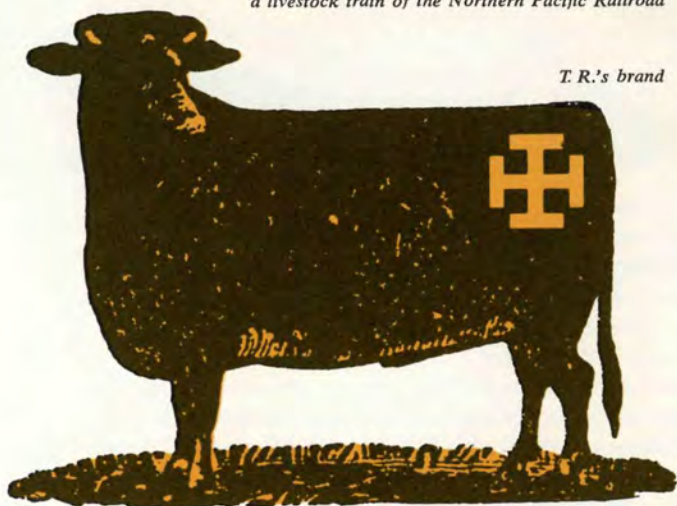




a livestock train of the Northern Pacific Railroad



T.R.'s brand

the Maltese Cross chuckwagon



ADMINISTRATION

Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park, established in 1947, covers about 110 square miles in three units: the South Unit near Medora, the North Unit near Watford City, and the Elkhorn Ranch site along the Little Missouri midway between the other two. The park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

The National Park System, of which this park is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the great natural, historical, and recreational places of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of all the people.

A superintendent, whose address is Medora, N. Dak. 58645, is in immediate charge of the park.

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR—the Nation's principal natural resource agency—has a special obligation to assure that our expendable resources are conserved, that our renewable resources are managed to produce optimum benefits, and that all resources contribute to the progress and prosperity of the United States, now and in the future.

U.S. DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



"We knew toil and hardship and hunger and thirst; and we saw men die violent deaths as they worked among the horses and cattle; but we felt the best of hardy life in our veins, and ours was the glory of work and the joy of living."

Theodore Roosevelt

Here in western North Dakota, in a "land of vast silent spaces," eroded by centuries of running water, are memorialized Theodore Roosevelt's contributions to the conservation of this country's natural resources and his part in developing the northern open-range cattle industry. Plants, animals, and landscape remain much the same as Roosevelt saw them on his first visit in 1883.

No other President has been as closely identified with the Dakotas and the Great Plains. From his experience in the Little Missouri Badlands and throughout the West, Roosevelt came to appreciate the vital need for conservation of natural resources. Before becoming President, he helped organize the Boone and Crockett Club, dedicated to preserving America's big game. He also warned that the United States was exhausting its forests more rapidly than they were being produced.

As President, he championed the conservation of America's scenic, scientific, and historic resources. Among the significant legislation passed during his administration was the Antiquities Act of 1906, which provided that natural and historic areas of exceptional merit could be set aside for posterity by Presidential proclamation. Under this act Roosevelt established the first 16 National Monuments. "When the historian . . . shall speak of Theodore Roosevelt," wrote Robert M. LaFollette in appraisal, "he is likely to say that he did many notable things, but that his greatest work was inspiring and actually beginning a world movement for staying territorial waste and saving for the human race the things on which alone a peaceful, progressive, and happy life can be founded."

"GRAND, DISMAL, AND MAJESTIC"

When the first explorers and trappers penetrated this region in the early 1800's, they encountered Crow, Cheyenne and Gros Ventre Indians living along the Missouri River from the mouth of the Knife River to the mouth of the Yellowstone. The Little Missouri basin, just southwest, was a frequent hunting ground for these tribes.

White men probably first saw the Little Missouri Badlands in 1804. That year Canadian voyageur Jean Baptiste LePage de-

scended the Little Missouri River and joined the Lewis and Clark Expedition in their winter camp at Fort Mandan, northwest of Bismarck. For the next two decades a number of trapping and exploring expeditions passed the mouth of the Little Missouri on their way farther west, but left no records of probes into that river's upper reaches.

The region first came to the attention of the American people through the campaign of Brig. Gen. Alfred Sully against the Sioux in 1864. Sully, according to tradition, said that the Badlands looked like "hell with the fires out."

While Sully was campaigning across the Dakota plains, the railroads were planning to link the Great Lakes and Puget Sound on a route that crossed Dakota Territory. The enterprise got underway in July 1864 when Congress passed the Northern Pacific Railroad Act. Since miners traveling to the goldfields of Montana had already caused uneasiness among the Indians, the Sioux were not long in attacking surveyors—agents of new intrusions. Another threat to the Indians' way of life was the slaughter of the bison herds by railroad construction farther south. It was not surprising, then, that the Indians tried to prevent construction of the Northern Pacific rail line west of the Missouri River.

Through the middle 1870's the Sioux were strong enough to resist the white man's westward movements. Railroad survey parties were sometimes halted by Indian attacks, causing the Army to furnish escorts. Yet the main construction holdup beyond Bismarck was the bankruptcy of the Northern Pacific in 1873. Sioux power, except for sporadic attacks, had been broken by the time of the railroad's reorganization in 1879, and the push now resumed.

T. R.'S WESTERN YEARS

Roosevelt first came to the badlands in September 1883 to hunt bison and other big game. During his visit he spent several evenings with ranchers discussing the prospects for the cattle industry in the badlands.

At St. Paul, Minn., on September 27, 1883, Roosevelt contracted with Sylvane Ferris and William Merrifield for the placement of some 400 cattle on the Chimney Butte Ranch, named for a nearby landmark. This ranch later became known as the Maltese Cross Ranch after its distinctive brand.

Returning to New York, Roosevelt was elected to the State Assembly in November 1883. But 3 months later personal tragedy struck when both his wife and mother died within a

single night. Though stunned, Roosevelt continued as a legislator. In June 1884 the now restless Roosevelt returned to the Little Missouri.

Since Roosevelt's cattle had successfully endured the winter of 1883-84, he now bought another thousand head and established his own ranch, the Elkhorn, about 35 miles north of Medora on the left bank of the Little Missouri.

Roosevelt's ranching operations prospered until the winter of 1886-87 when, as one writer said, "nature and economics seemed to conspire together for the entire overthrow of the open-range cattle industry." The *Bismarck Tribune* called the winter "in many respects the worst on record." Roosevelt probably lost about 60 percent of his cattle.

In the badlands Roosevelt found a life seasoned with hardship and adventure. "The country is growing on me more and more," he wrote his sister. "It has a curious, fantastic beauty of its own." Later he was able to boast: "I have been three weeks on the roundup and have worked as hard as any of the cowboys. . . . Yesterday I was eighteen hours in the saddle—from 4 a.m. to 10 p.m.—having an hour each for dinner and tea. I can now do cowboy work pretty well."

Roosevelt spent short periods in the badlands during the late summer or early autumn of 1887, 1888, 1890, 1892, 1893, and 1896. But these were also years of political success, making it increasingly difficult for him to give attention to his ranching ventures. By 1897 his herds had dwindled so much that he decided to sell out. Before leaving for Cuba in 1898 with the "Rough Riders," Roosevelt sold his cattle interests to Sylvane Ferris. His ranching losses in the badlands totaled over \$20,000, but it was money well spent, for his health had improved remarkably and he had tested himself as a man. "If it had not been for what I learned during those years I spent here in North Dakota, I never in the world would have been president of the United States."

THE MARQUIS DE MORES

A contemporary, and some say a rival, of Roosevelt in the badlands was the Marquis de Mores, a wealthy French nobleman. The Marquis founded the village of Medora, naming it for his wife. He attempted to establish a meat-packing industry and cattle empire in the badlands. But these enterprises failed, and the Marquis left this region after a few years for other ventures abroad. His statue now stands in Medora, and the Chateau de Mores, a historic site maintained by North Dakota, is across the river from the town.

THE SCULPTURED EARTH



"I have not sufficient power of language to describe the country in front of us. It was grand, dismal and majestic. You can imagine a deep basin, 600 feet deep and twenty-five miles in diameter, filled with a number of cones and overshaped knolls of all sizes, from twenty feet to several hundred feet high, sometimes by themselves, sometimes piled up into large heaps on top of one another, in all conceivable shapes and confusion. Most of these hills were of gray clay, but many of a light brick color, of burnt clay; little or no vegetation. Some of the sides of the hills, however, were covered with a few scrub cedars. Viewed in the distance at sunset it looked exactly like the ruins of an ancient city. . . ."

—Brig. Gen. Alfred Sully

Every continent may have its badlands, but few badlands have so colorful and varied a topography as those along the Little Missouri. Numerous tablelands, buttes, and hills, ranging in elevation from 1,952 to 2,855 feet, compose the surface of this region. Many creeks and streams, cutting soft strata into canyons, gorges, ravines, and gullies, lace its bottoms.

The badlands stretch from the river to the headwaters of the creeks that feed it. Most of the streams are so close that the rough country along one merges into the rough country along the next, eroding a continuous strip of badlands along both sides of the river. Yet grass-covered plateaus lie amid some of the tributaries, and on the fringes the badlands cut into rolling plains of grass.

WIND AND WATER

Those master sculptors, wind and water, cut away the plains into an infinity of hills and ridges, buttes and mesas, gullies and gorges, ravines and valleys, which blend into the distance like a great in-rolling surf. This maze of forms is filled with color: the grays and buffs of sand and clay beds, bands of black coal veins, and arrays of yellows, reds, and purples.

All through the badlands can be seen the isolated butte, typically a short ridge with steep, sloping sides, and a flat prairie top. The top of these buttes were once the level of the prairies, which, because of a protecting layer of rock or the tenacity of the clay, have withstood erosion.

In the North Unit there are great masses of blue bentonitic clay which have slipped downward after becoming softened with moisture. You can also see in that unit impressive tilted slump blocks, formed when huge sections of the cliffs slowly dropped as their base eroded away.

Millions of years ago, during the Paleocene epoch, the sediments which formed the rock layers of this region were generally deposited in streams, lakes, and swamps. The dense vegetation that later grew in places was also deposited in layers, in time forming beds of soft, impure coal, called lignite. You can see these layers on many eroded hillsides.

Sometimes the lignite beds catch fire from lightning or other natural causes and burn for years. You can see one such burning vein on a side trip off the east park road in the South Unit. A field exhibit explains the process.

The burning layers usually bake the nearby clay layers into a red, bricklike substance—locally called "scoria," or clinker. These outcrops occur at many places in the park.

ANIMALS AND PLANTS

During the era when the badlands landscape was being formed, huge herds of wildlife roamed through the area. These animals were the forebears of such grazing plains types as wapiti (elk), bison, and deer.

One writer in the "Mandan Pioneer" boasted in 1882 that "buffalo, deer, elk, bear, antelope, mountain sheep, and every other variety, good, bad and indifferent can be found [here] in greater numbers than anywhere else." Hunting, the establishment of the open range cattle business, and the coming of white settlements caused some of these animals—such as the

wapiti and the grizzly and black bears—to disappear from this section of the country; others like the bison, pronghorn, and bighorn have been reintroduced. A number of smaller mammals are still found here in abundance: coyote, beaver, badger, bobcat, red fox, whitetail jackrabbit, northern pocket gopher, least chipmunk, raccoon, porcupine, mink, longtail weasel, striped skunk, and muskrat.

The most frequently seen native mammals of the park are the black-tailed prairie dogs, residents of several "towns" along park roads. These quick-moving rodents, though they do not hibernate, sometimes stay underground most of the winter, living on body fat acquired during the summer and autumn.

You should take the same precautions on park trails that the expeditions of an earlier day took when they hunted the region. *Stay alert on the trails, and be careful where you put your hands. The prairie rattlesnake is sometimes encountered when hiking and climbing.*

The region is as rich in birdlife as it was in T.R.'s day. Bird watchers should be able to see at least some of the 116 species which have been observed here, including magpies, hawks, falcons, eagles, owls, woodpeckers, flickers, sparrows, larks, swallows, wrens, and flycatchers.

Washed-in sections of immense trees, some standing upright and some fallen but now preserved through petrification, are all that remain of once-great forests that flourished west of here. Dense stands of cottonwoods line the course of the Little Missouri. Northern slopes, cooler and more moist than southern, support woodlands in which several species of junipers are common. In contrast, only semiarid plants such as sparse grasses, yucca, and cactus usually grow on southern slopes.

Shrubs like the sagebrush, sumac, chokecherry, American plum, dogwood, and currant are as prolific today as they were when Sully was campaigning across the Dakota plains in the 1860's. Colorful displays of prairie rose, the State flower of North Dakota, provide bright splashes along the trails in early summer. Other plentiful wildflowers include the phlox, pasqueflower, redmallow, coneflower, goldenrod, aster, scoria lily, bluebell, bergamot, and mariposa lily.



IN THE SOUTH UNIT, look for these natural features:

Burning coal vein, believed to have been ignited by a natural cause in 1951. Here you can witness nature producing the type of rock known as "scoria."

Buck Hill is the highest, most prominent formation in the Painted Canyon region of the park. The stand of juniper and green ash on the northeastern slope is one of the area's best. Here, also, is the best opportunity in the South Unit for a panorama of the intricate badlands scenery.

Wind Canyon, probably the best example in the North Dakota Badlands of erosion accelerated by the force of wind. The view from the brink is spectacular.

Petrified forests within the park range from a few inconspicuous specimens to groups with stumps about 3 feet in diameter and logs about 5 feet long. These areas can only be reached on foot or by horseback.

Painted Canyon Overlook, along Int. 94, also offers an outstanding view of the badlands topography. There is a picnic shelter, with tables, fireplaces, and water.

IN THE NORTH UNIT, take the drive of about 13 miles along the northern edge to see the colorful strata, varied topographic forms, and weird erosional patterns carved by the meandering Little Missouri.

Here you will see the river in action and get an idea of how sediments are carried and deposited by running water. The banks of the river are constantly changing by being eroded in one place and built up by deposition elsewhere. Though the river is frequently overloaded with more sediment than it can carry, it is probably still cleaning and deepening its channel.

The river plain offers a good lesson in plant ecology. Note that cottonwoods are the first to grow in the newly deposited sediments along the river's edge. They stabilize the soil and provide shade, creating an environment suitable for less hardy trees like ash and elm which will crowd out the cottonwoods.

Be sure to take the Squaw Creek Self-Guiding Nature Trail, a ½-mile loop, starting and terminating from the Squaw Creek Campground area, or the Caprock-Coulee Nature Trail, a ¾-mile self-guiding walk.

ABOUT YOUR VISIT

East-west travelers approaching either the North or South Units can take U.S. 2 and Int. 94. North-south travelers can take U.S. 85 to both units. This highway intersects U.S. 2 near Williston and Int. 94 about 18 miles east of Medora.

Spring, summer, and autumn are the best seasons to visit the park. When entering the South unit, we suggest that you use the Medora entrance and make the visitor center your first stop. Exhibits depict the park's history and natural history.

Roosevelt's Maltese-Cross Cabin is located here also. The Elkhorn Ranch site can be reached only over a rough dirt road, and you should make local inquiry before attempting this drive. None of the original buildings remain at the site.

Camping and picnicking. There are campgrounds and picnic areas in both units. Campgrounds can accommodate both tents and trailers, but there are no utility connections for trailers. Firewood, water, and restrooms are provided. Meals, supplies, and overnight lodging can be obtained in nearby towns.

Interpretive services. In summer you are invited to attend the park's interpretive programs. Campfire programs are usually presented each evening in the campgrounds. Ask about these programs at the visitor center or at entrance stations.

Help protect this park. Please obey park regulations. They were established to protect you as well as the park. Do not disturb, injure, or destroy any vegetation, natural features, or animal life in the park. Be careful with fire. Hunting is not allowed, and firearms are permitted within the park only if they are packed so as to prevent their use. Pets must be physically restrained at all times and are not allowed in public buildings within the park. Drive carefully at all times. To avoid damaging the grasslands, do not leave the roadways.

Feeding, teasing, or molesting the bison is a violation of park regulations. They may turn without warning and inflict serious injury if approached too closely. Play it safe. Stay in your car.