A Contested Landscape Story Map: Campbell Farming Corporation and the Crow Indian Reservation in Big Horn County, Montana

Introduction
This project explores the complex landscape of Big Horn County, Montana, created by events surrounding the formation of the Crow Indian Reservation, Campbell Farming Corporation (CFC), and other key actors vying for control of land in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The authors argue that this is a contested landscape, which "evolve when differing environmental ethics and cultural identities collide in places with deep meaning" (Blake 2001, p1). Government documents from this time period and CFC records reveal a place where the landscape actively incorporated the struggles over it (Mitchell 2006). Dr. Holcomb and Ms. Long created an Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) story map that vividly illustrates some of these struggles through photographs, CFC records, and other information. Dr. Holcomb also conducted an oral history interview in 2015 with a man, Alex Uffelman, who knew Thomas D. Campbell, founder of the farming operation, and whose family now owns former Campbell lands.

Materials and Methods
This project has seven dimensions, including an oral history interview with a man from Hardin, MT, who knew Thomas D. Campbell and whose father worked for Campbell Farming Corporation and became friends with Mr. Campbell. Dr. Holcomb used a Marantz professional recorder to record the interview with Mr. Uffelman in the summer of 2015 and Erin Long transcribed the audio file. Dr. Holcomb also copied select records of Campbell Farming Corporation at the Montana State Historical Society Research Center. We analyzed these documents for evidence of a contested landscape and added some to a digital story map hosted on the ESRI website. Dr. Holcomb also obtained Campbell Farming Corporation photographs from the Big Horn County Historical Museum in Hardin, MT and added them to the story map.

Camp 4 Headquarters
This is a more recent photograph of the headquarters at Camp 4. Dr. Holcomb harvested wheat here several times when he worked for a custom harvesting crew from Sterling, Kansas.

CFC employed as many as 250 people
Mealtine in the Camp 4 cookhouse.

Campbell and mechanized agriculture
Mechanization allowed CFC to farm great swaths of what were once smaller parcels of Indian land but manpower was still needed to complete many tasks. To the right workers thrash wheat to separate the grain from the straw. Huge supplies of labor were needed for shocking and threshing in the era before combines and harvesters were developed and CFC hired independent contractors to supply crew. Below steam tractors pull plows to break sod on the Crow Reservation in 1918.

Opening Indian lands for agricultural production during World War I
"These enormous areas of dry lands (about 50,000 acres) have not yet been touched, nor have the other enormous areas farther west, almost directly south of Billings, yet within the Crow Reservation. There are places on these west areas where the plows can be driven six miles without a turn, and many where they can go three and four miles without a turn. The handling of these areas will be part of the 1919 task in readiness for the sowing of winter wheat in September, 1919." - Report on an investigation of land available for farming, obtained from the Campbell Farming Corporation records archived at the Montana State Historical Society in Helena, MT.

Checkers 北
"Indian lands that were alienated as a result of the General Allotment Act of 1887... were sold or transferred to non-Indian parties but retained within reservation boundaries. Checkers seriously impairs the ability of Indian nations or individuals to use land to their own advantage." - Indian Land Tenure Foundation https://www.iltf.org/land-tenure/checkering

References
Information and materials for this project are from Campbell Farming Corporation records archived at the Montana State Historical Society in Helena, MT; the Big Horn County Historical Museum in Hardin, Montana; an oral history interview with Mr. Alex Uffelman of Hardin, MT; and a variety of government documents which will be provided if requested. Dr. Holcomb's personal knowledge and associations with former Big Horn County, MT comes from many summers of work for Schmidt Harvesting, a custom harvesting operation from Sterling, KS.

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Thomas Campbell and his State Bearcat

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Results
Campbell Farming Corporation (CFC) records and other documents do indeed demonstrate a contested landscape in Big Horn County and illustrate the lasting legacy of Mr. Campbell in the area. One document shows the competition between CFC and a sugar beet company to lease farmland owned by Crow Indians. Many other documents concerning land leases confirm this, as well as the power farming and sugar beet operations had to control the leasing arrangements. The legacy of CFC is also illustrated in documents about the farm's role in hiring a reenactment company in the 1950s and bringing Mexican immigrant labor and custom harvesting operations to the area for harvest work.

Other documents demonstrate Mr. Campbell's contribution to introducing large-scale mechanized agriculture to Montana and the Soviet Union, as he made trips to the Soviet Union to advise them on agriculture. Dignitaries from the Soviet Union also visited CFC in later decades, thus revealing the importance of the farm as a model of mechanized American agriculture. The oral history interview added information to this legacy as Mr. Uffelman shared memories of his father tending the farm with Soviet dignitaries.

Conclusions
Thomas D. Campbell was an entrepreneur and leader in agriculture, government, and the military. He initiated plans to increase wheat production in the U.S. during World War I by opening Indian reservation lands to agriculture with financing from J.P. Morgan. Campbell Farming Corporation ceased its operations and sold its properties in 1947 but left a legacy on the Big Horn County and Crow Indian Reservation lands and on American agriculture. The Big Horn County Historical Museum in Hardin has CFC buildings and machinery on display, while the area's land use and land ownership patterns still have the imprint of CFC's introduction of large-scale agriculture almost one hundred years after its formation. Dr. Holcomb goes on to finish this project by finishing the story map for use by the Big Horn County Historical Museum and as part of a book about the custom harvesting in the Great Plains.

Mechanization for large scale farming
"A 5000 acre wheat field is harvested by 18 combines belong to Rand Combining, a custom harvesting crew from Sidney, Nebraska."

A contested landscape story map includes a map titled "A contested landscape story map: Campbell Farming Corporation and the Crow Indian Reservation in Big Horn County, Montana." The map shows a heavily shaded area labeled "Crow Indian Reservation 1915". The map includes a story about Thomas D. Campbell and his mechanized agriculture, as well as references to other documents and oral history interviews related to the history of the area.

The map contains a photograph of Thomas Campbell and his State Bearcat, and a photograph of a steam tractor pulling a plow on the Crow Reservation in 1918. The map also includes a section on opening Indian lands for agricultural production during World War I, with a quote from a report on land available for farming.

The map references information from Campbell Farming Corporation records, oral history interviews, and government documents, as well as personal knowledge and associations with Mr. Alex Uffelman of Hardin, MT. The map includes a section on references and acknowledgments, with credit given to the Big Horn County Historical Museum, Alex Uffelman, and the Montana State Historical Society Research Center for their contributions to the project.