

HOLE IN THE ROCK NEWS

Preserving the History and Sharing the Legacy

Volume 7 Fall 2009



AN UNBELIEVABLE DAY; A GLORIOUS AFFAIR

This whole week, I have awoken in the early morning with the feeling that I have experienced a wonderful, unbelievable dream! The dedication of the John Taylor statue on October 24, 2009 seemed almost unreal. Did it really happen? I called other Hole in the Rock Foundation (HIRF) board members and found out that we all were feeling the same way. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that we'd get an apostle, a governor, a professor, and the Sorenson Family all together at our humble little fort in Bluff. But it happened!



Dale & Donna Slade and Stan and Polly Johnson

Volunteers from far and near spent many long hours getting the Fort groomed and ready for the great event. Even the weather cooperated, and it was a perfectly beautiful day. I wish you all could have been there.

The Sorenson jet flew into the Blanding airport early Saturday morning with Beverley Sorensen and her two sons Joseph and James and their wives Kathleen and Nina, Elder L. Tom Perry, Utah Governor Gary Herbert, and Mary Jane Woodger, a BYU professor, on board. The Ben Black escort crew, consisting of HIRF members Graig and Grant Taylor and Corinne & Mike Roring, were waiting to take them to the Bluff Fort.

The day started with a brunch of johnny cakes and sausage. While they were eating, three little Navajo girls, under the direction of Clayton Long, danced for our guests on our new spot of green grass (put in by Grant our green man). Our guests took a short tour of the fort and the statue, and LaRue Barton gave a video presentation at the Visitors' Center. Then it was

time for the dedication program. Afterwards, the group went to see San Juan Hill. By then it was after noon and a lunch was ready at the Rincon where they could sit and view San Juan Hill. With the excitement of traveling Comb Wash over, our guests were taken back to the Fort where they were presented with appreciation bags containing homemade jams, pickles and honey candy. Elder Perry and Sister Sorenson were each given a Kelly Pugh (local artist) painting of President Taylor on horseback, guiding a wagon train to the Salt Lake valley. We hope it will remind them of their trip to Bluff Fort long after they have flown home.

continued on page 2.

A special "Thank You" to the Sorenson family for donating the John Taylor monument.

THE FULFILLMENT OF A DREAM

Stan Johnson is the sculptor of the new John Taylor monument at Bluff Fort. He lives in Parowan, Utah and is known for bronze works with Native American themes. Stan shared the following mission experience with us.

When I served an LDS mission in Denmark, I had a chance to see the works of Bertel Thorvaldsen in the Fruekirke in Copenhagen, including the original 12 apostles and the Christus in white marble, in heroic (larger than life) size. It was an overwhelming experience for me. At the time, I had spent one year at the University of Utah studying art, not sculpture.

Following this experience, I had a dream in which it was made known to me that I would, in my lifetime, accomplish similar works of our present day apostles and prophets.

Stan has previously sculpted a heroic-sized statue of the apostle Parley P. Pratt which can be seen at a park in Parowan.

Being commissioned to do the statue of President John Taylor was a further fulfillment of Stan's dream.



Dell Taylor and Stan Johnson

AN UNBELIEVABLE DAY CONTINUED

A week before the dedication, three more cabins were built by the families of Samuel Wood, Parley Butt and F. I. Jones. These were paid for by Frederick Hansen Jones for his three grandparents. Their descendants came and put up the cabins in three days. Cabin raisin' is rewarding. You meet new cousins with family resemblances (Fred has the Jones nose and piercing blue eyes), you work hard, eat good food sitting under the shade of a new patio (no fast foods here), you get a new suntan, and share great family stories. You laugh lots, fuss little, shed a few tears, enjoy pure well water, and get sand in your hair and clothes, but you don't even care for you are busy with your families. You leave with a deeper appreciation for your forefathers and knowing you belong to our growing Fort family. You will return to re-visit your cabins and connect again, and be reassured that your life is good.

At the end of the John Taylor monument dedication day, when all were gone and the Fort was empty, the sky turned into a brilliant, soft red-and-orange desert sunset. A quiet, calm light fell upon the statue with the hand pointing to the wall of our ancestors' names, and all was well...all was well. I stood there in the twilight of that place with tears falling and a thankful heart for my Jens and Kirsten, my Charles and Jane, my Fred and Mary and for you and all of yours. I knew it was all worth it; they are worth it. I believe they approve, and that is good. Yes, this humble little Fort was meant to be, and the time is now. And your support and your hard work are making it a lasting memorial to them.

When Utah became a state, Francis Hammond, the Stake President, recorded: "Bluff had a big celebration. We rang both bells (school and church house), had a great feast, we danced until midnight, and it was a GLORIOUS AFFAIR!" And so, too, was October 24, 2009...a glorious affair in beautiful Bluff.

Corinne Roring, HIRF President

Three new cabins went up in Bluff in October, in record time...three cabins in three days. Their incredible building team shared their experiences with us. Read on!



ANSWERING THE CALL

The call came quite differently than it did in 1880. It came via telephone, e-mail, and the postal service. It came to the descendants of those original pioneers who had left their families, homes, lands and businesses to go and settle a remote, desolate part of southeastern Utah and establish peaceful realtions with the Indians.

In 2009, our call came to go and build a cabin to memorialize our forbears. People from Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, California, and Utah answered the call! Helen Nelson, a great granddaughter of Samuel & Jody Wood, said, "Our hearts burst with love for the heritage and knowledge of those who were willing to follow the prophet. It is difficult to comprehend the faith, conviction and strength that those who answered that original call possessed. We live in such ease, and know very little about the word 'sacrifice.'"

Our group was approximately eighty strong, and we actually built not one, but three cabins to honor Parley Butt, Frederick Jones, Samuel Wood and their families. Who knew that we would have such a wonderful experience, covered with mud, sawdust and perspiration amidst the din of hammer and saws? Logs were lifted into place. Mud was pressed between the logs, and seeded soil was dumped and raked on top of the roof. Another grand-daughter, Terry Baker, said: "We labored together, family and friends. We renewed family ties. My thoughts turned to those early settlers, their sacrifice, faith, accomplishments and perseverance."

Many of our group said things like, "this was a once in a lifetime experience," "I would do it again," and "this was life-changing." We became reacquainted with ourselves and our ancestors, and we experienced many moments of inspiration.

A side trip to San Juan Hill brought us even closer to our forbears. We stood on the edge of their realm of reality, and we knew that our ancestors were gifted with strength beyond their own. They crossed a terrain that seemed to resist every attempt to move forward. We saw words carved into the side of the sandstone mountain: 'We Thank Thee O God.' Terry said, "I thought to myself, 'yes, we thank thee O God for our faithful, valiant ancestors.'"

My appreciation for my heritage has deepened a thousand-fold, and I feel humble gratitude to all of those who joined us in answering 'the call of 2009.' May we ever be united.

We are all grateful for Corinne Roring's vision, and for the chance to rub shoulders with Graig and Grant Taylor and everyone at the Hole in the Rock Foundation. I cannot express my gratitude to those who provided wonderful meals, to the drivers and guides to San Juan Hill, and those who treated us to an unfathomable journey of reflection and wonder. May God bless you all!

Kathern Hansen Marks,
granddaughter of Samuel & Jody Wood

HONORING THEIR MEMORIES

October 14-17, descendants of Frederick & Mary Jones, Samuel, Josephine (Aunt Jody) and Emma Wood, and Parley, Ency B. and Edith B. Butt joined forces to construct three cabins, in honor of their ancestors, in record time. Thanks to the incredible commitment of these families, everything was ready in time for the dedication of the John Taylor monument. The following are short histories of those to whom these cabins are dedicated.

Frederick and Mary Jones

Frederick and Mary Jones were only 32 years-old, married for three years, when they accepted a call to travel with the second company that left Cedar City in October of 1882, for Bluff, Utah. Three weeks later, they traversed the Colorado River at Halls Crossing, and after approximately thirty days, they arrived at their destination.

Fred Jones was an industrious man, and in spite of Bluff's remote location and very few resources, the Jones family was still able to construct a crude dwelling and create a few conveniences. In 1884, the Jones family moved out of their first home at the Fort and built a one-room home with a thatched mud roof.

In March 1887, after accepting another church calling, the Jones family moved to the Blue Mountains to help establish the town of Monticello. There Frederick Jones served as a bishop for over 25 years. He was a farmer and rancher and was part owner of the telephone company, the grist mill, and the water and power company.

Samuel and Jody Wood



Samuel & Jody

Also leaving Cedar City and traveling in the second company to Bluff were Samuel and Jody Wood. In preparation for his journey, Samuel traded his home, business and land for teams of horses, wagons, and a few sacks of bran. It was precious little gain for such a big investment. Samuel, with his trademark humor remarked, "Jody [even] gave back the bran so the neighbors could feed their hungry pigs." But the Wood family had received a call, and they answered.

Hyrum Perkins, who had been at Bluff, was sent back to Cedar City to pilot his new small band of pioneers through the wilderness. They traveled on rough trails, around mountainous cliffs, through drifting sand, and across jagged piles of rock, all under a relentless sun. Children begged for water and cried from thirst. The heavy heat became biting cold, and as the seasons changed they encountered heavy snow drifts and icy

winds.

Jody kept a journal, and when it came time to cross the raging Colorado River, she wrote, "Now it is our turn...oh, pray for us." Brother Fred Jones drove their wagon onto the raft, with Jody and her children inside, and tied it down. "My heart went faint as the raft went into the water," Jody wrote. "Before we started, I asked Fred to nail the cover down on all sides of the wagon so that if we drowned, we would all go down together, and he did." Other men helped Samuel row the raft to the bank on the other side.

Even after crossing the river successfully, the band was still 100 miles from Bluff, but they forged ahead and arrived at their destination sometime in late December.

In 1885, Samuel married Emma Elliker and joined her to the family. Even though she had no formal training, Jody served as nurse and doctor to the San Juan communities, and she was the midwife for the entire region. For the next 25 years, Samuel, Jody and Emma lived, worked and served others in Southeastern Utah.

Parley and Ency Butt



Children of Parley Butt

In the spring of 1879, Parley Butt was only 17 years-old when accepted a call from the church to join 26 men, two women, and a few children in a scouting expedition assigned to find a way to the San Juan. A larger party was expected to follow their trail in the coming fall. They took the old Spanish trail of 1540. It was a difficult journey. They suffered from intense heat, a lack of food and water, and the constant threat of hostile Native Americans.

When the time came for the large party to set out, Parley accompanied the first colony, which traveled through the Hole in the Rock. Once they had established a foothold in Bluff, Parley returned to Parowan for his bride, Ency Bayles. They created a home together in Bluff. Although they faced fears and hardships they were happy.

Eight years later, they moved their family from Bluff to Verdure. They built a log house with a dirt roof and made it a home with affection, charity, sympathy, humility and faith. In the evenings, Ency and Parley would frolic with the children before tucking them into bed and listening to their prayers

Once, when Ency and the children were gathering wild flowers, they came upon a knoll. Ency remarked, "this would make a good resting place for Christians." Not long afterwards, on October 11, 1897, this knoll became the final resting place for Ency. Those who chose this spot for her didn't know why it felt so right, but her children knew.

DEDICATING THE JOHN TAYLOR MONUMENT: A DAY IN REVIEW



October 24th was truly a “Blue Ribbon Day” at Bluff Fort. A full-sized bronze statue of President John Taylor was dedicated by Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, at a dedication/celebration held at 11:00 a.m. in front of the Hole in the Rock Monument.

Speakers at the dedication included the Honorable Gary Herbert, Governor of Utah; Mary Jane Woodger, a professor of

history at BYU; and Elder L. Tom Perry. Also attending were San Juan County Commissioners, Lynn Stevens, Kenneth Maryboy, Bruce Adams, and former commissioner Mark Maryboy, and commissioners from Garfield and Juab counties.

The Governor spoke about John Taylor as a statesman, legislator and colonizer who continued Brigham Young's example and added over 100 new settlements to Utah, including ones in San Juan County.

Mary Jane spoke of John Taylor as the ‘Champion of Right’ and his unwavering devotion to God. She bore testimony of his calling and his diligence in declaring the Gospel.

Elder Perry, in his full voice, quoted with power from *The Mormon*, a newspaper the early saints published to combat the false accusations of the *New York Herald and Tribune*. He also told the story of John Taylor's conversion and unwavering faith in the Prophet Joseph Smith.

James Sorenson, descendant of John Taylor, sang “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief,” first with the melody in which it was sung in 1844, and then with the melody we know today. This song was a favorite of Joseph Smith's, and John Taylor sung it at his request just two hours before Joseph was martyred.

Beverley Sorenson and her son Joseph unveiled the beautiful bronze statue of John Taylor to the applause from 500 on-lookers. Stanley Johnson, the sculptor, stood by beaming with pride.

Joseph Sorenson said earlier that week, as the statue was being placed on the mount, “It's truly fitting to have President Taylor in Bluff to celebrate the faith and dedication of the Hole in the Rock Pioneers.” The monument stands just to the northwest of the Hole in the Rock Monument. The stonework on the mount was done by Vance Seeley, a stone mason extraordinaire. We are grateful to Vance for donating much of his time.

The Blue Mountain Strings, under the direction of Mary Ann Lyman, played prelude and postlude music. They added so much to a beautiful day of blue skies and warm temperatures.

The day seemed to move along in almost flawless fashion with

the help of an army of volunteers. Thanks to Taylor Lyman for the sound system, President Isaac Chamberlain for the risers, and the kitchen staff for feeding 350 people a traditional Johnny Cake breakfast.

After the dedication of the monument, *The Panorama*, *The San Juan Record*, and *The Church News* took press photos. Our guests were then bussed to Comb Wash where they rode 4-wheelers and Excursions to San Juan Hill. Lunch was served at the base of the hill, and everyone was able to see, first-hand, the degree of difficulty the Mormon Pioneers had in navigating this final obstacle.

Gifts were presented and our guests were escorted back to the Blanding Airport. As Elder Perry hugged Graig Taylor just before boarding the plane, he said, “Keep it up, we're behind you all the way.”

Thanks to all who made the dedication such a great day.
Grant Taylor

THERE'S STILL WORK TO BE DONE

Descendant of Jens Nielson are raising money for a cabin which is scheduled to be raised May 6-8, 2010. Nearly five thousand dollars has already been raised. If each of Jens' descendants, who reads this newsletter, can make a donation, we'll have the necessary amount to build the cabin.

If you would like to participate in the Nielsen cabin raising, please send your name and address to:
The Hole in the Rock Foundation
PO Box 476
Bluff, Utah 84512

Funds are also being raised for a cabin that will honor Cornelius Isaac & Elizabeth Decker, James Bean & Anna Maria Decker, Nathaniel Alvin & Emma Morris Decker, Zachariah Jr. & Emma Seraphine Smith Decker, and Zachariah Decker Sr.

The Foundation has received some money to go towards a cabin honoring Charles Eugene Sr. & Jane McKetchnie Walton. The dates for the construction of the Decker and Walton cabins have not yet been determined. If you would like to make a donation for the Decker, Nielson or Walton cabins, please send a tax deductible contribution to the Hole in the Rock Foundation at PO Box 476 Bluff, UT 84512. Please note to which cabin you would like the funds to go.

If any other families are raising money for cabins, please let the Foundation know immediately, because we only have a few spaces for family cabins left.

The Foundation also needs financial support for the upkeep of the Fort and future building projects such as a restroom facility. Your help would be greatly appreciated. Please send general donations to the address above. Thank you.

The Visitors Center is closed Nov. 1st-Feb. 28th. If you would like to see the Hole in the Rock trail DVD, please call LaRue Barton at 435-672-9967. If she is at home, she will be happy to show it to you.

LYMAN CABIN: COMMEMORATING A LEGACY OF FAITH AND ENDURANCE

For years, we have idolized our Lyman forefathers who lived the dramatic adventure of The Hole in the Rock trek. Now, as we remember them and that spectacular journey, we honor them by building a log cabin in their memory at old Bluff Fort.

There were four Lyman brothers and two Lyman sisters who made that trip. Platte DeAlton Lyman, Captain of the Hole in the Rock company, and his brother Joseph Alvin Lyman were both sons of Eliza Maria Partridge and Apostle Amasa Mason Lyman. Walter Clisbee Lyman was the founder of Blanding, Utah and the son of Apostle Lyman and Caroline Ely Partridge, and Edward Leo Lyman was the son of Apostle Lyman and Lydia Partridge. (All three of the Partridge sisters, daughters of the first presiding Bishop of the Mormon Church Edward Partridge, were married to Apostle Lyman.) The two Lyman sisters on the trek were daughters of Lydia Partridge. Ida Evelyn Lyman was married to Hans Joseph Nielson (son of Jens Nielsen and his wife Kirsten), and Lydia May Lyman was married to Kumen Jones.

The Hole in the Rock pioneers who arrived at Bluff on April 6, 1880 were a bedraggled group of men, women, children, oxen, horses, and mules. The journey they thought would last six weeks had lasted six months, and they had endured bad weather, killing terrain, hunger and privation.

They built humble cabins out of cottonwood trees. The roofs and floor were made of dirt which kept most of the weather out, but not the water. When it rained the roofs drizzled muddy water into the cabins, adding to the discomfort of their challenging circumstances.

In the spring, the San Juan river overflowed its banks, flooding fields and homes and ruining crops and belongings. It was difficult and discouraging, and some settlers sent appeals to church headquarters to be released from their mission. Members of the Council of the Twelve left church headquarters and visited Bluff, but they asked the settlers to stay and continue their efforts to forge a peace with the Ute and Navajo Indian tribes. The faithful remained and persevered.

June 29, 2009, descendants of the Lyman families gathered at Bluff Fort to build a commemorative cabin. 44 men, women and teenagers worked on the structure. 32 children visited the Fort's buildings, learned to weave rugs, played pioneer games, and listened to stories about their ancestors. On July 1st, everyone gathered in the Meeting Hall to sing pioneer hymns, accompanied by Dennis Harvey on the harmonica. Clayton Lyman conducted the cabin dedication service which included an invocation by Jed Lyman, a talk by Grant Taylor about the restoration of the Fort, a talk by Scott Lyman about our heritage, and finally a dedicatory prayer by Ed Platt. It was a memorable experience for everyone.

The Lyman and Perkins families give thanks to Corrine Roring and her Board of Directors for their great leadership and the magnificent restoration of the Old Bluff Fort.

Clayson Wells Lyman

PERKINS' MEMORIAL CABIN: ADDING OUR SWEAT AND TOIL TO THEIRS

As the sun peeked through the sandstone crevices along the San Juan River, a group of anxious workers arrived at the Old Bluff Fort Historical Site. They had come to build a small log cabin to commemorate Hyrum and Benjamin Perkins' settlement of Bluff in 1880.

Logs had been hewn prior to their arrival. Now they were placed over steel anchors previously installed in concrete slabs. Power drills anchored the logs. Chain saws ripped openings for doors and windows. Poles for the roof were set in place with power drills. A rubber liner was cut to fit the roof structure. A backhoe dumped loads of dirt on the roof top to re-create the sod roofs of the original 1880 cabin structures. Bentanite was mixed with the soil on the roof so that, over time, it would harden and repel rain and snow. There will be no need for the buckets, pots and pans the pioneers used to catch the water seeping through their roofs. Finally, a cement mortar mixture was used to chink the gaps between the logs.

In two days, the cabin was finished with the exception of the fireplace and the trim work around the doors and windows. Nothing to it! What took Ben and Hyrum so long?

With much anticipation, the workers returned the next morning to clean up the construction site and add the final touches. The cabin could be dedicated that afternoon.

The most memorable moment was the arrival of the still living grandchildren of the original cabin's inhabitants. Norma Young is the granddaughter of Benjamin and MaryAnn Perkins; Erma Crawford and Helen Woods are granddaughters of Benjamin and Sarah Perkins; Richard Perkins and Byron James Perkins are grandsons of Hyrum and Rachel Perkins. The history of their grandparents would no longer be an abstract story shrouded in the long ago. It would become a tangible reality, embodied in this cabin for future generations and inquisitive travelers.

When the Perkins' brothers left Cedar City in 1879 and answered the call to settle the San Juan territory, they little knew the difficulties they would encounter building a road through the formidable terrain. Today, we, their descendants can say "Mission Accomplished." The visions that Brigham Young and John Taylor had for this region of Utah have become a reality.

It is fitting that we construct a memorial to these loyal pioneers. We thank everyone who has labored diligently to preserve Bluff Fort. The construction of this memorial cabin was a great privilege for us. We have contributed our own sweat and toil to preserve these memories for our children and grandchildren. Adults and children alike can say, "come here, let me show you what I did on Grandma and Grandpa Perkins' cabin."

Frank Perkins

THANK YOU

The Hole in the Rock Foundation would like to thank all who have made the past year such a memorable one at Bluff Fort. Thank you for your donated time, talents and skills. Thank you for your financial donations. We wanted to list each individual who has donated time and/or money, but we are afraid we might miss a name or two, so we are giving a big, heartfelt "Thank You" to all of you collectively. Without your support the Bluff Fort site would be a weed-covered, wind swept, anonymous piece of land. With your help it is becoming a memorial to the legacy of the San Juan Mission pioneers.



The Lyman and Perkins family building crew stand in front of their completed cabins

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER SERVICE EXPERIENCE: WE NEED YOU!

Volunteers are desperately needed to man Bluff Fort in the coming year. The museum/Visitors Center will open on March 1, 2010 and close Oct. 31st. With the completion of ten cabins, we urgently need at least three people a day: one or two to man the Visitors Center and one or two out in the Fort around the cabins. If we have enough helpers, each shift will only be about five hours each day instead of eight or nine. We will also try to arrange schedules so that volunteers can take a long weekend if necessary. Terms of service can vary in length from one day a week, two weeks or a month. We appreciate whatever you can offer.

To sign up or learn more, please call:
LaRue Barton
435-672-9967
435-459-2092 (cell)
P.O. Box 536
Bluff, UT 84512
larueb@frontiernet.net

We will fill up our volunteer calendar in the order that we are contacted. The sooner you call, the better your chances to get your pick of days.