billings Heights Kiwanis Club and one of its former presidents, Joe Hopper, began putting small wooden markers on the graves. Some of them, too, disappeared.

But now, under auspices of Billings' City Park Department, Billings Heights Kiwanis Club and local historians, Taylor's grave is handsomely and hopefully, permanently marked. Its granite stone symbolizing the strength and courage of Muggins Taylor in his ride with the news of the Custer defeat; its bronze plaque signifying the lawman's star he wore so proudly and served so well in the turbulent times of wild and woolly Coulson.

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No. 9--Major Bibliographical References
Boothill Cemetery

Books:

Irene Gibbs Breuchaud, "Memories of Montana 1882," 1958 Book Craftsman Associates, Inc., New York.

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Federal Writers' Project, "Montana, A state Guide Book," 1939 Hastings House, New York.

Joseph Mills Hanson, "The Conquest of the Missouri," 1946 Rinehart & Company, Inc., New York.

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The Post, Vol. 1, No. 36, Sept. 30, 1882.

Yellowstone Journal, Miles City, MT., Oct. 7, 1882, page 3.

Helena, MT., Herald, Oct. 10, 1882, page 3.

Bozeman, MT., Times, (Extra), July 3, 1876.

The Billings Gazette, Billings, MT, from Montana Historica Society files, no date, article by W.H. Banfill, "Muggins Taylor, Scout, was Mystery Man of Early Days."

The Billings Gazette, Billings, MT, from Parmly Billings Library files, no date, article titled, "Veteran Editor Tells Pioneers about Boothill."

The Billings Gazette, Billings, MT, Aug. 20, 1978, page 6-H.

Interviews:

I.D. O'Donnell interviewed by Kathryn Wright, Jan. 20, 1945, Billings, MT.

Mrs. M.A. Wallis, daughter of the late I.D. O'Donnell, interviewed by Kathryn Wright, Sept. 26, 1978, and Sept. 30, 1978.

Dolly Schock Plumlee of Santa Paula, CA, daughter of John Schock, Coulson's ferryman, in whose home H.M. (Muggins) Taylor died; interviewed by Kathryn Wright, June 1965, Billings, MT.