

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Head Chief-Young Mule Charge

Other names/site number: 24RB2431

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: Immediately east of Lame Deer College

City or town: Lame Deer State: MT County: Rosebud

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national      X statewide      X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A      \_\_\_ B      \_\_\_ C      \_\_\_ D

<p>_____  <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	
<p>In my opinion, the property <u>X</u> meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____  <b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>Title : Montana State Historic Preservation Officer</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local/Tribal
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	buildings
<u>      2      </u>	<u>      1      </u>	sites
<u>                    </u>	<u>      2      </u>	structures
<u>      2      </u>	<u>                    </u>	objects
<u>                    </u>	<u>      3      </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register   N/A  

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

  DEFENSE: battle site    
  LANDSCAPE: natural feature  

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

  LANDSCAPE: natural feature  

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Head Chief-Young Mule (Heart Mule) Charge lies east of the town of Lame Deer, in Rosebud County, Montana on the Northern Cheyenne Tribe Reservation.<sup>1</sup> The northern portion of the property includes a section of the south slope and ridgetop; the grassy slope and knoll overlook Alderson Creek, a small brush-covered year-round tributary of Lame Deer Creek that winds through a drainage dotted with variously sized cottonwood trees. The south portion of the property lies immediately south of State Highway 212 and includes the north facing slope and hilltop of a smaller knoll. The north and south extremities of the property represent the beginning and end locations of the deadly confrontation between two young Northern Cheyenne men, Head Chief and Young Mule, and U.S. Army cavalry under Major Henry Carroll and Northern Cheyenne Tribal Police under Agency Agent James A. Cooper; the confrontation concluded in the deaths of the two Northern Cheyenne. Contributing resources of the property includes historic stone alignments that denote the approximate descent of the two Northern Cheyenne men off the northern hill although there is some questions about the exact descent, a witness tree, an historic trail remnant, and the associated topography. The charge route and surroundings where the conflict took place occupy an area of 47.62 acres.

The irregular boundary relates to the presence of a multitude of educational buildings associated with Chief Dull Knife College and a historic cemetery, the presence which severely impact the integrity of the entire historic route of the bravery charge and ensuing conflict. For that reason, the property boundaries are drawn to retain the most integrity possible and omit non-conflict-related intrusions.

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<sup>1</sup> In *The Plainsmen of the Yellowstone*, historian Mark H. Brown gives Young Mule's name as Heart Mule and credits the version in his book to Northern Cheyenne tribal historian John Stands In Timber. However, in other Stands In Timber accounts and in many other narratives, the name Young Mule is used.

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At the time of the charge, the drainage near the base of the hill was the location of the first Northern Cheyenne Indian agency, which sat along the creek, surrounded by Northern Cheyenne tipis as the community of Lame Deer took hold. Today, the town of Lame Deer town is home to tribal headquarters, numerous services, and the tribal college.

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### Narrative Description

The Head Chief-Young Mule (Heart Mule) Charge is located immediately northeast and southeast of Chief Dull Knife Tribal College and northwest and southwest of the Lame Deer Tribal Cemetery. The northern portion lies north of Alderson Creek and State Highway 212 while the southern portion is south of the creek and highway.

West of the property is the 1975 Chief Dull Knife College constructed on land generally southwest of Head Chief Hill; the nearby cemetery was established following the conflict to be in proximity to the Head Chief-Young Mule Bravery Charge Site. Initially the older people wanted this area as a burial site for notable tribal leaders because of the event that took place here. Chiefs Little Wolf and Dull Knife's graves were moved to this location and Black Horse, a notable tribal leader, was buried here as well.

Alderson Creek bisects the district and is a tributary of Lame Deer Creek, which winds north through the town of Lame Deer into Rosebud Creek.<sup>2</sup> Alderson Creek generally parallels State Highway 212 northeast from Lame Deer to Ashland. The creek played a role in the engagement, as it likely provided shelter for Young Mule and was likely the location of his death. One large dead cottonwood tree is a possible witness tree to the episode. The tree, felled in 2011, remains in the creek bed; metal detected for shot by tribal experts and Bureau of Land Management cultural resource specialists in 2012. The test produced positive results, likely the result of gunfire related to the events of September 13, 1890.

The steep Head Chief/Young Mule Hill (referred to hereafter as Head Chief Hill) is a 3612-foot high landform that factored prominently in the historical event.<sup>3</sup> It is the most outstanding landscape feature within the site and remains essentially unchanged since the 1890 encounter. The hill rises sharply immediately northeast of the college and is generally unaltered, except for a small wooden shed at the summit, outside the NR boundary. The summit, approximately 300 feet above the valley floor, is the location where Head Chief and Young Mule prepared to confront their military pursuers following the fatal shooting of Hugh Boyle by Head Chief. Eleven large painted white stones in a linear arrangement are prominent on the hill along the rocky and barren southeast slope. The stones commemorate the path of Head Chief where he charged down the hillside toward military lines, these stones contribute to the historic property and symbolize the general direction of Head Chief's charge. Young Mule's route on foot is not

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<sup>2</sup> Alderson Creek was named for early non-Indian settlers Walter and Tiffany "Nannie" Alderson, who homesteaded along Alderson Creek. The Alderson house was burned by a handful of Northern Cheyenne men in 1884 shortly before the Northern Cheyenne Reservation was established by Executive Order and the Alderson family relocated. The Alderson name, however, remains, and the area near the Alderson homestead became the location of the Northern Cheyenne Agency.

<sup>3</sup> The landform was renamed Head Chief Hill and Young Mule Hill by Northern Cheyenne Tribal Resolution No. DOI-147 (2023). The landform is still labeled on older United State Geological Survey topographical maps as Squaw Hill.

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as prominently marked; according to tribal history he descended the hillside to the creek and took cover there among the trees and bushes.<sup>4</sup>

A large white stone on the south side of Highway 212, over the crest of a hill once marked the scene of Head Chief's final, head-long encounter with a cavalry troop near the crest of the hill and the location of his death. An historic photograph of John Stands In Timber depicts this stone, however, later housing development in this southern portion of the site resulted in its removal. The remainder of the site south of Highway 212 has seen little modification, with the exception of dirt roads and a water tower.

The property retains deep cultural significance to the Northern Cheyenne in many ways. As mentioned, the routes of Head Chief and Young Mule were marked by members of the tribe the day after the charge. The incident is recalled in tribal song and the hill itself is referred to by the Northern Cheyenne as Head Chief Hill, its USGS label notwithstanding. The warrior song was remembered by Ernest American Horse and handed down to later generations. Conrad Fisher, descendant of Head Chief through his grandmother Mary Playingbear Fisher, retains a recording of singing the warrior song in the Cheyenne language.<sup>5</sup> Head Chief's charge is also remembered by two large paintings located in the John Wooden Legs Library at Chief Dull Knife College.

## **DESCRIPTION OF RESOURCES** **CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES**

### **Landscape and Spatial Arrangement (one contributing site)**

Although the topographic locations associated with the charge are significant to the event and the Northern Cheyenne, they are not called out as contributing resources in the nomination, but are discussed throughout. The on-site topography and vegetation remains little changed from the time in 1890 when Head Chief and Young Mule engaged with the U.S. military. Nearby integrity issues, mostly associated with Chief Dull Knife College, are excluded and outside the defined National Register boundary. Although the recent development in the area detracts from the setting, the landscape within the National Register boundary remains virtually the same as over 100 years ago.

The Lame Deer area is part of an upland plateau consisting of sedimentary rocks of soft sandstone, shales, siltstone and lignite coal beds of the Fort Union Formation.<sup>6</sup> The area around the charge site features heavy desiccation by tributaries of the Tongue and Rosebud rivers, and perennial Lame Deer Creek runs through Lame Deer flowing into the Rosebud River; Alderson

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<sup>4</sup> Major Henry Carroll notes the placement of the stones in his September 26, 1890 report on the incident to the Assistant Adjutant General of the Department of the Dakota. Carroll wrote that "The following day the Indians marked with piles of stone the position of E Troop when charged by Head Chief, as well as the course of the latter when he caught side of this troop to where he fell from his pony."

<sup>5</sup> Conrad Fisher, personal communication during onsite field work with Otto Braided Hair and Chere Jiusto. Mr. Fisher is a former Northern Cheyenne Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Council vice-chair, member of the Montana State Historic Preservation Review Board, and descendant of Head Chief, and whose personal recollections of the event have been preserved by the later generations of the family.

<sup>6</sup> C.P. Ross, D.A. Andrew, and I.J. Witkind, "Geologic Map Of Montana," Prepared in cooperation with the Bureau of Mines and Geology, Butte, MT, 1955.

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Creek, an east west flowing creek and witness to the charge, empties into Lame Deer Creek just west of the National Register boundary. Payne describes the area as Ponderosa Savannah with areas of ponderosa pine and extensive open grasslands, a description that accurately reflects the charge site. The vegetation is dominated by ponderosa pine, rocky mountain juniper, sumac, western wheatgrass, blue bunch, blue grama, snowberry, prickly pear, needle and thread, junegrass, buffalograss and a number of other low vegetation types.<sup>7</sup> The vegetation in immediate area near Alderson Creek, where Young Mule sought protection but ultimately perished, consists of a riparian habitat dominated by cottonwoods, foxtail barley, bulrush, wheatgrass, and sweetclover. The landform and vegetation exist much as it did at the time of the charge.

Approximately 47.62 acres of landscape comprises the National Register property. The steep Head Chief-Young Mule Hill (referred to hereafter as Head Chief Hill) where the charge began, demarks the northern edge of the property rising 3612 feet in height, 300 feet above the surrounding landscape.<sup>8</sup> This area comprises what is referred to as the Ceremonial Summit Location. A few scattered rocks appear on the hill. The rock lies near an open area where Head Chief performed a traditional mock ritual prior to the charge.<sup>9</sup> The summit of the hill is the location where Head Chief and Young Mule prepared to confront their military pursuers following the fatal shooting of Hugh Boyle by Head Chief. The hill slopes sharply to the south and southwest and remains virtually unchanged since the time of the event.

Just southwest of the Ceremonial Summit, about 200 feet, is a terrace that witnessed the charge feints by the two warriors. The terrace served as the final location of the two Cheyenne prior to their descent down the hill. (see Margot Liberty and John Stands In Timber)

Flowing around the base of the hill, Alderson Creek meanders east to west before emptying into Lame Deer Creek closer to the center of Lame Deer. Alderson Creek presents much as it did at the time of the event with little change in terms of vegetation and likely creek position, though some movement north and south has likely occurred over the last century from water rate and flow.

South of the creek arises the small hill, the end of a northwest trending ridge, up which Head Chief drove his pony for his final encounter with the military. The hill continues to host a variety of vegetation, and historic images indicate the cluster of evergreen trees east of the hill grew and occupied that location both 100 years ago and now. This hill served as a final staging area for E and G troops that faced Head Chief.

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<sup>7</sup> G.F Payne, "Vegetative Rangeland Types in Montana," *Montana Experiment Station Bulletin 671*, Bozeman, MT, 1973.

<sup>8</sup> The landform was renamed Head Chief Hill and Young Mule Hill by Northern Cheyenne Tribal Resolution.

<sup>9</sup> Conrad Fisher, personal communication with Chere Jiusto, November 2023.

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**Stones Marking Paths of Head Chief and Young Mule Charge** (counted collectively as one contributing object)

Eleven large painted white stones placed in a linear arrangement are prominent on the hill along the rocky and barren south slope of Head Chief Hill to mark a general proximity of the path taken by Head Chief as he charged down the south slope and hillside toward military lines; a less conspicuous group of stones records Young Mule's path down the southeastern slope of the hill. The stones measure roughly 18 inches – 30 inches in diameter. These stones mark the general path and are counted as one contributing object to the historic property.<sup>10</sup>

**Witness Tree** (one contributing object)

One large dead cottonwood is believed to be a witness tree to the charge. The old cottonwood was felled in 2011 and Tribal experts and Bureau of Land Management cultural resource specialists followed up the felling in 2012 with metal detection analysis for bullets and shot. The testing produced positive results; although no invasive work was conducted to recover the shot, it strongly suggesting the materials identified relate to the gunfire of the events of September 13, 1890.

**Historic Trail** (Counted as one contributing site)

A historic trail that runs from the southern part of the present location of Lame Deer to the northeast was marked on the 1890 Map by LT. S.C. Robertson; it remains visible today. It is a dirt track trail that runs between hills in the southern portion of the property. Due to the topography and the trail's location, it has remained a simple dirt track that provides access between the housing south of Hwy 212 and the tribal casino to the east/northeast. Contemporary use of this trail has widened it into a two-track but it remains unimproved as does the portion of the historic landscape through which it passes.

**NONCONTRIBUTING ELEMENTS** (designated as "NC" on the feature map)

**U.S. Highway 212** (one noncontributing structure)

U.S. Highway 212 transects portions of the southern boundary. The two-lane paved road features four-foot shoulders and sits above the surrounding terrain 3-4 feet. A w-beam style guard rail parallels a small segment of the road on its north edge and a concrete sidewalk runs along the road on its south side.

**Two-Tracks** (Counted as one noncontributing site)

Modern two-track road remnants run through the southern end of the property. The two-tracks occur from the passage of vehicles and display no effort to maintain an actual road. The two-tracks are visible from the air and when walking across them, but their low profile helps them meld into the landscape.

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<sup>10</sup> Major Henry Carroll notes the placement of the stones in his September 26, 1890 report on the incident to the Assistant Adjutant General of the Department of the Dakota. Carroll wrote that "The following day the Indians marked with piles of stone the position of E Troop when charged by Head Chief, as well as the course of the latter when he caught site of this troop to where he fell from his pony."



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**Water Tower** (one noncontributing structure)

A modern water tower stands on the southern hill (west of Charging Horse Casino) where the troops assembled to confront Head Chief's final rush. The tower measures approximately 35 feet in diameter and stands on a concrete pad.

**Integrity**

Although significant integrity issues occur near the property, the exclusion of those areas from the National Register boundary decreases those impacts. Other integrity issues relate to later two-tracks and the water tower and bear no direct association to the event itself. The presence of a small segment of Highway 212 appears in the southern parcel of the district diminishing integrity; however, due to its low profile the loss of integrity is greatly reduced when compared to the possibility of a large standing structure.

**Location.** A wide swath of the Head Chief-Young Mule Charge remains well preserved, evincing intact integrity of location. The boulders that mark the general paths of the two warriors down Head Chief Hill also remain in their original locations as do the remains of the witness tree and the topographic features associated with the event.

**Setting, Feeling, and Association.** Although degraded by the intrusion of Chief Dull Knife College immediately to the west, but outside the district, and smaller or less intrusive noncontributing resources within the parcels (a small segment of Highway 212, two two-tracks, water tower), the Head Chief-Young Mule Charge retains fair integrity of setting, feeling, and association. Other than location, integrity of setting, feeling, and association perhaps prove the most important of the seven aspects of integrity for a property such as a charge site. Vegetation and landscape within the boundary remains virtually unchanged from the time of the charge conveying the qualities that it manifested during the event and continuing to provide a sense of atmosphere of what the two warriors and the U.S. military experienced in 1890. Although modern encroachment has occurred, views of and from the property allow a visitor to appreciate the tension of the event and its inescapable outcome. The presence of the two major landforms that witnessed the beginning and conclusion of the charge and the stones placed immediately after the engagement fetter the historic event to the present.

**Materials, Workmanship, and Design.** These three aspects of integrity bear little on properties such as the Head Chief-Young Mule Charge. At most, integrity of materials can relate to weapons associated with the charge, specifically, the presence of bullets fragments indicated in the witness tree at the far west of the southern parcel. Workmanship and design played no role in either the charge itself or the later placement of the stones marking the paths of the two warriors.

Despite the modern encroachment and diminishment of overall integrity around the skirmish area, the Head Chief-Young Mule Charge remains a very significant locale to the inhabitants of not only Lame Deer, but the area and Northern Cheyenne at large. The intrusions do nothing to

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diminish the very deep feelings held by the Tribe for the event—a conflict that occurred literally meters away from the town of Lame Deer.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: NATIVE AMERICAN  
MILITARY

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1890  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1890  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

Northern Cheyenne

**Architect/Builder**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Head Chief-Young Mule Bravery Charge Site is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at state and local levels of significance, as it demonstrates both a response to genocidal conditions imposed by the United States Government on the Northern Cheyenne people, as well as an assertion of Northern Cheyenne nationalism and traditional lifeways.<sup>11</sup> The property serves as a snapshot of the early history of the United States and the Cheyenne Nation and represents the last place where Northern Cheyenne warriors took up arms against the U.S. Army, at the end of a lengthy period of resistance to non-Indian settlement, westward expansion of the 1862 Homestead Act and subsequent allotment acts, tribal displacement and armed conflict against their people. This poignant site marks the closure of the long war between these cultures.

The site illustrates and bears witness to Northern Cheyenne resistance to the social and economic conditions imposed on the Northern Cheyenne following the creation of the reservation in 1884 by Executive Order under President Chester Arthur, and tensions that existed between the Northern Cheyenne and non-Indian settlers and their U.S. Government sponsors in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century. Further, the property well represents the broad patterns of conflict that marked Northern Cheyenne relations with the United States Government during much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In addition to the Head Chief-Young Mule Bravery Charge's eligibility under Criterion A at the state level, the property holds Tribal-national significance to the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. The site marks the fateful event of Head Chief and Young Mule's charge toward the cavalry line. The Northern Cheyenne tribal community continues to honor the event through the placement of interpretive signage, the naming of one landform significant in the encounter for Head Chief, and through tribal oral history. All underscore the abiding significance this site holds to the Northern Cheyenne people despite the nearby presence of modern facilities associated with tribal health and Chief Dull Knife College.<sup>12</sup>

The historic event marked the beginning of a socio/geographical transformation whereby the reservation was expanded to its current size and white landownership on the reservation was extinguished to avoid further hostility and conflict between Indian and non-Indians. By 1900, U.S. Congressional action removed non-Indians from the reservation and the reservation renamed the Northern Cheyenne reservation rather than the Tongue River Agency, an acknowledgement by Congress through Congressional action.

The Period of Significance is 1890, the documented date the bravery charge occurred. The significant date is the same.

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<sup>11</sup> This nomination was supported by a grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program.

<sup>12</sup> The Northern Cheyenne Tribe wholeheartedly concurs with listing the Head Chief-Young Mule Charge in the National Register passing a resolution that "...supports the annual commemoration of the historic Headchief Youngmule Hill in Lame Deer, Montana and supports the efforts to designate the site as a national historic site into the National Register of Historic Places." Tribal Council of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Northern Cheyenne Reservation, Lame Deer, Montana, Resolution No. DOI-147 (2023); Letter dated August 8, 2023 from Andrew Werk, Superintendent to Serena Wetherelt, President of Northern Cheyenne Tribe.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Head Chief-Young Mule Charge is highly significant to the Northern Cheyenne representing an undeniably painful chapter in their response to the broad loss of culture and tradition, as well as an act of rebellion against the United States Government and its repressive policies. Beginning in the early 1860s, the Northern Cheyenne endured extreme violence, deprivation, and a loss of traditional land base and culture resulting in decades of conflict with the U.S. Government. At the same time, thousands of non-Indian settlers poured into the former tribal homelands, securing homesteads, consuming resources, and establishing new economic and social systems that restricted tribal culture. Simultaneously, the Northern Cheyenne sought self-preservation in the face of this existential threat. Lack of food resulted in forays by some members of the Northern Cheyenne deemed illegal by the U.S., including the occasional killing of cattle and sheep for sustenance.

The Northern Cheyenne view the bravery charge as an assertion of Northern Cheyenne patriotism in the face of devastating conditions imposed by the U.S. Government. The district demonstrates and represents the Northern Cheyenne people's response to the existential threat inflicted by incessant attacks on the Cheyenne people and their traditional lifeways, and the imposition of reservation life culminating from the 1864-1890 Plains Indian Wars.<sup>13</sup>

The bravery charge compelled the U.S. government to take congressional action to expand the reservation, allow the removal of all non-Indian land ownership and avoiding further Indian and non-Indian conflict and rename the reservation.

### **Narrative History**

*Many accounts were consulted to build a narrative of the events that occurred September 13, 1890, on Head Chief Hill and its surroundings. Some accounts complemented and others conflicted with one another. Some appeared exaggerated, and a few proved racist in tone and language. Fortunately, there are historical accounts handed down and conveyed by Northern Cheyenne descendants that preserved tribal knowledge of the events. What follows is an attempt to weave the varying accounts together in a cohesive manner that permits both an understanding of the bravery charge as well the broad, historical complexities surrounding and contributing to the events of that week in September 1890.*

### **Overview**

The 1890 Head Chief-Young Mule Bravery Charge Site is the location of a bravery charge conducted by two young Northern Cheyenne men against U.S. Army cavalry units. The charge followed the death of Hugh Boyle, the 21-year old nephew of a local rancher, at the hands of Head Chief. Boyle apparently stumbled across the Northern Cheyenne as they butchered a milk cow belonging to his uncle. The incident galvanized the region as newspapers predicted war with the Northern Cheyenne. The fugitives refused to submit themselves to the military, and

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<sup>13</sup> The term, "Great Sioux War," is only one of many appellations applied to the conflicts.

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instead prepared to meet their fate in a traditional manner, culminating in a dramatic mounted charge by Head Chief and Young Mule at army lines in full view of gathered Northern Cheyenne bands; the charge resulted in the deaths of both young men.<sup>14</sup> Today, the episode is viewed as symbolic of Northern Cheyenne resistance and patriotism during the early reservation period, a time of violent change to traditional life patterns.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Impetus**

In 1890, Head Chief was in his early twenties, a young Northern Cheyenne man whose formative years occurred during the time of the greatest tumult in Northern Cheyenne history.<sup>16</sup> He was born at the time of the relentless battles and aggression against the Cheyenne, coinciding with the founding of the Bozeman Trail in 1863. These efforts are just few among others to decimate the Cheyenne included the Reynolds Battle of March 1876, the Tongue River Skirmish of June 1876, the Rosebud Battle in June of 1876, the Battle of the Little Big Horn in July of 1876, Dull Knife's Battle in November of 1876, and the Battle of Wolf Mountains in January of 1877. These engagements were followed by the forced march to Oklahoma in September of 1877. After a year of exile, numerous deaths and imprisonment, the Northern Cheyenne broke out from Darlington Agency, Oklahoma, in September of 1878, fleeing afoot, elders and the sick sought refuge at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, only to be imprisoned and forced to break out again in January of 1879 while being attacked by the cavalry.

Near 11 years of age in 1876 and 1877, and a teen during the time of the Fort Robinson breakout and the Northern Cheyenne's "Long Walk Home" from Indian Territory, he matured during the turbulent years prior to, and during, the establishment of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in 1884. According to accounts given by Northern Cheyenne historian John Stands In Timber to anthropologist Margot Liberty, Head Chief and his father argued Head Chief's perceived failure to meet traditional measures of manhood.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The shooting of Hugh Boyle was not an isolated incident. In May 1890, four months before the Boyle affair, local cowboy Robert Ferguson was reported missing. His body was located one week later, buried near his horse and a butchered steer carcass. Authorities concluded that he encountered a party of Northern Cheyenne butchering the cow and was killed. While five Northern Cheyenne men were arrested, they were eventually released due to the circumstantial nature of the evidence. The Ferguson killing led the army to establish Camp Crook in today's Lame Deer in late-May 1890, in an attempt to keep the peace and protect government property and personnel as tensions dramatically escalated between the Northern Cheyenne and non-Indians who resided in and near the reservation.

<sup>15</sup> The Head Chief-Young Mule Charge occurred just east of the Lame Deer Encounter Site of 1877, when General Miles and his cavalry attacked the village of Chief Lame Deer's Minneconjou Sioux. Chief Lame Deer died in the confrontation that occurred near the southwest edge of the town of Lame Deer. National Park Service, *The Clash of Cultures Trails Project*, Cooperative Effort by the Western History Association and the National Park Service (Denver: National Park Service, 2002) p. 82.

<sup>16</sup> Walter Mason Camp is an early-twentieth century historian who conducted research on many Plains Wars-era battles and skirmishes, including the Head Chief-Young Mule incident. Camp apparently conducted interviews with local people who noted that Head Chief was 23 and Young Mule about 17 years old.

<sup>17</sup> As an adult, Stands In Timber served as Northern Cheyenne tribal historian. But as a boy, he was among the Northern Cheyenne who witnessed Head Chief and Young Mule's charge. Stands In Timber worked with Liberty for years, and the two co-wrote *Cheyenne Memories*, published in 1967. That work contains a narrative of the Head Chief/Young Mule Charge. In 1964, Liberty wrote an account of the entire episode which was published in *Montana: Magazine of Western History*, using Stands In Timber and at least two other

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During the time leading up to the fatal encounter with Boyle, the Cheyenne suffered from poor and infrequent government rations. Head Chief was reputedly enamored with Goa (Ko'a'e), the daughter or granddaughter of noted Northern Cheyenne leader American Horse. In an effort to impress both Goa and American Horse, Head Chief pledged to bring back fresh meat to the hungry camp and win the approval of American Horse demonstrating that he was worthy of Goa's hand as a warrior. He was apparently accompanied on this hunt by Young Mule, a Northern Cheyenne orphan said to be approximately 14 years old and enrolled at the St. Labre School in Ashland (the Catholic mission school established for the Northern Cheyenne in 1884) under the name John Young Mule.<sup>18</sup>

At a point some three miles east of the forks of Lame Deer Creek, Head Chief and Young Mule encountered and killed a milk cow. They butchered and packed the meat, and in the process of returning to camp when they encountered Hugh Boyle, the 21-year old nephew of local rancher Hugh Gaffney.<sup>19</sup> Boyle hailed from Champaign, Illinois, and lived on the family ranch since June 1890, apparently coming to the arid climate of Montana for health reasons.<sup>20</sup>

The Gaffney family was likely well-known to many Northern Cheyenne at the time, arriving in the region in late 1883. The Gaffneys, accompanied by the related Lynch and Boyle families, immigrated to the United States from Ireland in 1882. That year, Patrick Lynch and his wife Margaret arrived in Rantoul, Illinois where Patrick's two sisters, Mrs. Boyle and Mrs. Ellen Gaffney, initially settled. Lynch was a cousin to Marcus Daly, the Anaconda copper king, and family accounts state that Daly urged the family to come to the United States. Daly ran cattle along the Rosebud and Lame Deer Creeks, where he employed Patrick's brother, Jack Lynch. Lynch also urged his brother to come to Montana Territory to work at the Daly cow camp.

In October 1883, the Lynch and Gaffney families arrived in southeastern Montana while the Boyle family remained in Illinois. The families homesteaded near today's Lame Deer the

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Northern Cheyenne witnesses as informants. The narrative presented here draws on both accounts, as well as other sources noted in the text and references; John Stands in Timber and Margot Liberty, *Cheyenne Memories*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967, p. 251.

<sup>18</sup> St. Labre documents confirm that Young Mule was a mission student; little else is known about his background. Traditional Cheyenne accounts place Young Mule around the age of Thirteen (13). See also "Historical Sketch: St. Labre's Catholic Mission," 1927, p. 14-15. This brief narrative, published by the Capuchin Fathers who oversaw mission operations, provides an alternative view of Young Mule's role, stating that Young Mule simply happened across Head Chief, who was carrying Boyle's corpse. Head Chief begged Young Mule for his assistance in burying the body. Bound by what the document referred to as the "Indian code of honor," Young Mule assisted Head Chief and was thus implicated. No other known accounts support this version.

<sup>19</sup> Many accounts place Hugh Boyle's age as sixteen. However, a photograph of his grave site at Saint Mary's Cemetery in Champaign, IL gives his date of birth as 1869, which would likely make him 21 years of age in September 1890; The Margo Liberty account in "I Will Play with the Soldiers" (*Montana: Magazine of Western History*, Autumn 1964) refers to the rancher as McGaffney. However, other narratives refer to the rancher as Gaffney, and a Hugh Gaffney is listed in General Land Office (GLO) records as owning 160 acres in Rosebud County's Township 3South, Range 41East, in Section 10 and 11. The Gaffney ranch is also shown on an 1887 GLO plat map of the area,

<sup>20</sup> Walter Mason Camp, "Field Notes." Unpublished notes located at the Lily Library, University of Indiana. Date unknown. Some information regarding Boyle's background was from the Inquest and recorded by Camp in handwritten notes. Camp was a noted historian of late-nineteenth century Northern Plains warfare.



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following spring, with Patrick Lynch homesteading north of Lame Deer, and the Hugh Gaffney family settling approximately three miles south of the townsite. Despite the creation of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation by a November 1884 Executive Order, non-Indian families continued to homestead within reservation boundaries, with many remaining until 1900, when the federal government bought out all non-Indian settlers living within reservation boundaries.<sup>21</sup>

According to the Stands In Timber account, Young Mule, who learned some English during his enrollment at St. Labre, served as interpreter when Boyle accused them of killing one of his uncle's milk cows. Stands In Timber relates that Boyle rode up and said, "I see a hungry dog has snapped up one of our cows," interpreted by Young Mule to Head Chief as, "He called us dogs."<sup>22</sup> At this time, Boyle may have lashed out at Head Chief with a quirt, an action that caused Head Chief to pull his rifle. Noting a decided turn of events, Boyle apparently turned to flee back to his uncle's ranch, pursued by Head Chief. After a short chase, Head Chief shot and killed Boyle.<sup>23</sup> After the shooting, the two Northern Cheyenne buried Boyle in the rocky hills nearby and returned to American Horse's camp.

### The Search

Margot Liberty wrote that after Boyle failed to return home, Gaffney visited the American Horse camp the evening of the shooting, searching for his nephew. By the following morning, Boyle's horse returned to the ranch, and spur marks on the saddle indicated he had been thrown from the saddle. Gaffney rode to the Northern Cheyenne Agency (the present site of the town of Lame Deer) to report the matter to Agent J.A. Cooper. A search party consisting of soldiers from Camp Crook, located one mile south of the Agency building, and tribal police was organized. Though searchers discovered bloodstains that indicated the site of the shooting, they were unable to locate Boyle's body. The search by the soldiers and police moved to American Horse's camp who threatened the Chief with arrest if he failed to help authorities find the culprits.

In Thomas B. Marquis' *The Cheyennes of Montana*, the author provides the account of Jules Chaudel, an Army cook who served with the army units at Camp Crook.<sup>24</sup> His narrative essentially begins when the military starts to investigate Boyle's death. Chaudel noted that Major Henry Carroll commanded four cavalry troops and infantry at Camp Crook as "...white settlers were leaving the community or were assembling themselves," and "Suppressed excitement was fermenting among the Indians. Perhaps this was mainly from fright or from

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<sup>21</sup> Further, many Miles City area politicians, developers and some ranchers actively sought to dissolve the reservation. There is also evidence that the Miles City General Land Office continued to issue land patents for non-Indian homesteaders within reservation boundaries after 1884 in an effort to weaken Northern Cheyenne claims to the land. For a full overview of the politics of this period, see Orlan J. Svingen's *The Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation, 1877-1900*, Niwot, CO, University Press of Colorado, 1993.

<sup>22</sup> *Cheyenne Memories*, p. 252.

<sup>23</sup> Stands In Timber indicates that Boyle was shot in the back during the chase. However, the Coroner's Jury found that Boyle had been shot twice, "one in the head and one in the right breast." This indicates that the Boyle and Head Chief likely faced each other, and perhaps no chase occurred.

<sup>24</sup> Marquis served as the Northern Cheyenne Agency physician for a short time, and subsequently wrote extensively on Northern Cheyenne history. He also took many photographs of the Northern Cheyenne during the early reservation era, many of which are featured in 2007's *A Northern Cheyenne Album*, by Marquis, Margot Liberty, and John Wooden Legs.

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resentment because of the coming of the soldiers. Signal bonfires on high hills sent up smoke by day and flickered messages at night.”<sup>25</sup>

Liberty relates that Head Chief and Young Mule learned of the search parties and the threat to arrest American Horse when they returned to American Horse’s camp. Head Chief confessed to American Horse and asked him to repeat the story to agency officials, stating he would surrender the following Friday, also the next ration day. According to Historian Walter Mason Camp’s notes on the incident, Head Chief also requested American Horse to absolve Young Mule of any unlawful conduct to Agent Cooper, that he alone killed Boyle. American Horse followed Head Chief’s request, making the report to the Agent Cooper and guiding authorities to Boyle’s body.

Here, Chaudel’s account begins to differ somewhat from Camp and Liberty’s accounts. Chaudel recalled that Agency police and soldiers searched for Boyle’s body for several days before Major Harris decided to hold a council with the “leading Cheyennes,” offering \$5 to each tribal leader for information on the location of the body. As the senior Northern Cheyenne conferred with each other, younger men lingered nearby until, “Two of them, Head Chief and Young Mule, rode away and stopped at a distance of about one hundred yards. As the conference progressed, these two dug heels into pony flanks and hastened elsewhere. Although they had been with the searchers every day, it developed that they were guilty of the killing.”<sup>26</sup> Chaudel says that a party of Northern Cheyenne then led the troopers to where the shooting occurred, “at a point three miles above the agency.” From there, the search party located Boyle’s body, which “had been transferred to the remote and uninhabited region.”<sup>27</sup>

Walter Mason Camp, however, recorded that Lieutenant John Pitcher, part of the search party, found the body on his own, without assistance from Head Chief and Young Mule, who also rode as part of the search party. Pitcher reported Head Chief confessed to him, but that he found the body without the aid of information from Head Chief. Camp’s notes suggest Head Chief did confess the same day. Though he waited until after the body was found. Pitcher did not arrest Head Chief but reported the confession to Agent Cooper (discussed again below).

### Failed Negotiations

Camp further states that Agent Cooper and Major Carroll urged the tribal leadership to compel the two Northern Cheyenne to surrender to avoid any unnecessary violence. Camp notes that Head Chief’s father told Agent Cooper the two Cheyenne would come in on a certain day. In a failed attempt to save his son, Northern Cheyenne Chief Two Moon stated Head Chief’s father offered 30 ponies to Gaffney as compensation, an offer rejected by Agent Cooper.<sup>28</sup> Head Chief’s father also tried to negotiate with Cooper that the two would surrender but not be taken to Miles City. Major Carroll, however, insisted that the two must surrender unconditionally.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Marquis, p. 113.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 114.

<sup>28</sup> The offer of ponies in exchange for the life of Head Chief is also noted in two fairly sensationalistic accounts of the event, *The Rush to Death* by Walter Shirlaw and *Head Chief and Young Mule; or, The Queerest Duel Ever Known* by Alfred I. Burkholder.

<sup>29</sup> The authority of the U.S. Government to prosecute crimes on a reservation originated from a legal case known as *Ex Parte Crow Dog*. In 1881, the Brule’ Lakota subchief Crow Dog shot and killed the noted Lakota

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Ultimately all negotiations failed; Chaudel states that the Northern Cheyenne chiefs again met with Carroll, telling him that the young men were not afraid to die and that “They will come in tomorrow morning, they will come in fighting. They will show you that Cheyennes are not afraid of your soldiers. If you want their bodies, you will have to kill them.”<sup>30</sup>

At this time, Major Carroll initiated correspondence with the Post Adjutant at Fort Custer, then located near present day Hardin, Montana. He notified his superiors of Boyle’s death and that the body had been found with the help of the Northern Cheyenne who “also gave the names of the murderers, two Indian boys about eighteen years of age, with police sent out to arrest them.”<sup>31</sup> He also asked for instructions on how to proceed.

According to Stands In Timber, Head Chief at the time returned to his family’s camp near present day Ashland, Montana.<sup>32</sup> He confessed the shooting to his family and he told father that he would die bravely the following Friday, facing the military on the day rations were issued to the Northern Cheyenne.

Young Mule apparently insisted on joining Head Chief in his challenge to the military. According to Liberty, Head Chief, Young Mule and a party of friends climbed to the summit of today’s Head Chief Hill before dawn on Friday, September 13<sup>th</sup> to prepare for the coming day. Liberty states that Head Chief told his friends of his plan to charge the line of soldiers and die in battle. He sang songs reflecting his plans, made medicine in preparation of his bravery charge, and donned his war clothing.<sup>33</sup>

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Chief Spotted Tail on the Rosebud Reservation. The Tribe prosecuted Crow Dog according to tribal tradition and he paid restitution. However, the U.S. Government also prosecuted Crow Dog in territorial court, and he was sentenced to be executed. But in 1883, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned his federal conviction, ruling that under the provisions of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty, the federal government had no jurisdiction over the matter. The Court affirmed that a crime, committed by a tribal member on a reservation against another tribal member, was an internal matter. The law was also murky regarding crimes committed by a tribal member against a non-Indian on a reservation. In response to this, Congress passed the 1885 Major Crimes Act. This law was part of the U.S. Government’s overall campaign to weaken tribal traditions and accelerate assimilation, and Congress also acted on the assumption that tribes were incompetent to manage their own affairs. This law placed tribal members under federal jurisdiction. Seven crimes, including murder, manslaughter, and arson, were now under federal jurisdiction, even if the suspect was an Indian and the crime occurred on a reservation, regardless of if the victim was Indian or non-Indian. The constitutionality of the law was upheld one year later. Under this act, the U.S. Government had the authority to arrest and prosecute Head Chief and Young Mule on the Northern Cheyenne reservation.

<sup>30</sup> Marquis, p. 114.

<sup>31</sup> Major Henry Carroll, Camp Crook, to Post Adjutant, Fort Custer. September 9, 1890.

<sup>32</sup> Head Chief’s family may have been part of Ice’s (White Bull’s) Northern Cheyenne band, known to occupy the area along the Tongue River and Otter Creek, near today’s Ashland. This factor likely contributes to the story, as Young Mule may have met Head Chief when they lived in the same area, as the St. Labre Mission is located near the confluence of the Tongue River and Otter Creek.

<sup>33</sup> A circa 1964 image exists of Stands In Timber pointing to a rock atop Head Chief Hill placed at the location where Head Chief made medicine. There is a sheltered clearing at the summit of the hill that appears to be ideal for these activities, and the research team photographed a rock that displayed very old images inscribed into the surface. According to Northern Cheyenne historians Conrad Fisher and Otto Braided Hair during a November 14, 2023 site visit, there likely was a fire ring there as well for ceremonies that took place through the night leading up to the bravery charge.

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While still early in the morning, some activity could be detected in the Northern Cheyenne camps near the agency. Cavalry units posted at nearby Camp Crook and tribal police were on alert, ready to apprehend Head Chief and Young Mule and to deal with the possibility of a general revolt.

### The Charge

Lieutenant S.C. Robertson commanded G Troop that fateful day. Robertson provided a firsthand account of the engagement, drawing a map of the encounter, and penning a published story in the weekly *Yellowstone Journal and Livestock Reporter* on September 27, 1890.<sup>34</sup> Robertson's account noted that around 3 p.m., the Army received word that the two young Northern Cheyenne would soon challenge the soldiers. Preparing for the worst, Robertson mustered his troops and posted them at positions he felt appropriate along what he termed the "Tongue River Road," the road that paralleled the agency.<sup>35</sup> Robertson's map (as well as others included in the nomination) shows that in 1890, the agency itself sat immediately west of the road that ran north from Lame Deer, and just northeast of where Alderson Creek met Lame Deer Creek. Robertson wrote, "As my troop took position these Indians left their tepees and in a few minutes nearly the whole Cheyenne tribe was assembled in groups on the neighboring hills awaiting in awestricken silence the tragedy that was about to take place in the valley below." Robertson obviously understood the impending tragedy soon to unfold.

Chaudel echoes Robertson's account stating, the "dawn disclosed hundreds of Indians scattered along the hills overlooking the agency. All of them were quiet, apparently waiting to see what was going to take place. Attention became fixed upon the hilltop about half a mile northeast of the agency office building. Field glass examination revealed that the two wanted young Cheyennes were up there...the military commander brought out his cavalry and divided them into two squadrons, of two troops each. The two squadrons moved to advance upon the hill from two sides, while the infantry companies remained in ranks just north of the agency office building."<sup>36</sup>

Robertson related he led his troop toward the north side of the hill, circling behind Head Chief and Young Mule who remained on the summit of Head Chief Hill. The *Stands In Timber* account notes Head Chief and Young Mule both rode down from the summit to a flat point wedged into the rocky hillside and began riding in a circular fashion before turning to return to the summit.

A volley of gunfire from the troopers or police below mortally wounded Young Mule's mount but both Northern Cheyenne were able to return to the summit to open fire on the troopers below.

<sup>34</sup> S.C. Robertson, "How They Died: Lieut. Robertson Tells the Story of the Cheyenne Killing," *The Weekly Yellowstone Journal and Livestock Reporter*, Miles City, MT, September 27, 1890, p. 2. Robertson's official report to Major Harris is missing from the National Archives. However, a map included in the original report was located in other secondary sources and included in this nomination.

<sup>35</sup> In 1890, no road continued north out of Lame Deer toward today's Colstrip on County Road 39. Instead, the road headed south, toward today's Birney, along the west side of the agency building before turning sharply east in front of the building, toward Ashland. The agency was located at the intersection of today's State Highway 212 and Cheyenne Avenue.

<sup>36</sup> Marquis, p. 114.

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Simultaneously, Robertson's advance began to push Head Chief and Young Mule off the summit, down the southeast slope of the hill. Robertson noted that Head Chief "with most reckless daring charged the line of E troop on the heights," and that he was killed with close-range pistol fire.<sup>37</sup> He further states that he advanced on foot toward Young Mule's hiding place in the coulee, "When within a few yards of him it was discovered he was dead, having undoubtedly been killed by G troop sharpshooters from the hills, E troop not firing for fear of shooting my men."<sup>38</sup>

Stands In Timber account detailed that Head Chief charged down the hillside in a southeasterly direction, toward Camp Crook. He crossed the gulch and was shot once in the arm, which rendered it useless and caused him to drop his rifle. Still, he galloped further (Stands In Timber says several hundred yards) and rode through a dismounted line of cavalry. He was soon shot again, fell off his horse, and killed by troopers as he lay on the ground.

Young Mule, who briefly remained on the hillside, witnessed Head Chief's engagement and the ensuing bloodshed. He ran down the hill's steep southern face, zigzagging to dodge bullets as he ran, stopping to occasionally fire. Young Mule reached Alderson Creek and took shelter beneath a wooded cut bank. According to Robertson, Young Mule maintained steady fire for approximately 20 minutes before being killed by G Troop sharpshooters who fired down into the gully from the hillsides. Traditional accounts relate that Young Mule was shot in his right side, indicating a shot from the west.<sup>39</sup>

Chaudel's version bears both similarities and differences to both the Stands In Timber and Robertson accounts. Chaudel states that both Head Chief and Young Mule charged down the hill together after exchanging long-distance fire at the soldiers. After Young Mule's pony was hit and fell, he continued his advance down the hill on foot, stopping at times to fire. When he reached the bottom of the hill, he retreated into a buffalo wallow for shelter where he stayed.

Head Chief, however, continued forward, advancing toward the troops. Chaudel reported that the soldiers and police fired at him but "it appeared no bullet could touch him."<sup>40</sup> Head Chief, singing his journey song as he galloped, reached a line of troopers, then veered and rode in front of a portion of the line. He then turned and plunged through and past the line. He stopped, abruptly turned again, and raced back through the disrupted army line toward the Cheyenne police. This proved Head Chief's undoing as gunfire struck him and he fell from his horse.

According to Chaudel, he obviously displayed great courage and resolve as he sprang to his feet to continue firing. The close proximity between Head Chief, the soldiers, and Tribal police required little marksmanship as several bullets struck him; at that point Head Chief dropped his rifle and fell to the ground fatally wounded.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Robertson, "How They Died."

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Burton Fisher, Sr., as related by his son Conrad Fisher, Personal Communication October 27, 2023.

<sup>40</sup> Marquis, p. 115.

<sup>41</sup> Some reports indicate that Cheyenne police were not only directly involved with the engagement but may have fired the fatal shots.

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After Head Chief was killed, Chaudel stated that soldiers still heard shots originating from the wallow where Young Mule sought cover. Troopers continued to fire at the depression hoping for an accidental hit as visual contact with Young Mule proved impossible as he remained hidden from sight. During the troopers targeted firing, a Northern Cheyenne woman who claimed to be Young Mule's mother approached the troops.<sup>42</sup> Through an interpreter, this strong-willed woman begged the soldiers to let her take Young Mule home. When the troopers refused this request, she appealed if she could go to him to convince him to surrender. This was permitted, and she ran toward the depression. When she reached the wallow, she immediately began to wail and beat the ground with her hands; despite her best efforts to save her son, Young Mule lay dead before she could intervene.

Robertson closed his account by stating, "The young Cheyennes killed were only about eighteen years of age, but they seemed perfectly devoid of fear, and the audacity they displayed in this desperate attack upon two troops of cavalry was probably never surpassed in the records of Indian bravery."<sup>43</sup> The desperate and determined charge by Head Chief and Young Mule clearly effected Robertson.

### **Additional Variations**

Additional reporting provides both clarity and ambiguity as some substantiates others' reporting while other instances fail or fall short of verification. September 14 found Lieutenant Pitcher submitting his report to Major Carroll about the previous day's event. Pitcher commanded E Troop, which ran headlong into Head Chief. Pitcher relates after receiving instructions from Major Carroll to support Robertson's troop posted at the agency, he heard gunfire from the direction of the agency. He ordered his troop to mount and proceeded north from Camp Crook. Pitcher reports he briefly halted his troop "just below the crest of a hill looking down into the small valley which opens up into the Lame Deer at the Agency."<sup>44</sup> He then directed his troop forward "to the crest of the hill, and as I reached it, discovered Head Chief coming up the other side."<sup>45</sup> Pitcher ordered his soldiers to dismount and form a line just as Head Chief galloped toward his center. Pitcher states Head Chief opened fire, immediately answered by the soldiers.

According to Pitcher, Head Chief, mortally wounded, crashed through the line before falling dead 20 yards past the soldiers. The Lieutenant then moved his troops to the crest of the hill in time to see Young Mule running down Head Chief Hill toward the Agency. Pitcher saw Young Mule receive fire, and speculated that he may have been wounded before jumping into the brush at a coulee, "about two hundred yards above the Agency."<sup>46</sup> At this time, Pitcher's troop took fire from Young Mule, though that fire quickly ceased. Pitcher reports that Lt. Robertson travelled up the coulee to discover Young Mule's death, but making no mention of Young Mule's mother. Pitcher concluded his report stating that he reassembled his troop and returned

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<sup>42</sup> According to the Stands In Timber account, Young Mule was said to be an orphan; the woman could have been an aunt, a categorical mother under the Cheyenne kinship system.

<sup>43</sup> Robertson, "How They Died."

<sup>44</sup> Lieutenant John Pitcher to Major Henry Carroll, Camp Crook. September 14, 1890.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. This location is in close vicinity to the fallen cottonwood tree that was metal-detected with positive results.

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to camp, noting the actions of Head Chief and Young Mule as “desperate bravery that I have never seen and but seldom heard of.”<sup>47</sup>

On September 14, Major Carroll again wrote Fort Custer’s Post Adjutant and reported that “Chief in the Head” and “Young Mule” were both killed yesterday near the agency.”<sup>48</sup> Carroll also noted that Hugh Boyle’s body had been found by Northern Cheyenne men and soldiers searching together, and that Head Chief told American Horse that he killed Boyle. American Horse reported Head Chief’s admission to Agent Cooper. Cooper directed police to arrest Head Chief who eluded capture. Cooper soon received a message from Head Chief, delivered by Head Chief’s father, regarding his intent not to surrender but instead ride into the agency and die fighting. Carroll also notes that Head Chief’s father offered ponies as restitution for Boyle’s death, confirming Camp’s assertion.

Carroll stated that he sent Lieutenant S.C. Robertson and G Troop, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry to the Agency to protect the Agent and government property, and to assist the tribal police in arresting Head Chief and Young Mule. Another cavalry troop under Lieutenant Pitcher was mounted and held in reserve. At 4:00 p.m., rapid gunfire broke from the direction of the Agency, and Pitcher was ordered to a position to support G Troop. Carroll relates that Head Chief charged into Pitcher’s troop as it moved into position and shots exchanged before Head Chief fell dead. Pitcher then “turned his attention to Young Mule, who was following Head Chief at some distance.”<sup>49</sup>

Carroll wrote that Young Mule took refuge in a coulee and fired a few shots before he was killed by soldiers and police, which included 20 Northern Cheyenne special police newly appointed by Agent Cooper. He also wrote that Robertson and Troop G, “climbed the hill on which [Head Chief and Young Mule] had taken temporary refuge.”<sup>50</sup>

However, historian Mark H. Brown provides a completely different account of Young Mule’s death, interestingly offering what he states are John Stands In Timber’s recollections of the incident. Brown wrote that Young Mule made his way down the hill and hid behind a cutbank in Alderson Gulch, a similar narrative to that provided by others. From this point, however, Brown’s retelling follows a much different path than other accounts. With Young Mule pinned down in the coulee, Two Moon and American Horse asked the troops to spare his life, a request that was granted. Brown then appears to quote Stands In Timber: “No soldier wanted to kill boy. When they shot they make target beyond. Then bugle sounded—all still. Boy came out and start to talk to Bill Rowland [tribal policeman and agency interpreter]. One shot sounded and boy fell dead. They say Indian policeman shot boy.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid. Two large white stones, similar in size and color to those arranged up the slope of Head Chief Hill that marked the two warriors’ paths down the hill were placed on the south side of the crest of the hill, just south of Alderson Creek and Highway 212; these stones are believed by the Northern Cheyenne to have marked the location of Head Chief’s demise. These stones are no longer in place today. See historic photograph of John Stands In Timber near the end of this nomination.

<sup>48</sup> Major Henry Carroll, Camp Crook, to Post Adjutant, Fort Custer, September 14, 1890.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Mark H. Brown, *Plainsmen of the Yellowstone: A History of the Yellowstone Basin*. Putnam’s Sons, New York, 1961. p. 455.

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Stands In Timber stated that the soldiers wisely left the area, leaving Northern Cheyenne mourners to gather the bodies of the two warriors and prepare them for a proper burial. During the gathering of the two bodies, it was noted that a feather from Head Chief's bonnet fell to the ground. Northern Cheyenne custom dictates that a fallen feather may not be picked up and removed, and for many years the feather was attached to a stone that marked where Head Chief fell.<sup>52</sup>

According to local rancher Jack Bailey, the Lynch and Gaffney families gathered at the Lynch ranch approximately one mile north of the agency during the charge.<sup>53</sup> The families heard the gunfire, and family members went to the agency where they received word of the bravery charge and subsequent deaths of Head Chief and Young Mule. According to one biography of Patrick Lynch, "Mr. Lynch did not blame the Indians for what they had done. He felt that starvation forced them to butcher other men's beef. This friendship with the Indians was a two-way street."<sup>54</sup>

As Conrad Fisher reflected, the events grew out of genocidal government actions, prejudice, poverty, and starvation. "It goes back to the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864 where over two 200 Cheyenne and Arapaho, mostly women and children were gunned down and mutilated. Sand Creek was really the trigger point for how federal Indian policy was implemented for the Cheyenne. When you have a group of people that have been fighting to survive and they look at the U.S. Government and see starvation, disease, broken promises and you start losing many of your members in that process, it had a collective psychological effect. And then they put you on a reservation with finite resources including food and rations while surrounded by hostile white homesteaders." This all culminated - taking of a milk cow belonging to a rancher - into the volatile and tragic situation."<sup>55</sup>

Further, the Battle at the Little Bighorn (where Long Hair was wiped away) occurred in 1876, and the events with Head Chief and Young Mule took place just 14 years later. The Northern Cheyenne experienced many battles with the U.S. military after the Sand Creek Massacre. Within in an 11 month period (1876-1877) the Northern Cheyenne were engaged in six major conflicts with the U.S. Military - in Montana and Wyoming - including the most famous battle, Battle of the Little Bighorn. Today, three of the six battle sites are either national or state parks and others being considered as further historic considerations. In essence, fresh memories of battles were present among warriors and leaders and this added tensions for tribal elders and leaders to keep younger tribal members from encounters that would escalate into violence. Because of the traumatic experiences in battles and warfare and subjugation from a repressive government, dating back to the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864, we underestimate the collective psychological effects similar to Post Traumatic syndrome disorder among the people and the defensive responses and retaliation when confronted in certain situations.

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<sup>52</sup> This site has not been located.

<sup>53</sup> Bailey is an ancestor of the Lynch/Gaffney/Boyle families. He maintains the family ranch immediately north of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. An honorary member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, he is also the owner of Deer Medicine Rocks, a National Historic Landmark.

<sup>54</sup> Patrick Hugh Lynch Obituary at [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com), viewed November 14, 2011.

<sup>55</sup> Conrad Fisher, personal communication with Chere Jiusto, June 2023.



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### Aftermath

Major Carroll soon began an investigation into the episode. He worried about local cowboys seeking retribution against the Northern Cheyenne and sent Lieutenant Pitcher on a patrol to “quiet all parties and [Pitcher] will patrol the Rosebud for the same purpose.”<sup>56</sup> Carroll also wrote to Father Van Der Velden at the St. Labre Mission, Agent Cooper, and Hugh Gaffney for information they held on the incident as well as a potential motive for the shooting.

On September 26, 1890, Carroll reported his findings to the Assistant Adjutant General for the Department of the Dakotas. Carroll noted that some information came from none other than Young Mule, perhaps from Father Van Der Velden at the mission school where Young Mule was a student. Carroll related: “Head Chief told Young Mule, after seeing a horseman in the distance, ‘If that is a white man I will kill him.’ Young Mule tried to persuade him not to do it. On coming up near Boyle, Head Chief loaded his gun; Young Mule again tried to persuade him not to shoot, but without avail. Head Chief shot Boyle through the head and right arm and again after he had fallen from his horse through the breast. Young Mule, in the meantime, ran away, but was called back by Head Chief and told that if he did not stand by him he would kill him.”<sup>57</sup> Carroll’s report contains no mention of a butchered cow or of a hostile exchange prior to Boyle’s shooting.<sup>58</sup>

Carroll also stated that no direct motive for Boyle’s shooting was uncovered, which “seems to have been committed on the impulse of the moment.”<sup>59</sup> Interestingly, Carroll states that after Head Chief was killed, American Horse asked Carroll that he be allowed to speak to Young Mule and persuade him to surrender. Carroll granted the request, but that the boy was already dead when American Horse reached him. This differs substantially from the Robertson, Chaudel, and Brown account of Young Mule’s death.

Conditions at the Tongue River Reservation continued to deteriorate for the Northern Cheyenne and conflict occurred virtually unabated with non-Native locals, as recurring incidents erupted. In 1891, the Northern Cheyenne agent requested troops to protect the agency after two Northern Cheyenne men were apprehended for allegedly killing cattle. After one, the Northern Cheyenne Walks Nights, escaped custody, two cavalry troops and an infantry company were dispatched to the reservation. Later investigation determined that the cow had only been killed after it broke through Walks Nights fencing several times.

In 1897, sheepherder John Hoover was killed and several Northern Cheyenne implicated. One of the accused Northern Cheyenne, David Stanley, preferred to fight rather than surrender and challenged Miles City Sheriff John Gibb to a duel outside the Agency. As with Head Chief and Young Mule, crowds gathered to watch the engagement, but the Indian Agent, Captain George Stouch, sought a peaceful resolution and ordered the sheriff off the reservation. Three Northern

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<sup>56</sup> Dispatch from Major Henry Carroll, Camp Crook to the Post Adjutant, Fort Custer. September 18, 1890.

<sup>57</sup> Major Henry Carroll, Camp Custer, to the Assistant Adjutant General for the Department of the Dakotas. September 26, 1890.

<sup>58</sup> Another source also states that Boyle was not out looking for cows when he was killed. In a letter written by Rosa Lynch, Boyle’s cousin, to the *Weekly Yellowstone Journal*, she states that Boyle “had gone out to hunt some stray horses.” However, other family documents note that Boyle was indeed looking for scattered cows.

<sup>59</sup> Carroll, September 26, 1890.

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Cheyenne were eventually convicted, though the Montana Supreme Court reversed one conviction and Governor Toole pardoned another.

In 1898, Special Inspector James McLaughlin investigated the continued conflict that occurred on the reservation and submitted a plan suggesting the reservation expand east to the center of the Tongue River, and non-Native settlers (such as Hugh Gaffney) bought out and removed. Northern Cheyenne homesteaders legally living off the reservation would be forcibly compelled to move onto the reservation, with the usual panache of the United States purchasing their off-reservation homesteads at a fraction of the price paid to non-Natives. Congress approved the plan in 1900, finally confirming, if only to non-Natives, the Northern Cheyenne right to live in a country they long occupied.

### **Developmental history/additional historic context information**

The Cheyenne Tribe, or *Tsistsistas* (The People), are one of the most notable of the western North American tribes who inhabited the area popularly known as the Great Plains, west of the Mississippi River and east of the Rocky Mountains.<sup>60</sup> Algonkian speakers, the Cheyenne centuries ago occupied the woodland region of the western Great Lakes. Toward the end the seventeenth century they migrated westward, settling along the Red River where it forms the border between Minnesota and the Dakotas. Early in the eighteenth century, they became closely associated with the village-based tribes of the upper Missouri River—the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara—and during this time the Cheyenne settled into a sedentary, agriculturally-based economy.

The Cheyenne joined and incorporated another Algonkian group, the Suhtais, who introduced new religious elements. Transformed by the introduction of the horse during the late-eighteenth century, the two groups slowly abandoned agricultural lifeways, assuming the patterns of the buffalo hunting-horse complex that typified Great Plains tribes by the early nineteenth century. Horse-based mobility transformed much of Cheyenne culture, and their acquisition of the horse, together with pressure from adjacent tribes, enabled them to move further west. In time, the 10 known bands of Cheyenne occupied the land west of South Dakota's Black Hills, as far north as the Yellowstone River, and South of the Platte River. The area surrounding the Black Hills, including the Black Hills themselves and Bear's Lodge (Devils Tower) remain the spiritual center of the Cheyenne.

Traditionally, the Cheyenne were guided by the Council of Forty-Four (Council of Chiefs), consisting of older and respected leaders from the different bands. The Council deliberated and primarily served as advisors to the military societies, ceremonies, and military leadership. Each of the 10 bands designated four chiefs to the council while four additional chiefs, who had previously served with distinction, were also included on the council.

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<sup>60</sup> The historic contextual information on the Northern Cheyenne was gathered from a number of sources, including *We, the Northern Cheyenne People: Our Land, Our History, Our Culture* (Chief Dull Knife College, 2008); *The Northern Cheyenne Tribe and its Reservation* (Arum, Ed., 2002); *National Historic Landmark Nomination for Deer Medicine Rocks* (Greene and Kaspar, 2010); *Handbook of North American Indians: Plains* (Demallie, Ed., 2001); and *The Cheyennes: Indians of the Great Plains* (Hoebel, 1960).

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During the early years of the nineteenth century, various trade opportunities contributed to the separation into two linked tribes, the Southern and Northern Cheyenne. The tribes retained familial, inter-band, and religious associations despite the emergence of unique tribal affiliations. The northern group assumed residency in the Powder River region of north-central Wyoming and the Tongue River country of southwestern Montana.

The first significant American contact with regional tribes occurred early in the nineteenth century. In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson signed the Louisiana Purchase Treaty, through which the United States acquired all or parts of 15 future-states (including Montana) and two Canadian provinces. As interest grew in understanding what the country actually purchased, President Jefferson, himself an advocate of exploration and scientific inquiry, led Congress to appropriate \$2,500 to sponsor an expedition. The expedition, known as the Corps of Discovery and led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, boated up the Missouri River and its larger tributaries, crossed the future state of Montana, then floated down the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean. The expedition made contact with numerous regional tribes, including the Lakota Sioux and Cheyenne.

Lewis and Clark's journey ushered in an era of scattered Anglo-American immigration in the form of fur traders. It was not until 1841, when Father Pierre-Jean DeSmet arrived in present-day Stevensville, Montana, and founded St. Mary's Mission that permanent non-Native presence was established. In 1850, Major John Owen arrived in the valley and set up camp north of St. Mary's. In time, Major Owen established a trading post and military strong point named Fort Owen, which served the trading needs of the settlers, tribal people, and missionaries in the valley. American immigration remained slow until 1864, when extensive placer gold deposits were discovered in the western part of the region. After the discovery of gold at Alder Gulch, Montana Territory formed on May 26, 1864, when Congress organized it from the existing Idaho Territory.

Increased non-Native immigration, fueled by gold fever, and an increased American military presence in the region fomented conflict as well as diplomatic efforts. Competition for land and resources also led to increased inter-tribal conflict. The Cheyenne clashed with the Crow, Kiowa, Comanche, and Pawnee while forming enduring alliances with the Northern Arapahoe and culturally-similar Lakota, especially the Oglala Lakota. The 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty recognized the separation of the Northern and Southern Cheyenne. Through this treaty, the U.S. Government attempted to reduce inter-tribal warfare on the Plains by "assigning" territories to each tribe and pledging mutual peace. Tribes were compensated with annuities of cash and supplies for such encroachment on their territories.

Despite the 1851 Treaty, the Northern Cheyenne found themselves embroiled in almost continuous warfare with the United States from the late 1850s to the late 1870s. The wars, not of their choosing, were forced upon them by ongoing American settlement, U.S. Government policies, and American military incursions against Plains tribes. On November 29, 1864, the U.S. military and Colorado volunteer struck a sleeping Cheyenne and Arapaho encampment, and the infamous Sand Creek Massacre, resulted in the death of approximately 200 Northern and

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Southern Cheyenne. The 1865 Powder River Expedition saw the first U.S. military incursion into the Powder River Country, and from 1866 to 1868, a conflict known as Red Cloud's War ensued. The Lakota and Northern Cheyenne emerged victorious in this latter war, and the Bozeman Trail closed with the result that the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 created what became known as the "Great Sioux Reservation."

In 1873-1874, the U.S. Army began a reconnaissance of the Black Hills tribal homelands on the Great Sioux Reservation. Gold was discovered, thousands of miners flooded into the region, and Lakota leaders such as Sitting Bull rebuffed government attempts to purchase the Black Hills. In 1875, President U.S. Grant ordered the military to cease blocking miners from entering the reservation and sent orders to assemble all the non-reservation tribal bands to report to their agencies. Significantly, the Northern Cheyenne did not have a reservation, but still possessed land assigned under the 1851 and 1868 Fort Laramie treaties.

As the 1876-1877 Great Sioux War unfolded, the formidable Northern Cheyenne played a large role in repulsing General George Crook at the Battle of the Rosebud and in the destruction of much of the U.S. Army's 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry at the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Despite these military successes, the Northern Cheyenne succumbed after the Dull Knife Fight in 1876 and Battle of Wolf Mountain in 1877. Following surrender, most were taken down to Indian territory with Southern Cheyenne at the Darlington Agency in today's Oklahoma. Disease and malnutrition decimated their numbers. In the summer of 1878, under the leadership of Dull Knife and Little Wolf, 300 Northern Cheyenne men, women, and children defied the United States Government by commencing the Long March Home. Leaving Indian Territory, the two bands fought and evaded their U.S. Army pursuers until they nearly reached their southeast Montana homeland. Upon their capture, Dull Knife's group faced confinement at Fort Robinson in Nebraska and ordered to return in winter to Oklahoma. Confronted with such an outrageous possibility and confined to an unheated barracks, Dull Knife's people conducted the Fort Robinson Breakout on the night of January 9, 1879. Sixty-four Cheyenne were killed and 78 recaptured, while approximately 30 escaped. Near the same time, the Northern Cheyenne under Two Moon and Ice (White Bull), who surrendered to General Nelson Miles at Fort Keogh (near present day Miles City, Montana) were almost immediately enrolled as U.S. Army scouts. These bands lived near Fort Keogh and scouted for General Miles during the late stages of the 1877 Nez Perce War.

As the 1880s began, Northern Cheyenne bands at Fort Keogh were settled under the authority of the U.S. Army, who sought to reward the Northern Cheyenne scouts for their invaluable service. Using the 1875 Indian Homestead Act, military personnel settled dozens of Northern Cheyenne families near present day Busby, Montana, while 46 Northern Cheyenne families eventually homesteaded on the east side of the Tongue River and at the town of present day Ashland near Otter Creek.

Disputes over land use arose between the Northern Cheyenne and Miles City-area ranching, commercial, and political interests resulting in the Commissioner of Indian Affairs ordering various special investigations throughout the 1880s. An 1883 investigation led to a recommendation to establish a reservation for the Northern Cheyenne. The following year, President Chester A. Arthur issued an Executive Order that created the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation on unsurveyed lands west of the Tongue River; the reservation boundaries excluded the Northern Cheyenne families who lived on the east side of the Tongue River. With

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the same flick of the pen, non-Native homesteads, both legal and illegal, were established within the boundaries of the new reservation—one of which belonged to Hugh Gaffney, the uncle of Hugh Boyle.<sup>61</sup>

The continued policy failure by the United States government to treat Native Americans in a fair and forthright manner continued the pattern of conflict escalation between the parties; the settlement system established and then endured by the Northern Cheyenne highlight how conflict continued between numerous Northern Cheyenne families and their rancher neighbors, conflict that grew as non-Native settlement increased and homesteads and ranches expanded throughout the 1880s and 1890s. The creation of the Northern Cheyenne reservation in 1884 and its expansion in 1900 yielded little improvement in conditions as the U.S. Government sought to restrict Northern Cheyenne religious and cultural freedom and compel off-reservation Northern Cheyenne families to move to the new reservation to secure more land for non-Native use. Further, many settlers and local authorities used their own tactics of intimidation and violence to force Northern Cheyenne families to the reservation, and forcefully sought to dissolve the reservation following its creation.

The Northern Cheyenne faced deplorable conditions during the early reservation era. The reservations in the late nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century ran under the unfettered and often arbitrary rule of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The BIA created and enforced regulations prohibiting traditional ceremonies, language, prayer, councils, and clothing. Northern Cheyenne people were discouraged from gathering for social events. Children were taken from their families and sent to boarding schools subjected both to harsh discipline and stripped of their cultural identity. These oppressive measures aimed at forced assimilation into the dominant, non-Native culture. Conditions became so harsh on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation that the Northern Cheyenne population, already decimated by decades of warfare, continued to decline precipitously as a consequence of semi-starvation and disease during the early reservation years. These conditions persisted until well into the early mid twentieth century.

The Northern Cheyenne built several responses to this existential threat, from continued protest and negotiations with federal authorities to the infrequent killing of cattle and sheep for food and occasional confrontations with local ranchers, though many nearby settlers empathized with the plight of the Northern Cheyenne. Some Northern Cheyenne, like other tribes at this time, took spiritual refuge in the Ghost Dance, a circa 1890 phenomenon that foretold the return of the traditional world. The Ghost Dance/Messiah complex is popularly associated with the Lakota and the tragic events at Wounded Knee, but a few Northern Cheyenne, led by the spiritual leader Porcupine were strongly associated with this religious experience.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> James McLaughlin, "Report on Proposed Removal of the Northern Cheyenne Indians and Related Matters, with Accompanying Documents." Submitted to the 55<sup>th</sup> United States Congress, 3<sup>rd</sup> Session, House Doc #153, November 14, 1898, pgs. 27-28.

<sup>62</sup> Government officials were worried about Porcupine's influence. Agent R.L. Upshaw, who preceded Agent Cooper at the Northern Cheyenne Agency, urged Major Carroll to arrest Porcupine, as reported by Carroll in his June 10, 1890 report from his post at Camp Crook to his superiors at Fort Custer. Carroll held a low opinion of Upshaw and Porcupine was never arrested.

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Despite local efforts to dissolve the reservation, the boundaries extended east to the midpoint of the Tongue River in March 1900. Non-Native settlers within the reservation were bought out, including Hugh Gaffney, while Northern Cheyenne families on the east side of the Tongue River were forced into moving onto the new reservation.<sup>63</sup>

The 1900 boundaries form the current extent of the reservation, some 444,157 acres of tribal, allotted, and fee patent land. In part, the two young warriors were responsible for the expansion of the reservation by defying a system of punishment foreign to them and opting to sacrifice their lives as a symbol of resistance to federal policies imposed on them. And from a traditional perspective, Head Chief attained manhood by engaging an enemy in combat and gaining the respect from others including his father and American Horse. His courtship with Ko'a'e was the impetus from which the whole episode unfolded. At the end, the expansion and renaming of the reservation and the expulsion of non-Indians must be underscored when addressing Head Chief Young Mule Hill .

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<sup>63</sup> The Federal government paid these settlers \$150,445 for their improvements (buildings, fence lines, etc.) on the west side of the Tongue River and compensated the Northern Cheyenne families with only \$1,150, or \$25 per family as described in the agreement with the promise to be able to return, for their homesteads on the east side of the Tongue River.

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** 47.62

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**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

	<b>Latitude</b>	<b>Longitude</b>
1	45.6279969N	-106.6656930W
2	45.6293652N	-106.6627556W
3	45.6279170N	-106.6588685W
4	45.6271616N	-106.6608484W
5	45.6257693N	-106.6608759W
6	45.6251788N	-106.6612358W
7	45.6248452N	-106.6611373W
8	45.6234003N	-106.6598321W
9	45.6216991N	-106.6624482W
10	45.6221278N	-106.6626041W
11	45.6224525N	-106.6633352W
12	45.6223390N	-106.6642757W
13	45.6234259N	-106.6649072W
14	45.6240398N	-106.6660948W
15	45.6242416N	-106.6653836W
16	45.6244689N	-106.6653605W
17	45.6245501N	-106.6647809W
18	45.6238890N	-106.6650372W
19	45.6236596N	-106.6648211W
20	45.6243228N	-106.6624452W
21	45.6246862N	-106.6625860W
22	45.6245215N	-106.6633408W
23	45.6251346N	-106.6632408W
24	45.6249534N	-106.6625849W
25	45.6250837N	-106.6620750W
26	45.6266181N	-106.6612408W
27	45.6269838N	-106.6615356W
28	45.6261931N	-106.6636440W

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Head Chief-Young Mule Charge features an irregular boundary that falls within the NW1/4 and N1/2 of the SW1/4 of Section 34, Township 2S Range 41E. The property can be found on the Jimtown and Lame Deer 7.5' quadrangle maps. The boundary encompasses all resources associated with the charge and counted as contributing resources. The boundary narrows toward the property's center to exclude the noncontributing buildings associated with the nearby Chief Dull Knife College to the west but capture the location the loss of one of the participants, Young

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Mule. The southern boundary lies immediately north of a residential development, excluding the place where Head Chief passed, now the site of houses. Fencelines serve to demarcate the boundary in a few spots near the middle portion of the property. See attached aerial and topographic maps on pages 38-41; reference to these maps confirm this boundary.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary has been drawn to include all resources that remain from the charge. Topographic features dominate the resources. The nearby area, especially to the west has witnessed development over the last century; areas of disturbance and integrity loss are mostly excluded from the boundary.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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telephone: (406) 444-3647  
date: January 2024

This nomination was made possible through the partnership and cooperative research and thoughtful input with the following dedicated and knowledgeable individuals:

Traditional Tribal Consultants

name/title: Conrad Fisher, Otto Braided Hair, Steve Brady  
organization: Northern Cheyenne Tribe  
street & number: \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town: Lame Deer state: MT zip code: \_\_\_\_\_  
e-mail Conrad Fisher, [esevone1@yahoo.com](mailto:esevone1@yahoo.com); Otto Braided Hair, [sandcreek@rangeweb.net](mailto:sandcreek@rangeweb.net)

*Funding for recording and recognition of this significant cultural site was provided through a grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program.*

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
Name of Property

Rosebud, MT  
County and State

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**Property Owners:**

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name Northern Cheyenne Tribe  
street & number P.O. Box 128 telephone  
city or town Lame Deer state MT zip code 59043

name Charles Killsnight Estate (Otto Braided Hair)  
street & number telephone  
city or town Lame Deer state MT zip code 59043

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:**
- **Photo Log**

**All Photographs**

Name of Property: Head Chief-Young Mule Charge

City or Vicinity: Lame Deer

County: Rosebud

State: MT

Photographer: Chere Jiusto

Date Photographed: November 2023

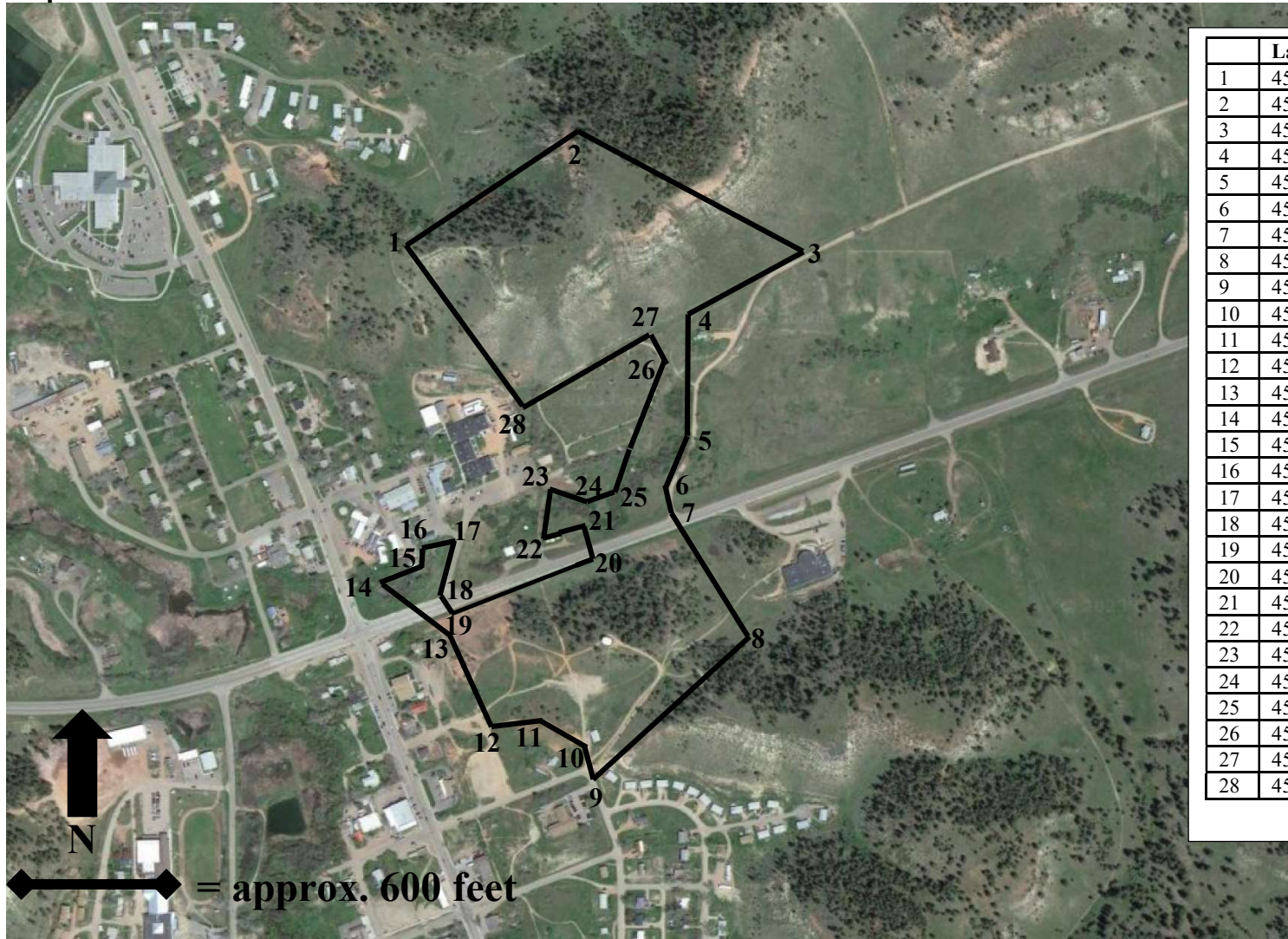
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of \_\_\_\_.

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
 Name of Property

Rosebud, MT  
 County and State

**Maps**

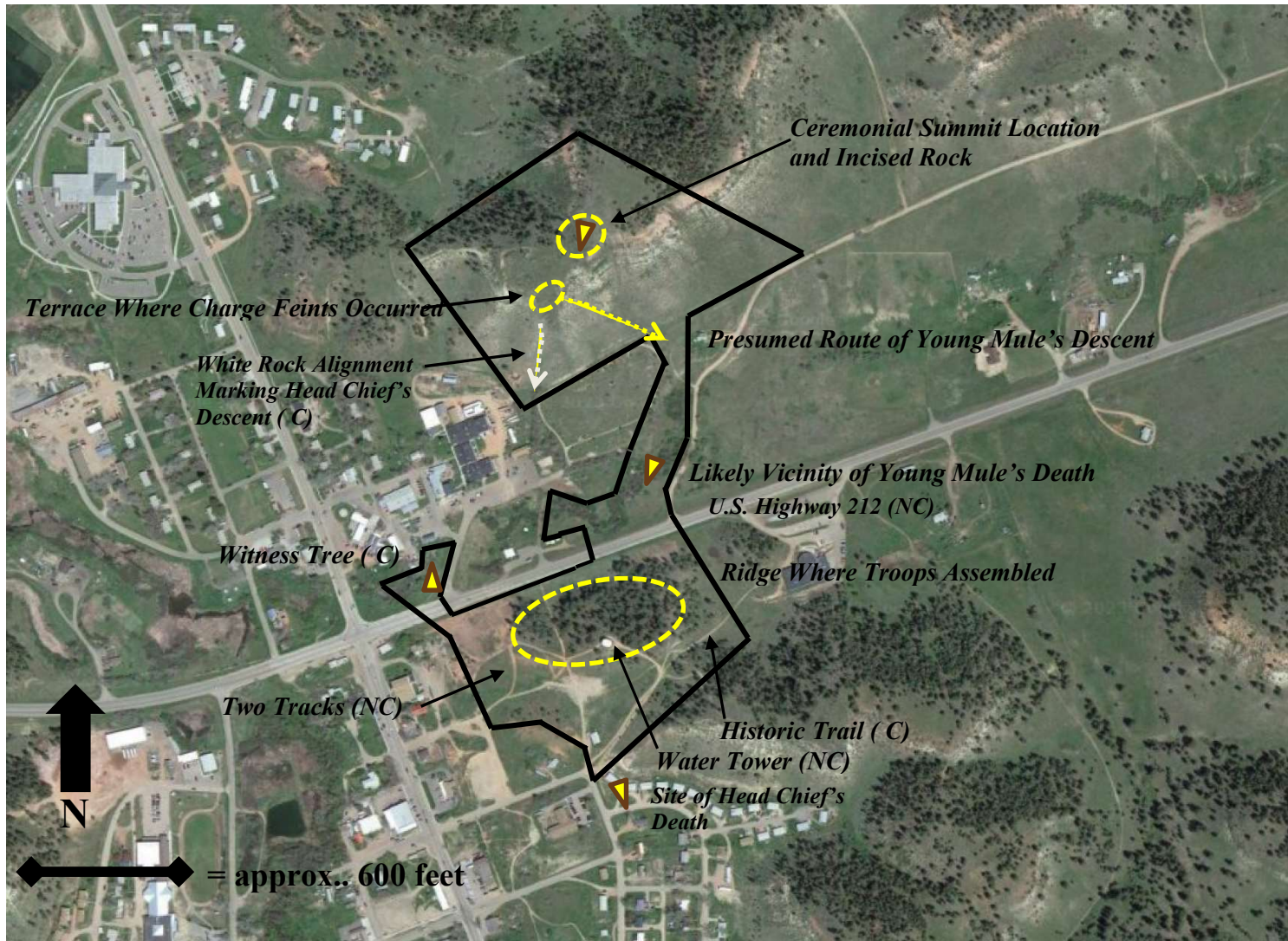


	Latitude	Longitude
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2	45.6293652N	-106.6627556W
3	45.6279170N	-106.6588685W
4	45.6271616N	-106.6608484W
5	45.6257693N	-106.6608759W
6	45.6251788N	-106.6612358W
7	45.6248452N	-106.6611373W
8	45.6234003N	-106.6598321W
9	45.6216991N	-106.6624482W
10	45.6221278N	-106.6626041W
11	45.6224525N	-106.6633352W
12	45.6223390N	-106.6642757W
13	45.6234259N	-106.6649072W
14	45.6240398N	-106.6660948W
15	45.6242416N	-106.6653836W
16	45.6244689N	-106.6653605W
17	45.6245501N	-106.6647809W
18	45.6238890N	-106.6650372W
19	45.6236596N	-106.6648211W
20	45.6243228N	-106.6624452W
21	45.6246862N	-106.6625860W
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23	45.6251346N	-106.6632408W
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25	45.6250837N	-106.6620750W
26	45.6266181N	-106.6612408W
27	45.6269838N	-106.6615356W
28	45.6261931N	-106.6636440W

**Aerial Image of Head Chief-Young Mule Charge showing National Register Boundary.**

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
Name of Property

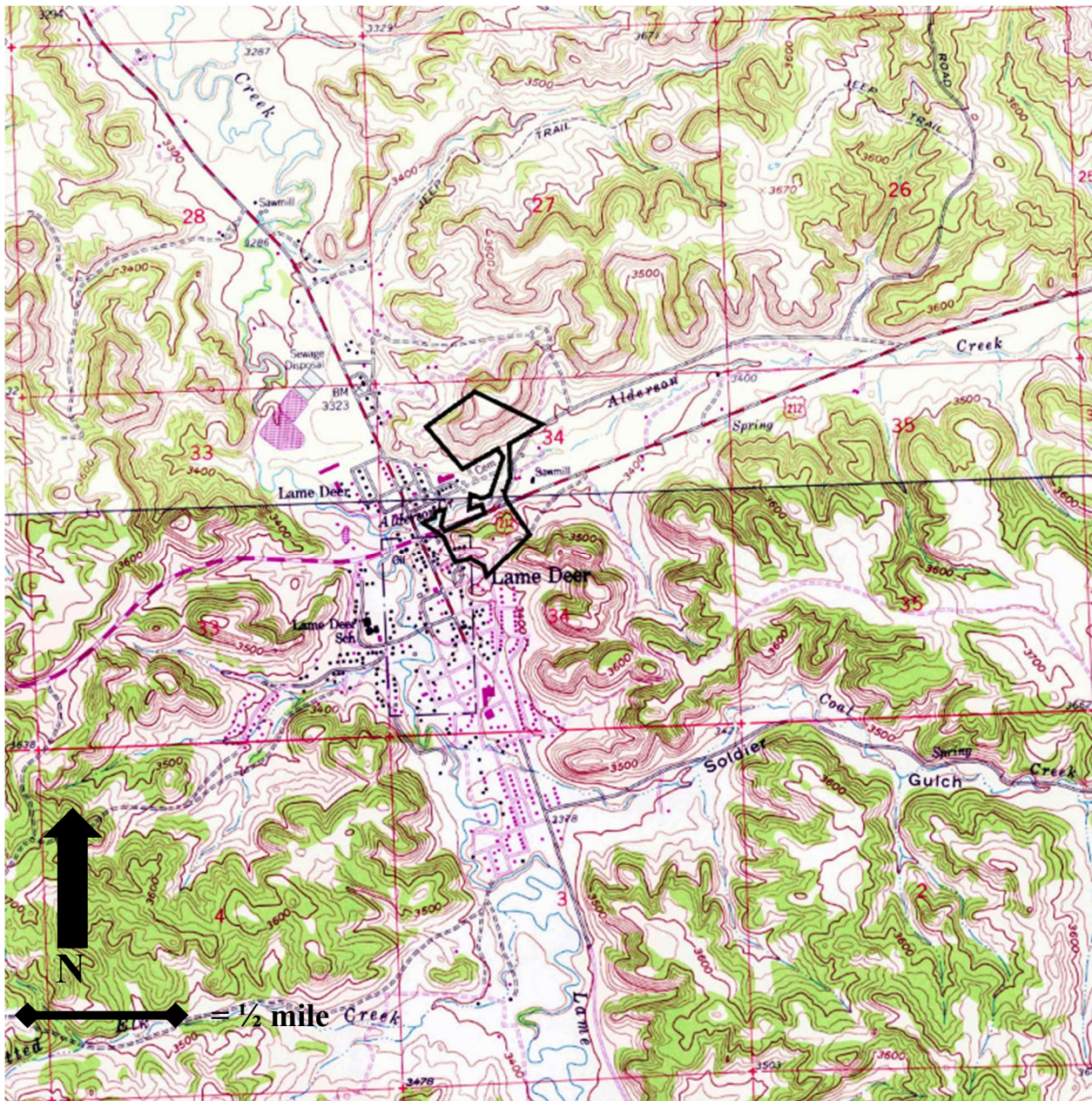
Rosebud, MT  
County and State



**Aerial Image of Head Chief-Young Mule Charge Identifying Resources and Topographic Landmarks.**

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
Name of Property

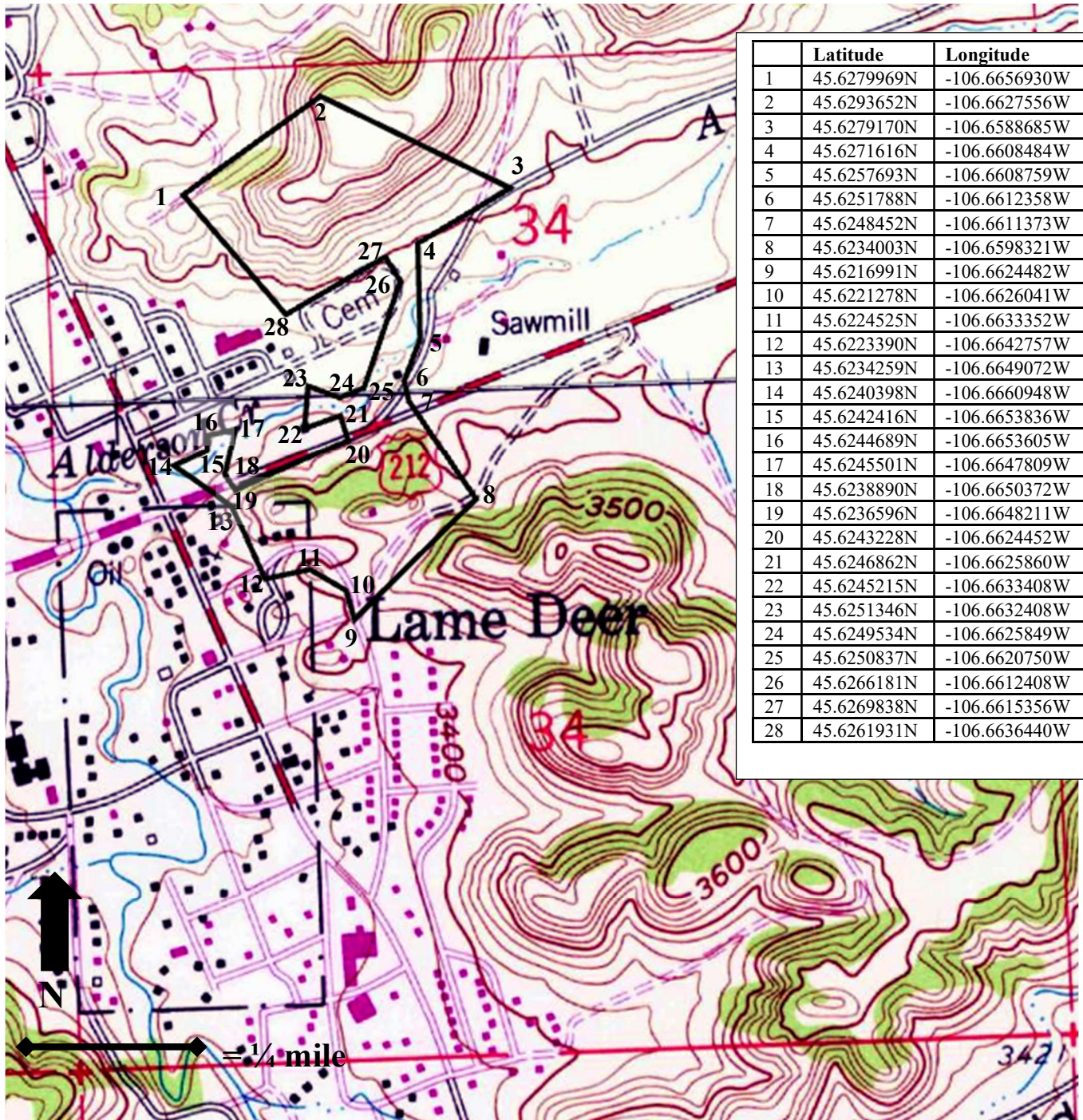
Rosebud, MT  
County and State



Location of Head Chief-Young Mule Charge. Found on the Jimtown and Lame Deer 7.5' quadrangle maps

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
 Name of Property

Rosebud, MT  
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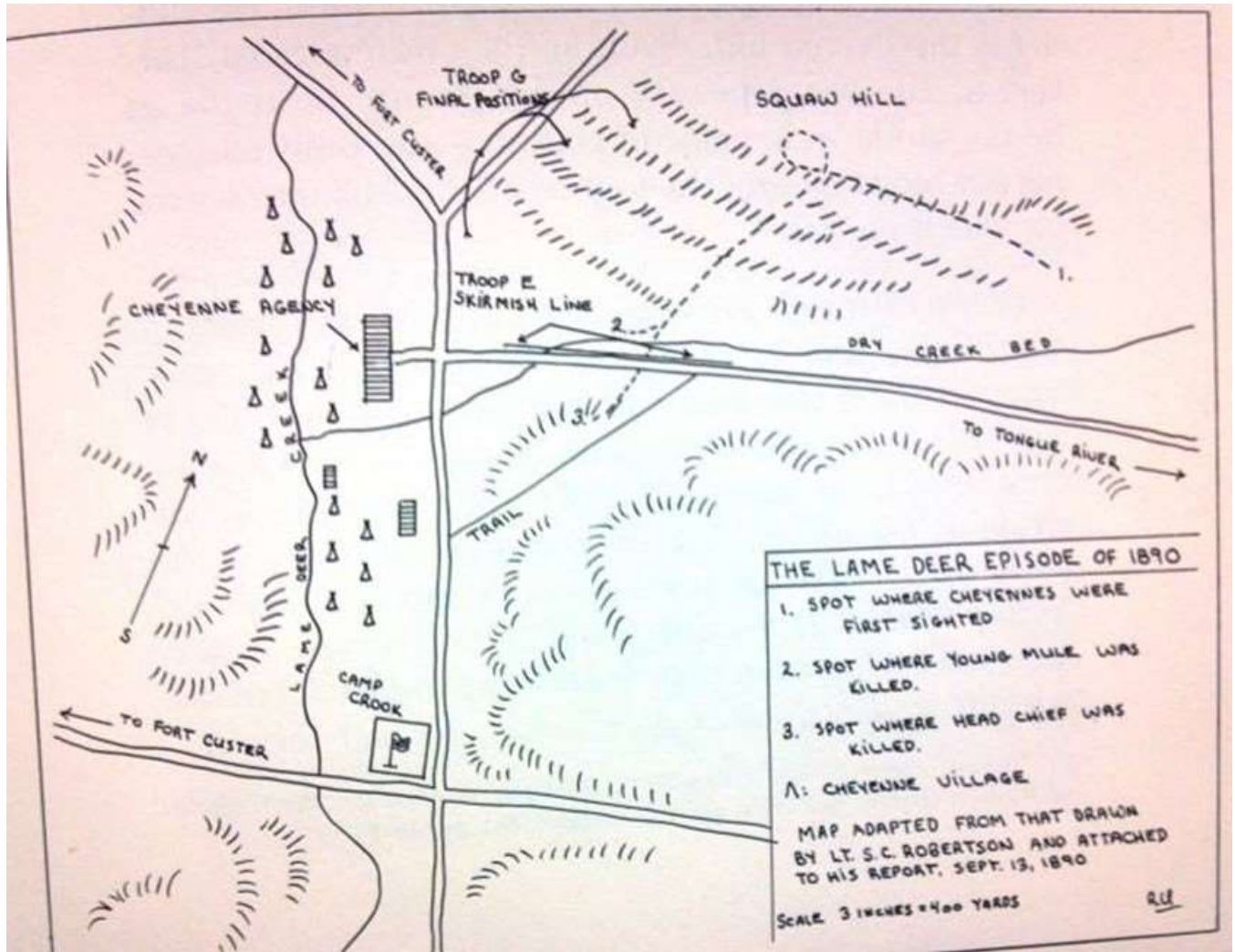


Close up of Head Chief-Young Mule Charge. Found on the Jimtown and Lame Deer 7.5' quadrangle maps.



Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
Name of Property

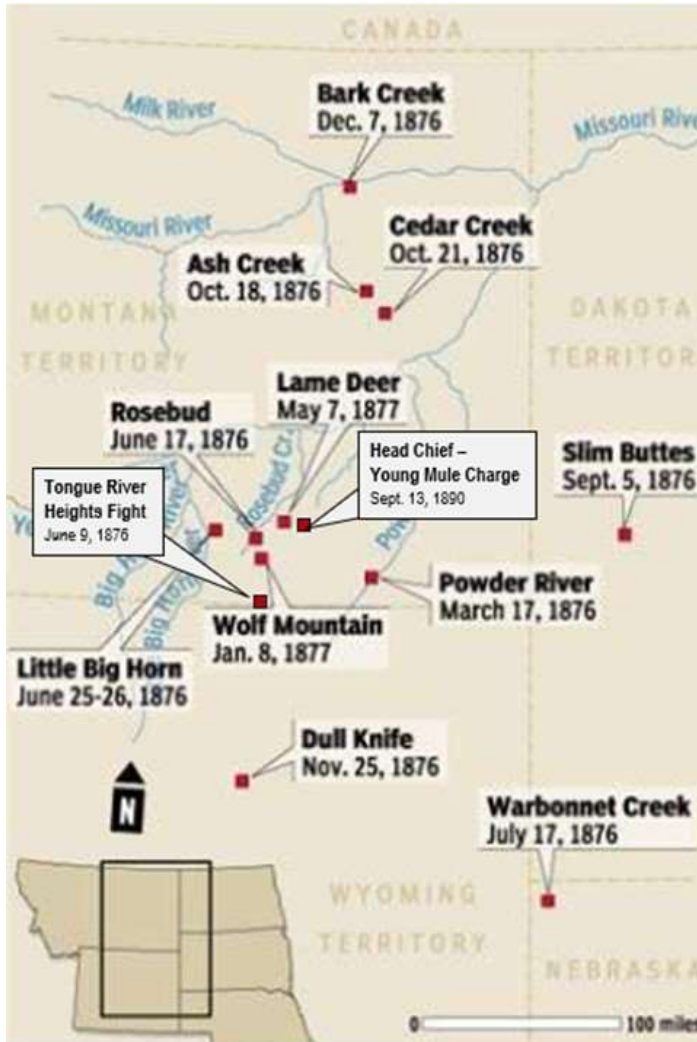
Rosebud, MT  
County and State



**1890 Base Map by LT. S.C. Robertson, who commanded one cavalry troop during the Head Chief-Young Mule Charge. The map was revised by Richard Upton for use in his 1973 book *Fort Custer on the Bighorn, 1877-1898*. The original copy of the map appears to be misplaced by the National Archives.**

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
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Map highlighting several of the battles referred to in the nomination. From Lorna Thackary, "Indian Wars Historian to Gather Sioux Battle Stories," *Billings Gazette*, July 1, 2002.

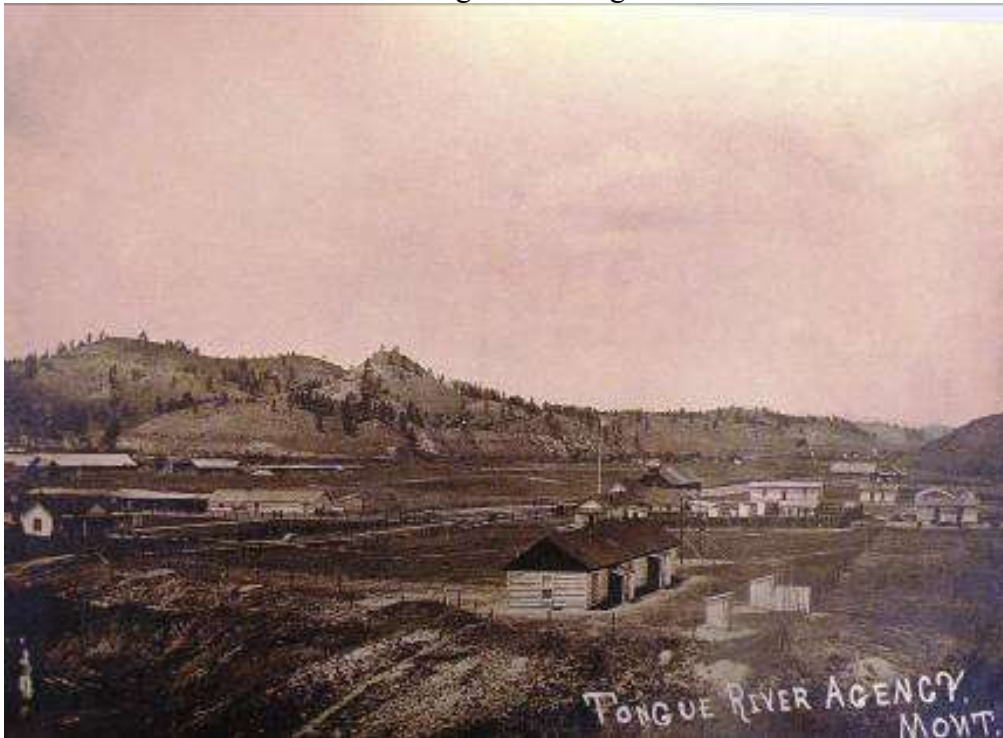
Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
Name of Property

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**Historic Images**



Circa 1888 Image of Northern Cheyenne Camp in Lame Deer. This photo depicts the landscape at the time of the Head Chief-Young Mule charge.



Circa 1890 Image of the Tongue River Agency at Lame Deer. The lower-left portion of the image shows Alderson Creek. Head Chief Hill is not in the image.

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Historic view of the Tongue River Agency building, center-right in the image. Taken from the top of Head Chief Hill, likely c. 1920. Alderson Creek flows from the left toward the center of the image where it meets Lame Deer Creek, and the hill where Head Chief met the cavalry is visible just in front of the white church on the left side of the image. Facing southwest.



Late-nineteenth century view likely of Head Chief Hill, with two Northern Cheyenne riders in foreground. Facing north. Photo from the online digital archives of the Cody Museum.

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
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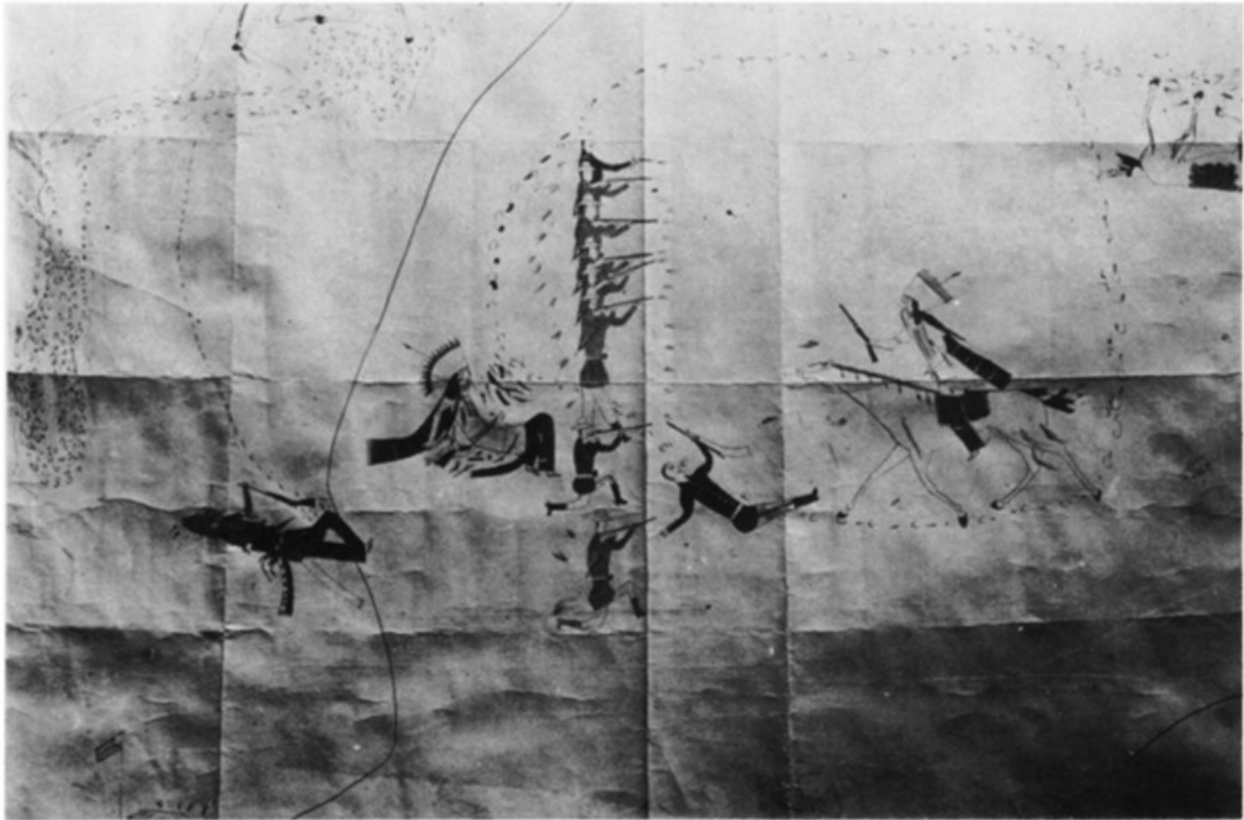
“The Charge of Head Chief,” by R.J. Magrino, Jr. Modern day rendering of Head Chief’s charge into army lines. Painting located in the Dr. John Woodenlegs Memorial Library.



Modern day rendering by Denver Horn, Northern Cheyenne artist. This depicts Head Chief as he reached the bottom of the hill, followed by Young Mule on foot. Painting located in the Dr. John Woodenlegs Memorial Library.

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
Name of Property

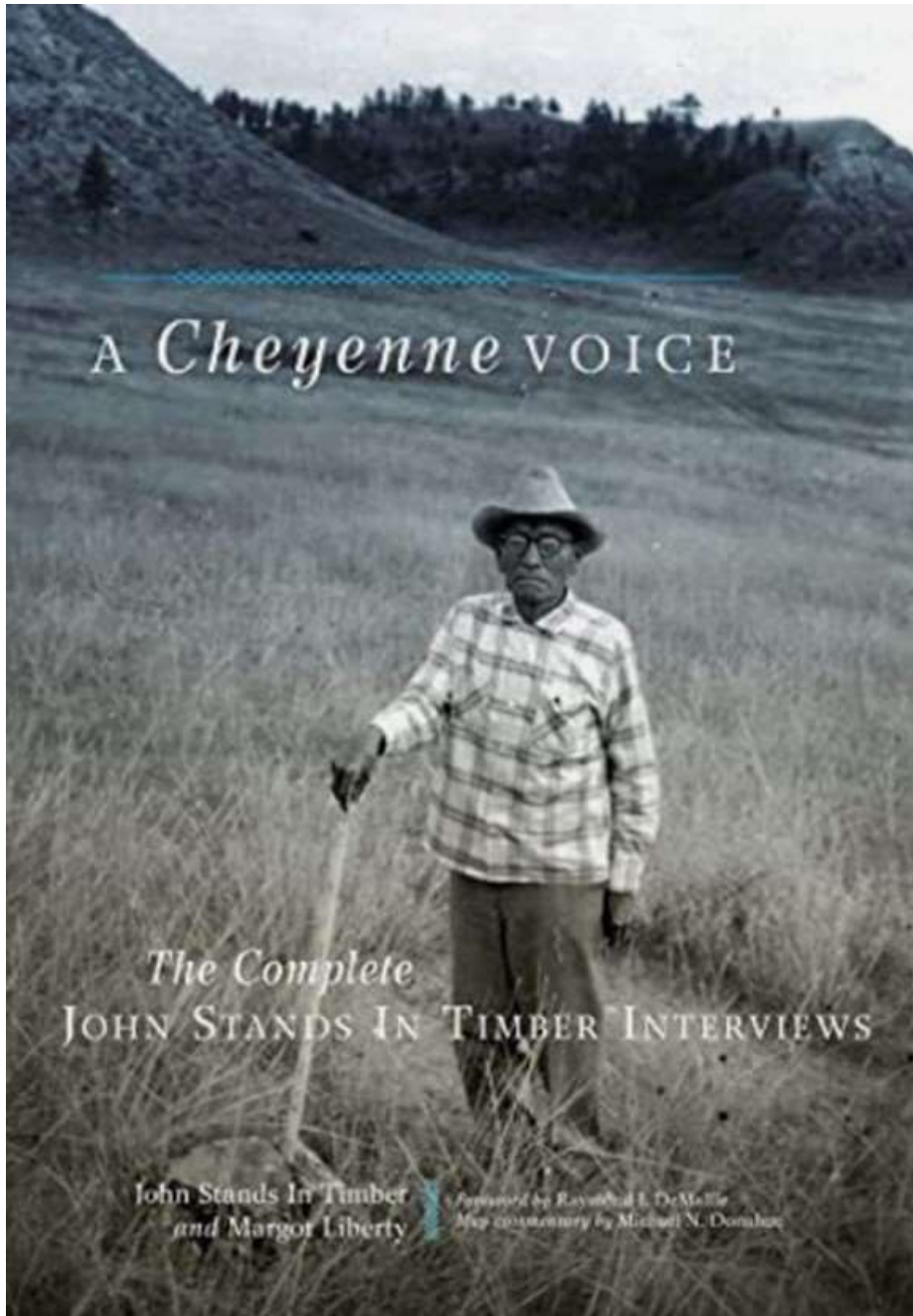
Rosebud, MT  
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Ledgerbook sketch showing the death of Head Chief by unknown Northern Cheyenne artist, date of drawing unknown.

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
Name of Property

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John Stands In Timber pointing out the rocks that marked the place where Head Chief fell.  
Direction of view, southeast.

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
Name of Property

Rosebud, MT  
County and State

**National Register Photographs**

All Photos:

Name of Property: Head Chief-Young Mule Bravery Charge

City or Vicinity: Lame Deer

County: Rosebud State: Montana

Photographer: Chere Jiusto

Date Photographed: November 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and number:



MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0001.

Head Chief Hill, Rock alignment at left edge, cemetery at base of hill, lower left. View to north.



Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0002.  
Southern portion of Head Chief-Young Mule Charge site, from Head Chief Hill. View to south.

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0003.  
Terrace where charge feints occurred, Chief Dull Knife College below. View to southwest.

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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0004.

View from top of hill near ceremonial summit location, overlooking terrace where charge feints took place at center left. Chief Dull Knife College and heart of Lame Deer community below. View to southwest.

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0005.  
View from top of hill with cemetery at center and southern portion of property beyond the road.  
View to south.

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0006.  
Rock alignment marking the charge route. View to north.

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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0007.  
Inscribed markings on rock face of, at top of hill near ceremonial summit location. View to north.

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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0008.  
View of Alderson Creek showing hill where charge began in background. Picnic Shelters in foreground stand outside the National Register boundary. View to north.

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0009.  
Southern Portion of Head Chief-Young Mule Charge site, View to south from ridge.



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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0010.  
Southern portion of the Head Chief Young Mule Charge site. View to the SW from ridge.

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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0011.  
View to the N and Head Chief Hill, from ridge in southern portion of Head Chief Young Mule Charge site where troops assembled.

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
Name of Property

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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0012.  
Ridge in southern portion of site where army troops assembled. Alderson Creek runs below ridge (not visible) and Head Chief Hill stands in the far background. View to north.

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0013.  
Noncontributing two-tracks on southern hill where troops assembled. View to the west.

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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0014.  
Southern hill where troops assembled. Noncontributing water tower in background. View to the northeast

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0015.  
Cross section of witness tree, measuring roughly 53" in diameter. View to southeast.

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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0016.  
Stump of witness tree, in the Alderson creek riparian zone.

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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0017.  
Felled witness tree along Alderson Creek.



Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0018.  
Felled witness tree in Alderson Creek riparian zone.

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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0019. Historic trail. View to the northeast.

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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0020.  
Overview of historic trail on southern hill near where troops assembled. Tribal casino in the far background. View to the northeast.

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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0021.  
Overview of historic trail through southern portion of site. Tribal casino in the far background.  
View to southeast from ridge near where troops assembled.

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge  
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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0022.  
Approximate Location where Head Chief Fell, south and outside of National Register boundary.  
View to southeast.

Head Chief-Young Mule Charge

Name of Property

Rosebud, MT

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MT\_RosebudCounty\_HeadChief-YoungMuleCharge\_0023.

Close up of water tower. View to northeast.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.