

MON 22.8.

What a lovely morning, warm and sunny, temperature 13°C! So this is Boysen Reservoir and it is a part of **Boysen State Park**, which is a state-operated, public recreation area, and that's where we had been camping last night. There was only one other camper on site, although a part of the area was quite full of caravans, these belonged to regular fishermen and boat people, i.e. weekenders.



After breakfast we went back on Hwy 20 heading for **Thermopolis**. The Indians called it "smoking waters". Thermopolis (1300m), with its population of 3009 people, is the largest town in, and the county seat of Hot Springs County, Wyoming. "Thermopolis" is from the Greek for "Hot City". It is home to numerous natural hot springs, in which mineral-laden waters are heated by geothermal processes. The town claims the world's largest mineral hot spring as part of Hot Springs State Park. The springs are open to

the public for free as part of an 1896 treaty signed with the Shoshone and Arapaho Indian tribes; there is rather a large public bathing pool there with warm water, of course. Travertine is formed from dissolved lime and gypsum. Colours are created by various algae + microorganisms. The Big spring produces 127°C warm water.



Decline in mineral spring flow

In 1991, the Associated Press reported, in an article entitled "Hot Springs Rationed: Natural Wonder Drying Up". One of Wyoming's natural wonders--**massive travertine terraces** formed over the centuries by cascading hot mineral water at Hot Springs State Park--appears to be dying. A dramatic decline in the flow of the main spring that feeds the terraces has prompted park management to maintain the water flow to the park's recreation pools and cut off water to half the terraces. The Big Spring, which pumped 13 million gallons a day in 1896 when the Indians sold the area to the government, now produces mere 3.5 million gallons per day, according to park superintendent Allen Cowardin. Neither Cowardin nor state water experts know what has caused the reduced flow, or not even when it dropped so dramatically.



Thermopolis viewed from Roundtop Mountain

A short visit to this local museum

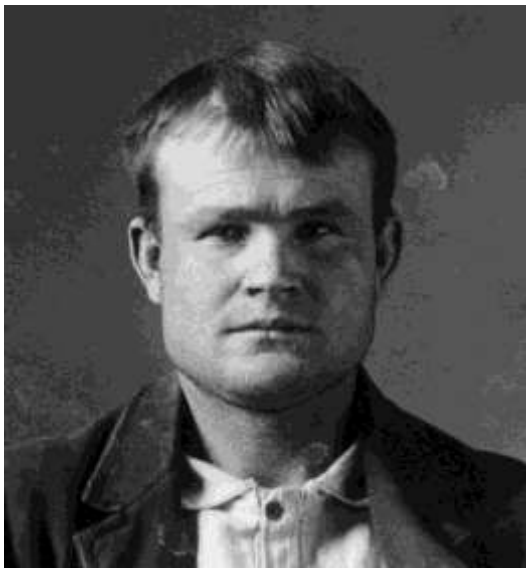


Thermopolis is also the home of the Wyoming Dinosaur Center, which hosts the only *Archaeopteryx* fossil outside of Europe. But I was more interested in the local museum, where I had spent just over one hour (VP was not interested and left to see some more travertine marvels) and tried to soak up the local atmosphere as was 100-150 years ago. E.g. I read about a good shooter and wolf hunter “Wild Cat”. The hunter travelled on one horse used two other horses to carry his supply, tent and trapping gear. He was armed with a rifle, revolver, hunting knife and hatchet. Some other exhibits included: a head of elk with antler spread 180cm; a photo of Grass Creek Valley showing 4 oil wells, 7 cabins, 5 sheep wagons/tents; various Winchester rifles model 1895 (caution when firing); many local commemorations, etc.

I discovered that Butch Cassidy and Sundace Kid were living nearby; only some 20km north of Thermopolis is the town of Kirby, home of Butch Cassidy.



This image is known as the "Fort Worth Five Photograph." Front row left to right: Harry A. Longabaugh, alias the Sundance Kid, Ben Kilpatrick, alias the Tall Texan, Robert Leroy Parker, alias Butch Cassidy; Standing: Will Carver & Harvey Logan, alias Kid Curry; Fort Worth, Texas, 1900



Cassidy's mug shot from the Wyoming Territorial Prison in 1894

Robert Leroy Parker (April 13, 1866 – November 7, 1908), better known as **Butch Cassidy**, was a notorious American train robber, bank robber, and leader of the Wild Bunch gang in the American Old West. After pursuing a career in crime for several years in the United States, the pressures of being pursued, notably by the Pinkerton detective agency, forced him to flee with an accomplice, Harry Alonzo Longabaugh, known as the Sundance Kid, and Longabaugh's girlfriend, Etta Place. The trio fled first to Argentina and then to Bolivia, where Parker and Longabaugh were probably killed in a shootout in November 1908.

The facts surrounding Butch Cassidy's death are uncertain. On November 3, 1908, near San Vicente in southern Bolivia, a courier for the Aramayo Franke and Cia Silver Mine was conveying his company's payroll, worth about 15,000 Bolivian pesos, by mule when he was attacked and robbed by two masked American bandits who were believed to be Cassidy and Longabaugh. The bandits then

proceeded to the small mining town of San Vicente where they lodged in a small boarding house owned by a local resident miner named Bonifacio Casasola.

Casasola became suspicious of his two foreign lodgers. A mule they had in their possession was from the Aramayo Mine, identifiable from the mine company brand on the mule's left flank, Casasola left his house and notified a nearby telegraph officer who notified a small Bolivian Army cavalry unit stationed nearby, the Abaroa Regiment. The unit dispatched three soldiers, under the command of Captain Justo Concha, to San Vicente where they notified the local authorities. On the evening of November 6, the lodging house was surrounded by the three soldiers, the police chief, the local mayor and some of his officials, who intended to arrest the Aramayo robbers.

When the three soldiers approached the house the bandits opened fire, killing one of the soldiers and wounding another. A gunfight then ensued. At around 2 a.m., during a lull in the firing, the police and soldiers heard a man screaming from inside the house. Soon, a single shot was heard from inside the house, whereupon the screaming stopped. Minutes later, another shot was heard.

The standoff continued as locals kept the place surrounded until the next morning when, cautiously entering, they found two dead bodies, both with numerous bullet wounds to the arms and legs. One



of the men had a bullet wound in the forehead and the other had a bullet hole in the temple. The local police report speculated that, judging from the positions of the bodies, one bandit had probably shot his fatally wounded partner-in-crime to put him out of his misery, just before killing himself with his final bullet. In the following investigation by the Tupiza police, the bandits were identified as the men who robbed the Aramayo payroll transport, but the Bolivian authorities didn't know their real names, nor could they positively identify them.

The bodies were buried at the small San Vicente cemetery, where they were buried close to the grave of a German miner named Gustav Zimmer. Although attempts have been made to find their unmarked graves, notably by the American forensic anthropologist Clyde Snow and his researchers in 1991, no remains with DNA matching the living relatives of Cassidy and Longabaugh have yet been discovered.

Harry Longabaugh (the Sundance Kid) and Etta Place, just before they sailed for South America



Another exhibit at the museum—the bar, where Butch Cassidy and his friends sat, drank whiskey and talked about their everyday lives and mischief (I sat there myself for a few minutes and was pondering about those days gone by).

After I had bought some postcards at the museum I left for the post office. When I returned back VP was already waiting for me. We decided to change our plans and not to travel north to Buffalo Bill's place, but instead to drive east to Little Bighorn Battlefield site.

Crossing the Bighorn Mountains we arrived to the Buffalo town. Driving slowly through this little town, I noticed the local Visitor Centre and decided to enquire about phoning home. I told the young girl at the office, that for about 10 days I had been unable to get any signal for my mobile and I'd love to call my wife; she was very kind and willing to help, but couldn't do anything, her phone would not connect to Europe, but advised me to try my luck at a mobile phone shop two blocks down the road. I found the cellphone shop and went inside. The shop was well air-conditioned (temperature in the street was over 30°C) and there were two staff and two customers, all well dressed, while I was in my camping shorts and an old T-shirt. Young girl assistant (in her 20's) asked me, what could she do for me, and when I told her my story, she had tried to use her phone to help me. However her boss, rather a corpulent young man (in his 30's) briskly told her off. Both customers, a lady in her 40's and a young man in his 30's, had looked at me with a sympathetic smile. I left with the words from some famous ROUTE 66 song "I'm driving to another destination..."

In the late afternoon we arrived to the location of Little Bighorn Battlefield in Montana.

MONTANA



Motto: Oro y Plata (*Latin*) – Gold and Silver
Nicknames: Big Sky Country, The Treasure State
Capital: Helena
Tree: [Ponderosa pine](#) (*Pinus ponderosa*)
State song: "Montana"



Map showing the location of Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument.

Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument preserves the site of the June 25 and 26, 1876, Battle of the Little Bighorn.

It also serves as a memorial to those who fought in the battle: George Armstrong Custer's 7th Cavalry and a combined Lakota-Northern Cheyenne and Arapaho force.



Custer National Cemetery, on the battlefield, is part of the national monument. The site of a related military action led by Marcus Reno and Frederick Benteen is also part of the national monument, but is about 5 km southeast of the Little Bighorn battlefield.

Custer National Cemetery is managed by "United States national cemetery" that supervises 147 nationally important cemeteries in the United States. A national cemetery is generally a military cemetery containing the graves of U.S. military personnel,

veterans and their spouses, but not exclusively so. There are also state veteran cemeteries.

A Clash of Cultures

Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument memorializes one of the last armed efforts of the Northern Plains Indians to preserve their ancestral way of life. Here in the valley of the Little Bighorn River on two hot June days in 1876, more than 260 soldiers and attached personnel of the U.S. Army met defeat and death at the hands of several thousand Lakota and Cheyenne warriors. Among the dead were Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer and every member of his immediate command. Although the Indians won the battle, they subsequently lost the war against the military's efforts to end their independent nomadic way of life.

The battle of the Little Bighorn was but the latest encounter in a centuries-long conflict that began with the arrival of the first Europeans in North America. The contact between Indian and Euro-American cultures had continued relentlessly, sometimes around the campfire, sometimes at treaty grounds, but more often on the battlefield. It reached its peak in the decade following the Civil War,



when settlers resumed their vigorous westward movement. These western immigrants, possessing little or no understanding of the Indian way of life, showed slight regard for the sanctity of hunting grounds or the terms of former treaties. The Indian's resistance to those encroachments on their domain only served to intensify hostilities.

In 1868, believing it's "cheaper to feed than to fight the Indians", representatives of the US Government signed a treaty at Fort Laramie, Wyo., with Lakota, Cheyenne and other tribes of the Great Plains, by which a large area in eastern Wyoming, was designated as permanent Indian reservation. The government promised to protect the Indians "against the commission of all depredations by people of the United States."

Typical 7th Cavalry marker stone on the battlefield

Peace, however, was not to last. In 1874 gold was discovered in the Black Hills, the heart of the new Indian reservation. News of the strike spread quickly, and soon thousands of eager gold seekers swarmed into the region in violation of the Fort Laramie treaty.



Cheyenne combatant marker stone on the battlefield

The army tried to keep them out, but to no avail. Efforts to buy the Black Hill from the Indians, and thus avoid another confrontation, also proved unsuccessful. In growing defiance, the Lakota and Cheyenne left the reservation and resumed raids on settlements and travellers along the fringes of Indian domain. In December 1875, the commissioner of Indian Affairs ordered the tribes to return before January 31, 1876, or be treated as hostiles “by the military force”. When the Indians did not comply, the army was called in to enforce the order. In the battle that followed, the 7th Cavalry (soldiers or warriors who fought mounted on horsebacks. Cavalry were historically the most mobile of the combat arms. An individual soldier in the cavalry is known by a number of designations such as cavalryman, horseman, dragoon or trooper) lost the five companies (a military unit, typically consisting of 80–250 soldiers and usually

commanded by a major or a captain) under Custer, about 210 men. Of other companies of the regiment (usually several companies are grouped as a battalion or regiment), under Reno and Benteen, 53 men were killed and 52 wounded. The Indians, who lost no more than 100 men, removed most of their dead from the battlefield when the large encampment broke up. The tribes and families scattered, some going north, some going south. Most of them returned to the reservations and surrendered in the next few years. On June 28, 1876, the bodies of Custer and his command were hastily buried in shallow graves at or near where they fell.



Indian Memorial

Notes from my visit to the site:

- Indians of Lakota, Sioux and Cheyenne tribes joined together (17 affiliated tribes that fought the war)
- After the battle Sitting Bull led his people to Canada; 5 years later they returned
- Custer 7th Cavalry; frontier army; very few educated most were illiterate and came the bottom of the social scale ladder ; 48% were foreign (125 German, 128 Irish, 53 English, Italians, 2 Polish and others; these young men could hardly speak any English); 368 foreign born soldiers and 472 US born soldiers

- Indians fought as individuals and by choice following famous war leaders of their tribes like Crazy Horse and Lame White Man
- During the battle the average age of Indian warriors was approx. 22 years
- The prospectors said there was gold in the Lakota reservation; Lakota Indians refused 6 million dollars for their land. A few years later US military claimed the territory
- The US Government sent 3 armies – east, south and west direction into the valley
- Custer hired Crow scouts to find the Indians. One scout, after discovering the Indians, told Custer: “You don’t have enough bullets for this village”
- Cavalry led by Marcus Reno (Custer’s officer) had 140 men. In an Indian village there were 8-10 000 people and 15 000 warrior Indians
- Women and children hid into river bushes; young men run their horses to create dust, so that women and children could not be seen by the soldiers
- Custer promised Reno help, but it never came
- Scouts said to Custer:” If we attack this valley, we shall both walk down the road which we never walked before”; i.e., a road reserved for dead
- River had more water than usual – more snow in the mountains
- Custer wanted to take women and children as hostages (he did it before and it worked, but this time it did not)
- The final battle lasted less than 30 minutes

I shall not see you (sun) go down behind the mountains tonight.
 I am going home today, not the way we came,
 but in spirit, home to my people.”
 - Bloody Knife, Arikara (June 25, 1876)

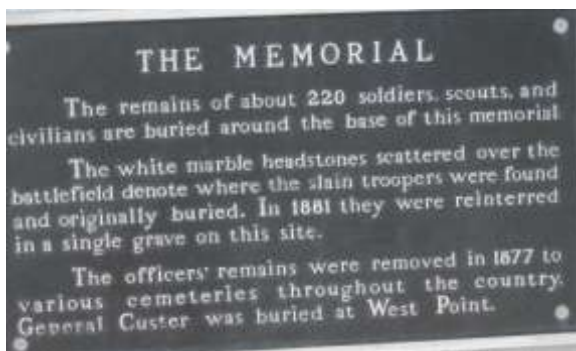
“A scout is like a lone wolf, that must be
 looking, looking, looking all the time.”
 - Red Wing, Crow

- Custer ordered his men to shoot the horses and use them as a barricade at last Stand Hill
- Indians surrounded the Hill – The Last Stand Hill – some were shooting their rifles others used arrows that were falling on Custer’s soldiers from the top
- The whole event took 3 days; major fighting took 2 hours
- 60 Indians died in a battle
- Over 210 soldiers were buried; many were mutilated (e.g. their forefingers were cut off, so that in the future life they could not use it for pressing the trigger)
- Red Horse said to his warriors:” Take no prisoners” All were killed, none left alive even for a few minutes
- HUMP: “The Indians and whites were so mixed up that you could hardly tell anything about it”

- Captain Tom Custer was a brother of Lieutenant Colonel George Custer. The youngest man killed in the Cavalry was 17, the oldest was 56; the caste between enlisted men and officers was strictly adhered to
- Late Sunday afternoon, June 25, 1876 - 210 men were killed by Lakota, Cheyenne and Arpaho warriors. Indian chief Red Cloud; another chief, warrior and statesman – Sitting Bull when talking to white men:” You are fools to make yourself slaves to a piece of fat bacon, some hard-tack and a little sugar and coffee”. Sitting Bull was a spiritual leader of Lakota and shunned reservation life. He led several uprisings of Sioux and Cheyennes in defiance of the US Government
- President of US **Ulysses S. Grant** (1822 – 1885) was the 18th President of the United States (1869–77). As Commanding General of the United States Army (1864–69), Grant worked closely with President Abraham Lincoln to lead the Union Army to victory over the Confederacy in the American Civil War.



U.S. Army Memorial on Last Stand Hill. An obelisk commemorates the U.S. Army dead and marks the spot of the mass grave where all US soldiers were re-buried



In 1877 the remains of 11 officers and two civilians were transferred to eastern cemeteries. Custer’s remains are reinterred at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.

Meantime, Custer had ridden into history and legend. His precise movements after separation from his captain Reno have never been determined, but vivid accounts of the battle by Indians who participated in it tell how his command was surrounded and destroyed in fierce fighting.



Northern Cheyenne Chief Two Moon recalled that *“the shooting was quick, quick. Pop-pop-pop very fast. Some of the soldiers were down on their knees, some standing... The smoke was like a great cloud, and everywhere the Sioux went the dust rose like smoke. We circled all around him-swirling like water around a stone. We shoot, we ride fast, we shoot again. Soldiers drop, and horses fall on them.”*

Pretty Nose who, according to her grandson, was a woman war chief who participated in the battle



Late in the afternoon we had continued on Hwy 90 towards a large city **Billings** (population 110,000) – hoping to find a camp. When we eventually found one, we did not like the price – big city

means a high price (\$40) and it was rather full, however the manager was good enough to advised us to drive further (30-40 min) to Laurel, where we would find a cheaper camp (I thought this was very kind of him). We did so and we arrived to a lovely place, just before a sunset.

Laurel RV Camp @ \$ 28.50.

Very good shower and laundry facilities! It was quite easy to charge our camera batteries, too. Lovely warm evening!

We had done 5022km (today I had driven 577km).