

# HOLE-IN-THE-ROCK NEWS

Preserving the History and Sharing the Legacy

Volume 13 Winter 2012



PO Box 476  
Bluff, UT 84512  
(435) 672-9995  
hirf@frontiernet.net  
www.hirf.org



## IT IS HERE! IT IS GREAT!

The Bluff Cooperative Store is appearing right before our eyes in full splendor!

It is a fitting asset to be returning to beautiful Bluff. You all must come and see it to believe it is for real.

Every week the Co-op structure is coming together with Joe Hurst (son of Erma Lee Nielson, daughter of Edward, son of Hans Joseph, the son of Jens Nielson) watching every detail. How fitting, that he is the one constructing this building. Joe is a good builder.

Our plea now is:

1. Do any of you have any original items that an ancestor brought on the trail through the Hole-in-the-Rock or anything used in old Bluff? A dish, a letter, a shoe, a piece of clothing--anything that they used or saved that you would consider displaying in the Co-op building? We will have secure display cabinets and what better place to share a bit of history.
2. From any old journals, letters, memories handed down, please send us copies. Any quotes, stories, love letters, poems, songs, descriptions of life on the

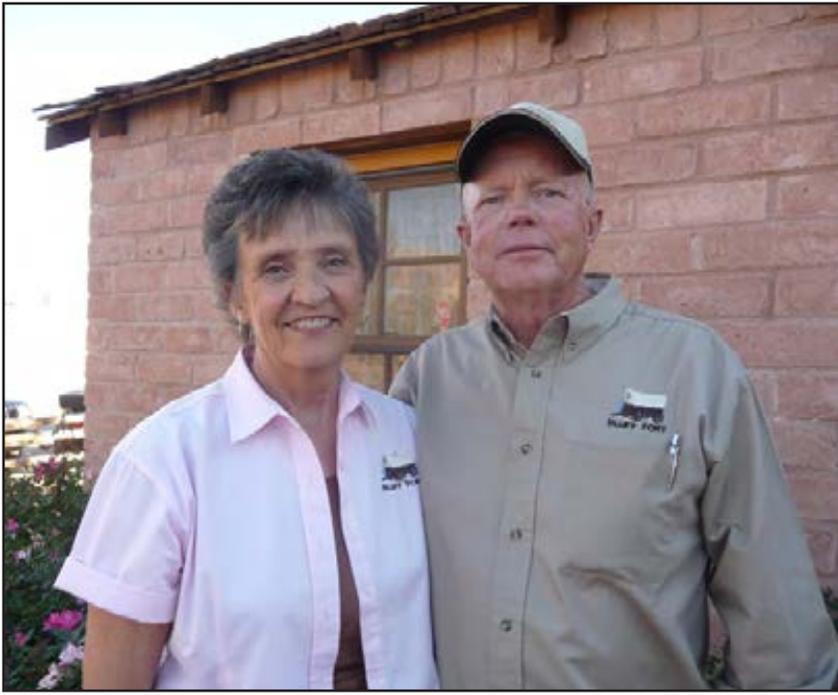
trail and living in Bluff is needed. These will help write the script for video presentations to be used in the Co-op Store. Help put your family's names and life's experiences in this presentation. Their stories will preserve for generations the purpose of rebuilding our Bluff Fort. Their call, the trek, their enduring is unequalled in all western journeys --- anyway that is my opinion. We must preserve their incredible story.

3. Dear people let us make our ancestors live on via Bluff Fort. All this will take is a bit of your time to search and send on.

Writing the script has started so please do not delay. This is an urgent call for NOW—information can not be added later.

Thank you again for your time, your interest, your contributions, your living a good life. May our ancestors be happy with this token of appreciation for them in this our effort at the Bluff Fort.

*Corinne Nielson Roring, HIRF President  
(Daughter of Floyd, son of Frans, son of Jens Nielson)*



## COMMEMORATIVE COIN AVAILABLE FOR CHRISTMAS GIFTS

In commemoration of the Bluff Utah San Juan Co-op, that will be re-opened and dedicated in the spring of 2013, we have recreated a beautiful brass co-op trade token. These tokens will make a great Christmas stocking stuffer.

An original co-op coin was found on the Clarence Johnson property in Bluff in March 2012 and was donated to the Bluff Fort. Up to this time, no one at the Fort was aware of co-op tokens.

These replicas can be purchased in a plastic display case for \$10 (includes information card with photos) or just the coin for \$5.00. The coins will be on sale at True Value located on Main Street in Blanding or at the Black Crane Salon - 40 East 200 South, Monticello, Utah.

To have them shipped to you through the mail contact LaRue Barton at [larueb2@frontiernet.net](mailto:larueb2@frontiernet.net) or call her at 435-459-2092 (a small shipping fee will be added).

100% of the proceeds will go to the Hole in the Rock Foundation.

## HOLE-IN-THE-ROCK FOUNDATION BOARD APPOINTS NEW BLUFF FORT DIRECTORS

A new Co-op store, seven missionary couples, long term docents, WOW, this is an impressive effort that the Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation has achieved. The HIRF has asked Frank and Elaine Rowley to be the new directors at the Bluff Fort for the 2013 Season.

Frank was raised in Monticello, a graduate of Utah State University and retired from the Bureau of Land Management with 35 years of service. Elaine was raised in Blanding, received an Associate Degree from Brigham Young University and is the mother of five children and grandmother to 15. She is also the great granddaughter of Benjamin and Sarah Perkins.

Frank and Elaine have been involved with the Bluff Fort effort for several years. In 2009, they spent their 41st Wedding Anniversary in Bluff as part of the work force that constructed the Perkins Cabin. The "Spirit of the Fort" at that occasion touched their hearts and their lives forever. They returned in 2011 and spent 5 months as full-time docents and also were part-time docents during the summer of 2012. Their understanding and commitment to the Fort will be very beneficial in reaching the goals that the HIRF Board is striving to achieve.

They will be "onsite" starting in April 2013, but will be part of the effort to make ready the new Co-op store for next year's visitors. Frank and Elaine can be contacted at [erowley2@msn.com](mailto:erowley2@msn.com) or call 480-390-5571.



*Enlarged to show detail. The actual size of the coins are the size of a quarter.*





## **LARUE BARTON – JOB WELL DONE**

*by L.C. Helquist, HIRF Board Member*

LaRue Barton first became involved in the work of the Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation when she was asked to assist in developing a mailing list of San Juan pioneer descendants. The goal was to send a newsletter to as many of the descendants as possible. She was retiring from teaching and felt she had time to help identify descendants' names and addresses. LaRue, with her usual enthusiasm, continued to add to the address list. It was not many months later that the first newsletter went out.

On a trip to Bluff, LaRue and her husband, Karl, noticed that the Jens Nielson home was for sale. Jens is LaRue's great grandfather. A few days later Karl surprised LaRue, when he said, "We ought to buy the Jens Nielson home." So the journey began. They bought the home and moved to Bluff. Soon LaRue and Karl were asked to serve on the Foundation Board. Shortly after the move to Bluff, the building where the current visitor center is located became available for purchase. LaRue immediately saw that the building would work well for a visitor center. After getting approval from the board

she worked enthusiastically to get some remodeling done and the visitor center became a reality. LaRue was a natural. She had experience in retailing, owning a commercial embroidery business. The center was first stocked with much of her handiwork. Since the center first opened, LaRue has been its heart and soul. One can see her enthusiasm for the story of the pioneers when she pauses the video and adds to the story.

Shortly after the visitor center was opened, LaRue was diagnosed with cancer. She bravely went through treatment. For a few months, all seemed to be well, but the cancer came back. Again she bravely went through treatment. Thankfully, her check ups to this point have been good.

About a year ago, LaRue lost her friend and companion, Karl. Through it all she has continued to serve at the fort, either as the director of the visitor center or as a volunteer. You cannot talk about the Bluff Fort without mentioning LaRue. She goes the extra mile to see that visitors have a positive experience. She opened her home to some German tourists who wanted to see the soccer match between Germany and England. They rewarded her with some very good German chocolate. She often takes visitors to San Juan Hill, gives them guided tours of the Jens Nielson home, or invites them to sew a few stitches on a quilt that has been set up in the meeting house. Her friendliness has endeared her to the people of Bluff. In the story of Esther in the Bible, Mordecai says to Esther, "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this." The same might be said of LaRue. Who knows but she was brought to Bluff for such a time as this, a time to keep the story of the heroic San Juan pioneers alive in the hearts of their descendants, and to tell the story to the world. Many thanks, LaRue.

## **WANTED**



1 or 2 good, modern, electric sewing machines to be used in the manufacturing of pioneer bonnets and aprons to be sold at the Co-op Store. The gift of this

sewing machine will be tax deductible (5013C Donation). We will mail you a receipt for your records. Please contact LaRue Barton 435-459-2092.



## THE PROFOUND EFFECT OF THE SAN JUAN MISSION

*By Steven Jensen, HIRF Board Member*

When I was 15 years old, in the summer of 1962, with Blanding river runners Frank Wright and Calvin Black, I floated the Colorado River from Hite, Utah to the almost completed Glen Canyon Dam in Arizona. From the banks of the muddy Colorado River, I climbed to the top of the Hole-in-the-Rock (HITR). We crossed the river and visited Register Rock where many of the Hole-in-the-Rock pioneers carved their names on a large sand stone panel in January of 1880. The difficulty of the San Juan Mission had a profound effect on me, even as a teenager.

The next year, age 16, I tagged along with a large jeep safari from Blanding and Monticello to retrace the HITR Trail from Bluff to the Hole-in-the-Rock. The trail was a poorly maintained 4x4 dirt road from a few miles west of Blanding and deteriorated into an incredibly rough jeep trail the closer we drove to the Hole-in-the-Rock. After several long days, the jeeps arrived at the top of Cottonwood Canyon and everyone cheered as we looked into the Colorado Gorge that was rapidly filling with water behind the completed Glen Canyon Dam. Jeep drivers inched their vehicles down Cottonwood Canyon towards the lake. This was a slow process. Instead of waiting for the creeping jeeps, we teenagers ran ahead

of the jeeps to the new waters of Lake Powell. Without any adult supervision, life jackets, or a boat anywhere in sight, we jumped from the cliffs into the water and swam across the lake to the Hole-in-the-Rock. Once again, the difficulty of the HITR Trail and the sacrifice of the early settlers of the Bluff Mission influenced my life. In subsequent years, I have re-visited the HITR Trail many times, in jeeps, walking, on 4X4s, and dirt bikes. Before each of my children left for their LDS mission, I made sure they climbed to the top of the Hole in the Rock. They were reminded that when faced with difficult circumstances, their situation was likely insignificant compared to what their ancestors had endured and conquered.

The power of the San Juan Mission can be conveniently experienced by visiting the Bluff Fort. It represents one of the most difficult pioneering stories in the history of the church and taming of the West. Take your families to Bluff, visit the old fort, the cabins of the first families in Bluff, hear the stories from the knowledgeable staff, and teach your families about their heritage. If you have not visited lately, there have been many changes. Decedents of the original HITR families have reconstructed their ancestral homes in Bluff. The reconstruction of the old Bluff Coop is nearing completion. Couples can now fill LDS missions serving at the Bluff Fort. Visit the HITR Foundations website for more information.

For more information about LDS Church service missionaries:

<https://www.lds.org/callings/missionary/church-service?lang=eng>



*The Flying Dutchman ATV Club trip to Arch Canyon on 04/20/12.  
This club rides every month from March through November.*

## MORMON HISTORIC SITES FOUNDATION

Article from Larry King, *Mormon Historical Sites*



*Bluff primary children. San Juan Historical Commission photo.*

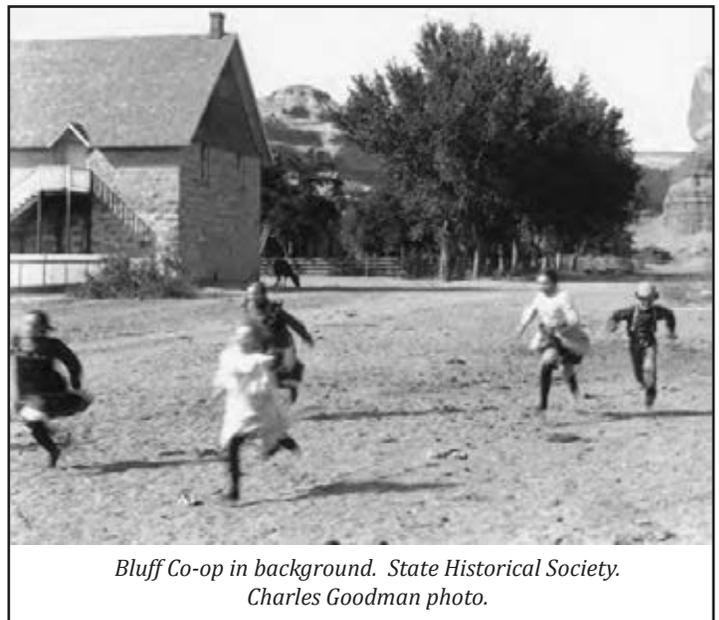
The Mormon Historic Sites Foundation (MHSF) is pleased to be an enthusiastic partner with the Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation to assist in the reconstruction of the Bluff Fort Visitors Center. The significance of this project can only be measured by the noted sacrifice and indomitable faith of the early Mormon pioneers who first settled Bluff, Utah in 1880. We commend the many workers, volunteers, contributors, and leaders who carry the vision of making the Bluff Fort a place of remembrance of those early trailblazers whose colorful and enduring legacy enriches our lives today.

The MHSF was first organized under the name of the Ensign Peak Foundation. The Foundation's first project was to work closely with Salt Lake City in the preservation and creation of the Ensign Peak Park, followed by playing a significant role in the restoration of the historic Kirtland Village in Kirtland, Ohio. As we now celebrate our twentieth anniversary, MHSF has contributed to many important Latter-day Saints sites that have been built, restored, or honored to preserve the Mormon heritage.

Besides the preservation and recognition of important historical sites, MHSF fosters the involvement of others in this important work. Annually, the MHSF presents the Junius Wells Award to a person who has distinguished themselves in the preservation of LDS historical sites. Junius Wells was an early missionary, historian, and Church leader who is known as the father of Church historic site preservation. Recipients of this award

include President Gordon B. Hinckley, Elder M. Russell Ballard, and Sister Florence S. Jacobsen. This year's recipient is Elder Marlin K. Jensen, retiring LDS Church Historian and Recorder.

The third area that gives the MHSF purpose and functionality is the publication of *Mormon Historical Studies*, a scholarly journal published semiannually and includes articles relevant to subjects of historical interest to Latter-day Saints.



*Bluff Co-op in background. State Historical Society. Charles Goodman photo.*

## 2012 SPRING-SUMMER ACTIVITIES AT THE BLUFF FORT

*By Dennis Harvey, Docent*

This summer has been very busy and productive as far as our guest visitors are concerned. Below are a few of the groups that visited us.

- Monticello 7th and 8th grade history class spent a day (spring 2012) going through the cabins and discussing Bluff history.
- Gunnison Stake Youth Conference Group which consisted of 60 youth and 40 adults. (June 2012).
- Sons of Utah Pioneers made a return visit on May 18, 2012
- Bayles Family Reunion – July 24, 2012



*Rosalee Zufelt and Lamont Crabtree renew an old friendship during his lecture at the Bluff Fort on June 21, 2012.*



*1st Marriage (in these latter days) at the Fort in May 2012. Barb Hawkins & Eric Kartchner and their families following their marriage at the Fort.*



*Bluff Elementary students visited the Fort in September 2012. Approximately 23 students came and toured cabins while people at the cabins told the story.*



*Ben and Sarah Perkins' grandchildren, Kinley Wojcik, Jayden Tate, and Fred Crawford on July 6, 2012 at the Dave and Freeda Guymon family reunion at the fort. Freeda grew up in Bluff.*



*Youth Conference from Grand Junction, Colorado.*



Lorraine and Dennis Harvey were presented gifts of appreciation at Docent Appreciation dinner by the HIRF Board for their full-time dedication they have given to the Fort the past eight months. They also served full-time in 2011.



### WHAT CHRISTMAS WAS LIKE ON THE HOLE-IN-THE-ROCK TRAIL

The following excerpt was taken from the history of Sarah William Perkins compiled by her granddaughter Alberta Lyman O'Brien.

At Christmas time, the children in the company were certain that Santa would find them there, and they hung their stockings on the wagon wheels. They were not disappointed; they found parched corn and cookies in their stockings the next morning. The adults also had their own kind of celebration which included one of the many dances to the music of the three violins and two horns brought along. Another Christmas event included a shooting contest. Twenty men each paid a dollar for a chance to shoot at a target. Their prizes were cuts of beef provided by one of the group. The nearer to the bulls-eye the contestant came, the better cut of beef he received.

Music, both sacred and secular, provided a therapeutic balm to their very souls and bodies. They danced the Virginia reel, Scotch reels, polkas, minuets and the Schottische, (a partnered country dance, that apparently originated in Bohemia), to the tunes the musicians supplied. Sarah loved the dancing as well as the music. Another who loved the dances was Ben Perkins. His snappy Welsh jigs furnished delightful entertainment and enjoyment for all.

- Beverly Vowell Black, Editor



Productive watermelon patch at the Fort this summer.

### Come Visit the Fort!

If you are interested in scheduling a group event (ie family home evening, field trip, service project, reunion) at the Bluff Fort contact Frank or Elaine Rowley at 480-390-5571 or erowley2@msn.com.





**BLUE MOUNTAIN SHADOWS SEEKS INFORMATION ON ORIGINAL BLUFF SETTLERS**

*By LaVerne Tate, BMS Managing Editor*

IT'S ABOUT TIME! Blue Mountain Shadows has been publishing a magazine for 25 years now. In the beginning, a lot was written about the Hole-in-the-Rock. However, for many years, Bluff Fort has been in the shadows of the past. Today Bluff Fort is a vibrant part of Bluff. People from all over the United States and the many foreign countries come searching for knowledge of their ancestor's history, to view the beauties of the Bluff area,

and to learn what life was like for the pioneers of the past. It seems to be time to publish a Blue Mountain Shadows' issue on Bluff Fort.

The Blue Mountain Shadows is the San Juan County's history publication and has been widely acknowledged for the historical contributions made to our area.

*We are looking for stories concerning the earliest Bluff days and how they affected the lives of the families in Bluff.* Our focus will be on the Fort itself, the people who settled there, what life was like, and the experiences and struggles they endured. You can email electronic copies or send CD's with manuscripts, photos, isolated stories, etc. We welcome talented artwork composed with the Bluff area as the theme and poetry can still be composed. These can be sent to LaVerne Tate ltate2000@yahoo.com (Managing Editor) 362 West 400 South in Blanding, Utah or to Beverly Vowell at bevowell@gmail.com (BMS Committee) 1558 North Reservoir Road, Blanding, Utah 84511.

Entries will be accepted until March 1, 2013. We hope to get this out the very summer the San Juan Co-op building is completed and dedicated.

Presorted  
Standard  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Provo, UT  
Permit #741



Hole in the Rock Foundation  
PO Box 476  
Bluff, UT 84512