

**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. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Indian Memorial – Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

other names/site number American Indian Memorial

## 2. Location

street & number Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

x

 not for publication

city or town near Crow Agency vicinity

state MT code 29 county Big Horn code \_\_\_\_\_ zip code 59022

## 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:

x national \_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_ local

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
1		<b>Total</b>

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument MPDF

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Recreation and Culture - monument/marker –  
commemorative monument

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Recreation and Culture - monument/marker –  
commemorative monument

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Soil

walls: stone

roof: N/A

other: Concrete, stone and dirt interior circle

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### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### **Summary Paragraph**

Dedicated in 2003, the Indian Memorial is a subtle, earthen mound structure with rock and concrete features placed atop a natural contour on the north end of Last Stand Hill. Located approximately 100m to the north of the Seventh Cavalry Memorial, the Indian Memorial provides a contrasting visual balance between the frequented Seventh Cavalry Monument and adjoining marble markers and the contemporary naturalistic architecture of the memorial to native warriors. A concrete path winds from the top of Last Stand Hill to the Memorial. Sandstone walls abut the cutaways into the mound. Its interior includes temporary aluminum interpretive panels that depict the battle from the variant perspectives of the Indian nations and memorialize their dead. As evidence of the site's ongoing use, tribal members frequently leave offerings at the Memorial in various locations.

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### **Narrative Description**

#### **Indian Memorial**

The Indian Memorial and accompanying trail rest on the northern slopes of Last Stand Hill across the Battlefield Tour Road from the Last Stand Hill site and the Seventh Cavalry Monument. The trail begins at the top of the hill to the east of the Seventh Cavalry Monument and proceeds westward along the road to a hillock extending north from the center of Last Stand Hill. There, the trail proceeds to the east entrance of the Memorial, exiting the Memorial's west entrance and winding to the south towards the tour road. It re-crosses the tour road and meets up with Last Stand Hill Trail near its midpoint. Along its length, the trail has interpretive markers discussing the history of the Indian Memorial and additional history on the battlefield. The path is constructed of pink-beige concrete and is approximately eight feet wide. The trail and markers are not contributing to the significance of the site. However, the circulation pattern that leads from the top of Last Stand Hill through the memorial and back to the base of Last Stand Hill does contribute importance to the Indian Memorial as an interpretive balance to traditional Euro-American perspectives of the battle.

The mound is aligned along a north-south/east-west axis with a circular cutaway center. Granular red gravel covers the ground in the center, and flat stonework extends away from the sandstone walls approximately one foot. On the northern face of the central circle is a rectangular cutaway in the wall that opens the inner circle to views of the plains to the north. Installed in this cutaway is an ironwork piece depicting three warriors riding off to the east, presumably to battle, with a woman handing a shield to one of the warriors and bidding them farewell standing on the farthest east side of the iron frame. Well-established grassland covers the outside of the mound.

The memorial's two entryways cut through the mounded wall along the east-west axis. Native sandstone retaining walls line the entire interior circle of the monument. On the exterior of each entry where the Indian Memorial Trail winds through the memorial, there is a rounded circular opening at the trail's turn into each entry. These have matching sandstone walls of approximately 18". A Spirit Gate breaks the mound at its southern axis, making a two-foot insert in the wall. It is intended as a viewing port to the Seventh Cavalry Memorial to the south. The Spirit Gate contains a single stone step originally named the Weeping Wall, and it

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was planned to have a small cascade. It is now dry due to lack of irrigation. The interior walls provide a cap layer of sandstone that borders the grasslands on the outer walls of the mound. They are only slightly visible from nearby vistas in the park.

Mounted on the walls along the interior sandstone walls are temporary aluminum plaques with interpretive stories from the perspectives of the Lakota, Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Crow and Arikira tribes, the major associated tribes on both sides of the engagement. In cooperation with associated tribes, the National Park Service plans to replace the aluminum plaques with permanent granite panels in 2012. From the northeast panel clockwise to the northwest, the tribes' panels are as follows: Crow, Cheyenne, Lakota Sioux, Arapahoe, Arikira. Each panel presents information on that tribe's perspective of the battle and of the Sioux War of 1876-77.

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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.)

Property is:

- 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Ethnic Heritage / Native American

Politics / Government

**Period of Significance**

2002 – present.

**Significant Dates**

1991 – Congress authorizes construction of Memorial

2003 – Memorial dedicated

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

Teton and Dakota Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Arikira, Crow

**Architect/Builder**

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance extends from the construction of the Indian Memorial beginning in late 2002 and continues to the present. This recognizes the ongoing contributions the Indian Memorial makes to the historic significance of Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument and its continuing use as a memorial to American Indian warriors who fought in the Great Sioux War of 1876-77.

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**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

The Indian Memorial has achieved significance within the last fifty years. Therefore, the National Register requires it to meet National Register Criteria Consideration G. Its historical significance for Native American history, Western history, and American social history is unprecedented. The Indian Memorial is the single most significant symbol of the pan-Indian movement's work in the late-twentieth century. It is also the only example of a federally-approved, federally-funded monument to American Indian warriors on an American battlefield. Due to its association with pan-Indian political and cultural movements in the late-twentieth century and its rarity as a federally-funded American Indian monument, the Memorial meets consideration G.

The Indian Memorial is primarily commemorative in nature, and therefore must meet Criteria Consideration F. The National Register states that commemorative properties must have significance through their age, tradition, or symbolic value. Due to the relatively young age of the Memorial, it cannot be significant for age, and any traditions associated with it cannot be understood within an established historical context. However, for the same reasons identified above, the symbolic value of the Indian Memorial at Little Bighorn Battlefield is unprecedented. The Memorial is an extremely rare physical manifestation of the pan-Indian movement of the 1960s. It symbolizes the historical and political process of recognizing American Indian peoples in their own right by the National Park Service and the federal government. As it has its own symbolic importance as explained above, the Memorial meets the requirements of Consideration F.

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Memorial falls under the "Native American – Monuments and Markers" Property Type as defined in the Multiple Property Documentation Form for Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. The Indian Memorial at Little Bighorn Battlefield is significant at the national level under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage – Native American as an exceptional and rare representation of American Indian culture and history in the United States. Due to its authorization by Congress and the use of federal funds to construct it, the memorial is also significant in the area of Government & Politics for its representation of changing policy on the part of the federal government towards American Indian history and culture. It encapsulates both changing public perceptions of American Indian cultures and memorialization of the sacrifices borne by American Indian nations during the wars for the Great Plains in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Its modest design represents one of the only designed memorials to American Indian warriors on a battlefield in the United States. Its dedication in 2003 involved the recognition of those warriors by the United States government as well as the American public. Presently it stands as an interpretive site to educate park visitors about American Indian nations' perspectives on the Great Sioux War of 1876. It has also come to symbolize the ongoing discussion of race and the place of American Indians within the broader cultural landscape of the United States. It serves both as a recognition of the costs of colonialism in the American West and as a source of peaceful cooperation and diplomacy among the American Indian nations and the United States.

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

The Indian Memorial at Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument is significant under Criterion A for association with the Ethnic Heritage of various Plains Indian tribes. While centuries of established culture informed the design and construction of a memorial, its primary significance lies within the rise of a pan-Indian

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political culture in the second half of the twentieth century centered on the actions of the National Congress for American Indians (NCAI) and the American Indian Movement (AIM), among others. In a move reminiscent of the allied Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho resistance in the 1870s, groups such as the NCAI and AIM pressured the National Park Service to alter the Little Bighorn battlefield built environment to reflect an American Indian perspective. As the quintessential, albeit pyrrhic, victory for American Indians over Euro-American settlers, Little Bighorn has retained symbolic prominence in American history. The site bears secondary significance as a memorial to American Indian warriors constructed on an American Indian Wars battlefield with a federal appropriation. With the exception of the National Museum of the American Indian, the United States supports few congressionally-funded interpretive structures to American Indians and no other known memorials to American Indian casualties on a battlefield both approved and funded by Congress. For these reasons, the Indian Memorial meets Criteria Consideration G as exceptional and rare.

Pan-Indian activism and the rise of social history in the 1960s were the primary motivations for the construction of the Indian Memorial at the battlefield. However, the idea for the Indian Memorial at Little Bighorn Battlefield first arose in the 1920s. Mrs. Thomas Beaverheart wrote to then Superintendent Wessinger requesting a monument to her fallen father, Lame White Man. The War Department ignored Mrs. Beaverheart's request, a policy to which the National Park Service conformed until the mid-1980s when popular support forced a change in administrative position. In the 1960s, when the National Congress for American Indians (NCAI) and the more radical American Indian Movement (AIM) demanded additional autonomy and enfranchisement for American Indians through demonstrations and lobbying, they raised the issue of a memorial to American Indians at Little Bighorn Battlefield. Although there were several battlegrounds during this social and political conflict, the Little Bighorn proved to be one of the most contentious. Targeting the site in the 1970s, AIM made several visits to the battlefield in an effort to raise awareness of American Indian politics and to push the National Park Service (NPS) towards more balanced interpretation. While the group placed several temporary plaques at Little Bighorn in the 1970s and 80s, a permanent structure did not arrive until 2003. The Indian Memorial at Little Bighorn Battlefield represents a new historical and political atmosphere that respected multiple narratives of historical events in American history. It is also an example of an attempt by the federal government to recognize the sacrifices of indigenous peoples in the process of Euro-American settlement of the West.<sup>1</sup>

Pan-Indian activism by the NCAI and AIM should be understood alongside the rise of 'new' social history in the 1960s, another broad development within which the Indian Memorial came into existence. With various minorities challenging Euro-Americans for economic and political enfranchisement, scholars began re-assessing the historical record of the United States to contextualize these marginalized groups. Just as African-Americans demanded equal access to voting centers, education, and wealth, American Indian groups renewed calls for recognition of their cultures and greater autonomy within state and federal government. This meant recognizing the integral role of American Indian peoples in U.S. history. In the 1970s, the desire arose among some Americans "to memorialize the Indian Americans...in a way at least equal to the memorials already lavished on the white Americans of Indian war fame." AIM initiated Indian commemoration in the 1970s, leaving plaques in Custer Battlefield National Monument in memory of Lakota and Cheyenne warriors who fought at the battle. During the 1972 "Trail of Broken Treaties" caravan that traveled across the United States and culminated in AIM's occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) building in Washington D.C., activists visited the battlefield on Columbus Day, placing a plaque to fallen warriors to protest to past and contemporary federal Indian policy. However, due to NPS policy at the battlefield, park staff removed each of these plaques and monuments soon after their placement. The increasing hostility surrounding interpretation of the battlefield had a marked effect on the centennial commemorations of the battle. On June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1976, officials

<sup>1</sup> Jerome Greene, *Stricken Field: The Little Bighorn Since 1876* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 170, 226.

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held a subtle ceremony with a few hundred guests and spectators gathered to commemorate the Seventh Cavalry troopers who died at the battle unlike the ceremonies that drew thousands at the 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the battle. Led by Russell Means, AIM members attended the celebration and advocated for a new monument to American Indian warriors. While AIM's presence at the centennial helped open the discussion about new interpretations of the battle and the American Indian Wars, it took over a decade of advocacy on the part of many groups to finally change policy at the Monument.<sup>2</sup>

Due to the tension at the Monument precipitated by pan-Indian activists, the NPS steadily incorporated these new historical perspectives into their resource management strategies. As early as 1971, Monument Superintendent William A. Harris advocated a name change to Little Bighorn National Battlefield. Park planners incorporated Harris' concept into the Monument's 1975 Statement for Management. However, it was not until the confrontation between AIM members and park staff at the centennial celebration that the NPS acknowledged the possibility of establishing a new memorial. On the battle's 112<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1988, a group of AIM activists led by Russell Means placed another plaque at the base of the Seventh Cavalry Monument on the battlefield that honored American Indian warriors and protested United States Indian policy. While the NPS removed the plaque to the visitor center after two months, AIM's efforts added to the political pressure on the federal government and the Park Service to recognize indigenous perspectives on the battle and establish a visible monument for them. Monument staff agreed to forward a report to the NPS Director for authorization of the plaque, as well as justification for a permanent memorial. Director Mott's August response called for the creation of a Task Directive in the fall of that year to study the issue of an Indian Memorial at the Monument. The Task Directive outlined several guidelines by which the memorial project would proceed, including environmental and cultural resource compliance, and set a completion date for June 1990, subject to funding. In 1990, the directive translated to legislative action when a group of congresspersons, including Colorado Representative Ben Nighthorse Campbell of the Northern Cheyenne, introduced House Resolution 4660 authorizing the construction of a memorial to the battle's American Indian warriors.<sup>3</sup>

Although pan-Indian desires motivated building the memorial, its creation reflected changing mainstream views of American Indian culture. In 1990, Campbell along with three other congressmen introduced House bill 4660 to authorize the memorial's construction at Custer Battlefield. The bill highlighted the existing Seventh Cavalry Memorial and stated "while many members of the Cheyenne, Sioux, and other Indian Nations gave their lives defending their families and traditional lifestyle and livelihood, nothing stands at the battlefield to commemorate those individuals." Before the House subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands, Fort Peck Assiniboine/Sioux representative Chauncey F. Whitright III stated there was "no absence of memorial within many Indians' hearts" but that it was "time to make that memorial visible to all people of this land and of the world. In doing so, it becomes an accomplishment of all Indian people – and all Indian people are made heir to the values and traditions which gave this memorial birth." While the bill failed in 1990, the following year Congress passed a new bill, a legislative measure that significantly altered the cultural, political and physical landscape at the Monument. Signed into law on December 10, 1991 by President George H.W. Bush as Public Law 102-201, the bill not only authorized the construction of a memorial to American Indians who fought in the battle, but required the National Park Service to change the name of the Monument from "Custer Battlefield" to "Little Bighorn Battlefield." As Cheyenne/Hodulgee-Muscagee Suzan Shown Harjo, President of the Morning Star Foundation, declared, American Indian heroes needed to be recognized and the federal government needed "to remove some of the more egregious areas of racism and dehumanization, and

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from North Dakota governor William L. Guy in Greene, 227; Greene, 228; Text adapted from Multiple Property Documentation Form for Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument.

<sup>3</sup> "Task Directive for a Native American Memorial at Custer Battlefield National Monument," Rocky Mountain Regional Office, National Park Service, October 7, 1988;



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inject dignity for our dead relatives and for our living people and our coming generations.” Supporters of the bill intended the memorial to provide parity in commemorative power at the Monument.<sup>4</sup>

Despite broad American Indian and institutional support, popular opinions of the memorial project and the Monument’s name change illuminated a tension between consensus-oriented perceptions of American history and those that emphasized multiple narratives. After the initial legislation passed Congress, opposition focused on the new name although public support for the memorial being relatively strong. Dissenting congresspersons, officials, and members of the public claimed that renaming the Monument was historical revisionism and unjustified. Many, including the descendants of the Monument’s namesake, Lt. Col. Custer, argued that proponents of the name change used Custer as a “scapegoat for every wrong that has been committed against the American Indian.” While lauding the appropriateness of the memorial, George Custer IV assaulted the name change as “cheap politics,” claiming that it patronized American Indians and dishonored soldiers who died executing their duty. Former Monument Superintendent James Court and Little Bighorn Associates Chairman Lowell Smith agreed that the bill was one of appeasement and set an undue precedent for caving to special interests. Nevertheless, support for both sections of the bill proved strong enough for the bill to pass Congress in December of 1991. Replying to criticisms, Representative Campbell claimed that far from revisionism, authorization for a memorial and a name change was “a matter of writing history the way it should have been written in the first place.” In July of 1993, the Monument officially changed its name to Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. Congress made no funding authorization for the Indian Memorial when it passed the legislation, relying on private donations that proved slow in arriving. The project languished due to lack of funding.<sup>5</sup>

In the 1990s, public opposition also slowed memorial construction. The project fell within the political tensions of the so-called “Culture Wars” of the 1980s and 90s. Some resisted remaking Little Bighorn’s cultural landscape from a largely Euro-American space to one that included both American Indian and white perspectives. After the enabling legislation’s passage in 1991, the National Park Service appointed two successive American Indians as superintendents of Little Bighorn Battlefield, Ute-Cherokee Barbara Booher and Gerard Baker of the Hidatsa. These superintendents provided greater ceremonial access for the Indian nations associated with the battle, and they received a great deal of criticism in the process. New Jersey history professor Wayne Sarf accused the Monument staff of dishonoring a mass grave of two-hundred American soldiers. Others viewed the disproportionate size of the monument compared to the subtle granite obelisk to the Seventh Cavalry as completely disrespectful and “too far over to one side.” Some preservation-minded opponents believed that the construction of a new memorial on the battlefield would degrade or destroy the historic resource of the Monument.<sup>6</sup>

Opponents faced significant, broad-based and long-standing support for the American Indian memorial at the Little Bighorn. Proponents claimed that it signified much more than simply a monument to the 75 or more

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<sup>4</sup> Greene, 228-29; Quotation of Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Chauncey F. Whitright III, and Suzan Shown Harjo from statements before the House Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands, *Custer Battlefield National Monument Indian Memorial*, 101<sup>st</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sess., Sept. 4, 1990, H.R. 4660, serial 101-48, 2-3, 21, 44; Edward T. Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 131, 141 (quotation)

<sup>5</sup> Quotation from Lowell Smith, Chairman of the Little Bighorn Associates, “Conflict Emerges Over Custer Park,” *New York Times*, October 13, 1991, <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/10/13/us/conflict-emerges-over-custer-park.html?pagewanted=2&src=pm>; George A. Custer IV, “Letter to the Editor,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 41, No. 4 (1991), 93; “Change Order,” request from National Park Service – Division of Land Acquisition, 7-9-1993, electronic copy received from Park Ranger Melana Stichman, June 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Greene, 230; Quotation from James Court in James Brooke, “Controversy Over Memorial to Winners at Little Bighorn,” *New York Times*, August 24, 1997, <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/08/24/us/controversy-over-memorial-to-winners-at-little-bighorn.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

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fallen Indian warriors at the battle. Superintendent Baker contextualized the memorial as one “to represent all the fallen American Indian people” who died defending a lost way of life. More than simply a single battlefield, Little Bighorn had become one of the most significant American Indian sites in the country, and it demanded the placement of a monument to that perspective. Lakota artist and philosopher Arthur Amiotte claimed later that the importance of the Memorial was to provide a place where “Native descendents can feel welcome and believe one’s people had done a courageous and good thing.” Responding to the preservationist arguments about the battlefield, supporters argued that the site proposed for the battlefield had already been disturbed frequently by the War Department during its stewardship of the site. Furthermore, the text of law 102-201 specified that the Memorial be in the vicinity of the Seventh Cavalry monument to provide a visual balance in the battlefield’s monuments.<sup>7</sup>

Whether traditional opposition or pan-Indian support, the increased publicity in the late-1990s helped push the memorial project from an idea into a reality. Public Law 102-201 called for an Indian Memorial Advisory Committee, but this did not come into existence until 1995. Choosing “Peace Through Unity” as the theme, the selection committee began a design competition August 1, 1996. The committee reviewed hundreds of entries from throughout the nation, finally picking a top applicant in February of 1997. Created by two non-Indians from Pennsylvania, the winning design was an eclectic blend of several aspects of Plains Indian cultures. Its mounded-earth walls recalled the earthen mounds utilized by the Hidatsa and Missouri River Basin tribes in the prehistoric period. A Spirit Gate on the Memorial’s southern wall provided a visual connection between it and the Seventh Cavalry Monument. The trail route took visitors on a complimentary journey that linked the Seventh Cavalry Monument to the Indian Memorial, emphasizing both perspectives as well as the Memorial’s theme of “Peace Through Unity.” The original design also called for two Lodgepole Pine tipi poles to mark the Spirit Gate between the Memorial and the Seventh Cavalry Monument. The selection committee approved the design claiming that it was both buildable and fitting to the battlefield’s surroundings. It believed the site would have “international appeal” and that it would have “meaning for everyone.” However, the enabling legislation failed to provide funding, forcing private donors and the Monument itself to raise the necessary \$2.5 million. During the late 1990s into the early 2000s, Superintendent Neil Mangum raised the entrance fee to \$10 a vehicle to aid in the project’s fundraising. Finally, with mounting fears that lack of federal funding would doom the project, Congress approved a line-item sum of \$2.3 million which allowed the project to move forward.<sup>8</sup>

With federal funding secured, the Indian Memorial project accelerated. By early 2002, the drawings from the Philadelphia design team had been transformed into construction plans by the Roybal Corporation of Denver, Colorado. Supervised by NPS Intermountain Regional Office Architect Rudolph B. Lobato, Cain Construction Management (CCM) of Billings began work at the battlefield in April 2002. While initial plans projected completion by August, delays pushed the dedication ceremony back to the following year’s anniversary celebration on June 25, 2003. Those delays included the discovery of human remains belonging to Fort Phil Kearny cavalry troopers who had been transferred and re-buried near the Seventh Cavalry monument in 1888. The War Department moved them again in 1926 and 1927 to the cemetery on the hill below, presumably leaving remnant remains on Last Stand Hill. During the delay, Oglala artist and Brandon University professor Colleen Cutschall began designing the bronze sculpture to be installed on the Memorial’s north

<sup>7</sup> “Controversy Over Memorial to Winner at Little Bighorn,” *New York Times*; Amiotte quotation from Paul Hutton, “An Indian Memorial for Little Bighorn,” *Roundup Magazine*, February 2003 in “Indian Memorial Dedication” folder, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument Administrative Files (hereafter LBAF).

<sup>8</sup> Greene, 232-33; U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, “Indian Memorial – 95% Preliminary Design Program,” Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, July 1998, 1-4, “Indian Memorial 2003 – Planning Mtgs” Folder, LBAF; and *Little Bighorn Battlefield Indian Memorial Design Competition – Jury Report*, February 14, 1997, “LIBI Memorial” folder, LBAF; and Becky Bohrer, “Indian Memorial Proves Slow in Coming to Indian Memorial Battlefield,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 11, 2001, <http://articles.latimes.com/2001/mar/11/local/me-36209>, accessed 10-15-2011.

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viewing platform. The Park Service sent her designs to the Christopher S. Collins Studio in Glenside, Pennsylvania for final engineering. The Eagle Bronze Foundry in Lander, Wyoming cast the final bronze sculpture and sent it north where crews installed it in the Memorial on April 17, 2003. By that time, CCM had completed the majority of the Memorial, with a satisfactory final assessment performed by the Park Service on May 29. Although some closing tasks remained, the Park Service chose to delay these until after the dedication ceremony in June.<sup>9</sup>

The Indian Memorial's dedication provided a level of historic continuity that justified the work of the Memorial's proponents. Delegations from several associated tribes and the federal government arrived on the site for the ceremonies on June 25, 2003. Several tipi encampments graced the valley floor as the American Indian tribes took charge of the festivities for the first time since the commencement of anniversary celebrations at the battlefield. At 8 a.m., a procession of riders from the Crow, Northern Cheyenne, Lakota, Arikara, and Arapaho nations moved across Battle Ridge to the Indian Memorial. Throughout the day, speeches and ceremonies reinforced the monumental importance of the Indian Memorial to American Indians, to the battlefield, and to American history. Northern Arapaho William C. Hair summed up the historic importance of the structure, claiming that "this memorial is the first time in the history of the United States of America that aboriginal people are being recognized through governmental processes. This is the closest we'll ever come to acknowledgement from the government of the atrocities we have suffered."<sup>10</sup>

Upon the Memorial's completion, it became one of the most unique structures related to modern American Indian history in existence. The construction of the Memorial and its dedication drew national attention from the *New York Times* to the *Wall Street Journal* and *Christian Science Monitor*, revealing that support for a monument to native warriors was widespread throughout the American public. Carl Rieckmann of the *Bighorn County News* also claimed that the memorial was "America's only national monument to the memory of courageous Indians protecting their homelands, families and way of life." While various groups have constructed other monuments at significant battlefields in the American Indian Wars, the Memorial at the Little Bighorn remains the largest and by far the most renowned symbol of American Indian perspectives on that conflict. Furthermore, it is the only significant monument to American Indian warriors constructed on federal land with federal dollars. Due to its unique status as a federally-recognized monument largely funded by the federal government, the Memorial is exceptional and rare despite its young age. Not only does it represent changing public views but also changing policies and perspectives within the federal government, within the National Park Service, and within Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. For these reasons, the Memorial satisfies the requirements of Criteria Consideration G and is therefore eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>11</sup>

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

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<sup>9</sup> Greene, 233-34; and Stephen L. DeVere, NPS Archeologist to LIBI Superintendent, "Trip Report – Inadvertent Discovery of Remains Related to Fort Phil Kearney reinterrments," July 26, 2002, "Indian Memorial – Last Stand Hill Mitigation" folder, LBAF.

<sup>10</sup> Greene, 234-36; Hair quotation from Greene, 237.

<sup>11</sup> Rieckmann quotation from excerpt by same author appearing in *Little Bighorn Battlefield Advocate*, Summer 2003, 6, "D66 – Indian Memorial" folder, LBAF.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

### Archives and Collections

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### Articles, Dissertations, and Reports

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House Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands. *Custer Battlefield National Monument Indian Memorial*, 101<sup>st</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sess., Sept. 4, 1990, H.R. 4660, serial 101-48.  
Rankin, Charles E. "An Indian Memorial for the Little Bighorn." *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 47, No. 2 (Summer 1997): 58-59.  
Reece, Megan. "The Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument and an Indian Memorial After 1988." Paper. University of Colorado, 2005.

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Segal, Michaly D. "The American Indian Movement: The Potential of a Counter Narrative." PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2000.

Whitright, Chauncey F., III. "Letter to the Editor," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 48, No. 1 (Spring 1998): 86.

**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): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** \_\_\_\_\_

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

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

The boundary reflects a roughly rectangular area of land that encompasses the Indian Memorial and its immediate landscape including entrances. It does not include the accompanying interpretive trail which is not deemed historically-significant at this time.

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

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Jim Bertolini – Author/Researcher and Janet Ore – Principal Investigator  
organization Public Lands History Center – Colorado State Univ. date 1-31-2012  
street & number 1776 Campus Delivery telephone 970-491-6130  
city or town Fort Collins state CO zip code 80523-1776  
e-mail Ajimb1210@gmail.com

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**Additional Documentation**

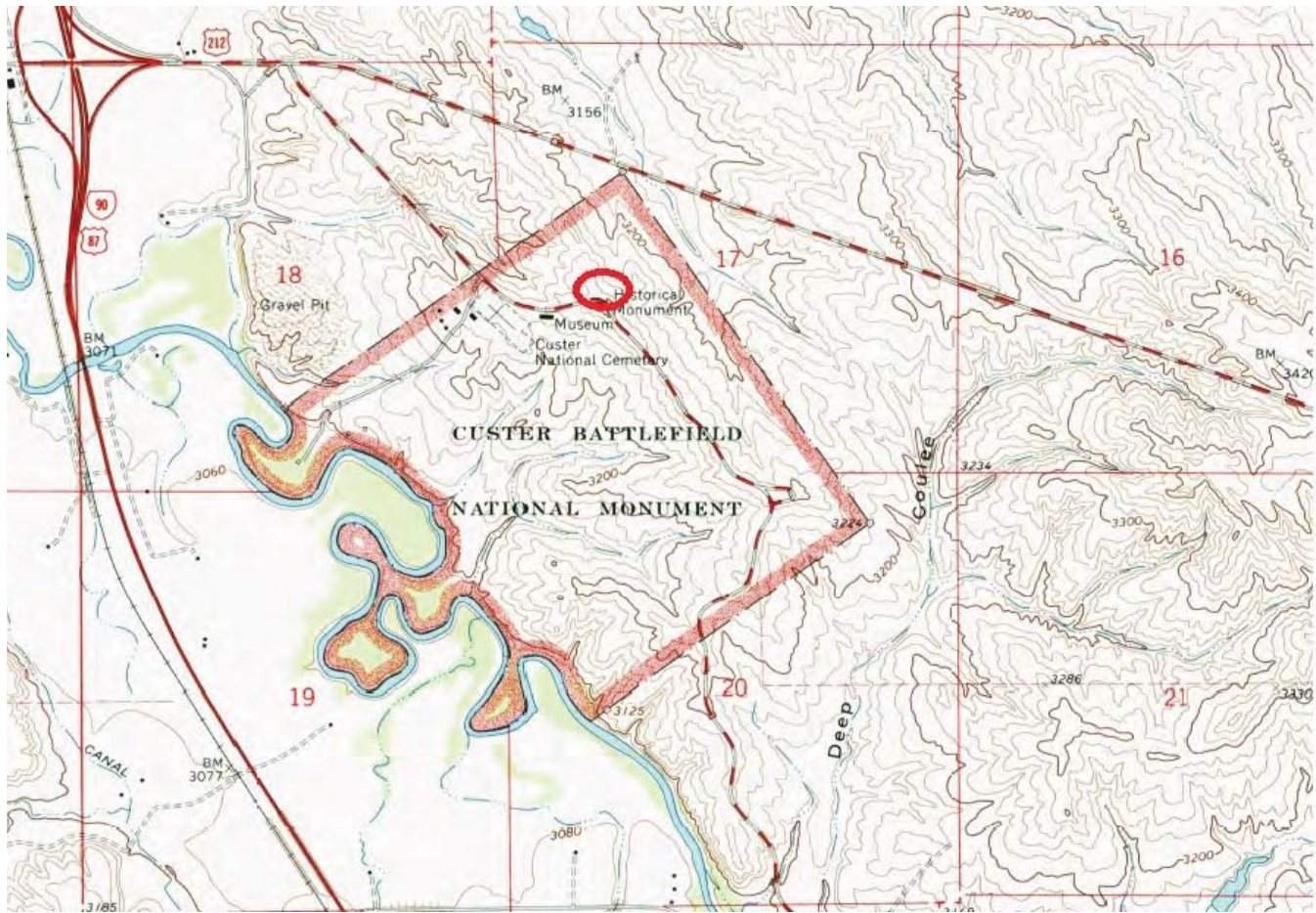
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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**Site Map and Drawings**

**Site Map – Indian Memorial and Surrounding Area**



**Site Map - Indian Memorial and Surrounding Area**  
 Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

Date: 4/12/2012  
 Produced by: National Park Service  
 Intermountain Region  
 Geographic Resources Program  
 Data Source: NPS Park Data

**Legend**

- Indian Memorial
- 7th Cavalry Monument
- Marble Markers
- Last Stand Fence
- Battlefield Tour Road
- Parking
- Photo Location & Viewing Direction
- Vegetation Map
  - Grassland
  - Forb
  - Shrub
  - Developed
  - Road

0 0.0125 0.025 Miles



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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: **Indian Memorial, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument**

City or Vicinity: **near Crow Agency**

County: **Bighorn** State: **MT**

Photographer: **Jim Bertolini (unless otherwise noted), Photographs 1-8.**



1. Indian Memorial looking north, 2009, Bob Reece.

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2. Indian Memorial northeast entry, 6-15-2011.

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3. Indian Memorial, southwest entrance, 6-15-2011.

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4. Spirit Gate on south wall looking toward Seventh Cavalry Monument, 6-15-2011.

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5. Indian Memorial looking southwest from Last Stand Hill, 6-15-2011.

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6. Indian Memorial artwork looking northwest, 8-24-2011.

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7. Indian Memorial, looking west, 8-24-2011.

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8. Indian Memorial, sample wall interior showing temporary aluminum interpretive panels (east wall from iron artwork), 6-15-2011.

**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name National Park Service, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument  
street & number Superintendent, Little Bighorn Battlefield NM,  
P.O. Box 39 telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Crow Agency state MT zip code 59022

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications 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.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.