



## HIRF NEWSLETTER

BLUFF FORT VISITOR HISTORIC SITE AND HOLE IN THE ROCK FOUNDATION  
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## FOUNDERS' DAY

Bluff Founders' Day will be celebrated on April 25, 2020. This year we will also be celebrating the 200th birthday of Jens Neilson, first Bishop of Bluff. Festivities will include a Friends and Family parade beginning at 10:00 am at the Community Center and ending at the Twin Rocks Café.

A dedication of the Kumen Jones home and complex will take place at noon, with entertainment on the Jones stage the remainder of the afternoon. Pioneer activities and displays will be available on the Fort grounds during the afternoon also. These activities include; blacksmithing, video and audio histories of the Bluff Fort, quilting, rope making, tours of Historic Bluff Town structures and cemetery, pioneer dress-up with photo opportunities, to mention a few.

At 6:00 p.m., The Neilson family will host a program celebrating the life of Jens Neilson. He served for almost 26 years as Bishop for the Bluff area for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. He oversaw the health and welfare of the early pioneers to the area. This program is under the direction of the Neilson family. For questions contact LaRue Kirkham (435) 459-2370.

This year the Friends and Family Parade will include entries as simple as walking the route or carrying a banner and throwing

candy to parade watchers. Bring your own banner or you'll find poster paper and paints at the Fort to make your own sign that morning. The parade is a great time for friends and families to take a short walk from the Community Center to Twin Rocks Café. Bring candy and grab a handcart at the Fort and join in the fun!

After the parade, at 12:00 noon, those interested may gather at the Kumen Jones home (reconstruction) located at the north-west corner of the Bluff Fort complex. Listen to some history of the Jones family and observe the dedication of the Jones home and stage. Leon Jones and Donna Jensen have charge of this event. The history one hears at this dedication will be fascinating!

After the dedication, the Jones stage will be filled with entertainment for the rest of the afternoon. The Sevy Family Entertainers will perform at two different times. The Grayson Girls will perform as will Scott Lambertson with his brand of music, songs, and poetry. Come join in the fun, get in a little toe-tapping!

Food this year will include breakfast and lunch served by Jed Tate; he will set the price for each meal. All the Bluff Restaurants will be open. We encourage you to support our local businesses as well.

You're on your own for dinner. The Fort will be serving about 250 pulled pork sandwiches to the Neilson Families/ descendants who are here for the birthday party. Dinner will cost approximately \$5.00 to \$7.00 per person.

We're excited to see y'all for this years Founders' Day Celebrations! Don't forget to bring your smiles!

### **The-Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation Board of Directors President's message**

—Lynn Stevens

I have served on the board of Directors of this organization for ten years. It was obvious from the very beginning that our success is primarily due to the hard work, dedication, and commitment of the Church Service Missionaries. The board serves to provide resources, policy, and leadership to the Directors.

We have always had AMAZING Directors. We are most grateful to Wayne and Cindy Embleton for accepting the monumental task of being the current Directors.

We are looking forward to seeing all of the previous missionaries who are able to attend the Reunion this coming April. This is truly the Lord's work.



### **Mandarin Story Messages at the Fort**

by Grant Taylor

Chinese is the latest language added to the recorded messages found around the Fort. Last year we saw an increase of Chinese visitors at the Fort. We used my grand-



官话

Chinese characters from Wikipedia Commons

children's tutor, Pei Pei, who did an amazing job of translating the twenty-three story messages into Mandarin. She also translated the short video by Lamont Crabtree.

We weren't sure where to turn for voice-over helpers.

It was suggested that we put an announcement in the Chinese Ward bulletin that meets in Salt Lake City. Phone calls came rolling in.

May Lin Lau helped with 4 of the messages and then a few weeks later I got a text with a picture of her family while visiting Bluff Fort. After alerted, Sue West found them at the Fort and they were treated to ice cream cones and a VIP visit to Camp Stickie by Stuart Matheson.

Other voices included, Jun Le Chang, Carmen Levitt, David Cheung and his wife. All volunteers were from Taiwan or Mainland China. It was fun listening as they told the stories of the pioneers in Chinese. I could feel the warmth and love that came through as they narrated the stories.

Ben Wilson and Dick Jacobs continue to help us with audio and visual at Bluff Fort. Both men worked for the LDS Church during their lives and have great experience

## Bluff Fort Projects, 2019:

**Completion of the Kumen Jones home.** This is a project that has been underway since Corinne envisioned it many years ago and insisted it be preserved and made into a permanent and significant part of the Bluff Fort. No one person besides her deserves the credit for this amazing achievement.



This past year the partial construction was completed with one room being finished for display and the front part of the home made into a per-



forming stage where some of the Friday Night at the Fort concerts were performed. The home now serves as a display, not just for Kumen Jones and



his family, but a representation of all the comfortable homes that were later built throughout the town.

## Audio/Visual Equipment

One of the key components to a successful Historic Site is the use of audio and visual equipment to help tell the story. Dick Jacobs and Ben Wilson live in the greater Salt Lake area but have taken time to visit Bluff Fort quite regularly. They upgrade the equipment when necessary and keep the original equipment in top working order. They have updated the sound system in rooms 2 and 3 of the visitor center, which allows them to remotely make changes when they are not actually on property. They installed a sound system along with ceiling speakers in and around the new bowery located just east of the renovated Kumen Jones home. Each of the cabins language buttons are being updated to add the Mandarin language, giving our visitors a choice of six languages, (English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Mandarin) The older amplifier systems in each cabin (consisting of two boxes) are being updated with a single amplifier box. Even though we may have a glitch now and then, it is nice to know that our systems are keeping up with some of the latest technology.



## Brochures of Every Kind

Many of the visitors to Bluff Fort want to know about the literature or brochures that are available showing places of interest in the area. Two of our volunteers, Tim Black and Merlin Morgan, built a new Brochure display case and placed it on the South wall of the Visitor Center. Kelly and Karla Jensen keep the display stocked with various sizes of brochures, leaflets, pamphlets, maps and general information about all of Southeastern Utah and the surrounding Four Corners. The information is priceless in helping the visitors enjoy the wonders of the area!

**Northwest Corner display.** Closely associated with the completion of the Kumen Jones home is the move of the plaque and large rock that has been on the northwest corner of the Fort. In moving it to the south entry of the Kumen Jones home, unfortunately, the rock was cracked, but was miraculously preserved intact. Replacing the rock is now a covered wagon depicted traversing a rocky hill, representative of the arduous trek of the Hole in the Rock Expedition.



**Pioneer Farm Implement Display.** In March, 2019, Wayne Embleton, yard supervisor, envisioned a display of farm equipment. At the time, there were 5 pieces of equipment, representing 3 types of implements. Thanks to the generosity of life-long Bluff resident, Melvin Gaines, there is now an extensive display in the Southwest corner of the Fort with a sign describing each piece.



### **Terracing, of the Water Wheel Landscape**

The soil around the Water Wheel is a mixture of clay and sand and when it rains it becomes mushy. The terracing around the Water Wheel was starting to erode during the rainstorms, running down and covering the red rock that was placed outside the fencing. Jerry Allred, Sid Ashcraft, Eric Dastrup and others re-terraced the area with plastic underlay and with the placement of beautiful red rock to stop the erosion. It is a wonderful display and a focal point on the Bluff Fort grounds.

**Wagon Encampment Display.** Another significant display added to the Fort this past year was



a display depicting a typical home based on the family wagon. Visitors to the Fort can now better envision life for the Bluff settlers before the family cabin was completed. Because of the immense work required to build an irrigation ditch and prepare the land to farm, families remained living in their wagons for extended periods. The display was built in honor of the Henry and Sarah Holyoak family that lived their entire 4 years along the San Juan River in their wagons.

### **More Landscaping Enhancements of the Fort.**

Another major effort of the year at the Fort was the addition and replacement of many of the trees, shrubs and flowers. Under the personal care and guidance of Marc Willardson the soil in the orchard in the southeast corner of the Fort was amended and several trees replaced. The Fort is now more beautiful than ever.

### **Updates in the Craft Center**

We want each building to be inviting to those who come to visit the Bluff Fort Historic Site. With that in mind our volunteers prepared the Craft Center for a new coat of paint, along with the chocolate brown trim. In all, the project took a couple of weeks. It was a perfect time to also clean out the old shrubs and dead flowers around the outside with anticipation of planting anew in the spring of 2020. Inside the Craft Center each of the blinds were taken down and cleaned. The entryway on the east side of the building was cleaned and reorganized for proper storage of equipment and for the craft room supplies and donated material. Alan Martindale headed up a project to create an area where

photos of the guests could be taken when the weather did not permit them to be outside. The two doors on the east side of the craft center were redesigned to look like they were built back in the 1800's. Above the doors is the inscription: "BLUFF FORT est 1880". This is a perfect photo opportunity for those that wish to dress in the clothing of period.

### **Learn How to Make a Rope**

Three of our volunteers (Kelly Jensen, Carl Ball, and Jerry Allred) wanted to give those groups visiting the Fort on field trips, the opportunity to see how a rope is made. On the south side of the Fort just west of the Native American Hogan, they set up a rope making area. When the large groups would visit they would set up the area as one of the stations the groups could stop at and try their hand at making rope. The goal was not only to teach them how to make rope but to also give them a small piece of rope as a souvenir.

### **Oiling the Cabins, Other Buildings, and Wagon Wheels**

In 2019, the volunteers had the opportunity to help with oiling the Cabins, the Log Meeting House, the Public Restrooms, the staircase outside of the Visitors Center, two pergolas, and the wagon wheels on the historic wagons that are placed around the Fort grounds. A mixture of Roofing Oil and Linseed Oil is used to help preserve and protect the wood in each of these areas from the harsh climate changes that can and do occur. The oil is penetrating and durable. It is water resistant and gives the wood an attractive natural sheen and texture.

### **Service: In the Community and from the Community**

It has been a pleasure to have youth groups, school groups, and others come to visit Bluff Fort. Our volunteers have had the opportunity to help with each of these groups and to give a little more personal attention to them while they are here. During the past year we had an Easter egg hunt for all of the children in the area. There were 2000 eggs placed all over the Fort and they were picked up and accounted for in about 30 minutes. We also had a Halloween parade at the Fort for the children that attend Bluff Elementary School. The children were so cute as they walked the pathways around the Fort. The volunteers also handed out goodies to the children as they passed by.

We have very talented volunteers here at the Fort and with those talents come the opportunity to serve others in the community. Loaves of bread were baked and then taken to many homes in

the area. There is nothing better than a nice big slice of bread covered with butter, jelly, or, honey!

We enjoy the community that we call Bluff City. Most residents who live here have been welcoming to the volunteers that serve and to the Fort itself. One very knowledgeable resident, Gene Stevenson, was a guest speaker at the Fort on August 15, 2019. His expertise and presentation on the geological aspects of this area were amazing. We hope to have him back again.

We learned quite a bit from Melvin Gaines as he spoke to our volunteers in one of our early morning devotionals. He has a wealth of knowledge about the history of Bluff City, its water systems, the residents that have lived here, and just what he has seen and witnessed in his lifetime. We love Melvin Gaines!

### **San Juan Hill!**

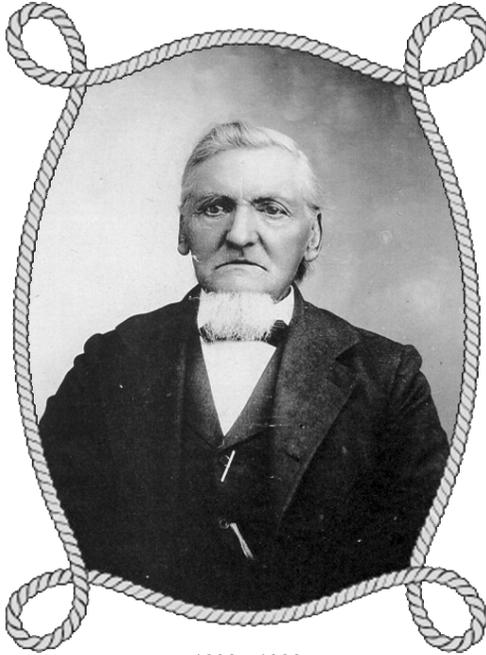
Jerry Allred has spent over 500 hours creating a display, carved almost completely out of wood. It will represent the seven teams of horses as they pulled a pioneer wagon up the steep and last great obstacle, San Juan Hill.



The pioneers were weary from their against-all-odds travels to that point. Not knowing if they could make it or not, they began the ascent up the hill, which would be the last part of their journey as they prepared to enter the area now known as "Bluff City."

**Other significant additions.** For many years the Bluff Fort has been a beehive of activity, work projects and additions. A careful eye will notice them everywhere!

Attention all Jens Nielson descendants



1820 - 1906

Jens was born April 26, 1820. In honor of Bishop Nielsen's 200th Birthday the Bluff Fort would like to invite each of you to visit the Fort sometime during 2020. Your visit will pay respect to Jens Nielson, his wives and children.

There will be a special sheet for you to sign at the Visitor Center to record your visit and heritage.

Please spread the word through social media or any way you can. Let's see how many descendants can visit the Fort this year.



This crowd showed up for Jens Nielson's birthday about 1897.

### **Missionary Reunion — Jim and Vicki Orr**

We have reserved Camp Stickie Thursday thru Sunday in conjunction with Founders Day, Jens Nielson's Birthday and dedication of the Kumen Jones house. At this time the agenda is very tentative however we plan to go on a ride, have a potluck dinner, eat Navajo tacos and have a breakfast at the Fort on Saturday. There will be a small cost for food which we will let you know the amount later, once I have a list of those who plan on coming.

Anyone that wanted to bring a trailer can park it at Camp Stickie.

Please let us know ASAP if you are interested in attending and if you would want to stay at Camp Stickie.

Hope this finds you all well and happy! We cherish the time we got to spend with you all and hope to be able to see you at this special event.

### **Founders' Day and Kumen Jones Dedication April 25**

On April 25th Bluff Fort is celebrating Founders' Day with a variety of activities, including:

- Breakfast and lunch served by Jed Tate (paid by customers to him)
- Parade
- Bluff Historical Tours
- Dedication of the Kumen Jones home
- 200th birthday celebration for Jens Nielsen
- Entertainment performed by the Sevy Family, Grayson Girls, and others.

Many past missionaries who have served at Bluff Fort will be arriving at Camp Stickie on Thursday, April 23rd. They are planning on activities such as campfires, breakfasts, trail rides on Friday, pot luck dinner, games, s'mores, attending activities at the fort.

Pre-1960 photos at Hole-in-the Rock, gift of David E. Miller estate, show Cottonwood Canyon in the distance. Glen Canyon Dam had

not yet been built, and there is no Lake Powell, so these images give us a fairly accurate idea of what the members of the San Juan Mission



actually saw looking down to and across the Colorado River. (Top Left: Widened cleft of the Hole; Top Right: Slope to the River beyond “Uncle Ben’s Dugway;” Below: Colorado River and Cottonwood Canyon. The exit cliff on the east bank is a formidable barrier by itself. Vertical distance from top of gorge to river is approx. 1800’,

