

BACKGROUND

Theodore Roosevelt created Devils Tower National Monument in 1906, as the first national monument in the United States. The name of the monument came from its central feature, a tower-like column of phonolite porphyry 865' high, which first appeared on published maps in 1857 as "Bears Lodge" (a direct and correct translation of the Lakota name "Mato Tipi") but was renamed by Col. Richard Irving Dodge in 1875 as "Devil's Tower," an epithet which Dodge claimed to be a "proper modification" of the "Indian" name "Bad God's Tower." The new name was at first scorned even by the scientific members of Dodge's expedition, and variants of "Bear Lodge" and "Mato Tipi" (the original Lakota name) continued to appear on published maps. In later years Maj. Gen. H. L. Scott attempted to have the name "Devil's Tower" removed from the feature. However, largely due to the success of Dodge's several books (Sundance Times 1927, Kiger 1996d), and perhaps partly due to sentiments toward Indian people, the name "Devil's Tower" became most widely used.

A diverse set of indigenous names continued to be used by American Indian Tribes having historical and cultural affiliation with the tower. With increasing institutional attention to American Indian cultural issues emerging in the final quarter of the twentieth century, the matter of the name emerged once again into public debate. When the National Park Service commissioned an ethnographic overview of Devils Tower National Monument, the name was identified as a key issue and the researchers recommended that the National Park Service "consider renaming Devils Tower, giving it a name (proposed by the tribes) that is more ethnographically appropriate" (Hanson and Chirinos 1997:34).

Vocal public sentiment in Wyoming opposed any name change (although sympathetic opinions were also to be heard), and the National Park Service's Systems Support Office in Denver decided to commission a focused study dealing with the history of naming and with various names used by contemporary tribal groups having affiliation with the tower. Traditional knowledge of the tower was also to be included, in support of better understanding the names affixed to the feature by various Tribes. This study is a result of that decision.

NAMING BEAR LODGE: A SEQUENCE

The earliest known map showing what appears to be the feature widely known to American Indians as Bear Lodge, but officially known at present as Devils Tower, is of uncertain date and authorship. It is thought by Linda Zellmer to have been based upon information from the fur trader John Dougherty, circa 1810-1814 (Ehrenberg 1971). The map may be in the hand of William Clark (of Lewis and Clark fame), but certainty on this point awaits handwriting analysis (Zellmer 1997). On various occasions, Zellmer has been cited as having estimated the date of the map as 1810-1812 (Laramie Daily Boomerang 1991), and 1814-1816 (Kiger 1996d). The crudely hand-drawn map, from the National Archives (Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Record Group 92, Post and Reservation File, Map 281) shows two concentric circles with a dot in the center and the legend "Devils Mountain" alongside it. The feature is shown east of the Little Missouri River headwaters and north of the "Cheyene River."

Aside from this map—which presently remains more confusing than enlightening—there is no written information prior to 1850 which is pertinent to Bear Lodge. Table 4 summarizes information from early explorations in the Black Hills vicinity, from the 1743 La Vérendrye brothers' expedition until 1906, when the Devils Tower National Monument was established.

Brief discussion of reasons for the lack of early information may be useful. The Vérendrye expedition exemplifies two of these. While the party may have passed quite close to the Devils Tower vicinity (Flandrau 1925:20, Smith 1980), they may have been farther east (Odell 1942:43); regardless, there was no mention of the tower. This is not surprising, as the only record of the trip is what Odell (*ibid.*:49) calls Vérendrye's "vague, indefinite journal." (The Vérendrye expedition did describe a mountain referred to as "Montagne Gens des Chevaux"; some historians have speculated that this was Devils Tower, but Odell emphatically disagreed, insisting that it was Bear Butte instead [*ibid.*:157]). Not only were the records of many early explorations scanty; the purpose of those ventures did not focus on local resources and topography. Beginning in 1673, when Louis Jolliet and Father Marquette reached the mouth of the Missouri River, "and thought that by means of it they might discover the Vermillion or California Sea" (Nasatir 1930:2), exploration of the Missouri focused on finding an overland route to the Pacific.

In addition, progress was slow. The French did not make significant headway in exploration of the Missouri until more than fifty years after the Vérendrye expedition. It was in 1794-95 that Jean Baptiste Trudeau (Truteau) traveled far enough up the Missouri to reach the mouth of the Yellowstone (Nasatir 1990:109). By this time, a decade before the Lewis and Clark expedition was successful in finding an overland route west, another preoccupation had developed, i.e., finding an efficient route south from the Missouri River into New Mexico (*ibid.*:738-39). Still,

Table 4. (continued)
Historical Explorations and Maps
of the Black Hills, 1743-1906,
With Names Ascribed to Devil's Tower.

Source	Date	Name ascribed; comments; map availability; reference(s)
Lt. G. K. Warren	1855-56	" Bears Lodge " shown on 1857 map, first to show correct location of Black Hills (Hayden 1858; Allen 1987); referred to as " Mato Tepi " on sketch with Warren diary (Zellmer 1997).
William H. Emory	1857	Black Hills incorrectly shown on map; no further pertinent detail (Allen 1987)
Gen. R. F. Reynolds	1859-60	Bear Lodge ; map by Reynolds and Maynadier (1867); (Stone n.d.1; Wood 1987)
George A. Custer	1874	Bear Lodge (following Warren and Reynolds); Custer barely entered Wyoming, but visited Inyan Kara; map by Ludlow (1874) (Krause & Olson 1974)
Asher & Adams	1874	Bear Lodge (map, Asher & Adams 1874)
William Ludlow	1874	Bear Lodge (map, Ludlow 1874)
Lt. Col. Richard Irving Dodge	1875	Bear Lodge Butte (Dodge 1876a, June 10 journal entry; also see Kime 1996); Devil's Tower on map by Schiverdtfeger (1875); name said by Dodge 1876b:95 to be from "Bad God's Tower"
Walter Jenney	1875	Bear Lodge Butte, Mato Teepee ; no separate map from that of the expedition (Schiverdtfeger 1875); see Jenney and Newton et al. (1875) and Newton and Jenney (1880)
Henry Newton	1875	Bear Lodge, Mato Teepee ; no separate map from that of the expedition (Schiverdtfeger 1875); see Newton and Jenney (1880)
Robert Benecke (photographer)	1875	Bear Lodge ; no separate map from that of the expedition (Schiverdtfeger 1875); see Turchen and McLaird (1975)
Graphic Company	1875	Bear Lodge (map, Graphic Co. 1875)
G.W. Coulton, C.B. Coulton	1876	Bears Lodge (map, Coulton and Coulton 1881)
G. L. Gillespie	1876	Bear Lodge, Devil's Tower (map, Gillespie 1876)
D. N. Smith	1876	Bear Lodge (map, Smith 1876)

Table 4. (continued)
Historical Explorations and Maps
of the Black Hills, 1743-1906,
With Names Ascribed to Devil's Tower.

Source	Date	Name ascribed; comments; map availability; reference(s)
Wm. H. Jackson, Thomas Moran	1892	Devil's Tower; no map viewed (Moran 1893, 1894; Norton 1981)
V. L. Pirsson	1894	Mato Teepee; no map viewed (Pirsson 1894)
Rev. Peter Rosen	1895	Okeheedee-Paha, "Devil's Tower"; no map (Rosen 1895)
I. C. Russell	1896	Mato Teepee; no map viewed (Russell 1896)
Thomas A. Jagger	1901	Mato Tepee; no map viewed (Jagger 1901)
Theodore Roosevelt	1906	Devils Tower; no map (Roosevelt 1906)

Mattison (1956:4) suggested that although G. K. Warren, in 1857, reported seeing "Bear's Lodge" through a spy-glass, "It is not known if he was referring to the Bear Lodge Mountains or to the Tower itself." The Crook County Historical Society (1981:2) supported Mattison in identifying Raynolds as the first white explorer to see the tower: "In 1859, W. F. Raynold's Expedition passed through the Black Hills and he wrote in his journal about seeing 'Bear Lodge' far in the distance up the valley of the Cheyenne, noting the singular peak rising like an enormous tower and from its resemblance to an Indian Lodge suggesting the origin of the title." Urbanek (1988:53) also accepts the Raynolds party as the "first white men" to see the tower. Mattison noted that "J. T. Hutton, topographer, and the Sioux interpreter, Sephyr Recontre" were the members of Raynolds' expedition who on July 20 actually reached the Tower (ibid.:5).

Mattison and others to the contrary, it is undeniably true that either Warren or members of his party did in fact see the tower. Four pieces of evidence support this. **First**, Warren's 1857 map shows the tower, labeled "Bears Lodge," in the appropriate position west of the Belle Fourche (Allen 1987:58). **Second**, with Warren's handwritten journal there is a drawing labeled "Drawing made from informations given by Mr. Morin to Lt. G.K. Warren." This drawing shows "Mato Tepi" on the "North Fork of Shyenne River," and it indisputably depicts the Bear Lodge butte, not the Bear Lodge Mountains (Linda Zellmer 1997). **Third**, P. M. Engle, topographer to the Warren expedition, also drew a sketch labeled "view from Inyan Kara Sept. 14, 1857." This shows Devils Tower labeled "Mato Tipi or Bear's Lodge" (Engle 1857). **Fourth**, only portions of Warren's diary (Warren 1857) have been published, but those suggest that the party went to Mato Tipi (Hanson 1996:149). Harrington (1939:171) correctly notes

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that the Warren expedition was the first to map and record the "Sioux" name of Bear Lodge or Mato Teepee, even though the party did not actually reach the tower.

Subsequent to G. K. Warren and W. F. Reynolds having reported and briefly described "Bear Lodge," the name appeared on the map used by George Custer (Ludlow 1874); it also was used on a map available to the general public (Asher and Adams 1874). Some published sources, such as Rypkema and Haire (1977), are clearly erroneous in crediting Richard Irving Dodge with having been the first white man to see the tower. Notably, when Dodge first mentioned the tower, he used the name "Bear Lodge Butte":

To the northwest the huge form of the Bear Lodge Butte dwarfed every mountain in sight. Inyan Kara of which Custer makes a good deal, was 1600 feet below us ... scarcely distinguishable except as a flat topped Mesa (Dodge 1876a, June 10).

As with his futile attempt to change the name Bear Butte to "Bare Peak," Dodge's coining of the name "Devil's Tower" was intentional; he clearly knew of the prior name. The name "Bear Lodge Butte" has been used by several others, including Jenney (1880), Blish and Bad Heart Bull (1967), Parks and Wedel (1985), and Little Eagle (1996); none cite Dodge as the source of that name.

Once Dodge went into print, he ignored the name that had been published on at least six maps, and that he himself had used in manuscript, and he assigned a different name to Bear Lodge. Dodge's description reads as follows:

On the north side of the Belle Fourche, not far from the mouth of Inyan Kara Creek, in a country very broken, but the general surface of which is comparatively level, rises one of the most remarkable peaks in this or any country.

An immense obelisk of granite, eight hundred and sixty-seven feet at base, two hundred and ninety-seven feet at top, rises one thousand one hundred and twenty-seven feet above its base, and five thousand one hundred feet above tide-water.

Its summit is inaccessible to anything without wings. The sides are fluted and scored by the action of the elements, and immense blocks of granite, split off from the column by frost, are piled in huge, irregular mounds about its base.

The Indians call this shaft 'The Bad God's Tower,' a name adopted, with proper modification, by our surveyors (Dodge 1876b:95).

Zellmer (1997) points out an editorial inconsistency: elsewhere in the same book, when discussing geology, Dodge (1876b:31) lists "Bear Lodge" along with several other igneous features.

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It is curious that Dodge's journal makes no mention whatsoever of "Bear Lodge Butte" having any alternative names; "Bad God's Tower" and its "proper modification", "Devil's Tower," appear only in the published account of the expedition. It is perhaps even more curious that Dodge provides no American Indian term, either Cheyenne or Lakota, that could have been translated as "the Bad God's Tower." This suggests that the name may have been given to him in English; given the "excellent English" of Dodge's "Mexican Cheyenne half-breed" guide Romeo, the probability seems reasonably high that indeed Romeo was the source of the name.

Henry Newton and Walter Jenney, the geologists escorted by Richard Dodge and the 23rd Infantry, gave more attention to ethnographic data than Dodge. They echoed the Lakota name "Mato Tepi," as recorded on a drawing with G.K. Warren's diary (Zellmer 1997), with their own spelling, "Mato Teepee." Newton and Jenney (1880) were the first to publish the name "Mato Teepee," and after that, this name and its English translation, Bear's Lodge, predominated for the next quarter-century.

Geologists were particularly inclined to accept Newton and Jenney's contention that the name Bear Lodge was "well applied" and should be retained (1880:221). Early exceptions who accepted Dodge's new name were a military engineer, Major G. L. Gillespie (who democratically used both names, "Bear Lodge" and "Devil's Tower," on his 1876 map); the artist Thomas Moran; and the missionary Reverend Peter Rosen. Rosen, however, provided the first and apparently only reputed translation of the name "Devil's Tower"; it was, he said, *Okeeheedee-Paha* (Rosen 1895:51), named after Okeeheedee, "the Bad Spirit." Rosen's assertion regarding the name "Okeeheedee" has never been verified by any other source, and it is likely to have been a "forced" translation, i.e., from English to Lakota rather than vice versa. Rosen's lack of understanding is shown by the fact that he went on to say that "Some of [the Indians], indeed, believed that Toon-kan, or Inyan, the stone god, made [the tower] his abode." Later, Dodge's English version, "Devil's Tower," was widely accepted not only by local Wyoming settlers but with apparent finality by Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States, who in 1906 assigned the name "Devils Tower" to the nation's first National Monument. (The apostrophe that had always been present before was reputedly lost as the result of a clerical error, according to Gunderson 1988:22.)