



# Powder River Depot

The Powder River Depot was located at the confluence of the Powder and Yellowstone rivers, southwest of Terry, Mont. Established by General Alfred Terry, it supported the campaigns of the Sioux War of 1876.

Lt. Colonel George Armstrong Custer and his 7th Cavalry stopped to rest and resupply at the Powder River Depot prior to their defeat at the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

The BLM administers a large portion of this historic area which – other than a few modern intrusions like access roads and grave markers-- appears much as it did in 1876 when the U.S. Army occupied the site.

Gerald R. Clark, a BLM archaeologist and cultural resource specialist in Montana and Wyoming for 30 years, discovered the remnants of the supply depot while surveying the area. Hundreds of relics collected from the site, including ale and soda bottles, clay pipes, and a ceramic doll, have since been cataloged and stored at the Billings Curation Center. Now retired, Clark recently published a book detailing the significance of the Powder River Depot and its place in history, with particular emphasis on Custer's command.



Above left: one of many bottles found at the Powder River Depot site.

Above: This bottle's rounded bottom kept it on its side so the liquid inside kept the cork damp and the bottle sealed.

Left: Clay pipes

Far left: Crew excavating the Powder River Depot site in 1985.



Located in the BLM Montana/Dakotas State Office, the Billings Curation Center is a repository that preserves the evidence of human occupation on the Northern Plains, from the age of Paleo-Indians to the era of homesteaders, miners, and their subsequent ghost towns.

The BCC has catalogued and preserved more than half a million archaeological and ethnographic artifacts recovered from lands administered by the BLM in Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota. Each item offers clues about the history and prehistory of life on the Northern Plains.

For more information, contact Museum Curator David K. Wade at (406) 896-5213.



## Billings Curation Center