AWANNUÚKAAXUWUA:

Living Within a Line Drawn On The Ground

Absaroka Agency Rediscovery - *Stillwater County, MT*

The Crow people lived for generations within the vast and beautiful Beartooth Front cultural landscape. By the nineteenth century, however, non-Indian influences began to encroach on their homeland. By midcentury, the U.S. Government established the first Crow Agency at Fort Parker, near present-day Livingston, Montana. In 1875, the agency moved south and east, near what is now Absarokee, Montana. For nine years, the Absaroka Agency served as a place of transition for the Crow people. Abandoned in 1884, the place disappeared into the landscape, but not from memory. Recently, exciting archaeological investigations rediscovered the exact location of Absaroka Agency, providing a remarkable opportunity for preservation, interpretation, education and understanding.

The Absaroka Agency is one of the most significant sites in Stillwater County and in Montana and embodies a unique educational, economic and interpretative opportunity. Evidenced by the nearly complete footprint and the rich material culture retrieved from the site, it is a place important to preserve and embrace. It is a rare occurrence when a site possesses the attributes that this one reveals: a physical representation of an important historic transition. Because the physical aspect was essentially lost for over a hundred years, its rediscovery has provided a rich archaeological basis for future interpretation and for educational programs. Finally, the Absaroka Agency remains an essential cultural memory for Crow tribal members and presents a prospect for true cultural understanding among the Crow people, Montanans--young and old--as well as the public at large.

None of the sites described in this brochure are currently on the National Register of Historic Places, and many are worthy. In fact Stillwater County only has a few properties on the National Register; however, that can change. Protecting and preserving the past is something that everyone can do. Whether you'd like to perform historically correct renovations, register your building or site on the National Register, or join with others to help preserve and interpret your historical legacy, the place to start is the place where this brochure begins--the Museum of the Beartooths in Columbus, Montana.

In the 2008-2009 school year, my language arts students began researching places and people significant to the Crow Tribe's history in our county as part of multiple grants funded by the Montana Office of Public Instruction and the Montana Historical Society. This work has produced maps and newspaper articles, museum exhibits and a written publication, and all produced by the students. The personal learning and growth I have witnessed my students experience in this effort has been truly gratifying for me personally and professionally.

The Columbus High School Class of 2013, consisting of forty students altogether, took the stories and findings from previous classes, identified the locations included in this tour and compiled the information here along with their own research, much of which was conducted in partnership with the Museum of the Beartooths staff in Columbus. Our special thanks goes to museum director Penny Redli for her tireless help and assistance.
The Class of 2013 would also like to thank our cultural advisors, Dr. Shane Doye from Montana State University and Tim McCleary from Little Big Horn College. I would especially like to recognize the editorial work of students Ashtyn Aumueller, Sarah Corson, Julianna Cangro, Taylor Schultz and Nicole Nelson in this finished product. Thanks to CHS junior Brandon Clouse for drafting early versions of the tour map. Also, this work would not have been complete without oral history transcriptions completed by Stevie Howell from the Class of 2012.

Julianna Cangro, a member of the CHS Class of 2013, wrote that, "[t]his project not only affects each one of us students on a personal level, it also reveals information relevant to our families, members of our community, and residents of our state. Some people who have grown up in Stillwater County had no idea that the places they drive past every day are sites of historical significance that impacted our state as a whole. The influence of the Crow Tribe throughout Stillwater County has shaped the present day towns of Absarokee, Columbus, Park City, and surrounding areas. The evidence is all around us, in street and place names, in artifacts found and articles written, and even in the location of the towns themselves." It is my hope that the lessons learned by Julianna and her classmates continue to educate the youth of Montana.

We cannot understand our present in context unless we truly understand our past.

Enjoy your drive,

Casey Olsen, Composition Teacher
Columbus High School

Interested in finding out more?

Here are some resources we recommend:

Apsáalooke Place Names Database, Little Big Horn College; http://lib.lbhc.edu/index.php?q=node/200

Parading Through History: The Making of the Crow Nation, 1805-1935, by Frederick E. Hoxie (1947)

They Gazed on the Beartooths, by Jim Annin (1964)

Plenty-Coups: Chief of the Crows, by Frank B. Linderman

Memoirs of a White Crow Indian, Thomas Leforge as told by Thomas Marquis (1974)

The Journal of Lieutenant James H. Bradley, 1872-1877

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office records; http://www.glorecords.blm.gov

"Mining, Moccasins, and Montana's 34th County: A Centennial Celebration of Stillwater County" by Patty Hooker and published by the Museum of the Beartooths(2013)

Some of these books that we have recommend are available for research and for sale in the gift shop at the Museum of the Beartooths in Columbus, Montana.

MUSEUM OF THE BEARTOOTHS

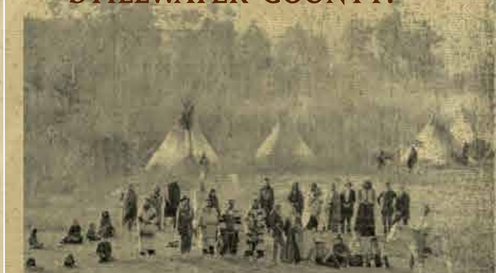
Big Sky. Big Land. Big History. Montana Historical Society

Montana Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent
opi.mt.gov

COLUMBUS HIGH SCHOOL

THE CROW TRIBE'S

INFLUENCE IN STILLWATER COUNTY:



A DRIVING TOUR

1 The Museum of the Beartooths:

[440 East 5th Avenue North in Columbus.] The Museum of the Beartooths preserves the rich history and culture of Stillwater County. The museum includes an exhibit showcasing the Second Crow Agency and the Crow Tribe's influence in Stillwater County, including historical photographs, artifacts, maps, and a model of the agency compound to help visitors understand the agency's important role in the development of the area after the Crow Reservation was formed in 1868
(written by P. Redli, C. Olsen).

Museum Of The Beartooths

2 Park City:

[Park City I-90 Exit 426, head to Columbus on frontage road.] In the winter of 1884, Plenty Coups led a party of Crows (including Plain-bull, Big-sky and Strikes-on-the-head) and white settlers north from Park City in search of a large horse herd captured by a group of Blackfeet near present-day Rockvale. According to multiple accounts, Joseph Tate, Chancy Ames, Philip Sidle, and Lee M. Owens were the four men Plenty Coups agreed to bring along with him.
They followed the tracks northwest and finally caught up with the horse herd in an area now known as Hailstone Basin in northern Stillwater County. Two Blackfeet men were killed in this battle, both by Plenty Coups, and Plain-bull "counted coup" on one of them. The horses and the dead were taken to Park City. Sidle and Owens were injured, Ames and Tate were killed and later were buried at Round Top Butte. Plenty Coups said, "It was a hard journey for those white men. Two whole days and nights, with little rest, took us to Park City, ... and it was there I learned that white women mourn as ours do. My heart fell to the ground when I heard them crying and wailing for their men, ..." (R. Blenkner, J. Ruffatto).

3 Young's Point:

[Young's Point Road pull out.] Alonzo J. Young ran a trading post from 1877-1882 on the north side of the Yellowstone River near present-day Park City. The prominent rocky point on the south side of the river is commonly known as "Young's Point". The Crow name for this place is Iisáakshamammaaiaschiluua, which means "young man's store" (K. Hersrud)..

4 Yellowstone River:

[Best viewed on the frontage road from Hensley Creek to East Hill pull-out (mile-marker #2) outside Columbus.] The Crow name for the Yellowstone River is Iichílikaashaashe, which translates to "Elk River" or "Elk Crossing River" in English. When French explorers first visited this area, they mistranslated the Crow word for "elk" as "yellow" and the Crow word for "crossing" as "rock." This led to the river being labeled "La Roche Jaune," or "Yellow Rock River" on early maps of the area. In later maps the name was changed to "Yellow Stone." The mistranslation, most likely occurring while communicating in Plains Indian sign language, has been credited to the similarities in the words due to color of elk and the reality that river crossings were often made at a place where rocks or stones could be seen in the water. The mistranslated name also transferred to Yellowstone County to the east and to Yellowstone National Park to the southwest. Elk are often spotted crossing the Yellowstone between Columbus and Park City (T. Harrison).

5 Early Trading Posts:

[West Hill pull-out overlooking the Yellowstone River.] 5. Horace Countryman was one of the first white settlers of the area, about 1875. He had a trading post called Stillwater on the north side of the river west of the Columbus West Hill. He also had, for a short time, an illegal trading cabin on the south side of the river on Crow Reservation land. His south side cabin was roughly a half mile up Countryman creek and has since been torn down. Whiskey at one time was illegally traded here causing much grief for the Crow tribe and Crow agents alike. Countryman also installed a cable basket for carrying passengers and trade goods across the river during high water periods. The cable was located east of the Columbus West Hill near a natural forde where horseback riders would cross the river to and from the Crow agency and the trading posts. In some years the cable can still be seen on the south bank, depending on the high water erosion in the spring.

Shortly after Countryman, other traders began cropping up closer to the natural forde. The first one was known as Eagle's Nest, established around 1879, about a half mile east of the natural forde on the north bank of the river. It was a lively place that included a blacksmith shop, harness shop and hotel. Also in that area was a placed called "Sheep Dip," which is believed by some to be more of a nickname than a separate community. The name was apparently derived from the vile-tasting whiskey that was made there. The name was so frequently used that "Sheep Dip" became one of the early names of Columbus (D. Ehret, E. Kluthe, C. Kent, C. Gibson, T. Ostrum, B. Wiggs).

6 Rapelje/Hailstone Basin Battle:

[For best view, turn west on Stagecoach Road 0.2 miles, looking north.] The Crow Tribe used the landscape surrounding present-day Rapelje, Montana, to hunt and find resources, especially during the second agency's use when supplies were scarce. In the fall of 1881 a group of young Crow men crossed the Yellowstone above the Stillwater and rode north 20 miles to hunt antelope in the landscape before you. The group of nine hunters divided into three equal parties. One party encountered two cowboys who accused the hunters of stealing a horse. One of the cowboys shot and killed a young Crow man, and his body was hid beneath sagebrush. According to letters written by the Crow agent at the time, all the white men in the area had "banded together" and stated their intention to "kill any Indian on sight found in the country." The agent added that "no respect" was paid to Indians in the area and "it was deemed no crime to kill an Indian but rather an act of heroism."

Hailstone Basin is located 18 miles north of Rapelje, its rocky rim visible from this vantage point on a clear day. In 1884, Crows and Park City whites exchanged gunfire with a group of Blackfeet Indians who had captured a herd of horses from the Crows camped on Rock Creek (see also the "Park City" tour description). Plenty Coups wanted to sneak into the Blackfeet camp quietly in darkness, "[B]ut I could not hold my white friends," he said. "They were unmanageable..." The whites began shouting and charged their horses toward the rimrock where the Blackfeet were camped. The group of Blackfeet awoke, and one Park City man was shot and killed. Another received a head wound from a bullet glancing off the rocks he hid behind, and he too later died. Plenty Coups shot and killed two Blackfeet men. As he and Plain-bull tried to help the mortally wounded white man, more whites from Park City arrived and started shooting at them. They were pinned down with Park City settlers firing on them from one direction and Blackfeet firing on them from the rims. Plenty Coups waved his arms at the settlers who continued to fire until one of them recognized him. Once the confusion subsided, the newly reinforced group recovered the stolen horses (M. Baker).

7 Yellowstone Crossing:

[Itch-Kep-Pe Park, Columbus, alongside the Yellowstone River.] An early river ferry over the Yellowstone wa located in this vicinity. Prior to the bridge's construction, Horace Countryman owned a ferry which carried passengers, horses and wagons across the river. This ferry cost just a couple bits to a dollar to cross and in one day it reportedly made $200. The ferry ran from 1882 to 1893. Former Columbus News owner/editor Jim Annin gave the following description of the ferry's location: "The big tree just east of the present south side approach of the bridge at Columbus was a 'snub' post of the ferry. While two big trees in the city sewage disposal tract furnished an attachment for the ferry ropes on the north side." Many visitors to the Crow Reservation and second agency traveled through this location (J. Martinez).

8 William & Julia White home:

[Once across the Yellowstone bridge, house can be viewed by pulling over at the very end of the right-hand guardrail; Private Property.] William and Julia White owned land just outside of Columbus along the Yellowstone River. Their original beige home with a brown roof, built in 1883, can be seen almost directly to your right after crossing the Yellowstone bridge. William was a private in the Second Cavalry. Julia was a Crow woman, the daughter of Crooked Foot. According to William's autobiography, her original Crow name Yoho-na-ho means "She Sings Many Songs of Victory." She was allotted some of the land through the agency and William filed a claim on surrounding acres after the reservation boundary moved. Their land stretched from the Yellowstone River south up the side of Shane Ridge. A 1902 survey map shows the home listed in Julia's name.

Together they had 4 children, Mary "Mamie", Minnie, Ada, and William "Willie" Jr., all of whom graduated from Columbus High School. When Julia died in 1921, William sold the ranch for one dollar to the McClanahans and moved to Crow Agency where he served as a guide to visitors at Little Big Horn Battlefield because he couldn't bear to live in the Columbus area without Julia. The house was moved a short distance south in 1924 due to the close proximity to the Yellowstone River. When the White family lived in the house, the Yellowstone River flowed past on the north side of the house and the Stillwater River flowed by on the south side through the swampy channel visible in the pasture today. The original survey map from 1902 supports that claim. Today, most of the White family rests together in the Columbus cemetery (S. Corson, N. Nelson).

9 Shane Family Home & Ranch:

[Pull off Hwy 78 at Wagon Trail Road sign, mile-marker #44]. Shane Creek got its name from the Shane family who lived near its confluence with the Stillwater River. Thomas and Sarah Shane lived on a piece of land regarded by many as "one of the finest allotments in the reservation," stretching from modern-day Fireman's Point to the bottom of modern-day Shane Creek Road. The ridge to the east between Shane Creek and the Yellowstone River is called Shane Ridge, but the ridge's traditional Crow name is Daxpitcheeaashúua, which translates to "Bear's Head."

Sarah Shane was an enrolled member of the Crow Tribe, and had 11 children with Tom. When the reservation boundary moved, the Shane Ranch possibly developed out of a provision in the Dawes Act that allowed allotments outside the reservation boundary. A new cabin was constructed in 1895. Thomas Shane died in 1901, and sometime after Sarah married Jack Williams. On a train ride to Salt Lake City, Sarah overheard Williams tell another passenger that he was planning to kill her and take her allotment. She got off the train at the next stop in Utah, walked back to Montana following the railroad tracks, and wrote a will excluding Williams. She is believed to be one of the first Native American women to write a will. Many of Sarah's children had allotments in the area and her daughter Josephine registered a claim on 40 acres. Altogether, the family was allotted or held claim on 1,680 acres. Heirs of Sarah Shane sold 40 acres to the Columbus Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association for $250 in 1919. That piece of ground is known today as Fireman's Point. Sarah was laid to rest in Crow Agency on March 15, 1932 (Q. Edeler, M. Corriz).

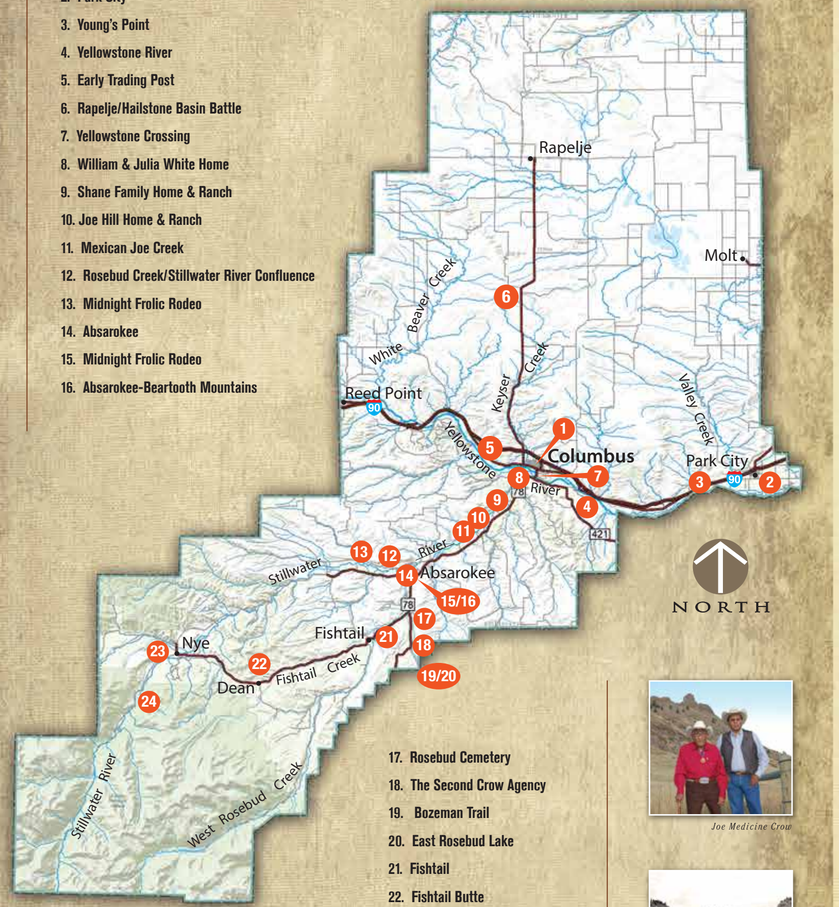
10 Joe Hill Home & Ranch:

[Beartooth Ranch entrance pull-out, private property.] Jose Trujillo, also known as Joe Hill, married Harriet, a Crow woman, during the Second Crow Agency's use. The couple had two children, James and Lucy, who were also enrolled Crow, and the Hill family's combined allotted ground stretched from Joe Hill Creek to Whitebird Creek in the Stillwater River Valley. Today the majority of this land is owned by the Beartooth Ranch, which was once owned by actor Mel Gibson (J. Jones).

Driving Tour Of Stillwater COUNTY

Crow Agency Ruins

1. The Museum of the Beartooths
2. Park City
3. Young's Point
4. Yellowstone River
5. Early Trading Post
6. Rapelje/Hailstone Basin Battle
7. Yellowstone Crossing
8. William & Julia White Home
9. Shane Family Home & Ranch
10. Joe Hill Home & Ranch
11. Mexican Joe Creek
12. Rosebud Creek/Stillwater River Confluence
13. Midnight Frolic Rodeo
14. Absarokee
15. Midnight Frolic Rodeo
16. Absarokee-Beartooth Mountains



17. Rosebud Cemetery
18. The Second Crow Agency
19. Bozeman Trail
20. East Rosebud Lake
21. Fishtail
22. Fishtail Butte
23. Buffalo Jump
24. Nye City

Joe Medicine Crow

Hailstone Basin

Basemap: World Top Map was compiled using sources several data providers, including the U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. National Park Service, Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO), Department of Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Dutch Kadaster, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, and Esri.

Midnight Frolic

11 Mexican Joe Creek:

[School bus pullout after Pheasant Lane on Highway 78, the creek flows east to west into the Stillwater.] Mexican Joe Creek is named in tribute to Jose Pablo Torjie, also known as "Mexican Joe." Torjie was an employee at the Second Crow Agency. On July 2, 1875, Torjie and another man, Tom Stewart, were cutting timber for agency buildings in the Whitebird area when they noticed that the agency's cattle herd was missing and went in search. When Torjie and Stewart didn't return, the rest of the timber crew went looking for them. The crew encountered Torjie and Stewart attempting to escape a group of raiding Lakotas. During the ensuing confrontation, Torjie went missing after falling from his horse. When the shooting was over, the crew was unable to find him. A year later, his body was found beside what is now known as Mexican Joe Creek. Torjie was disoriented and possibly wounded after the attack and tried to find his way back to the agency. The agent at the time used examples like this in letters to his superiors in Washington, D.C., asking them to send the army to remove the Lakota encroaching on the Crow Reservation; this in part led to the Battle of the Little Big Horn (A. Aumueller, J. Cangro, T. Schultz).

12 Rosebud Creek/Stillwater River Confluence:

[North Stillwater Road, view 0.8 miles from the Huy 78 turn-off.] Rosebud Creek runs into the Stillwater River near Absarokee, but according to Lieutenant James H. Bradley, the names were transposed at one point in history. The river now known as the Stillwater was once called the Rosebud, and the creek now known as the Rosebud was once the Stillwater. In his 1876 journal Bradley states that "[b]y some hocus-pocus they have become exactly reversed, and everybody now calls the main stream the Stillwater." Present-day Rosebud Creek and its two forks had numerous beaver dams which converted the stream into a series of "stillwater" pools. The present-day Stillwater River was well-known to the Crow for its abundance of rose-hip bushes. This switch is confirmed through the Crow Tribe's traditional names for the streams: Biliinneeté (Stillwater) means "no current," and Bichkapáashe (Rosebud) means "rose-hip river." Itch-Kep-Peh Park in Columbus gets its name from a slang version of Bichkapáashe (R. Flick).

13 Midnight Frolic Rodeo:

[North Stillwater Road at Johnson Bridge.] The Midnight Frolic Roundup took place on July 2nd-4th in 1921 & 1922 on the north side of the river here. The event was possibly the largest festive gathering in Montana up until that point with more than 7,000 attendants. "Tex" Van Harris was the winner in 1921, winning the Connolly trophy saddle. Many Crows attended and competed at the event. Using a 1921 group photo from the event, William Big Day and friends identified the following people: Old Crane, Oliver Lion Show, Alex Plainfeather, Joe Gun, John Push (Crow Scout), Plainfeather, George & Slim Boot Tail, Daniel & Fanny Blackbird, Henry Big Day, Walter Chief, and George Russell. Visit the Museum of the Beartooths to view the photos and Harris' saddle in the Midnight Frolic exhibit (J. Brooks).

14 Absarokee:

[Town of Absarokee, Main Street traffic light.] The town of Absarokee got its name from the Crow Tribe's name for their own people. Apsaalooke (ap-SAH-lo-ka), means "children or off-spring of the long-beaked bird" (Hoxie). Early French interpreters mistranslated this as "crow." Anthropologist Robert H. Lowie describes the name as "a bird no longer to be seen in the country." Thomas Leforge explains it as "a peculiar kind of forked-tail bird resembling the blue jay or magpie." There are a few variations on the phonetic spelling of this name, such as Absarokee, and Absaroka. Absarokee sprang up as a town after the Second Crow Agency was relocated, and the close proximity to the agency inspired the name. The first post office was established in 1893 (K. DeSaveur).

Absarokee 1895

15 Smallpox Caves:

[Absarokee High School parking lot, south end of town.] There were once small caves in the cliff face directly across Rosebud Creek overlooking present day Absarokee. Today they are located on private property. Oral history mentions them being used by Crow people to quarantine themselves during smallpox outbreaks at the agency. Later European American settlers dynamited the caves closed out of the fear of smallpox. A U.S. Springfield Model 1873 rifle found in one of these caves matches the model and serial number of rifles used by Custer's 7th Cavalry. Experts have been unable, however, to determine whether the rifle was actually used at the battle. The rifle was found by Alfred Mendenhall and is on display at the Museum of the Beartooths
(D. Wiggs, D. Sobrero).

Absarokee-Beartooth Mountains

16 Absaroka-Beartooth Mountains:

[Absarokee High School parking lot]. The Crow name for the Absaroka-Beartooth mountains is Daxpitcheeihté, which translates literally in English to "bear's teeth." The Beartooth range in south-central Montana and northwestern Wyoming has tall white peaks whose sharp angles resemble a grizzly's teeth. This mountain range is part of the Crow Tribe's traditional homeland and was included in the original 1868 Crow Reservation. In 1882, Montana's portion of the Beartooth Mountains were divided from the Crow Reservation by the federal government (I. Walston).

17 Rosebud Cemetery:

[Rosebud Cemetery Road.] The cemetery at the Second Crow Agency was located along Butcher Creek due east from the agency building. Some time between 1875-1884, George DeForest Brush painted an image on a cigar box of the agency compound with Butcher Creek (the small creek separating the Rosebud Cemetery from Highway 78) running through it. Brush's written description says that Butcher Creek ran "through the Indian and white cemetery." In 1879, Chief Blackfoot died near present-day Cody, Wyoming. An 1879 telegram from Agent Keller states that Blackfoot wanted to be brought back to the agency for burial. An 1880 Frank J. Haynes photo taken at the agency shows a deteriorated burial lodge in the cemetery with the caption "Blackfoot Chief burial" on its reverse side.

In 1884, the agency moved and in 1892 the land here ceased to be reservation. Jack Pearson married LaVentia Pease, a Crow woman, and the two served as caretakers for the burials in the area after her father, a former Crow Indian agent, gifted the ground to the couple as a wedding present. A portion of the Pearson Ranch was designated as the site for the Rosebud Cemetery established in 1896. The two cemeteries were about a quarter-mile apart. Jack died on the place in 1914, and, according to Jim Annin, "guarded the property with reverence, but later owners plowed over the graves." In 1911, Clarence Smith built a home where Butcher Creek meets the highway. According to Smith, there were many burial scaffoldings around his property at that time (A. McNally, L. Ryker, H. Skeman).

18 The Second Crow Agency:

[Second Crow Agency historical marker, west side of HWY 78.] The Second Crow Agency, called Baaxawuaashalíiko, or "wheat mill," in the Crow language, was located on the east side of present-day Highway 78 immediately across from the historical marker. The second agency was in use between 1875-1884. An archaeological report describes that, "[t]he main agency building included an extensive stockade that enclosed eight large buildings, including seven square adobe houses, and a corral." Stretching north from the main complex were adobe living quarters for tribal members, also known as "Doby Town," consisting of thirteen buildings arranged in a straight row where the highway is now. East of Doby Town was the reservation's slaughterhouse and horse barn. The surrounding flat land was used for agriculture. Butcher Creek gets its name from the slaughterhouse. The coal, ice house and sawmill were located near the present-day historical marker.

Crow Agency computer generated image

The Crow had a hard time adjusting to the new agency with epidemics such as measles, scarlet fever, and smallpox afflicting the people. In 1882, a U.S. Army officer named Henry Armstrong was temporarily reassigned as the Crow's agent, and began to pressure the Crow to move their agency east. He marched 130 families (a total of 900 people) on foot to the Little Big Horn River. The women cried for days, and upon arriving they were exhausted and hungry. By 1895 the building was in ruin after a fire. Many of the bricks were removed to build foundations for homesteader cabins in the area, some of which still stand today (S. Mayhan, S. Medina, M. Schultz, E. Eder).

19 Bozeman Trail:

[Bozeman Trail historical sign (east side), 2 miles south of Fishtail turn-off on Huy 78.] The Bozeman Trail was first used by Native American tribes as a path of exploration, trade and migration before John Bozeman led a group of 2,000 settlers on the trail in 1864. The trail follows the north side of the Pryor Mountains just south of Pryor, Montana and makes its way here before continuing on toward modern-day Reed Point, Big Timber and Livingston. Around 1876, the U.S. military used the trail for campaigns and established a telegraph line along the route. All three Crow agency sites are located on the trail (J. Redman, A. Panella).

20 East Rosebud Lake:

[Butcher Creek turn-off]. East and West Rosebud Creeks run from this side of the Beartooth Mountains. The mountains themselves were part of the Crow Reservation until 1882. In January of that year, Crow Indian Agent Armstrong arrived at the Second Crow Agency. By 1884, Armstrong was at the center of efforts to relocate the Crow Tribe's headquarters to the Little Big Horn Valley. Armstrong remained the Crow agent until 1885 and filed a patent claim on what is now known as East Rosebud Lake and the surrounding land in 1895. An original BLM survey map from 1902 shows a cabin in Armstrong's name there which he used as a summer home. Armstrong later sold the land, and for many years after it was referred to as Armstrong Lake. Today, much of the East Rosebud Lake shoreline remains private ground surrounded by public forest land because of Armstrong's patent claim (H. Berndt).

21 Fishtail:

[Town of Fishtail.] From 1868 until 1892, the Fishtail area was part of the Crow Reservation and, after the agency moved, European Americans began "squatting" on it. Bob Hudson described squatting in the Limestone area, while his friend John squatted near Fishtail. According to Hudson, "One day John rode over to tell me the Indians had come up from the Crow Reservation and were camping on Rock Creek [referring to the Rocky Fork Creek east of present-day Nye]…The Indians were killing cattle, so we went to John's camp and poisoned balls of meat to give to the dogs..." Hudson described how he and John traveled to Rock Creek and secretly poisoned dogs in the Crow camp with the balls of meat. This was done in retaliation for Crows killing squatters' cattle illegally grazing on the reservation (L. Washington).

22 Fishtail Butte:

[Benbow Road pullout; Dean, MT.] Sometime in the early nineteenth century, a Crow named One Child Woman was traveling through this location just east of Fishtail Butte and found a basalt stone nearby carved with the heads of various Pacific Northwest animals, including a buffalo, a seagull, and a horse. One Child Woman, according to some descendants, had to dig the stone out of the ground with her knife. The medicine bundle that included this stone was passed down to Medicine Crow, an important figure at the Second Crow Agency. While carrying the bundle, Medicine Crow earned the title of Crow chief through accomplished war deeds by the remarkably young age of 22. He earned a total 22 coups during his lifetime, more than any other Crow in recorded history, all while possessing this bundle. When Medicine Crow passed away, possession of the bundle transferred to his brother, Little Nest, and the bundle is often referred to as the Little Nest bundle. Marvin Stewart is the present-day keeper of this bundle. Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow credits his grandfather's deeds while carrying this bundle as the inspiration for his own achievements during World War II that earned him the Bronze Star, connecting these accomplishments to this place where the Little Nest bundle was found (A. Aumueller, T. Schultz, J. Cangro).

23 Buffalo Jump:

[Pull out across from Keogh Road on the west side of Nye Road.] The Stillwater Buffalo Jump is a site outside of Nye, Montana, that was used by several Native American tribes to kill buffalo, bighorn sheep, elk, deer, and antelope. The jump was first used around 300 A.D. The Shoshone began using the site around 996 A.D. and were then followed by the Crow from 1530-1750 when horses were acquired which made the buffalo jump obsolete. Once the animals were gathered on top, they were spooked off the cliff one by one. This site is known in the Crow language as Ammishéelahpee, which means "where the buffalo are driven over the ridge." The buffalo jump is on private land (G. Seibert).

Noel Keogh speaking to a group near the jumps base

24 Nye City:

[South from Old Nye Fishing Access.] After the Beartooths were separated from the Crow Reservation in 1882, Jack Nye and others staked copper claims in 1883 here, leading to the establishment of Nye City, and in 1884 the Crow agency headquarters were moved to the Little Big Horn. Between 1883-1887 there were 300 people living in Nye, with a store, hotel, post office, smelter, and seven saloons. In 1887 surveyors found that Nye was 6 miles inside the Crow Reservation boundary. Nye became a ghost town. In 1892, the reservation boundary moved once again and mining resumed. Today Stillwater Mining Company, located at Old Nye City, is the largest public company in Montana and one of the largest platinum and palladium mines in the world (A. Solomon, B. Beer).

Nye abandoned mine camp