Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Camp Disappointment

AND/OR COMMON
Camp Disappointment

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
2 miles west of Rte. 444, 3-1/2 miles north of Rte. 2 __NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Blackfoot X VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
1st

STATE
Montana

CODE
30

COUNTY
Glacier

CODE
035

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	__OCCUPIED	XX AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	XX UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
X SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	XX OTHER undeveloped

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Larry Higgins (within exterior boundaries of Blackfoot Reservation)
local contact: Wilber Werner, Cut Bank, Montana

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Blackfoot XX VICINITY OF

STATE
Montana

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Glacier County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
East Main Street

CITY, TOWN
Cut Bank

STATE
Montana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
none known

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	XX UNALTERED	__ORIGINAL SITE
XX GOOD	__RUINS	__ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The site of Camp Disappointment today is impressive because of its very isolated, wilderness character, with a view in every direction of undisturbed rolling prairie lands, high plains, with the snow-topped mountains of the Lewis Range to the west. The campsite is apparently very much the same today as when Lewis and party camped there in July 1806, as this part of the Blackfoot Indian Reservation is still quite primitive, with only an occasional small ranch building and some areas used for wheat fields and livestock grazing.

After comparison of original expedition descriptions of the campsite with the local terrain, local historians have chosen the meadow (marked by a black X on the U.S.G.S. map), just below a large cliff and beside Cut Bank Creek and a grove of cottonwood trees, as the most likely location of Lewis' Camp Disappointment. The site is privately owned, within reservation lands, but the meadow is undisturbed, inaccessible except by jeep as there are no roads, and marked only with the national historic landmark plaque.

Lewis described the terrain as they travelled along the Cut Bank Creek Tuesday, July 22, 1806:

> ...we passed the river and took our course through a level and beautiful plain on the N. side. the country has now become level, the river bottoms wide and the adjoining plains but little elivated above them; the banks of the river are not usually more than three to four feet yet it does not appear ever to overflow them.

Farther along the Cut Bank Creek they found a place to set up camp, planning to explore the source of the creek from there:

> ...we found no timber until we had traveled 12 miles further when we arrived at a clump of large cottonwood trees in a beautiful and extensive bottom of the river about 10 miles below the foot of the rocky mountains where this river enters them; As I can see from hence very distinctly where the river entered the mountains and the bearing of this point being S. of West I thought it unnecessary to proceed further and therefore encamped resolving to rest ourselves and horses a couple of days at this place and take the necessary observations.

At the campsite today wide lowland meadows are watered by the Cut Bank Creek and cottonwood trees line its banks. From the high wind-swept plains that rise above the site on the north and south you can trace the route of the creek into the foot of the mountains in the distance by the dark green foliage of the trees which mark its course.

Immediately east of the meadow delineated as the probable campsite, and protecting the area from the strong winds, is a large stone cliff--approximately 300 feet high and 600 feet wide--of craggy grey stone. This very sheer precipice was an Indian buffalo jump, or pishkin, one of many in Montana, but one in particularly good condition, probably because of its isolated location. The creek which washes directly by the foot of the cliff has exposed many bones of the animals killed during the Indian-instigated buffalo stampedes over the cliff, which provided the people with large supplies of food and hides in the era before the Indians had horses for hunting.

West from the site is a beautiful view of the Lewis Range of the Rocky Mountains, now located within Glacier National Park. Lewis described the view of the range later named for him:

> ...this plain on which we are is very high; the rocky mountains to the S.W. of us appear but low from their base up yet are partially covered with snow nearly to their bases. There is no timber on those mountains within our view; they are very irregular and broken in their form.

After a discouraging four days of rainy windy weather which prevented Lewis from establishing the latitude with his instruments, finding that the Marias did not extend as far north as hoped, and with the news that a band of Blackfeet braves was probably in the vicinity, Lewis and his men struck camp and headed south again, on the morning of Saturday, July 26, 1806:

> The morning was cloudy and continued rain as usual, tho' the cloud seemed somewhat thiner I therefore posponed seting out until 9 A.M. in the hope the it would clear off but finding the countrary result I had the horses caught and we set out biding a lasting adieu to this place which I now call camp disappointment.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	X EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES July 22-26, 1806 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In July 1806 Meriwether Lewis and nine men journeyed up the Marais River and investigated along the Cut Bank Creek in order to complete a major objective of the Lewis and Clark expedition--to find the northern extent of the drainage of the Missouri River in order to determine the northern boundary of the Louisiana Purchase territory. Lewis further hoped to locate a shorter route across the mountains than they had used on the trip west.

From the high bluffs above the meadow campsite which he called Camp Disappointment, Lewis saw that the Cut Bank Creek curved southwesterly towards the Rocky Mountains about 20 miles away, and he knew he had reached the northerly point of the river system.

The site recognized today as Camp Disappointment has been carefully determined by local authorities, based on comparison of the details of the expedition's original reports with the area's terrain features and geographic coordinates. The very remote Camp Disappointment site has remained virtually undisturbed in prairie land. The site is accessible only by jeep, and used only for grazing, though some of the virgin prairie in the vicinity is being plowed for the first time. The area is privately owned and located within the boundaries of the Blackfoot Indian Reservation.

History

On July 3, 1806, Lewis and nine men separated from Clark and the rest of the expedition at Travelers Rest and started northeast on the Indian road that had been described to them as the short route from the Lolo Trail to the Great Falls of the Missouri. The expedition was homebound and, realizing that they had misunderstood Indian information and missed the short route west on their outbound trip, they decided to explore the territory to the north, to the headwaters of the Marais River.

This was important both to determine whether this tributary of the Missouri extended as far north as the 49th Parallel or farther, and to learn if there was a short and easy portage between the headwaters of the Marias and the Saskatchewan River in Canada. The latter was the route of the English fur traders in exploiting the rich western Canadian fur regions. If such

an easy portage could be found it might be feasible to divert the western Canadian fur trade to the Missouri route, and hence to the United States, rather than to follow its customary long, difficult river and lake portage route to Montreal in Canada. Empire and wealth in the fur trade were involved in President Jefferson's instruction to Lewis in 1802 at the outset of the expedition. Since the Marias appeared to be the most likely of the Missouri tributaries to reach into Canada, it was necessary to follow it to its source.

Lewis and three companions spent July 22 to 26 at Camp Disappointment, the northermost campsite of the Lewis and Clark expedition. This camp not only was associated with one of the major exploratory objectives of the expedition, it also resulted in the first encounter of American explorers with the Blackfeet Indians, in which two Blackfeet were killed--the only Indians killed by the expedition during its entire journey. On July 26, when Lewis and his companions were returning on the back trail to join the expedition, they met eight Piegan Indians (a subdivision of the Blackfeet). The Indians appeared to be friendly, and that night the two parties camped together. At dawn the Indians attempted to steal the guns of Clark and his companions and to drive off their horses. In the ensuing melee, two Indians were killed, and Lewis narrowly escaped death by a bullet that fanned his cheek. The remaining Indians fled, and Lewis and his party left as quickly as possible, since the Indians had told them that a large party of their tribe was nearby.

The northern boundary of the Louisiana Purchase between the Mississippi River and the Spanish boundary at the Continental Divide was an uncertain and complex issue. At the time of the Louisiana Purchase Jefferson thought, erroneously, that the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 had extinguished any claim that England might have to Louisiana south of 49 degrees latitude. Seventy years later the Peace of Paris, that ended the Revolution in 1783, left ambiguities as to the boundary in the Northwest. Furthermore, the terms of Jay's Treaty in 1794 regarding explorations and negotiations to settle several boundary issues had never been carried out.

Meanwhile David Thompson's surveys showed that the Northwest Angle of Lake of the Woods was not at 49 degrees, as was thought by the negotiators of the 1783 treaty, but that it was 49° 37', and it was also learned that the source of the Mississippi did not go as far north as the Lake of the Woods. The Jay Treaty of 1794 had stated that the boundary should extend from the Lake of the Woods to the Mississippi. British authorities at the same time were urging that the boundary be placed at 45 degrees, and at such an angle in the far west within Spanish claims as might be needed to include the mouth of the Columbia. The extent of Spanish California was an international uncertainty.

Jefferson, after considerable study of all the available information on the geography of that western country, decided that the northern boundary must be so drawn that it would include all of the Missouri drainage, part of the Mississippi System. He hoped that some of the northern tributaries of the Missouri would extend north of 49 degrees, and on this he could base a claim for land north of the source of the Mississippi itself.

By the time of the Lewis and Clark expedition, it was known that the Mississippi did not extend to 49 degrees, however, Jefferson still hoped to find a tributary of the Missouri that extended to 50 degrees, and then he intended to claim a northern boundary that extended from the Lake of the Woods to that point, and continued west on that line to the Spanish boundary.

Therefore, a far-sighted goal in the realm of international geopolitics was involved in Lewis' exploring trip up the Marais. The northern boundary question remained a matter of controversy for many years, and was not settled by diplomacy and surveyed until a long time after Lewis' dangerous trip up the Marais into the heart of Blackfeet country.

Monroe, June 6, 1811.

Helen B. West, Meriwether Lewis in Blackfeet Country (Museum of the Plains Indian Browning, Mont, 1964).

Robert G. Ferris, editor, Lewis and Clark: Historic Places Associated with Their Transcontinental Exploration (1804-1806) (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1975).

Field trips 1964 and 1975.

One square mile of virtually undisturbed land has been included within the national historic landmark boundary. This 640 acres provides for the general setting of the camp, the meadow site that was probably the specific location of the campsite (indicated by the black X on the map), the bed on both sides of Cuty Bank Creek, to include possible changes in the location of the stream, the buffalo jump to the east of the campsite, and a portion of the high bluffs on the north side of the creek--the high points from which the explorers studied the view to ascertain the source of Cut Bank Creek in the Rocky Mountains to the west.

The landmark boundary encloses the south one-half of Section 29, and the north one-half of Section 32, Township 34 North, Range 9 West.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Thwaites, Journals, V. 205-218.
Bernard DeVoto, The Course of Empire.
Bernard DeVoto, The Journals of Lewis and Clark.
Donald Jackson, ed. Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents, 1783-1854.
Letter, William Clark to Nicholas Biddle, April 1810, and letter, Biddle to James

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 640 acres

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	12	367540	5392650
B	12	367510	5392680
C	12	365890	5391110
D	12	365940	5391150

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Continuation Sheet

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Blanche Higgins Schroer, Landmark Review Project; Roy E. Appleman, 1964

ORGANIZATION
Historic Sites Survey - National Park Service

DATE
June 6, 1976

STREET & NUMBER
1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN
Washington

STATE
D.C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL ___

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

FOR NPS USE ONLY
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 11/3/83

[redacted]

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER