



Facts in Depth: Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe names of towns, communities, creeks, rivers.

Can Oju Ble Otunwahe - Timber Lake: Has a name of two possible explanations. One is that it was named in irony because of the presence of a single tree growing on the north shore of the lake. However, a Sioux Indian legend related that it was named as the result of a battle between the Sioux and a band of Indians from Minnesota. With dusk nearing, the fleeing invaders sighted the lake, mistook the tall growth of grass for trees, and joyfully shouted “Timber! Timber!” Their elation was short-lived, however, for the Sioux set fire to the grass and burned the enemies out.”

Tatanka Ble - Buffalo Lake: This lake was named after the tribal member who’s last name was Buffalo, who owned the land in and around the lake.

Cankin Akanl - On The Tree: This community was named because it was a place where they hauled wood from.

Canku Otunwahe - Trail City: This small town was named because it was a popular watering place on “The Strip” a six mile wide cattle trail used by the large cattle companies at the turn of the century.

Canpa Wakpa - Cherry Creek: Cherry Creek lays claim to being the oldest continuously inhabited place in South Dakota. The area received its name from the abundance of wild cherries, plums, gooseberries and currants along the banks of the creek.

He Owanyanke – Ridgeview: Derived its name from its location on the ridge dividing the Cheyenne and Moreau Rivers.

Hinhan Wakpa – Moreau River (Owl Creek): “The River (Sneve, 1973:144) was named for a French trader and non-Indian, who made his home at the mouth of it and who was later stabbed to death by his Cheyenne wife. The Sioux name for this stream was “Owl River (Hinhan Wakpa).”

Icazo Wicoti – Marksville: This was a new settlement close to the old Cheyenne Agency, due to the flooding of Old Agency. Wicazo means make a mark. Marksville was named for the first resident of this settlement whose name was Mark Garter. He was given a few acres to build his home site there.

Ikpazo Wicoti – Parade: This community was named after George Paradis, an early French trader who married into the tribe.

Isto Wasake – Armstrong: The origin of the name is debated and no explanation given. Armstrong County became a defunct county in South Dakota. It was formed in 1873, but was annexed in 1879. It was reorganized in 1895 and abolished in 1952. It is now a part of Dewey County.

Iyasica Otunwahe – Isabel: Isabel was named for a daughter of one of the Milwaukee railroad officials.

Iyuskin Osmake – Glad Valley: All communities, towns or settlements were given a name by the local Lakota people who lived here. The valley here was given such a name for what the valley had to offer.

La Plant: There’s no known Indian name for this settlement. La Plant was named after a part Indian, Frenchman married to an Indian woman.

Mato Topa – Four Bear: Four Bear was named for a leader of the Two Kettle Band, from 1834 and died in 1909. He was also a member of Fool Soldiers band. The government recognizing his chieftainship built him a large two-story frame house at the site of the Four Bear Camp. The camp was the oldest permanent village on the reservation. In 1962, Chief Four Bear’s house was moved to Eagle Butte to be set up as a museum but unfortunately it burnt down that same year.

Mato Wakpa – Bear Creek: Long ago bears used to roam this creek before it was inhibited by people.

Mni Sose – Missouri River: “The river (Sneve, 1973:144) bears an Indian name of Sac-Fox origin, meaning “big muddy.” The Sioux name for this river means “rolly water.” Its common nickname is the “Big Muddy.”

Okiciyapi – Habitat: This housing sub-division of Eagle Butte was named “okiciyapi” which translates to helping each other because it was built by the “Habitat for Humanity” people and the tenants. It is located southwest of the town of Eagle Butte.

Owakpamni – Agency: This name translates to handing out because at one time long ago, rations were distributed at this place for all the reservation tribal members. It also became the focal point of the reservation where people went for all their needs in health, education and welfare.

Pe Can Sa Otunwahe – Red Elm: Was named for the elm trees of a reddish variety which were found in the vicinity of the community.

Pelijanjan Otunwahe – Lantry: Lantry was named for a family by those names who were early settlers in the community.

Peji To – Green Grass: This historical place is the home of the “White Buffalo Calf Pipe.” The name Green Grass is a translation of the Lakota name ‘Peji To’ which was given to the area because of the rich green bottomlands near the mouth of the creek. Green Grass was first settled by members of the Itazipa Cola band around the turn of the century.

Maza Peta – Firesteel: Firesteel was named because a coal quarry was discovered there and a business was started to distribute the coal until there was no more coal to be distributed to consumers.

Siha Sapa – Black Foot: This community was named after the Lakota bands that were in that area of the reservation and located at the far northwest area.

Sungila He – Fox Ridge: The reservation is divided on an east-west axis by Fox Ridge, the high ground between the Moreau and Cheyenne Rivers. Everything to its north flows into the Moreau; everything to its south flows into the Cheyenne. Both of these rivers empty into the Missouri River. There is a housing area named after this place in Eagle Butte.

Sung Ska or Sunka Wakan Ska – White Horse: White Horse is named after the Lakota headman, White Horse. He was a leader of the Itazipacola band of the Lakota who settled in White Horse, SD. The first agency at Cheyenne River was briefly located at this village.

White Horse was a famous historian of his people and kept an accurate winter count for many years. He thought of himself as a progressive and was one of the first of his people to wear short hair. In his later years, he was a statesman and traveler and always on hand to offer a hearty welcome to people visiting the Cheyenne Agency.

Takini – Bridger: Bridger was named after Bridger Creek and also named for Jim Bridger, a famous frontier and trader. Takini means ‘survivor,’ the survivors of the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890 reside in this community.

Tasna Wakpa – Virgin Creek: the name of the creek that runs through the community of La Plant, on the east end of the reservation.

Tiospaye Topa Owayawa – Four Bands School: A recently established K-12 grade school in La Plant on the east end of the reservation. The name was chosen by the students, staff, school board and community people.

Wacinyapi Otunwahe – Faith: Faith was named for the daughter of the president of the Milwaukee Railroad. The railroad ran through this town.

Wahoyapi – Promise: Promise was named for an early Lakota Episcopal minister, John Promise, who was given an Indian name Wahoyapi, meaning ‘once called,’ but was translated by an interpreter as “Promise.”

Wakinyan Maza – Iron Lightning: Iron Lightning was named after the Lakota headsman, Iron Lightning.

Wakinyan Paha – Thunder Butte: Thunder Butte got its name in the following narrative, “The name Thunder Butte was given to the butte after a mysterious thunder storm originated from the butte. The incident was witnessed by an Indian hunting party. Early one morning a small, dark cloud formed on the top of the butte and as the cloud grew larger, loud thunder was heard until a thunder storm moved out from the butte. The incident witnessed by the Indians happened between 1850 and as late as 1910.

Wanbli Paha – Eagle Butte: This butte was named Eagle Butte because Indians used to trap eagle there. Sidney Keith states, “In the early 30s, an old man called “Fish Gut,” or Ho Supe, lived down below that butte, told that the Ree Indians were catching eagles the old way. They would dig a hole large enough to stand in and they covered it with brush. Then they would tie a freshly killed rabbit to the brush, skinned partly and the eagle with their sharp keen eyesight would spot the meat. The eagles would land to get it but it was

tied up, so while they struggled to get the meat, the Indian would stick his hand through the opening and grab a leg. They would tie a thong to their legs because if the eagle grabbed hold of your hand, it wouldn't let go or it would peck your hand until you let go. Eagles are strong. Because of the south wind, eagle would spot the butte. They can soar without flapping a wing. It is a stopping place for the eagles in their migration."

Wasicu Ikceka Otunwahe – Dupree: The town of Dupree was given an Indian name which translates to ‘common man town.’ It is also named after a French man, Fred Dupree or Dupris, who married a Lakota woman from this area.

Wicagnakapi Sa – Red Scaffold: There are several accounts of how Red Scaffold got its name. Oliver Brown Wolf tells this explanation, (Brown Wolf, 1979): “Long ago a band of hunters were traveling from Deer Ears Butte where they had been hunting. As they were traveling, one of the hunters had become sick and died. The dead hunter had a red shawl with him, so the rest if the hunters wrapped him up in the shawl and put him on a funeral scaffold. Since that time, the place where this happened had been called Red Scaffold. The spot where the scaffold stood along Red Scaffold Creek is still marked.”

Zintkala Luzanhan – Swift Bird: Swift Bird was named after Chief Swift Bird. He was a member of the Fool Soldiers who rescued several white people who were held prisoners below Bismarck, ND by the hostile bands of the Lakota Indians who were parties to the 1862 uprising in Minnesota. Named after the chief are Swift Bird Creek, Swift Bird Camp, Swift Bird School and Swift Bird Job Corp Center.

He Owanyanke	Ridgeview
Hinhan Wakpa	Owl Creek (Moreau R.)
Icazo Wicoti	Marksville
Ikpazo Wicoti	Parade
Isto Wasake	Armstrong
Iyasica Otunwahe	Isabel
Iyuskin Osmake	Glad Valley
Mato Topa	Four Bears
Mato Wakpa	Bear Creek
Mni Sose	Muddy Water (Missouri R.)
Okiciyapi	Habitat
Owakpamni	Agency
Pe Can Sa Otunwahe	Red Elm
Pelijanjan Otunwahe	Lantry
No known Indian name	La Plant
Peji To	Green Grass

Maza Peta
Siha Sapa
Sungila He
Sunka Wakan Ska
Takini
Tasna Wakpa
Tiospaye Topa Owayawa
Wacinyapi Otunwahe
Wahoyapi
Wakinyan Maza
Wakinyan Paha
Wanbli Paha
Wasicu Ikceka Otunwahe
Wicagnagapi Sa
Zintkala Luzahan

Firesteel
Black Foot
Fox Ridge
White Horse (Sung Ska)
Survivor
Virgin Creek
Four Bands School (Tiospaye Topa Sch)
Faith
Promise
Iron Lightning
Thunder Butte
Eagle Butte
Dupree
Red Scaffold
Swift Bird