Form 10-317
(Sept. 1957)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO.
North Dakota	Arch. Theme III, Indian Villages and Communities

3. NAME(S) OF SITE	4. APPROX. ACREAGE
Big Hidatsa (or Olds) Village Site (32ME12)	about 15

5. EXACT LOCATION (*County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet*)

Mercer County. Near center of SW$\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 21, T 145 N, R 84 W.

6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (*Also administrator if different from owner*)

7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (*Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant*)

This Hidatsa village, occupied from about 1740 to 1850, was one of the group of Indian communities near Fort Mandan, the winter headquarters of Lewis and Clark. It appears, however, that Charbonneau and Sacagawea came from a neighboring Hidatsa village about one and a half miles to the south. It is believed the Big Hidatsa Village contains the best-defined earth lodge depressions of any major Indian community in the Great Plains. Will and Hecker state:

> . . .The site covers an area of about 15 or more acres and shows several ditches made when parts of the site were abandoned or enlarged. This site was visited by all the explorers in the area up to 1850, as near as we can learn from the journals. The lodges were of the circular type and the greater part of the site is well preserved. The earlier potsherds are Later Heart River period types. Contact material is plentiful and mixed with these relics of early traders are innumerable bone, stone and flint artifacts.

Much of the village area is adjacent to unoccupied ranch buildings on land owned by a Mr. Olds. However, it extends southward under the buildings of another ranch. Byran Grannis is the name on the mail box at this second ranch. Because of the rich archeological values, a greater amount of visible surface evidence of Indian occupation than is usual, and the educational potential which could be developed through ethnological and historical research, this site merits the "exceptional value" classification in either of two themes, VIII (Contact with the Indians) or III (Indian Villages and Communities).

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (*Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works*)

Will and Hecker, "The Upper Missouri Valley Aboriginal Culture in North Dakota," North Dakota Historical Quarterly, Vol. XI, nos. 1 and 2, 1944; Russell Reid, "Lewis and Clark in North Dakota," State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck, 1947-48.

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (*Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.*)

10. PHOTOGRAPHS* ATTACHED: YES ☒ NO ☐	11. CONDITION	12. PRESENT USE (*Museum, farm, etc.*)	13. DATE OF VISIT
		Corrals and pasture	11-3-60

14. NAME OF RECORDER (*Signature*)	15. TITLE	16. DATE
Paul L. Beaubien	Regional Archeologist	10/23/61

*DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10½ SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16—74016-1

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

Big Hidatsa Village Site, North Dakota

The Big Hidatsa Village site, the largest of three Hidatsa Indian villages located near the mouth of the Knife River in North Dakota, stands as an excellent example of the effects of nearly 100 years of fur trade contact and the accultration resulting from it in the period from about 1740 to 1845.

When Jacques D'Eglise, the first representative of Spanish traders to visit the Mandan and Hidatsa Indians, reached their villages near the Knife River in 1790, he found a French Canadian trader employed by the British who had been living and trading there for 14 years.

The first definite reference to the Big Hidatsa Village occurred in 1797 when David Thompson, the Canadian trader, explorer, and geographer, visited the Mandan and Hidatsa Indians.

Meriwether Lewis and William Clark spent the winter of 1804-1805 at Fort Mandan, a camp which they built on the Missouri a short distance below the mouth of the Knife River and their journals describe five villages, all of which were within six miles of one another.

George Catlin, Prince Maximilian, and Karl Bodmer visited the Hidatsa and Mandan during the years 1832, 1833, and 1834, and found that the villages still formed a stable community. Both Catlin and Maximilian described the Big Hidatsa Village and its people and Catlin and Bodmer did sketches of the village. A smallpox epidemic in 1837 almost destroyed the Mandan and greatly weakened the Hidatsa.

Shortly after Fort Berthold was built in 1845 both the Hidatsa and the Mandan moved upstream and established new villages.

The Big Hidatsa Village site covers 15 or more acres and is exceptionally well preserved. Depressions of more than 100 circular earthlodges can be clearly seen and several fortification trenches are also visable.

NSHSB 4/29/64 ZAB