

# HOLE IN THE ROCK NEWS

*Preserving the History and Sharing the Legacy*

## WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT IT WILL HAPPEN

HIR President, Corinne N. Roring

I am doing a happy dance! Karl and LaRue Barton of Monticello are new HIR board members. They have recently purchased the Jens Nielson home across the street from the Bluff Fort. LaRue is a great granddaughter of Jens and Katrine Nielson. Karl is a great grandson of Joseph and Harriet Barton, builders of the Barton cabin in the Fort. Welcome to HIR, Karl and LaRue! We'll have great fun in Bluff with lots of work in between.

The time was right! After several years of trying to buy a small building in the Fort block owned by the Utah Navajo Development Council, it happened! With a check for half the amount now, and a note for the balance due Jan 1, 2008, the Hogan building is now HIR property. This will make an excellent Native American and historical museum. The Navajo and Ute people are indeed a big part of Bluff history. An teepee and traditional dirt Hogan will be located next to this building. Anyone want to volunteer to cut cedar logs this fall?

Other HIR board members include:

Graig Taylor - Treasurer, Financial Chief  
Lamont Crabtree - Interpretive Projects & Research  
Mike Roring - 2nd Vice President, Properties & Freight  
LaMar Helquist - 1st Vice President; presently on a mission in Tennessee  
Corrine Roring - President, Official Fort Gopher

The Fort improvements are moving on. To stay current on the HIR report, please send your email and mailing addresses. Also, please send a brief article about one of your ancestors for our newsletter. This will start our collection of family histories for the information center.

Please don't forget a contribution to help the project along. Every dollar you contribute becomes five!\*

Plan a visit to Bluff Fort. We love to show and tell. Come catch the spirit of beautiful Bluff.

### The Fort Speaks:

From England:  
"A wonderful piece of American history to be treasured by all."

From New Zealand:  
"Not to be missed."

From France:  
"Splendid! We came here for the second time."

### Wanted!

Individual or family to help with ground planting and site maintenance.  
Contact Corrine Roring  
Phone: 435-587-2484

### Wanted!

Early 1880-1990 pioneer memorabilia for display.  
Contact Corrine Roring  
Box #56  
Monticello, UT 84535  
Phone: 435-587-2484

### Wanted!

Volunteer interior commercial designer to design and help build our new interpretative center.  
Contact L. Graig Taylor  
Phone: 801-836-2404

## WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE

A little over a year ago, Lamar Helquist began searching for family and friends of the Hole-in-the-Rock pioneers. Before he left to fulfill a service mission in Tennessee with his wife Colleen, Lamar found nearly one thousand names with addresses, and in some cases, e-mail addresses. We want to sincerely thank him for taking the initiative to start this great effort.



Bluff mid 1890's  
Charles Goodman photo  
Utah State Historic Society

It is now my turn to continue the work Lamar began and track down the remaining name (approximately 10,000) and their contact information. We need your help. We are searching for the names, phone numbers, addresses and e-mail addresses of all of the descendants of the Hole-in-the-Rock pioneers and other key characters in this epic story. Please send us any information you have. If you have received this by mail and have an e-mail address, please send us your email address and include the names and contact information of any married children and grandchildren that you have (if they have not already received our newsletters). The information we receive will be used primarily for sharing our newsletter and updating the address database. All information will be kept confidential.

At the dedication of the Joseph Smith obelisk in Sharon, Vermont, Joseph F. Smith said, "If we don't preserve it, we will lose it." We plead with you to help us preserve the history of Hole-in-the-Rock. Please share your family stories with us and help us fill our website story database. We want to simultaneously shout the Hole-in-the-Rock story to the world and share the beautiful stories that have come about from the San Juan mission area with family and friends.

Please send all information to:  
LaRue Barton, Box # 593  
Monticello, Utah 84535  
Phone: 435-587-9917 or 435-672-9967  
Email: barton@hirf.org

## NAVAJO TWINS



Navajo Twins with Bluff in the background. Charles Goodman photo, late 1890's courtesy of the San Juan Historic Commission

Bluff is in a remote part of the world, off the beaten path, even hard to find on many maps. Quiet reigns most of the time and noise seems out of place. Why then, would a beautiful cove behind the twin rocks be sought for added solitude and a place to get away from it all? Come, see, feel and rejuvenate.

Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation participated in the purchase of seventeen acres from Utah State institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) for this very purpose. The twin rocks cove includes pueblo I II III archeology remnants of its first settlers. It is neighbors to Bluff's most recent settlers and presents a story of every group in between, and the best part is that when you tell your story, any story, the acoustics at this site are supreme. The purchase arrangements include restrictions on development. No artificial lighting, no excessive noise, nor any improved facilities, just natural places to relax on a soft rock, absorb, adjust, and become part of this quiet world.

Thanks to the Simpson family for an added 1.43 acre frontage and San Juan Foundation for their willingness to contribute toward this added benefit of a never forgotten visit to the Bluff area.  
-Cleal Bradford

## IMPROVED ROAD TO THE HOLE-IN-THE-ROCK

This is an ideal time to drive to the Hole-in-the-Rock crevice. Not only are temperatures pleasant, but the road has been repaired. Not since the 1970's has the last ten-mile stretch of road to the Hole-in-the-Rock been in such great condition. In the 1970's, it was common to see most any high ground clearance vehicle at the Hole. However, since then the road had deteriorated to a point that traversing the last ten miles required a rugged 4x4 vehicle with good tires and ample ground clearance. Late last fall heavy rainstorms in the area caused additional road damage which necessitated major repairs. Fill was brought in, and the last ten mile section of road was repaired. It is now in excellent condition. Four wheel drive is still recommended and good ground clearance and good tires are a must. Take advantage of the improved road and visit one of the remarkable sites in Utah history.

Lamont Crabtree

## A CALL FOR BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES AND PHOTOS

Currently the Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation website, www.hirf.org, provides general information about the foundation, the Bluff Historic Fort and the Hole-in-the-Rock trail. Website visitors to the site can submit questions about the trail or the preservation projects and even make a donation to the Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation.

Major enhancements to the website are scheduled for release during the first quarter of 2008. One of those enhancements will be pioneer biographical sketches. Preserve your family's stories by sending us a biographical sketch and any photos you have of your ancestors connected with The San Juan Mission. Information can be uploaded via the CONTACT PAGE on our website.

Lamont Crabtree

## Fun Fact

The first wedding was held in the restored log meeting house on Oct. 27th, 2007.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear readers,

The mission of the HIR Foundation succeeds because of your interest and involvement in our endeavors. Starting with this issue, we are sharing some of the letters and comments sent to the editor.

The Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation is doing "a great work and a wonder" in telling the complete story about the Hole-in-the-Rock. As we walked through the historic site and other places in Bluff and learned about the first courageous people who settled in Bluff, we felt a special peaceful and inviting spirit.

Of special interest to me was riding along the San Juan Trail and sensing the challenges the saints endured as they traveled toward Bluff. It must have been overwhelming for them to realize they had to take their wagons and supplies up that rugged terrain. In sensing their great challenge, it gave us—as I know it will give others—the faith to know that with the Lord's help we can also overcome and endure our life challenges.

Rulon G. Craven

Thank you so much for this fascinating article on the Hole-in-the-Rock. Years ago, I actually wrote a children's story about this event. The publisher declined to publish it, but it was a good experience to write it. I am the daughter of William and May McConkie. My Grandmother was Vivien Redd McConkie.

Marcinelle McConkie Sarager

Share your thoughts about Hole-in-the-Rock with us.

Send your comments to:  
Hole in the Rock Foundation  
P.O. Box # 476  
Bluff, Utah 84512

Or email: inquiry@hirf.org

## ESCALANTE: A LIFELINE TO THE HOLE-IN-THE-ROCK EXPEDITION

Mother Town of the Southwest—Past

The story of the settlement of Bluff strikes awe in the hearts of all who hear it. It's not so much the town itself as it is the remarkable journey the pioneer settlers undertook across nearly impassable terrain and the sacrifices they made to forge a trade route between southwestern Utah and the Four Corners area. At the end of their incredible journey, they built the city of Bluff and established peaceful relations with the Ute and Navajo Indian tribes. The pioneers established not just a city but a legacy of faith and determination that their descendants share today.

In 1879, President John Taylor of the LDS Church issued a call to colonize the San Juan area. On April 14, an exploration party of twenty-six men, two women and eight children, led by Silas S. Smith, left Paragonah, UT and headed south through Arizona searching for a practical route to the area. The length of the route, the scarcity of water, and the hostility of the natives made the journey impractical for a large colony of men, women and children. On the return journey, the exploration party tried going as far north as Salina, but this too was not feasible since the route was over 400 miles.

The shortest distance between two points is always a straight line—"as the crow flies"—and that is what the settlers were looking for. By blazing a trail straight through to the San Juan area, settlers hoped to avoid hundreds of miles and many weeks of labor. It was imperative that they get to their new homes before the dead of winter; they needed to get there before spring in order to plant crops early enough to be harvested by fall.

The farthest flung community that lay on the direct route was the newly established community of Escalante which had been settled in 1876. The region south of Escalante was somewhat known to cattlemen who ranged their cattle in the area and to prospectors who had vainly searched the area for gold. But neither cattlemen nor miners had considered building wagon roads.

Why the mission leaders decided on the Escalante "short cut" through Hole-in-the-Rock has never been explained, but most historians believe the route was chosen because of favorable reports from Charles Hall, Andrew P. Schow and Reuben Collett of Escalante. But no one could have predicted the difficulties this band of settlers would encounter taking the short cut. Had they foreseen the hardships and the backbreaking labor this route would require, they surely would have chosen one of the longer routes.

The Escalante citizens helped sustain the settlers physically and spiritually. At the mercy of the harsh desert winter the Bluff settlers' only hope of survival lay in the kindness of this newly-established community. Escalante was literally the last chance to obtain fresh supplies of potatoes, molasses, flour and other necessities, repair wagons and harnesses, and trade old, worn animals for fresher stock.

Mary Alice Barker Shurtz, who at age sixteen was the first white woman to set foot in Escalante, had recently married when the San Juan group passed through. She said the townspeople were extremely generous in helping the colonists. While Escalante citizens had to be paid for store-bought commodities that had to be shipped in, Mary Alice said the San Juan settlers were never charged for manual labor. As often as possible, beef was purchased from Escalante residents, the settlers not wanting to kill their own cattle until it became absolutely necessary. As the company pushed on towards Colorado, wagon and pack outfits ran supplies from Escalante to the struggling group.

Reuben Collett had a sorghum plant in Escalante and was producing a pretty good quality of molasses in 1879. His son, Reuben Samuel, said he remembers his father "rolling out eleven barrels of sorghum and driving as many as five beef at one time to the Saints." Reuben's family says they don't know whether their father was paid for the molasses and beef since "the family never knew what Father contributed, as he was a very selfless man who never talked of his good deeds."

Not only did Escalante citizens provide food to the colonists, they contributed much in the way of physical labor. Both Andrew Schow and Reuben Collett continued to scout for the company in an effort to help them find the most accessible routes to their destination. But perhaps the greatest help to the San Juan group was the building of a ferry by Charles Hall and his sons to transport the wagons across the river. Charles had already contributed greatly to the success of the mission as an explorer. Hall designed the ferry and cut most of the lumber to specification at his Escalante mill where necessary machinery was available. Crafting the materials at the mill saved time when they began assembling the ferry at the river. Charles and his sons arrived at the river in the first week of January 1880 and

began assembling the ferry at the river. Charles and his sons arrived at the river in the first week of January 1880 and began assembling the ferry that would carry the entire San Juan group across the river. The kiln for pitch was constructed at the river's edge so that the caulking material would be readily available. In addition to the Hall family, many citizens from Escalante came to lend a hand. One account says that "half of the people of Escalante built the ferry." encounter taking the short cut. Had they foreseen the hardships and the backbreaking labor this route would require, they surely would have chosen one of the longer routes.

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Parowan is sometimes called the "Mother Town" of the southwest because it was from the Parowan Rock Church that calls came for pioneers to leave their homes and settle in parts of Utah, Nevada, Arizona, Colorado and Oregon. Bluff has been called the "Mother Community" because it is where the Hole-in-the-Rock pioneers finally settled. In this spirit,

### MOTHER TOWN OF THE SOUTHWEST-FUTURE

For many years Escalante citizens have wanted to construct a building where the story of the Hole-in-the-Rock expedition could be told, but a suitable location and money for construction could not be found. Finally a group known as the "Escalante Heritage Center," a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization was formed, and in 2002 the LDS Church donated nine-and-a-half acres of land, located east of town on a ridge with a view of the entire Escalante Valley as well as an unobstructed view down the Escalante Desert where the colonists traveled.

The Center is planning a facility that will introduce visitors to the beginnings of the San Juan colonization efforts. A similar facility in Bluff will tell the ending of the story. The Escalante Heritage Center and the Bluff group have formed a mutually beneficial partnership and are working together to achieve each organization's goals.

However, much more money is needed by each group. Anyone wishing to contribute directly to the Escalante Heritage Center may do so by making checks payable to the Escalante Heritage Center in care of either Jerry C. Roundy, Chairman of the Board (Box 439) or Quinn D. Griffin, Executive Director (Box 272) in Escalante, Utah 84726. -Jerry Roundy

## BARTON FAMILY HISTORY



Joseph Franklin Barton



Harriet Barton

Photos courtesy of San Juan Historic Commission

When living inside the fort was no longer necessary, Bluff settlers moved their log cabins to town lots. A portion of the west side of the fort became the Barton town lot. The Bartons expanded the size of their home by moving and connecting three one-room structures together.

The Barton cabin is the oldest pioneer structure in San Juan County. It was the home of Joseph and Harriet Richards Barton, both born in Parowan, UT. Harriet Barton was a dedicated wife and mother. She was also known for her musical talent. Her beautiful soprano voice filled the Bluff meetinghouse on many occasions. Joseph was a farmer, rancher, freight hauler, postmaster, county judge and public school superintendent. He is also credited with being the town's chief tooth puller.

May 29, 1896 Harriet Barton died at the age of 40, seventeen days after giving birth to their eighth child. Nine days later their newborns boy died. Two years following Harriet's untimely death, Joseph was called to serve a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in the southern states. After returning from his mission, Joseph married Eugenia Johnson in 1907 and moved to Verdure where they established a successful farm and ranch. Joseph died in Verdure, Utah on April 10, 1926.

This is only a partial excerpt of the Barton story. Please come visit the Bluff Fort Historic Site to read and experience the rest of the story.

## HOGAN BUILDING



When the Letty Jones Foundation transferred title to three of four lots at the Bluff Fort complex to Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation a reminder also came of needing the remaining two properties within the block. One of these sites has now become available. Half of the purchase price has been paid and the remaining amount is due by Jan. 1, 2008. This twenty-two year-old twin Hogan, a potential museum building for the Bluff Fort complex, was built as an education center and more recently used as an office. Expertise on utilization of the 1,200 foot floor space is being sought from Utah Museum of Natural History and State museum staff. The displays will include original pioneer, Native American and modern-day pioneer artifacts and stories.

The Bluff Fort complex provides a variety of stories with much of its history on display of wagons, buggies, pioneer buildings, etc. These are available to view by walking the connecting paths. The museum facility will offer protection to smaller glass-cased displays and historic rugs, quilts, utensils and the like from the Bluff time period. We feel fortunate to now include this site as part of the Bluff Fort complex.

-Cleal Bradford

### The Fort Speaks:

From France:  
"Bravo!"

From Germany:  
"Interesting historical place in the middle of nowhere. God Bless. Thanks!"

## ADOPT A CABIN



Barton cabin 1998, Lamont Crabtree

The Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation is in the process of building cabins around the outer perimeter of the original Bluff Fort site. We are inviting families who would like to commemorate their ancestors to adopt one of these cabins. Each cabin will cost approximately \$15,000-\$20,000.

Recently, members of the Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation spent two days with Steve Pratt of Cove Fort, UT renowned world wide for his knowledge of historic preservation of log structures. Steve and his son John have agreed to help us rebuild the cabins that outlined the old Bluff Fort's perimeter. We plan to furnish the inside of each cabin with pictures, furniture, tools and other period pieces that tell the story of the Fort's original families and their daily lives.

The project will begin with a model family cabin this winter. Nearly all of the funding for this cabin is in place, but we still need more to clear the final hurdle. Other projects in process include the Jens Neilsen family cabin, Barton Blacksmith Shop, an explorer cabin and a few other family dwellings which need more funding before we can start construction.

We are excited to announce that we have received some start up funds for the restoration of the Kumen Jones home discussed in our last newsletter, as well as some of the funding needed to start the explorer cabin and the Vivian Redd McConkie cabin. We would like to thank the individuals who are involved in these contributions.

We invite you to start funding your prospective family cabin. You can send your donation to:  
Hole in the Rock Foundation  
P.O. Box # 476 Bluff, Utah 84512

Or donate securely with any credit card via our website [www.hirfoundation.org/donate.asp](http://www.hirfoundation.org/donate.asp)

We do not have plans to restore all 50 of the original Bluff Fort cabins, but if you are interested in seeing your particular family cabin restored, please contact Grant Taylor 801-583-9102 or e-mail [grant@hirf.org](mailto:grant@hirf.org).

Reconstructing your ancestor's dwelling at Bluff Fort is a great way to preserve your family story and pass it on to future generations. Your cabin will become a magnet for family reunions and other family gatherings. Additionally, it will contribute to the historical experience that is Bluff Fort and help spread the story to visitors across the world. Please join us in this effort today.

-Grant Taylor

### Wanted!

Farm implements, wagons, blacksmithing tools to enhance the Bluff Fort restoration project.  
Contact Karl Barton  
Box #593  
Monticello, UT 84535  
Phone: 435-587-9917 or 435-672-9967  
Email: [barton@hirf.org](mailto:barton@hirf.org)

### Wanted!

Hole-in-the-Rock photos prior to Lake Powell  
Contact Lamont Crabtree  
3675 Chippewa Road  
West Valley City, UT 84120  
Email: [lamont@hirf.org](mailto:lamont@hirf.org)

### Wanted!

Native American stories and memorabilia (Navajo and Piute) from 1880-1890 to be shared on the internet, in the newsletter, and in the visitor center.  
Contact Eva Sanchez  
Email: [eva@hirf.org](mailto:eva@hirf.org)

## FIRST MONTEZUMA: ROCK PIONEERS SETTLEMENT OF THE HOLE-IN-THE-ROCK

My interest in Fort Montezuma was sparked in 2001 when I accidentally stumbled onto the headstones of Lizzie Harriman (1879-1881) and John Alma Harriman (1876-1883) which stand alone in a wind-swept desert near the town of Montezuma Creek, Utah. When local residents were unable to provide adequate information about the fate of the two little children, I resolved to learn the full story.

I unearthed part of the story that connected Fort Montezuma with the Hole-in-the-Rock expedition by reading in the books Hole in the Rock by David E. Miller, Saga of San Juan by Cornelia Adams Perkins, Marion Gardner Nielson, and Lenora Butt Jones, and In the Palm of Time by Robert S. McPherson. However, I didn't find enough information to satisfy my curiosity; I had to know the whole story of Fort Montezuma. My research process was slow and hard going. Eventually I was able to locate 3rd and 4th generation descendants of the Fort Montezuma pioneers in places outside of Utah, and I tracked down diaries, journals, biographies and photographs. The more I learned, the more curious I became.

After three years of research, I had the Fort Montezuma story completed. In 2004 the first edition of Fort Montezuma 1879-1884 was published in volume 30 of the Blue Mountain Shadows magazine. However, research continued for two additional years which prompted a second edition containing significant additional details and photographs. The second edition of the history was completed in July of 2006. It is 95 pages long with dozens of photographs. The crowning event of all of this research could be the discovery of ruins which the author believes are likely the remains of the original fort. It is located in the San Juan River where only the highest parts of the original fort protrude from the water during the low runoff season. Most of the year, the ruins are completely under water.

Fort Montezuma 1879-1884 recounts the pioneers' personal stories which detail life at Montezuma, Native American encounters, and the eventual demise of the Montezuma community. The publication follows the Montezuma pioneers all the way to their eventual place of death. The emphasis of this history is on the pioneers themselves.

The second edition has not yet been published. A few hard copies have been placed in the San Juan County Historical Archive and will be placed in the LDS Church Archive in Salt Lake City. It is also available from the author on CD only. Mail requests to the author at 138 S. 500 West Blanding, UT 84511.

The Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation originally planned to include the names of the Montezuma settlers on the monument honoring the Hole-in-the-Rock pioneers which now stands in the center of the Bluff Historic Fort Site. Due to space limitations, the decision was made honor the Montezuma settlers on a separate plaque.

My task was to identify every pioneer who lived at Montezuma from 1879 to 1884. That assignment put me back into research mode. After another year of scratching for details, I was able to identify 132 pioneers who had lived in Montezuma. I believe this count to be quite accurate. Thanks to the generosity of donors and the diligence of Lamont Crabtree, the monument to the Fort Montezuma pioneers stands in the Bluff Fort today. One plaque tells the brief account of Fort Montezuma and its demise, and the other plaque lists all of the pioneers'



R.F. McDonald and the Montezuma plaque

## The Fort Speaks:

From Blanding:  
"A heritage that must be emulated."

From Nevada:  
"Have to come back and spend more time."

## CEMETERY

The Bluff Cemetery tells a story unlike any other site within the area. The first settlers left remnants of their time on this earth. Pioneers, ranchers, homemakers, miners, truckers, lawyers, teachers, business owners and horse thieves are placed side by side to each other without complaint or envy.

Again with the help of local, descendants and assistance of the San Juan Foundation, the Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation has acquired two acres of this wonderful history. The cemetery parking lot provides a view of the river valley in all directions. It's a good location to visit for many reasons, but none of these can exceed a renewed feeling of gratitude for our own lives. We have none of the childhood crippling diseases of the past centuries, we have the ability to survive in today's marvelous world, we enjoy the beauty of rock formations, green river banks, beautiful homes, businesses, and modern infra-structure. Finally, it's a place to be reminded that deep down we are all pretty good people.  
-Cleal BradfoH

## THANK YOU

Since our last newsletter we want to publicly thank the following organizations that have committed significant sums to the restoration project.

San Juan County  
San Juan Tourism Development  
Letty Jones Heritage Foundation  
San Juan Foundation  
San Juan County Commissioners

We sincerely appreciate the San Juan Foundation and Letty Jones Foundation for their contributions and the Utah Navajo Development Council for their willingness to work with us on the double hogan building.

Additionally, many individuals have responded to our request for donations in the last newsletter with gifts ranging from \$20.00 to more than \$1,000. Some of these wonderful people include:

Gary & Dixie Taylor Family  
Phylis Jones Schumm  
Marilyn R. Rowley  
Floyd Atkin  
Lindsay Jones  
Lyman Holyoak  
Geraldine Redd Dunn  
Helen R. Hurst  
Jessie R. MacDonald  
L. LaMontayne  
W. D. Homes Inc.  
Dorothy Butt Hurst  
Ken and Cora Helquist Family  
Steven Winn  
Redd  
Karl & LaRue H. Barton  
Kassie Welch

David Pierce  
Bennion Redd  
John Nielson  
Amy Gregerson  
John Adams  
J.C. Stimson  
Leslie Streets  
Joyce A. Martin  
G. R. Taylor  
Enid Ashton Curtis  
Leslie & Alan Layton  
Bonnie Taylor  
LaMar Helquist  
John P. & Erma H.

Mary Donoho

Every dollar you donate is matched by another four dollars from partnering historical programs. Your one dollar actually becomes five! Thank you for your support in helping us with our mission.

Thank you

### Wanted!

Biographies, histories and photographs  
Contact Lamont Crabtree  
3675 Chippewa Road  
West Valley City, UT 84120  
Email: [lamont@hirf.org](mailto:lamont@hirf.org)

### Wanted! Dead or Alive

The names of family and friends of the San Juan Mission. Contact LaRue Barton  
Box #593  
Monticello, UT 84535  
Phone: 435-587-9917 or 435-672-9967  
Email: [barton@hirf.org](mailto:barton@hirf.org)