

HOLE IN THE ROCK NEWS

Preserving the History and Sharing the Legacy



Volume 4 Autumn 2008

EXCITEMENT AT FORT BLUFF

So much is happening at the Fort; the momentum is unreal! The timing was right for a Visitor Center/Museum opening July 1, 2008 in the double Hogan building. Karl and LaRue Barton did a super job getting that in operation. A highlight of the center is the video reenactment, by LaMont Crabtree, of the Hole in the Rock Trail. Visitors are amazed that man and beast could make that incredible journey. They did, and they survived, and it was done for all of us, to leave their posterity more favorable conditions than they ever had. Are we measuring up to their great sacrifice?

The week of October 13th, we hosted the families of James Monroe and Lucinda Pace Redd at the Fort. We began with 25 people, and by Oct. 16th we grew to 130. Imagine such a turnout! The Fort was a buzzing hive of workers. Logs were raised for cabin walls, dirt roofs went on (one mother was on the roof top working with a small baby by her side), flagstone walks were laid, chinking was done on all three cabins (the women are great chinkers), trees and bushes were planted, and a plant watering system was installed. Once again the bell rang calling children to school in the log meeting house. Meals were served Fort-style under a tarp for shade with sand under foot. Evening programs taught the James Monroe Redd heritage. Quilts were finished for the Redd cabin and a duplicate dress of Grandma Lucinda's was ready to be hung in her cabin. Great organization by the McConkies! Thank you for coming and working so diligently! What an experience! We love and appreciate you all. Bluff Fort will now become your "special place" too.

Prior to the McConkie family's arrival, we had retirees volunteer their building skills. Later some returned for another week to build rock chimneys, benches, etc. Thanks Gary & Dixie Taylor, Stan & Gay Jones, Ron & Linda Snowden, Grant & Nina Taylor, John Cox, Brandon Cox, Jack Muterspraugh, Carl Mackay, Jeff Youngstrom, Rob Briem and to Graig Taylor, our anchor who shared the Fort dream from the very beginning. Mucho Gracias.

We invite you to have an ancestor cabin in the Fort. Would your family like to have a "cabin rais'in" too? Visit our website at www.hirf.org or email us at inquiry@hirf.org.

Come to Bluff Fort because it's changing fast. Call and we will tour together.

Corinne Roring, HIRF President

EXCERPT FROM SLICK ROCK JOURNAL

Joy Lyman Olson didn't grow up in Bluff, but it's a part of her family legacy, as she explains here. In this journal entry, she shares her experience connecting with a part of her heritage.

These two words, "slick rock," were the most fascinating words of my childhood growing up in Washington state. They were always present in the stories my dad, Almon Lyman, told about his grandparents in Utah whom he so much admired. These words were embedded deeply in the foundation of my imagination, so as I grew, the magic of these words increased exponentially with every year, eventually driving me to visit the southwest as much as possible.

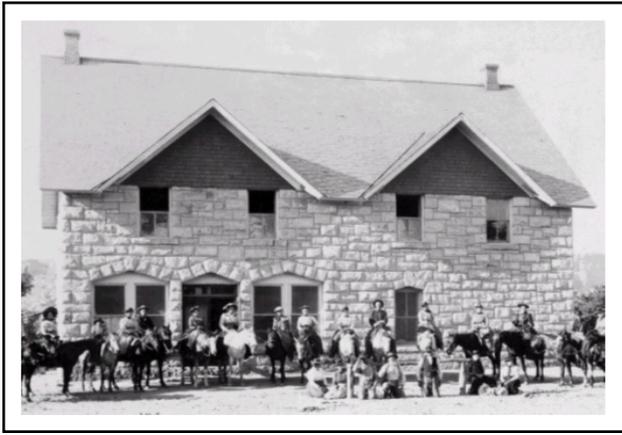
And now, at age 63, I am experiencing slick rock, not as the San Juan pioneers did, as a barrier to their progress. Nor as the horses did, valiantly giving up their skin and hair on their knees as they scrambled for traction with their iron shoes on slick rock. But I am experiencing it as connection to the heart and soul of my tough ancestors, to my story-telling Daddy who has been long gone since 1965, and as the here-and-now reality of adventure into one of the wildest places left in America...the east side of the Hole-in-the-Rock.

NEW HIRF WEBSITE JANUARY 2009

The Hole in the Rock Foundation is excited to announce our new website which will debut January 1, 2009. The new site will include an extensive image galley with video fly-overs of all of the significant portions of the Hole-in-the-Rock Trail. The website will also provide detailed trail guides, video tours of Bluff Fort, and highlights of past service projects. Visitors can read online histories and share bibliographies and photos of their ancestors. Newsletter will also be posted on the site.

The web address will remain www.hirf.org. **We invite everyone to register** with us on the registration page on the new website. This will allow us to keep our records current and allow you to sign up for future newsletters and updates. It is not too late to submit your ancestor's bibliography and photos for inclusion in the initial launch. Please submit online at: inquiry@hirf.org.

Several jackets and sweatshirts were left behind after the "cabin raising." To reclaim them, please call LaRue Barton at 435-587-9917 or 435-672-9967



The Bluff Co-op store stone structure

FEDERAL SCENIC BY-WAYS GRANT BRINGS BACK BLUFF CO-OP STORE

In the early days of Bluff, the co-op store was the hub of economic and social activity. Navajo and Ute tribes also came to trade their wool, pelts and woven goods. Near the turn of the century, the log structure was replaced with a two-story stone building. The upper floor of the new store was used as the community's dance hall. In 1925, a bank robber, alias Frank Starr, tried to rob the co-op by blasting open the safe. However, he used too many sticks of dynamite which caused the demise of both the co-op store and Frank Starr.

In May 2008, the Hole in the Rock Foundation received a Federal Scenic By-ways grant of \$486,000. This money will be used to build a replica of the original co-op store. We anticipate starting construction in 2010.

Ron Snowdon, a dear friend of the fort, has offered to help us negotiate the new structure. We look forward to making the co-op store a central part of the fort experience once again.

WORKING AT THE BLUFF FORT WELCOME CENTER

It has been my privilege to work at the Bluff Fort Museum/Visitor Center/Gift shop since it opened on July 1st. The building had been completely remodeled and the shelves have been stocked with old-fashioned candy sticks, fudge, shirts, toys, and other items. But the best part of the job is sharing our story with people from all over the world. Visitors from France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Austria, and the United Kingdom are fascinated by the story of the early Bluff settlers and their willingness to sacrifice so much to follow the counsel of their church leaders.

Visitors to the fort are always excited to learn that I am a descendent of one of the original Hole in the Rock pioneers. They ask questions like, "Are Bluff residents descendants of the pioneers?" "Do they get along with the Native Americans?" "Where can we see hieroglyphics?" "Can we swim in the river?" Occasionally their questions get a little more

complicated, like "What do Mormons believe?" The visitors are always willing to listen and learn. It's so much fun! One man from Germany showed me that my piano actually sounds wonderful when it is played by someone who knows how!

During slow times, I knit, crochet or read, and there are always weeds to hoe and cobwebs to dust. If you would like to participate at the Welcome Center, let me know as I am willing to share some of the fun times with you. You will love it!

LaRue Barton, HIRF Secretary

WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE

We are still seeking email and regular mailing addresses for friends and family of the fort. We'd like to include them on our newsletter mailing list.

Please send addresses to larueb@frontiernet.net

or mail to:

LaRue Barton Box #593

Monticello, UT 84535

EXPERIENCE THE TRAIL IN A WHOLE NEW WAY

One of our objectives as a foundation is to help family members and friends have a Hole in the Rock trail experience. The trail is unique in that you can do sections of it by car, boat, 4-wheeler, on foot...and now by handcart!

This summer, with generous contributions from Martin's Cove and the Snow Flake Stake, we obtained twenty two handcarts for your use. With the help of John & Carolyn Cox and Rob & Nyla Briem the handcarts made their way to the Fort.

We invite you to start talking with your family, friends and church groups and planning your Hole in the Rock trail experience. To learn more, email us at inquiry@hirf.org.



BUILDING CABINS AT BLUFF

What do the descendants of the Hole in the Rock pioneers have in common with their ancestors? “Stickety tootie” as settler Jens Nielson called it: determination and dedication.

In October of this year, three families of Bluff descendants gathered at the old Fort and raised three new log cabins: the Amasa Barton cabin, the Barton blacksmith shop, and the James Monroe Redd cabin. Even while hoisting the 400 pound beams, the workers expressed sentiments such as “this has been a life-changing experiencing,” “we’ll be back,” and “we’re hooked.”

The Hole in the Rock Foundation has received commitments and funding for eight more cabins which will include the Explorer cabin, the Lemuel Redd cabin, the Albert R. Lyman cabin, the Ben Perkins cabin, the Jens Nielson cabin, the Jody Wood cabin and the Theil Haskells cabin. This leaves just 10 more cabin sites left at the fort.

The purpose of adopting and raising a cabin is to let families have a pioneer experience that puts them in touch with their ancestors and brings the family together in a common cause.

We anticipate completing the remaining cabins over the next two years. Reserve a spot for your family cabin by e-mailing inquiry@hirf.org

Contributions to Hole in the Rock Foundation can be made online at www.hirf.org or mailed to:
Hole in the Rock Foundation
P.O. Box# 476
Bluff, Utah 84512

Jeff Youngstrom, contractor for the cabin reconstruction project at Bluff Fort, shares his thoughts about the project.



“As a contractor with 21 years of experience in log home construction, I have never worked on a project that I felt was so inspired. With the site dedication only

four days away, I knew there was a significant amount of work to be done. What I didn’t know was that an incredible group of people, including women and children, would willingly take on every task from stacking logs to making sod roofs. Even the children helped by carrying tools back and forth. I actually choked up as I watched all of these people working together. I couldn’t help but wonder if this was what it was like when the original cabins were built. It was awe-inspiring.”

“After the dedication, I walked back to the job site. It now felt almost sacred. I felt certain peace and understanding of what had been accomplished.”

THE ESCALANTE HERITAGE CENTER



Escalante Heritage Center Board: Quinn Griffin, Executive Director; Jerry Roundy, Board Chairman; Sherree Roundy, Board Member; Gael Hill, Liaison Officer between EHC and UDOT; Louise Barnes, Board Member (fund raising); Joyce Griffin, Secretary; Clem Griffin, Board Member. Absent, Stephen Steed, Board Member.

The Escalante Heritage Center Board is pleased to announce Land mark Design has completed a feasibility study, and a heritage center will be built in Escalante on nine acres donated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The Utah Department of Transportation (Richfield Office) has also given the Heritage Center a grant of \$125,000. On October 29th a contract was signed by County Commissioner Clare Ramsey on behalf of Garfield County. UDOT will release \$500,000 of funds, matched by \$167,000 from the Escalante Heritage Center, to begin the first phase of construction.

The Heritage Center will tell the epic journey of the San Juan/Hole-in-the-Rock Pioneers in 1879-80. The telling of the tale begins in Escalante and concludes in Bluff.

Historian David McCullough said, “How can we know who we are and where we are going if we don’t know anything about where we have come from and what we have been through, the courage shown, the costs paid, to be where we are?”

The Escalante Heritage Center will teach about the early settlement of the Escalante Valley and the struggle for survival these settlers faced so far from any other community.

The new Heritage Center will include a resource room where visitors can read family histories. We urge anyone with histories relating to Escalante or the Hole-in-the-Rock pioneers to send them to Sherree Roundy at Box 439, Escalante, Utah 84726.

While we hope to fund the majority of the project with grants, we still need financial help with fences, water lines, power lines and other small projects. The Escalante Heritage Center is a 501(C)3 corporation and all donations are tax deductible.

To donate, contact:

Jerry Roundy
Box439
Escalante, UT 84726

or

Quinn Griffin
Box 315
Escalante, UT 84726

COVERED WAGONS JOIN TWO CULTURES AND TWO COUNTRIES

Gunter Liebich, a German Latter-day Saint, can still remember being evacuated from Salzia, Poland as boy after World War II. His father was being held prisoner in a POW camp in France, so his mother loaded all of their belonging into a wagon and moved the family back to Germany. Ever since Gunter has had a real love of wagons. He began collecting them and eventually acquired over 30.



As Gunter grew older, he wondered what would happen to his marvelous wagon collection. He shipped two of his wagons to the U.S. for the Church of Jesus Christ's

Sesquicentennial re-enactment of the Mormon pioneers' wagon trek to Utah. Gunter offered to donate his wagon collection to the church, but his offer was declined.

Years went by, and then a small miracle happened. Through a series of "coincidences," Gunter found the Hole in the Rock Foundation. He felt a kinship with the early Bluff pioneer who had been called by President John Taylor to leave their homes and establish a settlement in San Juan County. Gunter Liebich and Steven Pratt, a historical restorationist from Cove Fort, discussed how his collection might help tell two stories of courage and faith, and philanthropist Bert Smith provided the money to ship the wagons to the U.S.

Graig, Grant and Mark Taylor, along with Gunter's son Thomi, flew to Hamburg to pack the wagons and prepare them for shipping. However, company regulations, time zones, and holidays all combined to delay the operation. Ultimately, the men had only a few hours to pack 18 wagons plus additional 250 pound wheels. Dieter Lunning, a member of the Church of Jesus Christ living in Hamburg, offered to help as did local LDS missionaries. In less than four hours the container was packed, the customs officer placed his seal on the container, and it was on its way.

When the container arrived in Utah, the Taylors, along with Rob Briens and John Cox, were ready to unload and reassemble the wagons. Alex, Patrick and Zeke, local Native Americans, showed up at the fort and offered their help. LaRue Barton, Corrine Roring and her grandson Craig also joined in. Within two hours the container was unloaded, and by evening all of the wagons had been reassembled at placed at the fort.

Corrine Roring, HIRF president, has always said, "when the time is right, it will happen," and it certainly has. When needs have arisen, people like Gunter, Dieter, Patrick, Alex, and Zeke have stepped in and played a major part in preserving Bluff Fort and its history for a whole new generation.

4-WHEELING ON THE HOLE IN THE ROCK TRAIL

This Spring, we had a great Hole in the Rock trail experience: we had six vehicles, 25 people and a difficult stretch of the trail to tackle...in 4-wheelers. The damage to the road caused by the rain waters in October of 2006 was amazing.

The trail goes over a hill that we named Honk Hill. One of the members of our groups had inadvertently punched his vehicle's horn as we bounced along, and this is how Honk Hill got its name. After about 1 ½ miles the trail joins back up with the mining road and continues along the trail.

We drove all the way to the Great Bend of the San Juan, seen from the top of Grey Mesa. We discovered that we had great cell phone service there, so we made a few calls home and then jumped back in our vehicles including a Hummer driven by Joseph Sorenson, a Jeep Rubicon, and two lifted Cherokees driven by Dave Fraden and Adam Lignell. Andrew Fitzpatrick brought up the rear with a lifted Jeep Wrangler with a winch.

That night we cooked steak over coals with dutch oven potatoes, sautéed mushrooms and peach cobbler for dessert. No one ever goes hungry on our trips.

The next day, rather than trying to make it to Cottonwood, we decided to go to Tower Ruins. In 1879, the last 4 scouts of the Hole-in-the-Rock pioneers had stayed there one night before Christmas. We had Laurel Casjens from the Office of Museum Services with us. She had worked down in San Juan County as an archeologist and so knew lots about the culture of the cliff dwelling Native Americans. She gave us a disc with all of her professional photographs of the trail as a present. These photos are on display at the new Welcome Center.

It is amazing how many different ways the trail can be experienced. In addition to 4-wheeling, some parts are great for hiking and the slick rock portions are perfect for biking. It is the many variations of the trail that make it so inviting.



When planning a trip out to

Cottonwood Canyon, take someone along who knows the trail or talk with someone who does. Be sure to bring enough water and gas and be prepared for any possible mechanical difficulties. Remember, safety first. Take your time and enjoy the trail. Plan on sleeping in a campground along the way. It's only 30 miles, but it's a rough round trip.

To learn more about the trail, email gptaylor50@comcast.net

THANK YOU'S

This year, with your help, we have acquired wagons and handcarts, re-built three cabins and made substantial improvements at Bluff Fort. "Thanks" is not a big enough word to express our appreciation for your continued help. The following, during the months of April to October 2008, have contributed to Bluff Fort and earned our sincerest gratitude. (List does not have the names of those donors who wish to remain anonymous.)

Gunther Liebiec	Elaine Jensen	Richard & Nadine Fairbanks
Tommy Liebiec	Wyman Redd	Lynn & Carol Fairbanks
Dieter Lunning	Joe K. Holyoak	MaryLou Kosanke
Bert Smith	Holyoak Family	Jon & Janie Lauritzen
Steve Pratt	Oscar & Judy McConkie	Jim Hardin
Grant & Nina Taylor	Clea Johnson	Ron & Merle McDonald
Mark Taylor	Lyman Holyoak	Amanda Bouchard
John & Brandon Cox	Rebecca Pierce Simmons	Amer & Cindy Tumeh
Rob & Nyla Briem	Doris A. Alexander	Stanford & Kathy McConkie
Polar Bear Club Martin's Cove	Linda Bohn	Paul McConkie & Family
Elder & Sister Longson	Whitney J. Redd	David & Marie Adams Family
Elder & Sister Vanhorn	W.E. & Harriet Rasmussen	Carlos & Vivian Adams
Elder & Sister Taylor	Dorothy Nielson	Mariana Allan & Family
Church of Jesus Christ Snow Flake Stake	Stephen & Mary Nielson	Bethany Crowton & Family
Karl & LaRue Barton	Ellen Atkin	Ben & Mary Donoho
Gordon & Rebecca Lyman	Amy Gregerson	David Donoho
S & B Specialty Paints	Kirk & Nancy Helquist	Robert Donoho
Gordon Naberker	Enid Curtis	David & JoAnne McConkie Family
U.D.O.T.	Donald Walker	Preston & Sarah Gudmunson Family
Sorenson Legacy Foundation	Van S. Mays (in memory of Montel Seely)	Nate & Becky Hendricksen
Office of Museum Services	Francis Madison	Kurt & Shanna Jensen Family
Eccles Foundation	Harold K. Monson	Matthew & Julie Maddox Family
James & Beverly Sorenson	Dr. L.L. Bateman	Lewis & Chris Pope
Sons of the Utah Pioneers	James Giauque	Michael & Rebecca Pinegar Family
Stan & Gay Jones	Joseph Woods	Andrew & Marcinelle Sarager Family
Steve & Alison Jones	Joseph Pierce	Kent & Jeannine Savage Family
Timberline Log Homes	Francis & Constance Madsen	Wayne & Patrice Tew
Yellowstone Log Homes	Owen & Colleen Burnham	Stewart & Bonnie Wright
Gary Guyman	Katherine Mark	Seth & Lark Sarager
Alex, Zeke & Patrick	Jack & Erma Redd	Bryan & Noelle Wright Family
Mike & Craig Roring	Jerry Jasper	James & Amy Wright Family
Buzz & Anne Woods	Carl Mackay	Ed & Lisa McConkie Family
Ruth Nielson	Ed & Valerie Platt	Matt & Nicole McConkie Family
Marian Bayles	Corinne Roring	David McConkie & Family
Dorothy Hurst	Ron & Linda Snowden	Michael & Gina McConkie
LaJune Bogh Leishman	Gary & Dixie Taylor	Richard McConkie
Bruce & Karen Powell	Jeff Youngstrom	Joseph McConkie
Montell Seely	Kay & Patsy Shumway	Raymond Beckham
David & Kathrine Paxman	Conager Wells	Gabriel Nichleson
Joseph & Brenda McConkie	Vance & Laura Nielson	LaNell Winn
Anita Crockett	Donald Jensen	Kena Winn

THE FORT SPEAKS

"It's more beautiful now than in 2003." —France

"Beautiful place, lots of things to do and see." —Slovakia

"Haven't come across anything quite like this yet." —New Zealand

"Bello! Here we can really touch and smell your glorious history. Bravo!" —Italy

"We love this little town! Very interesting for us, it's better than western movies!" —France

THE SPIRIT OF PLACE

The November 8, 2008 issue of the Church News featured Bluff Fort, the story of the early Bluff settlers, and their descendants who returned to the Fort in Oct. of this year to build three new cabins on the site.

“Places of historic, religious and personal significance carry with them a special and distinctive spirit. We know it as the ‘spirit of place.’

This spirit unlocks feelings and understanding that invite us to be a part of things bigger than ourselves. We sense that the ground upon which we walk is sacred.

By such a standard, Bluff, Utah, founded April 6, 1880, by a hardy company of Mormon pioneers whose faith and “sticky tootie” is unmatched in the annals of pioneering has claim to being sacred ground.” —Joseph Fielding McConkie

Ron Snowdon, a volunteer in the cabin re-construction project, expressed how he experienced the “spirit of place” at Bluff Fort. “We walked the ground, tasted the blowing sand, enjoyed the heat and hefted logs until our backs gave out. We now have far more respect for our pioneer ancestors and understand their lives far more as a result of following in their footsteps.”

Read more about the Bluff cabin construction project in the Church News.

Descendants say the breach ahead of their ancestors blazing the path for settlement in the San Juan Mission was a feat of "unparalleled difficulty." David McConkie, below, is among those re-creating Bluff Fort.

The spirit of place

Feat of Hole in the Rock settlers unmatched in annals of pioneer history

President John Taylor called about 250 people in 1879 to leave their established homes in the Cedar City area to colonize the San Juan Mission in southeastern Utah. Their six-month ordeal of traversing through much uncharted territory has been described by descendants as a feat of "unparalleled difficulty." They blasted rock and carved a passageway through a sheer 1,300-foot crevice now known as Hole in the Rock. Such faith may be obscured by the remoteness of the area. Descendants are honoring their ancestors by re-creating the original fort with cabins.

Three cabins built in honor of ancestors, see page 10.

Places of historic, religious and personal significance carry with them a special and distinctive spirit. We know it as the 'spirit of place.' This spirit unlocks feelings and understanding that invite us to be a part of things bigger than ourselves. We sense that the ground upon which we walk is sacred. By such a standard, Bluff, Utah, founded April 6, 1880, by a hardy company of Mormon pioneers whose faith and "sticky tootie" is unmatched in the annals of pioneering has claim to being sacred ground. —Joseph Fielding McConkie and the first bishop of Bluff who said that "with a little sticky tootie we cannot fail."

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