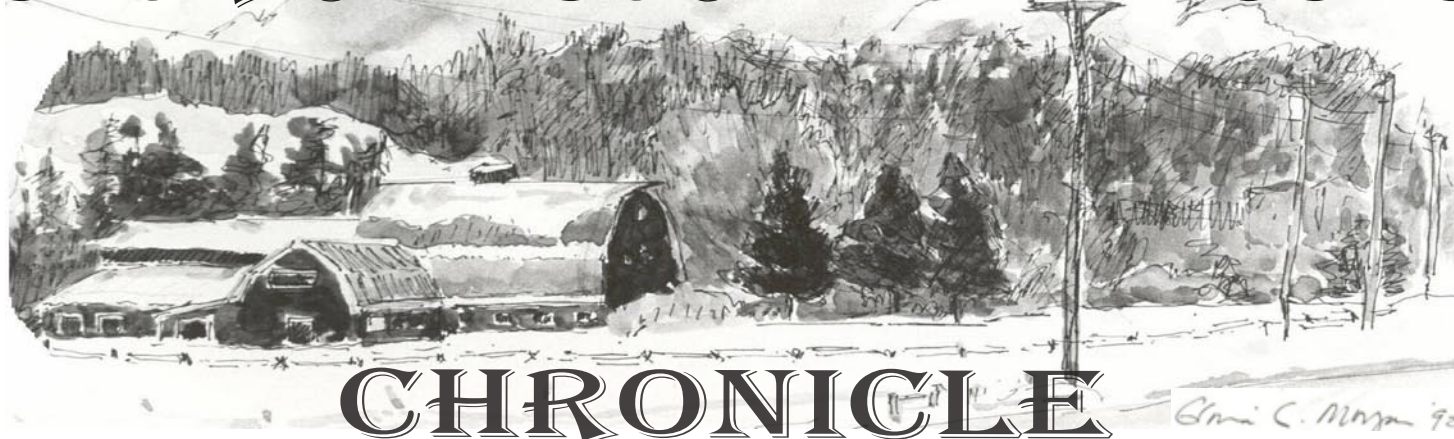


# JACKSON HOLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM



## CHRONICLE

VOLUME XXIV NO. 4

JACKSON'S HOLE, WYOMING

WINTER 2009-10

## Horse-powered Sleighs and Sleds Jackson Hole *Fundraising* Traditions

by Liz Jacobson

Winter diversions in Jackson Hole are a necessity because the winters seem so long. There is a need to break up the isolation and enjoy some social activities. Two favorite pastimes have evolved from fun winter activities into major charitable fundraising events. The Shriners' 38th Annual Cutter Races takes place on February 13-14, 2010, and the World Championship Snowmobile Hill Climb is celebrating its 35th year on March 25-28, 2010.



Early cutter racing on Broadway

2005.0019.039

### Cutter Racing: A Long-Standing Tradition

The Jackson Hole cutter races were one of many activities in the annual Winter Sports Carnival which started in 1932. Other events to occupy participants and spectators alike included downhill and slalom ski races, ski jumping, dog sled races, kids' dog derby, bob sled races, elk hide racing, snow shovel races, torchlight skiing and fireworks, snowshoe and barefoot races, and basketball and ice hockey games. A traditional coronation ball was held to crown the Winter Queen. People must have had fun devising these creative and competitive winter events.

Cutters were horse-drawn chariots which raced two at a time on Broadway Avenue in downtown Jackson in the early days. "Originated in Wyoming many years ago, cutter racing was started in the Jackson Hole area by John and Jess Wort, George Lumley, and Gibb Scott. Mr. Scott, in fact, was known as the 'Daddy of cutter racing'" (Chamber of Commerce).

As the streets became busier in Jackson, locations other than Broadway had to be found for the cutter races. According to Bob Lundy, the current president of the Jackson Hole Shrine Club, the races were held on Pearl Avenue only one year because the racers didn't like running their teams on Bean's Hill (corner of Pearl and King). He remembers when Grand Teton National Park allowed the races to be held near the airport

in 1963 or 1964. Cutter races have been held every year except for a six-year hiatus from 1966 until 1972. Lundy says the Shriners took over the event in 1972, and the event was held on the field where Teton Motors and Shervin's Independent Oil are now. Beginning in 1973 for four or five years, the event was held in Little Horse Thief Canyon. Since then, Paul VonGontard has graciously offered his land in Melody Ranch which once was the old highway, and today is used as an airstrip.

Lundy says one of his favorite memories

of the early cutter races was Fuzzy. "The undisputed star of the '53 races was Fuzzy, a young elk who ran the track hitched to a homemade sleigh. He was driven by George Robertson who had tamed the animal when it first visited his fields as a calf. Photographers from *Life* magazine brought both of them national attention. The publicity was good for the races, but cost Robertson his elk. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department didn't like the fact that a wild animal was being held in captivity, and ordered the elk released." (*Jackson Hole Guide*, 1987). Lundy thinks that Fuzzy was still alive in 1966.

Lundy states that because interest in the cutter races was lagging in 1972,



Cutter Race team, c. 1960

2005.0019.038

the "Dirty Dozen Shriners," a group of about twelve Shrine Club members, contacted the active All-American Cutter Association in Star Valley and convinced them to bring twenty-five to thirty teams to compete in Jackson that year. Now the club tries to have about forty

*continued on Page 4*

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JACKSON HOLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
AND MUSEUM

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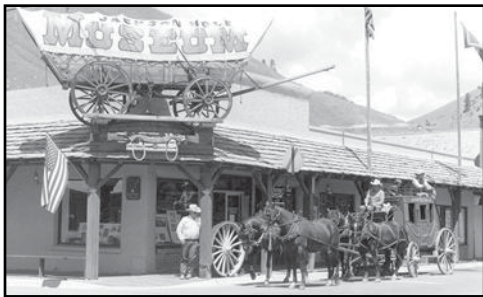
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Mission Statement

*The Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum collects, interprets, and preserves our unique heritage in an engaging and enriching manner.*



The Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum Chronicle is published quarterly for members and friends of the Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum. Suggestions and comments are always welcome.

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# Organizational News

## Teaming with Excitement for Stories

By Karen L. Reinhart

We all know that everyone has a story. People share stories daily around cups of coffee, while standing in the grocery store aisle, or through telephone and e-mail conversations. Friends and family catch up with annual Christmas letters, and occasionally by gathering at reunions. Because of Jackson Hole's uniqueness, residents have great stories to tell, and the Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum saves these stories for posterity.

Oral histories fulfill JHHSM's mission of collecting and preserving our heritage. One of our goals is to encourage, listen, record, and transcribe as many of the people's stories as possible. To that end, the historical society has gathered ten volunteers and staff, and formed an oral history team. We convened the end of October to learn the art of conducting successful interviews, and to gather names of potential Jackson Hole interviewees.

The esteemed volunteers who are part of our new oral history team are Marion Buchenroth, Judy Clayton, Larry Hendricks, Jackie Montgomery, Nancy Pettus, and Happy Weston. Staff members Liz Jacobson, Lokey Lytjen, Karen Reinhart, and Shannon Sullivan will also do oral history interviews as time and their work schedules allow.

Why conduct oral histories? There are many reasons: to discover aspects of a person's life experience that would not otherwise be documented, to gain someone's personal perspective, to give

the interviewee a sense of the value of their own life, and to gather and interpret rich, authentic stories. The interviews are recorded digitally, stored on CD format, and are transcribed. The recordings and transcriptions are made available to the interviewee and his/her family, as well as to the community and researchers. They may be used for historical society programming.

This fall the following Jackson Hole residents have shared their stories: Ted and Kay Benson, Pete Cameron, Ben Ferrin, Abi Garaman, Albert Gunther, Loal Jacobson, Sid Kranenberg, Cile Lamb, Elizabeth McCabe, Dr. Richard Sugden, Barbara and Bob Van Deburg, and Paul Von Gontard.

We invite you, our members and supporters, to pick up the phone and give us suggestions of people whose stories we should capture and preserve. Please note that we are not exclusively seeking stories from people who were born and raised and still living in Jackson Hole. There is validity in gathering oral histories from people of all ages and experiences. We can conduct interviews via phone if a person has moved away. Thank you! Please contact: Karen Reinhart, 733-9605.

*In December, the Rotary Club of Jackson Hole (Lunch Club) generously donated funding for two digital recorders for the oral history team. We are grateful to them for helping us record the voices of Jackson Hole.*

## Board Members Provided Invaluable Service

It is with deepest appreciation that we say good-bye to two dedicated board members who have each served two three-year terms, Joe Albright and Pete Karns. Joe joined the board of directors in 2003, and after two terms stayed on an additional year as allowed under the revised bylaws. He has been the vice-president since the Fall of 2006. Pete became a member of the board in 2004, and served as co-treasurer in 2007.

Both Joe and Pete have been invaluable in directing the affairs of the Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum and in helping the board of directors tackle pivotal decisions affecting the

organization's future. Pete brought the perspective of long-time residents to our organization and shared his knowledge of real estate as well. Joe lent his insight to help move the new museum project forward with vision and determination, and provided generous financial support. They both helped identify and acquire the property at 225 N. Cache and obtain Specific Purpose Excise Tax funds in support of building a world-class, year-round community history museum. Sincere thanks goes to Joe and Pete for their enthusiasm, commitment and faithful service to the organization.

## Welcome New Members (September, October, and November):

- Richard and Virginia Appleby
- Andrea Billingsley
- Nancy Eaton
- Steve and Polly Friess
- Anthony and Cynthia Huhn
- Scott and Carrie Kirkpatrick
- Chris and Pippa Knowlton
- Tom and Linda Lamb
- Floyd Looley
- Jim and Lisa Ryan
- Paul Stacey
- Trapper Inn
- John and Mary Kay Turner
- William and Robin Weiss
- Wells Fargo
- Dan and Sharon Zelenko

## Upcoming Events

### Storytelling Program Series\*

#### "Jackson Hole Stories: Voices of the Valley"

**Thursday, January 14, 2010**

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Wort Hotel ~ Jackson Room

Olympic skiers Pepi Stiegler  
and Tommy Moe



**Thursday, January 28, 2010**

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Teton County Library

Ordway Auditorium

American Avalanche



Institute: Rod Newcomb,  
Don & Sarah Carpenter.  
Ski patroller Kirby  
Lambert

**Thursday, February 11, 2010**

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Teton County Library

Ordway Auditorium

Fishing/River guides: John Simms  
and Tom Montgomery



**Thursday, February 25, 2010**

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Teton County Library

Ordway Auditorium



Musicians: Terry  
Yazzolino and Dan  
Thomasma

\*Any schedule or speaker changes will be updated on our web site

[www.museumofjacksonhole.org](http://www.museumofjacksonhole.org)

**Thursday, March 11, 2010**

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Teton County Library

Ordway Auditorium

Dude ranch owner/  
outfitters: Harold

Turner and Jim Garry



### Book Discussion Group\*

This "Reading Wyoming" group is sponsored by the Wyoming Humanities Council, and the topic this year is "Living Between Fences." The program will be held on the following Thursdays from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. at Jackson's Old County Library, 320 S. King.

Discussions are led by Stephen Lottridge. The limit is 20 participants, and registration is required by calling 733-9605.

January 21 ~ *House of Sand and Fog* by Andres Dubus; February 11 ~ *Snow Falling on Cedars* by David Guterson; March 4 ~ *Tortilla Curtain* by T.C. Boyle; March 25 ~ *The Work of Wolves* by Kent Meyer

### Winter Dinner Program\*

**Thursday, February 18, 2010**

Location and Program TBA

Bring a dish to share and your table service.

## Voices in Print Grant Completed

by Robin Allison

The Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum recently completed the grant requirements for *Voices in Print – Transcribing Oral Histories of Teton County, Wyoming*. A yearlong project that was generously funded by the Wyoming Cultural Trust, the grant funded the professional transcription of ninety-three of the organization's oral histories which included a total of 103 taped conversations equaling 2,028 written pages.

In conjunction with the transcriptions, JHSM staff and volunteers transferred 450 recordings originally on reel-to-reel and cassette tapes to CD/DVD format. The oral history CD/DVDs are available to the public for listening in the research room at the historical society, and the transcriptions are being printed and added to the museum's public collection. A roster was sent to the Wyoming State Archives to add to their collection of information about Teton County. The roster is available on our web site under About Us, then Research, Manuscript and Document Archive. The Digitized Oral History List link is at the end of that paragraph. This grant allowed JHSM to make significant strides in preserving an important portion of our community's collection. It is truly educational and entertaining to hear the stories and experiences of people living in Jackson Hole during the last 100 years, and we hope you will enjoy this additional resource.

## Jackson Hole Stories: Voices of the Valley

By Karen L. Reinhart

Looking for local culture this winter to illuminate your evenings? Want to be part of something that inspires and enriches your experience of the valley's natural world? The Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum and the Teton County Library are co-sponsoring a five-part storytelling program series, "Telling Our Stories: Voices of the Valley," where audiences can connect with well-known local adventurers of Jackson Hole.

Beginning in mid-January, valley residents who have long been part of Jackson Hole's adventure scene will share their unique experiences. Speakers tell fascinating stories of their expertise: alpine skiing, avalanche predicting and backcountry skiing, dude ranching and hunting, fishing and river guiding, and playing music and telling stories.

All programs are held on Thursday evenings from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Only the first program, Thursday, January 14, will be held in the Jackson Room of the Wort Hotel. The remaining four programs will be held at the Teton County Library's Ordway Auditorium.

Mark these dates on your calendar and

plan the rest of your winter around these great programs!

### Skiing Stories:

**January 14:** Tommy Moe and Pepi Stiegler, Gold Medal Olympic downhill skiers and Jackson Hole Mountain Resort employees, share skiing stories of different generations. The evening's presentation will feature footage of Moe's ski run that won him the gold medal in downhill skiing in 1994.

### Backcountry Stories:

**January 28:** Rod Newcomb, valley native and American Avalanche Institute (AAI) founder, Don Carpenter, co-owner of AAI and avalanche instructor, Sarah Carpenter, AAI instructor and ski guide, and Kirby Williams, ski patroller at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, tell tales of avalanches, alpine and backcountry skiing, emphasizing safety.

### Fishing and River Stories:

**February 11:** John Simms and Tom Montgomery, professional fly-fishing and river guides, collectively spent nearly eight

decades guiding on the Snake River. As an entrepreneur, Simms began successful outdoor gear companies beginning in the 1970s. Montgomery is also a professional photographer.

### Music Stories:

**February 25:** Terry Yazzolino and Dan Thomasma, musicians, recording artists, teachers, and storytellers share anecdotes and music inspired by Yellowstone and the Rocky Mountains during their collective six decades in Jackson Hole.

### Hunting Stories:

**March 11:** Harold Turner, valley native, Triangle X dude ranch owner and hunting guide, and Jim Garry, thirty-year professional storyteller, author, and past employee of Triangle X, tell of their hunting pack trip experiences in the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

This series is made possible by a generous grant from the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole. All programs are free, and open to the public. Families are welcome. Refreshments provided.

*continued from Page 1*

cutter teams racing, and they come from Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Montana, and Idaho. Lundy says there is still a gentleman competing who also raced on the streets of Jackson in the old days. The racers are given some travel fund money, but their participation is voluntary, and many return year after year.

The Shriners donate fifteen percent of the money made from the Calcutta betting as well as the net proceeds made in ticket sales and concessions to the Intermountain Shrine Hospital in Salt Lake City. On average, they donate \$20,000 - \$25,000 each year to the hospital. It takes forty to fifty volunteers to set up, work the track, run concessions, and coordinate the betting. Some of the volunteers come from other Shrine temples in Wyoming.

The Shrine Club Cutter Races are a favorite event for locals. It is thrilling to watch two teams pound down a quarter mile track to the finish line. The betting makes it even more competitive and exciting, and everyone feels good about helping out a worthy cause.

#### **The Snowmobile Hill Climb: Reaching Heights for Charity**

The Jackson Hole Snow Devils snowmobile club was established in 1964 by approximately fourteen members who got together to ride snowmobiles.



Snowmobiling with Verba (left) and Slim Lawrence (third from left)  
2005.0164.006

According to local Doyle Stoker, only three of the original members are still in the area: himself, his wife Linda, and Ted George. Over the next ten years, club activities included club rides, oval races at the fairgrounds, and cross country races up Mosquito Creek.

The snowmobile hill climb started out as a friendly competition between twenty members of the Snow Devils in 1975 as part of their end-of-the-year party. Two snowmobilers at a time raced up the hill side by side on Kelly's Alley, a ski run on Snow King. After a couple of years, snowmobilers from Pinedale heard about the event, and challenged the Jackson riders. Then folks from Victor and Driggs, Idaho joined the competition. Now the event hosts participants from all over the world.

Though the hill climb started just for fun, many people may not be aware that it has been a fundraiser for charitable causes since 2001. Heidi Tobin, the current president, said the club was officially incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1967. Their mission is to educate the public concerning winter activities and sports, and to raise funds for charitable and educational purposes. The Snow Devils actively support and donate to groups such as the Blue Ribbon Coalition and the Wyoming State Snowmobile Association in their efforts to protect parks and public lands.

Over the past six years, the organization has donated \$100,000 to St. John's Medical Center for an Oncology exam room, approximately \$47,000 in local scholarships to graduating seniors and on-going college students, \$43,000 to Teton County Youth and Family Services for "Toys for Tots," and \$10,000 to the Huntsman Cancer Institute in Salt Lake City in memory of Angie Gould, wife of hill climb racer Darin Gould. In 2008, they donated \$16,000 to the Jackson Hole Shrine Club for the benefit of the Shriners Hospitals for Children—Salt Lake City. They also aid local residents and families in need. In 2009, they donated \$10,000 to the Shriners Hospitals for Children—Salt Lake City and \$15,000 to Make-A-Wish Foundation of Wyoming.

The four-day event now draws over 10,000 fans and more than 300 snowmobile hill climb racers from all over the U.S. and Canada. Nearly 400 club member volunteers converge on Snow King Mountain to stage one of the largest non-profit charity snowmobile events in the United States. Money is made from ticket, beer, and clothing sales, as well as from raffle ticket sales and from snowmobile manufacturer sponsorships. All of the organization's net proceeds go for charitable purposes.

Not only has the event grown exponentially in number of participants, spectators, and amount of money raised, but other changes have occurred over the years. For instance, Stoker said early machines such as Ski-Doos, Allouettes, Evinrudes, Rupp's, Arctic Cats, and Polaris did not have enough power to make the races very fast. Over time, the machines improved, and people modified their snowmobiles making them even more powerful. Because so many snowmobiles were going over the top, the hill climb was moved around 1982 to the steeper, more challenging Expedition ski run under the main chairlift (*Jackson Hole Guide*, 1990).

There are several hill climb milestones worth mentioning. The Snow King Hill Climb was the first of its kind in the nation. In 1987, twenty-four year old Ward Barnes from Belgrade, Montana became the first rider to go over the top, and four others also made it that year (*Jackson Hole News*). When more and more racers succeeded, "King of the Hill" was awarded to the riders who reached the top in the fastest time in each of the snowmobile classes: stock, improved stock, and modified. About four years ago, the three "King of the Hill" winners began competing against each other for the title "King of Kings."



Shilah Brown becomes first woman over the top.  
Courtesy of Reactionphoto.com

In 2005, twenty-four year old Jackson Hole native Shilah Brown became the first woman to take a snowmobile up and over the top. Only one hill climber, local Rick Budge, has raced in every hill climb since its inception.

Both the Shrine Club Cutter Races and the Jackson Hole Snow Devils World Championship Snowmobile Hill Climb had modest beginnings. These unusual sporting events initially helped people make it through the winter, but in time became grand Jackson Hole traditions which help neighbors contribute to worthy causes.

#### **Resources**

Brown III, Norris. Member and Past-President of the Snow Devils Snowmobile Club.

Chamber of Commerce brochure, date unknown.

*Jackson Hole Guide*. February 12, 1987.

*Jackson Hole Guide*. March 28, 1990.

*Jackson Hole News*. April 1, 1987.

Lundy, Bob. President of the Jackson Hole Shrine Club.

Snow Devils web site [www.snowdevils.org](http://www.snowdevils.org). Referenced frequently throughout the article.

Stoker, Doyle. Member of the Snow Devils Snowmobile Club.

Tobin, Heidi. President of the Snow Devils Snowmobile Club.



Peter Hansen wearing his cowboy scarf 1958.0020.001

### Will You Add Treasures to the New Museum of Jackson Hole?

We are looking for some items to place in the ranching exhibition in the new *Museum of Jackson Hole*. It is preferable if the items are authentic, used artifacts. Cowboy clothing items sought include rubber boots with metal buckles that fit over cowboy boots, wool pants, a jacket such as a Carhartt, cowboy silk scarf, and a dude shirt or fancy cowboy shirt. Other items needed are tobacco rolling papers and a couple of saddles for kids. Please give us a call at 733-9605 if you would be willing to loan or donate any of these items for use in the museum exhibition.



Dudes on horses 2005.0016.022

### History Mystery



Can you identify these goose hunters? The description on file says George Lumley is on the left and Jimmy Riggin on the right. 1991.3621.010

## THE SPIRIT OF WILSON

By Pete Cameron

(written in commemoration of the 100th birthday of Wilson, Wyoming: July 4, 1995)

What is it, this place called Wilson?  
 To me, it brings to mind names like Callahan, Curtis, and Stilson,  
 Ordway, Huidekoper, Morgan, and Resor,  
 Old man Green – that dancin’ fool geezer,  
 Nethercott, Seaton, Yokel, and DeVinnie,  
 Linn, Cheney – ah, the list is too many.  
 And now, it seems to me as though  
 Over half the names, you don’t even know.

Sleepy, gravel-road Rabbit Row  
 Is now a major thoroughfare – the pace anything but slow.  
 Where once was the Crystal Springs Dude Ranch  
 Stands now Teton Village,  
 And you can see at a glance,  
 She ain’t quite the same.



Now, folks clamor to get here from near and afar,  
 Arriving by air, hitch-hiking or car,  
 To marvel at these mountains,  
 To play in this wonderland so grand.  
 Yet, there is an underlying current here one needs to understand.

A current as strong as that river they called the Snake.  
 Think of the tenacity of the pioneers  
 And what they had to do to make  
 A living.

Think of freighting over this big hill.  
 Even with my limited teamster knowledge, it gives me a chill.  
 Steep grades, avalanches, whiteouts, and rotten snow  
 Are only a few of the challenges  
 Most people today don’t even know.

Spring floods, short growing seasons,  
 A long way to markets and a spare part.  
 The settlers here were crazy, innovative, tough and smart.

With a feeling of community and of being a good neighbor.  
 Rewards were hardly monetary in return for their labor.  
 Wilson folks got their energy by living close to the edge.  
 Sort of like being on a high cliff and looking over the ledge.  
 A dramatic place, with winters too long,  
 But a good place to live, if your back and mind were strong.

That spirit remains today, I believe,  
 Even though loss of the old ways is enough to make you grieve.  
 There’s a pride, a uniqueness, in this area at the foot of the Pass,  
 And damned be those who don’t want it to last!

Fight for the open spaces, narrow roads, slower speeds.  
 Hang onto those values that meet your life’s needs.  
 It doesn’t matter if you’re a little dog – or one slightly bigger,  
 A millionaire landowner, or a “Wilson nigger.”  
 Wilson is a fine place, and I’m up here to say  
 In another hundred years, I hope it’s still that way!

*Pete Cameron performed this poem at the Olde Tyme Christmas Winter Celebration on December 2, 2009 to the delight of the audience.*

## NEW MONUMENT GRACES ASPEN HILL CEMETERY

Aspen Hill Cemetery has a new public monument created for the people of Teton County as a place of remembrance and a place to engrave the names of loved ones who were residents of Teton County and who are not buried in a formal cemetery in Teton County. This includes the deceased who chose cremation, are buried on private property, or their remains were taken by family members to be placed in another city or state.

The monument was installed in September 2009 after a great deal of planning by Robin Allison of the Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum and two dedicated volunteers who developed the design, donated money for the cause, and established guidelines. The original monument was built in 1989 by the JHHSM, and had deteriorated beyond repair. The names on the original monument were added to the new one. If anyone is interested in having a name engraved on the monument, they should contact the JHHSM to see if the person meets the requirements. The cost of the engraving is \$350.00 and additions will be added annually.

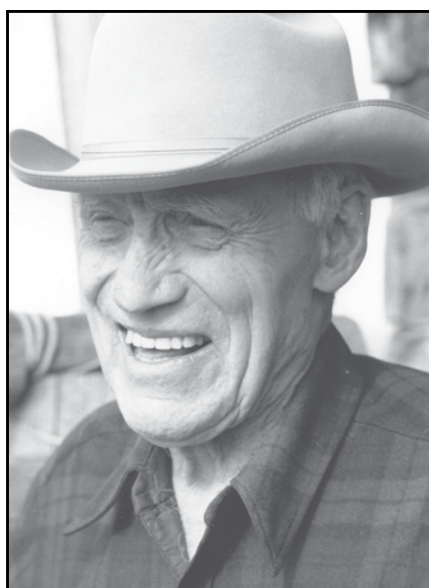


New monument installed September 2009

## Cliff Hansen Was A Friend of the Museum

Jackson Hole lost a native son on October 20, 2009 when Cliff Hansen died at age 97. The Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum lost a dear friend. Enough can't be said about what he did for our nation, our state, our community, and our organization.

Cliff and Martha have been lifetime members and supporters of the JHHSM since 1958. Cliff delighted audiences when he participated in our programs such as the old-timers panel in 1994 and the fall program series in 2001. He graciously consented to doing an oral history in October 2001, and this is a precious part of our archives at the historical society. He helped with books published



Cliff Hansen 2009.0007.015  
Photograph courtesy of Amy Raab

by the JHHSM, writing the forward to *And That's the Way It Was in Jackson's Hole* and contributing to the content of *Windows to the Past: Early Settlers in Jackson Hole*.

Not only did he donate his time, but items for our collections as well. These included Pete Hansen's (his father) white angora wool chaps with tooled leather belt and Visalia saddle, Bill Neal's journal and John Markham's manuscript about cattle drives.

Cliff honored our organization when he dedicated the JHHSM historical exhibitions placed around the Town Square in 2005.

Thanks for everything, Cliff ~ you will be sorely missed.



P. O. Box 1005, Jackson, WY 83001-1005

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