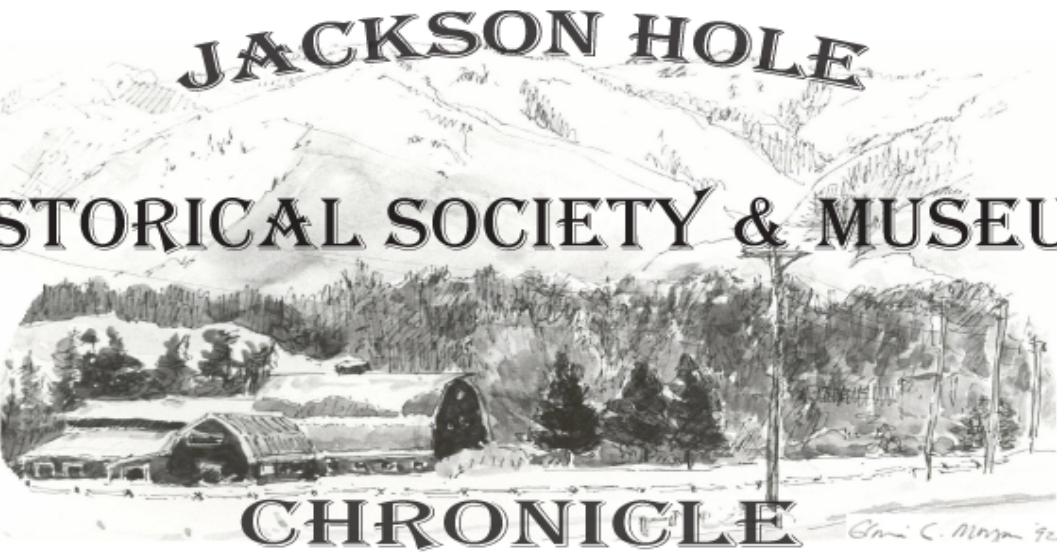


# JACKSON HOLE

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM



### CHRONICLE

VOLUME XXXV NO. 2

JACKSON'S HOLE, WYOMING

SPRING 2015

## Enter the Americans: A New Challenge to the Fur Trade

**W**hile the American entry into the fur trade market west of the Mississippi River was rather late in its history, it was never the less significant in many ways. Preceding them by over two hundred years were the Dutch, Spanish, French, and British trappers who had several generations of dealing with the Native Americans in the northeast, the Great Lakes region, the upper Missouri area, and the Pacific Northwest, as well as the southwestern part of what became the United States.

The North American continent (and to a lesser extent South America) had long been a source of raw materials for the various, ever-changing, empires of Europe whose resources in timber and furs had been depleted. Looking west they found a land rich in the many products they needed: timber for ship-building, pelts for the fashions of the moment, and hides for the leather belts that turned the factory wheels of industry.

As the ever-growing colonies and subsequent states continued their westward march, the Natives and the wildlife were pushed further on or destroyed.

Two of the key hunting targets were the buffalo from the upper Missouri River region and the beaver pelts from the Rocky Mountain West. Whether it was under control of the Spanish or French at any given time from the 17th to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century,



the fur trade in what was to become the Louisiana Purchase (1803) continued unabated to supply the demand in Europe.

### Trade Goods

From the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards the colored glass trade beads found throughout the world were manufactured in Venice, Italy. By the 1600s glass beads were also being created in Bohemia (Czech Republic), Holland, France, England, and Sweden. For a short while there was even a bead-making industry at Jamestown,

Virginia. Many styles and colors were manufactured, with different tribes valuing different colors and designs and trading accordingly.

Other trade goods made of metal created a substantial industry throughout Europe, supplying the growing Indian demand for improved substitutes for their tools and containers made of wood, bone, and stone. Some common items were knives, pipes, tomahawks, pots, arrowheads, and decorative items such as metal beads, tacks, and bells.

Trade values for beads varied from time and place. Records show six Hudson Bay-style, two-tone beads traded for one beaver pelt; three pea-sized light blue beads were exchanged for one finished pelt; or two larger, transparent blue beads for one 'made' beaver.

[Continued on pages 4-5]

## Mission Statement

*Preserving and sharing the heritage of Jackson Hole*

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Lead article compiled from: *A Primer of the North American Fur Trade*, James Crutchfield; *American and Canadian Fur Trade Facts and Trivia*, O. Ned Eddins; *Rocky Mountain Rendezvous*, Fred Gowans; *Wind River Rendezvous*, Ron Mamot, et al., St. Stephens Indian Mission; *Fur Trade of the American West*, David Wishart; *Fur, Fortune, and Empire*, Eric Dolin.

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK...



This issue of the JHSM Chronicle can readily be summed up as a sneak preview. What have staff been working on while waiting for the snow to melt?

Up first is an exhibit on the early musical traditions and performers in Jackson Hole which will be ready to go in time for our second *Mud Season Blues* concert with Jackson guitarist and Friend of the Museum, Byron Tomingas on Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>. Next is an exhibit on Betty Woolsey and the Trail Creek Ranch which opens on Friday, May 22. The first of a series of gallery and online exhibits on the historical ranches of Jackson Hole, Trail Creek is funded in part through the generosity of Natalie Goss, Betty Woolsey's niece, and in part by the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole.

In August, our second ranch exhibit on the R Lazy S Ranch follows on Tuesday, the 6<sup>th</sup>. Flat Creek Ranch comes on board in September, with Triangle X, Bar B C and others planned for the fall and winter.

"**Beaver, Beads and Bullets**" an exhibit on the Fur Trade in Jackson Hole, opens next on Saturday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> at the *Indians of the Greater Yellowstone Museum* (on the corner of Glenwood and Deloney). The fur trade exhibit allows us to expand our Deloney displays by including some of the museum's traps and other mountain man artifacts, including its exceptional collection of early North American trade beads.

In April, join us for the launch of our month-long of oral history project. April is a quiet month for visitation so we have decided this would be an excellent time for us to reach out to the community and invite folks into the museum to share their stories. Bring your scrapbooks and we'll also scan selections of any photos you might want to share for our archives. If you're not able to come in town but would still like to participate, just give us a call and one of our trained staff will come to you – along with our digital recorder, video camera, and scanner (for copying photos or other things you might want to share).

Stay tuned, too, for new history stories featured on the museum's audio tour partnership with Story Clark's mobile TravelStorysGPs app. And don't forget to mark your calendars for JHSM's second annual Western Heritage fund raiser on Sunday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> at the "Grassy Arena" by the rodeo grounds. This year we've added "archaic arts" as well – bring the whole family and enjoy activities such as an atlatl-throwing contest, flint-knapping and bow-making, as well as log cabin construction, quilting, and other frontier skills. We look forward to seeing you at all of these – please check out our website at [www.jacksonholehistory.org](http://www.jacksonholehistory.org) for a more detailed calendar of events and other museum activities.

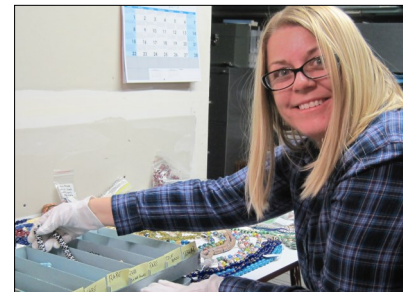
*Sharon Kahin*

# COLLECTIONS CORNER

JENNA N. THORBURN

## Jackson Hole Historical Society & Museum's Bead Collection

In preparing for our upcoming exhibit on the fur trade in Jackson Hole, I've discovered that the museum has quite the bead collection! There are 240 strands of beads in our collection, the majority of which was acquired from John E. Weida in 1988. A master watch-maker and jeweler from Idaho Falls, ID, Weide spent over 30 years studying and collecting Indian trade beads and Native American beadwork. Our collection includes 90 strands of western North American beads, as well as beaded artifacts: there are beads made from French brass, Cornaline d'Aleppo, Hudson Bay and drawn glass beads, as well as hair pipes, beads with Dutch and, of course, Italian ancestry, Padre beads and many more – even one just like those that came West with Lewis and Clark (maybe ours did?). In fact, this is a first class collection.



A very small portion of the bead collection has been on display at JHSM's Indians of the Greater Yellowstone museum since 2013. However, because the collection is so large and comprehensive, more will be added beginning in May for the opening of the upcoming **"Beavers, Beads and Bullets"** exhibit.



As Curator of Collections, I've been sorting and organizing all of the trade beads: the collection is being re-housed in order to better preserve the beads, but I am also sorting it into categories and sub-categories in order to get a better sense of what we have and which strands will fit best with **"Beavers, Beads & Bullets"**. Categories

include shape, color and region or origin. Sub-categories range from "rare" to "skunk" or spotted strands.

In addition to trade beads, our upcoming exhibit will include traps, furs, tools, early guns and other artifacts. We are look forward to sharing the new display with the community – especially our exceptional bead collection - which I understand has not been on display for several decades.



## Do You Know....?

With the passage of time and the changing staff at the Museum sometimes the background on an item we have is forgotten, especially if it came to us before we began adding our artifacts into our computer.

One such item that we continue to try to discover the origin of is the dugout canoe stored in the Wylie addition behind the cabin at Mercill. If you have any information about it we would love to know more. Please call the office and share your insights so we can update our collections database (307-733-2414).



## Trading Post on Wheels

From the earliest times in the colonization of the North American continent the trading model most often used by the French, British, and Spanish traders was the establishment of trading posts, oftentimes referred to as 'forts'. This provided a secure and central location, usually along a key waterway or trail network, to encourage the Indians in the region to bring finished furs to trade for the many manufactured goods from Europe that the natives often found enticing and, frequently, a useful replacement for their traditional implements.

When the Americans entered this long-standing business in the early 1800s under the leadership of John Jacob Astor, William Ashley, Andrew Henry, Nathaniel Wyeth, and other entrepreneurs, they created their own model, in part growing out of the recognition that a wagon trail through the Rockies was a distinct possibility. Going after the furs directly and cutting out the middle man, in this case the Native Americans, led to potentially greater profits in the end.

Sending small armies of trappers into the field coordinated by field captains, such as David Jackson, produced a more direct method of obtaining the hides and a more efficient way of maintaining an exclusive pipeline of procurement. These groups of trappers, who eventually came to be called 'mountain men,' often stayed in the field year-round, trapping beaver, processing their hides (called pelves), and constructing a field press to compress them into 100-pound bundles that could hold as many as 60 pelts.



Hudson Bay trade beads



Beaver pelt stretched to dry on a willow hoop.

## Rendezvous

Once a year, at a pre-determined time and place, these hardy mountaineers would reconvene with their packs at a 'rendezvous,' to meet up with the wagon train bringing their supplies for the coming year. They arrived in high expectation of a two-week-long party that included liquor, gambling, fighting, tests of strength and skill, and Indian women from the many tribal camps that also showed up for these riotous events. Many a mountain man returned to the hills with little more than he showed up with after one of these gatherings, always in hope of leaving the next rendezvous with better results. The trappers were almost always at the disadvantage, with the mark-up on delivered goods usually at 600 percent.

The empty wagons and animals from St. Louis were then reloaded with packs of beaver pelts and began the slow trek eastward. They were sold on the fur market in New York via the Mississippi or the Ohio Rivers, and

from there moved on to European markets. This 'rendezvous system' remained in use from 1825 until the end of the era in 1840.

As an example, in August of 1830, when Smith, Jackson, and Sublette disbanded their partnership and sold their holdings to five of their men, they headed back to St. Louis with 190 packs of beaver; it was the largest single annual shipment to be taken out of the Rocky Mountains to that date. The furs brought \$84,500 (roughly \$2.1 million in today's dollars) in the Philadelphia and New York markets, which was enough to clear the debts of the former partners and still leave each of them a substantial profit.

This line of business was not without its downside: Smith, Jackson, and Sublette estimated their material losses from Indian depredations for the duration of their partnership (1826-1830) to be \$43,500 (\$1.08 million today), over half of which was due to the theft of horses.



Beaver Trap

**End of an Era**

The fur trade era lingered on until about 1840, when a combination of events led to its final demise. Most notable was the change in fashion in both Europe and the East from beaver hats to the much more stylish silk hat. Concurrent with this trend was the elimination of the beaver from its traditional range by overhunting. Adding to these events were the economic downturn in the country and more organized, monopolistic practices from the rapidly expanding American Fur Company, which combined to drive pelt prices down and eventually engulfed or eliminated many smaller enterprises.

The mountain man himself, excluding those who succumbed to weather, starvation, accident, or death at the hands of Indians, often became guides to government expeditions or for the hundreds of emigrant wagon trains on the westward trails. Others moved on to Oregon, California, or the southwest to settle down in more traditional lifeways.

A few, of course, chose to stay and subsist in the mountains, but most followed the example of trapper Robert Newell, who wrote to his fellow trapper and brother-in-law Joseph Meek in 1840:

*“Come, we are done with this life in the mountains – done with wading in beaver dams and freezing or starving alternatively – done with Indian trading and Indian fighting...Let us go down to the Wallamet [Willamette Valley in Oregon] and take farms.”*

**The Accoutrements of a Mountain Man:**

*“A Trappers equipment in such cases is generally one Animal upon which is placed one or two Epishemores [a buffalo skin saddle blanket or groundsheet] a riding Saddle and bridle a sack containing six Beaver traps a blanket with an extra pair of Mocasins his powder horn and bullet pouch with a belt to which is attached a butcher Knife a small wooden box containing bait for Beaver a Tobacco sack with a pipe and implements for making fire with sometimes a hatchet fastened to the Pommel of his saddle his personal dress is a flannel or cotton shirt (if he is fortunate enough to obtain one, if not Antelope skin answers the*



*purpose of over and under shirt) a pair of leather breeches with Blanket or smoked Buffalo skin leggings, a coat made of Blanket or Buffalo robe a hat or cap of wool, Buffaloe or Otter skin his hose are pieces of Blanket lapped round his feet which are covered with a pair of Moccassins made of Dressed Deer Elk or Buffaloe skins with his long hair falling loosely over his shoulders complete the uniform.”*

- Osborne Russell, *Journal of a Trapper*

**Rendezvous Dates and Locations**

- 1825 – Henry’s Fork of the Green River, UT
- 1826 – Cache Valley, UT
- 1827 – Bear Lake, UT
- 1829 – Upper Popo Agie River, near Lander, WY
- 1830 – Upper Popo Agie River, near Lander, WY
- 1831 – Willow Valley, WY
- 1832 – Pierre’s Hole, ID
- 1833 – Horse Creek fork of the Green River, WY
- 1834 – Ham’s Fork of the Green River, WY
- 1835 - Horse Creek fork of the Green River, WY
- 1836 - Horse Creek fork of the Green River, WY
- 1837 - Horse Creek fork of the Green River, WY
- 1838 – Wind River, WY
- 1839 - Horse Creek fork of the Green River, WY
- 1840 - Horse Creek fork of the Green River, WY

**Some of the more well-known mountain men:**

- John Colter
- Andrew Henry
- William Sublette
- George Drouillard
- Moses ‘Black’ Harris
- Etienne Provost
- Manuel Lisa
- Nathaniel Wyeth
- Milton Sublette
- Thomas Fitzpatrick
- David Jackson
- John Hoback
- Jedediah Smith
- Osborne Russell
- Jim Bridger
- Kit Carson
- James Beckwourth
- Joseph Walker
- Hugh Glass
- Joe Meek
- Pierre Tevanitagon [Pierre’s Hole namesake, now Teton Valley, ID]

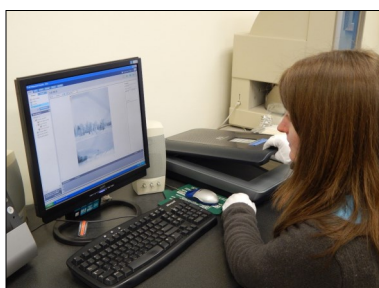
# THE STAN KLASSEN RESEARCH CENTER

EMILY WINTERS

One of the current projects in the Stan Klassen Research Center is gathering together historical photographs for our upcoming exhibit on “Beaver, Beads, and Bullets – the Fur Trade in Jackson Hole.” As the Director of Archives, it is my job to look through our historical photo collection to select some of the more interesting and relevant photos showcasing fur trappers and related subject material. The museum uses PastPerfect as our collections management software. While we have an extensive digital database to search from, this is just the beginning. Once I find an image, I research it. Often this means going into the files to find the original to see what information it might yield. Frequently there is more information written on the back of the photograph than is recorded in our digital files.



Emily searches the archives to find photos to use in the exhibit.



Scanning the original to insert in an exhibit interpretive panel.

With the help of my co-workers, I fill in the gaps that have been identified in the information we have, and update our catalog records in the process. By the time the images are on display, we have amassed the most accurate information that we can. I hope that when you see the exhibit you will enjoy the images as much as we have enjoyed compiling them for you. “Beaver, Beads, and Bullets” is set to open on Saturday, May 23, 2015, in JHSM’s *Indians of the Greater Yellowstone Museum* at the corner of Glenwood and Deloney.

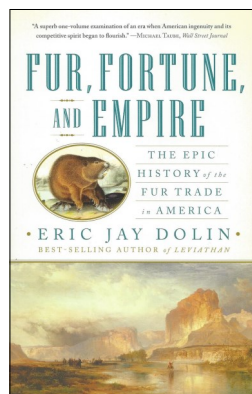


Printing a record of the image from PastPerfect helps to locate it accurately in the archives.

## Want to learn more about the Fur Trade in America?

We have a large selection of books about the Mountain Men and the Fur Trade era in the Museum Store.

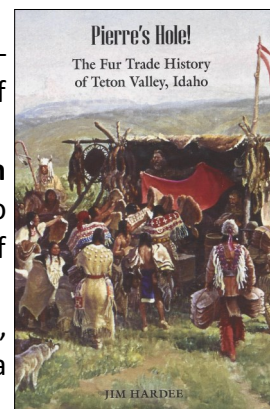
Here are just a few:



**David Jackson: Rocky Mountain Fur Trader**, by John C. Jackson—an in-depth biography of the man for whom this valley was named, by one of his direct descendants.

**A Majority of Scoundrels: An Informal History of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company**, by Don Berry—a very well-written and insightful look into the details of life as it was really lived by the mountain men in this part of the Rockies.

**Fur, Fortune, and Empire: The Epic History of the Fur Trade in America**, by Eric Jay Dolin—a comprehensive overview of the fur trade in America from its earliest times.



**Pierre’s Hole! The Fur Trade History of Teton Valley, Idaho**, by Jim Hardee—The story of Teton Valley, Idaho’s part in the fur trade which focuses on the trappers who traversed the Jackson’s Hole region.

**Rocky Mountain Rendezvous: A History of the Fur Trade Rendezvous 1825-1840**, by Fred Gowans—the story of the fur trade from the perspective of each of the rendezvous held in this three-state region, by the creator of the Museum of the Mountain Man in Pinedale.

**Remember: Members receive 15% off your purchases in the store!**

# THE JACKSON HOLE ARCHAEOLOGY INITIATIVE

MATT STIRN & REBECCA SGOUROS

## Connecting to the Land

The Linn family has owned Linn Canyon Ranch, a popular dude ranch, trail-riding and wedding venue over in Victor, Idaho since 1976. In the decades before they bought it, the area was also a dairy farm and ranch-land. But what Pete and Trudy Linn want to know is, *“who was here before us? It’s more than just the people; it’s the animals and the plants, the whole community that we live in”*. While its more recent owners knew it as both home within a beautiful natural landscape and a place to make a living, they may not have realized how long this community has existed. Now, however, Pete Linn and his dog Cedar walk the property every morning, discovering clues about its long history. Since this tradition began, Pete has found evidence of nearly 10,000 years of prehistory - ranging from projectile points and stone knives to grinding stones and bone tools.

The discovery of a Clovis-age (12,500 BP) projectile point just across the valley from his property, which looked suspiciously like some of the items Pete had discovered over the years, finally moved him to seek answers. Pete’s curiosity led him to Dr. Rick Holmer of Idaho State University who first helped him to interpret how the site was used. JHSM archaeologists Matt Stirn and Rebecca Sgouros got connected to Pete by a fortuitous turn of events: They hired Pete’s nephew, Peter, as their outfitter in the Tetons last summer and Peter - upon realizing that they were archaeologists and shared their uncle’s passion for rocks and artifacts - told them about the finds on the ranch.

In the summer of 2014, Matt and Rebecca went out to the ranch and quickly realized the importance of the site, which extends across approximately 12 football fields and spans at least 10,000 years of history. Pete, who has become something of an expert in the subject himself, said, *“I didn’t know things were that old here”*. Evidence of late-prehistoric projectile points and musket balls (found by a previous owner while putting in a road) suggests, he believes, that *“the site was a campsite with almost continuous use over all that time.”*



Students help archaeologists excavate a 1x1 meter unit

This introduction has since led to a wonderful collaboration between the Linn family and the Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum. Stirn and Sgouros found that the site would not only be important to investigate further, but as a protected site on private land, could offer invaluable educational opportunities. During the fall, the JHSM ran programs with the Jackson Hole Middle School and Teton Literacy Center at the ranch, bringing 70 students to excavate and screen back-fill at the site. The project identified several concentrations of prehistoric activity, and confirmed that people had routinely used the site time and time again. More importantly, this project exposed young students to archaeology, a subject not commonly taught in the classroom. *“Native Americans have lived in the Teton area thousands of years,”* Rebecca notes, *“but very rarely do we learn in school about tribes like the Mountain Shoshone or Crow, and more importantly, how to protect and preserve that cultural heritage.”* The opportunities at the Linn Ranch help students connect to the past and appreciate their surroundings.

As Matt and Rebecca walked across the ranch, and talked about plans to continue school programs this summer, Pete said, *“Really, what’s important is to get young people inspired... to light a spark, and for that we are excited.”* According to Stirn, this is *“a dream come true. Very rarely do people let us know about archaeological sites on their land, and even less often are they excited to preserve and share that knowledge with their community.”*

JHSM is truly thankful to the Linn family for their support, hospitality, and their strong connection to the land.



JH Middle School students analyze artifacts from the Linn Ranch Excavations



A chert knife found by Pete Linn at the Linn Ranch site

# NEW EXHIBITS TO HIGHLIGHT LOCAL RANCHES

## SAMANTHA FORD

*"The mountains cast a spell over me. One night, when they were silvery in the light of a full moon, I tried to reach them. My mother found my bed empty and I was nowhere to be found in the house. She retrieved me some hundred yards or so out in the mesa, walking toward them as fast as my two-year-old legs would carry me. I have no way of explaining this overwhelming desire to be in the mountains, but it was been with me all my life."*

– Betty Woolsey, *Off the Beaten Track*.



Aiguille du Grépon, part of the Mont Blanc Massif in France, 11,424 feet.

Elizabeth "Betty" Woolsey spent her life running towards the mountains. She was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico and her childhood bedroom window faced the Sandia Mountains. Her adventurous spirit brought her to the

European Alps, the Canadian Rockies, the Big Horn Mountains and the Tetons. When she was not scaling peaks like the Aiguille du Grépon in France and Monte Rosa in Switzerland, she was breaking records on the

ski slope. In the 1936 Olympics, Betty was captain of the first U.S. women's ski team. She placed seventh in the slalom and shocked the European skiing world. In 1939 she won the National Downhill Championships at Mt. Hood, Oregon. After earning international ski fame, Betty sought out a quiet mountain valley already known for its soft powder snow.

Betty first came to Jackson Hole on climbing expeditions, and resolved to return to ski. On her first ski run down Teton Pass, Betty found herself at a small log cabin at its base. In 1943, she was finally able to purchase this parcel of land and felt she was home: *"To celebrate, I went into the woods with a shovel, dug up two Engelmann spruce and planted them on either side of the front door of what was now my cabin."* Betty then created a prosperous dude ranch with the help of friends and family.

The Trail Creek Ranch had the distinction in the valley of being run by



Betty with Tucker in the Winds.

women and hosting winter guests for skiing. Betty wanted to share her passion of outdoor adventures with as many as possible. She led pack trips into the high Tetons in summer, and led groups of skiers down the Teton Pass in winter. In each endeavor, she used her unique abilities to read the landscape to avoid danger. Betty strove to share her sense of adventure with each of her guests. She believed that vacations were for invigorating the body as well as the spirit. The seasonal excursions were as much fun for her as they were a delight for her guests. Betty's legacy and memory continues to live on at the Trail Creek Ranch. Not only do her two prized spruce trees remain, but the ranch continues to welcome visitors to the valley each summer.

*"I never tire of life in the valley, with the ranch to work on, mountains to climb, streams to fish, game to hunt and powder snow on the ski slopes. I lived as simply as possible, saving every penny to put back in the ranch."*

– Betty Woolsey, *Off the Beaten Track*.



Olympic skier Betty Woolsey.



Barn and riders at Trail Creek Ranch.

**The Trail Creek Ranch exhibit opens on May 22, 2015, and is the first in a series of exhibits planned by the JHSM to highlight historically significant ranches and dude ranches in Jackson Hole. Funded in part by the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole, the Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum, and private donors.**



# FRIENDS AND STAFF OF JHHSM MAKE THE NEWS!

Congratulations are in order for Friend of the Museum and bow-maker extraordinaire Tom Lucas, one of three Wyoming artists to receive the Governor's Arts Award, and to JHHSM archaeologist and educator Matt Stirn who was recently nominated as a Fellow of the prestigious Explorers Club in NYC.



Governor Meade presenting Tom with the Arts Award

Tom Lucas was nominated for his award by the JHHSM and National Bighorn Sheep Center in Dubois. JHHSM Director, Dr. Sharon Kahin nominated Tom in the category of Folk and Traditional Arts for his work in recreating the lost art of making sinew-backed bows from the horns of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. Lucas also makes Shoshone and Arapahoe ceremonial items for his Wind River neighbors including Sun Dance whistles, ceremonial drums and traditional saddles from cotton wood trees and elk-horns. A nationally recognized artist whose oil paintings reflect his life-long interest in Native American culture, Tom grew up on the Crow and Wind River Indian reservations. He has shared his knowledge and skills through numerous school programs here in Teton County and at events such as the annual Game and Fish Expo at the Casper Events Center. To see Tom's step-by-step exhibit of

how the Mountain Shoshone, or Sheep Eater, Indians made the bighorn bow, visit the JHHSM's *Indians of the Greater Yellowstone* museum at its Deloney location when it opens for the summer season on Saturday, May 23.



Tom Lucas



Tom's display at the awards ceremony.

**Membership is honorary at the Explorer's Club,** *"an international multi-disciplinary professional society dedicated to the advancement of field research and the ideal that it is vital to preserve the instinct to explore."* It is strictly reserved to those individuals *"who have gotten their hands dirty and their feet wet working in the field as participants in one or more documented scientific expeditions."* Becoming a Fellow is yet another step up in terms of recognition by the club's peers. Digging in the dirt since a volunteer at Jackson Hole's Game Creek site at the age of 13, Matt has gone on to further dirty his hands and wet his feet in a number of exotic locations including Egypt and Belize.



Matt Stirn

Of particular interest to his work as Co-Director (with colleague Rebecca Sgouros) of the museum's new *Jackson Hole Archaeology Initiative*, however, is his work in the Wind River Mountains. Between 2008 and 2012, Stirn was Field Director at the High Rise Village site where the 2006 discovery of 1,500 year old villages at timberline by Dr. Richard Adams turned much of what archeologists had taken for granted about high elevation archaeology on its head. For more on Matt's work in alpine archaeology, check out some of his online publications at: [www.researchgate.net/profile/Matthew\\_Stirn/publications](http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Matthew_Stirn/publications).



Matt Stirn in the Wind River Mountains



Matt exploring in Egypt.

# Music in the Hole – the Beat Goes On...

We recently concluded our second annual “**Mud Season Blues**” here in the Museum with **Byron Tomingas**, along with chocolate treats from **The Meeteetse Chocolatier** and coffee parings from **Snake River Roasters**. What a great evening of stories about some of the music and musicians in the Valley, as well as great classical guitar selections from Byron! This evening introduced the opening of our newest exhibit, highlighting music in Jackson Hole. We also unveiled our new screen and short video featuring Byron sharing stories about music around the area from the past. Here are a few highlights from the exhibit:



Local musicians in the early 1900s:  
Back row, l-r: Asker Nelson, Dick Mayer (orchestra leader), Lucy Miner. Front row: Emily Coffin, Almer Nelson, Peck Miner, Pearl Nelson.



## Tenor Banjo (left)

Carl Homer (“Jimmy”) Stephens’ tenor banjo was played at dances in East Idaho and throughout Jackson Hole in the 1920s and 30s.

## Banjo (center)

This Gibson banjo belonged to Holly Leek, the son of Stephen N. Leek. One of the earliest pioneers in the valley, Leek settled here between 1886 and 1887. Holly and his brother helped their father develop Leek’s Camp at Jackson Lake in 1927.

## Mandolin (right)

This mandolin belonged to Pearl Nelson who came to the Valley from Wisconsin as a child in 1902. John Peter Nelson, Pearl’s father bought the Gibb Scott ranch, which is now The Virginian motel and campground. Pearl’s father later bought the Hotel Jackson, which was on the town square (corner of Cache & Deloney).



## Violin (left)

Emile & “Stippy” Wolff’s violin: Emile Wolff came to the valley from Luxembourg between 1886 and 1887. He returned to Europe to find a wife, (Marie) returning to Jackson and homesteading north of Spread Creek in 1895. This instrument was handed down to his son, Stippy, who played both the guitar and the violin. Stippy was a regular on the music scene in Jackson and could be seen playing with his siblings or with friends all around town and out in the smaller communities.

## Ham Can Violin (center)

Made from a lard can, this type of violin is commonly known as the “Ham Can Fiddle.” Our particular violin was made from an Armour & Co. lard can. Tin can instruments were usually hand-made and, because they could travel without their owner’s being worried about breaking them, were often used by herders.

## Violin (right)

“Teton Jackson” (Arthur Bradford) was notorious for being a “bad man of the wild and wooly west.” Jackson may have stolen horses, but was recognized here in the valley as a good singer, always ready to lend a hand and accompany fellow musicians. His violin was actually found in a cave on the Elk Refuge.



## Guitar (left)

Stella Brand guitar from the Moose Head Ranch: the Stella guitar brand was owned by the Oscar Schmidt Company, founded in 1899. It consisted of low and mid-level stringed instruments and was one of several musical instruments made in Jersey City, New Jersey by the Oscar Schmidt Company.

## Guitar (right)

A 1930s May-Bell brand parlor guitar from the Moose Head Ranch: a relatively inexpensive and hugely popular brand from that period that was sold through mail-order houses across America.

**Stop in soon to see this newest exhibit in our Cache Street gallery!**

# The Weida Collection – Who Was John Weida?

*[Reprinted from JH Museum Newsletter, Vol. 5, No. 1, March, 1988.]*

John E. Weida was born on December 11, 1911, in Canton, Hoio, to Pennsylvania Dutch parents. “My father was a tradesman and he wanted me to be one.” Explained John about his departure from high school and enrollment in the Elgin Watchmaker’s College in Elgin Illinois. at age 17. He mastered watchmaking and watch repair and graduated as a certified watchmaker.

John’s family moved to Beloit, Wisconsin, where John’s father hired on with the Fairbanks Morse Company. John graduated at the height of the Depression and traveled from town to town doing odd jobs until he landed a watch repairman’s job in a jewelry store in Janesville, Wisconsin. Here he met Dorothy, his wife to be. Both families were interested in collecting Indian artifacts, and one of the panels of artifacts in the Weida Collection belonged to Dorothy Weida’s father.



John Weida



James A. Beard

From a traveling watch-material salesman, John learned that a watchmaker was needed in a jewelry store in Cheyenne, Wyoming. In 1939, John and Dorothy were married and moved there. In 1941, John heard of another opening, this time in the C. F. Ames Jewelry Store in downtown Idaho Falls. Again the Weidas moved west, and John worked for Ames for 8 ½ years before opening his own store at 348 B Street. Here many Jackson residents sought him out to purchase his fine line of pewter, jewelry, watches, and diamonds.

In 1960 John heard about the late Jim Beard’s Indian Collection in Arco, Idaho. The collection was up for sale and John purchased it. In the collection were several caches of Russian trade beads strung on wire. Also present were many brass trade items. This was a catalyst for John, and he began to study trade beads. Where did they come from? How and when did they get to Wyoming and Idaho?



Weida Collection baskets.



Shell and bead display.

John placed ads in different trade journals and traded some of Jim Beard’s “Russian blues” for other trade beads. Local people learned of his interest and they began bringing him Indian things. One day, a Jackson collector visited John’s store and found out about his trade bead interest. This was Slim Lawrence, co-founder of the Jackson Hole Museum. The two men became friends and Slim was soon a regular dinner guest at the Weida’s home where the two could talk about Western history, trade beads, and Indian culture.

Anna Bridges, daughter of Fort Hall Doctor T. M. Bridges, became a close friend of the Weida’s. Anna told John how Navajo Indian visitors to the Fort Hall Reservation taught the Shoshones to make baskets. Eventually, she gave John old pictures of the Fort Hall Reservation and a number of rare Shoshonean baskets her mother had collected.

The Weida Collection was growing and John was studying everything he could find on trade beads. He began going to auctions, continuing to trade and upgrade his collection, making careful notes on all his acquisitions.

John and Dorothy sold their store in 1976, but John’s passion for information and for collecting continues today. Last fall, interested Jackson residents asked John what he planned to do with his collection. John expressed concern that it should not be broken up, but how could it be made available to the public? The Jackson Hole Museum Board of Trustees offered to buy the collection and the deal was struck. As a result, all of John’s dedicated work on trade beads, the Shoshones, and regional archaeology will soon be made available to the public. John has left a legacy – the John E. Weida Collection – for us all to enjoy.



Weida Collection tools & points.



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### May 16, 2015—Elk Fest

8:00 am — 12 Noon: JHHS&M booth on Town Square

### May 22, 2015

10:00 am: Trail Creek Ranch exhibit opens

3:00 pm: Special Walking Tour on the Town Square

7:00 pm: Beaver, Beads & Bullets: presentation on the new Fur Trade exhibit in the Deloney Museum

### May 23, 2015—Old West Days

9:00 am—12 Noon: JHHS&M booth on Town Square

10:00 am: Old West Days Parade

10:00 am: Indians of the Greater Yellowstone Museum re-opens for the 2015 summer season

### May 24, 2015

2:00 pm: Special Walking Tour on the Town Square

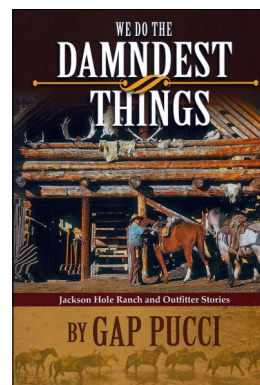
Keep current on our upcoming events at our website: [www.jacksonholehistory.org](http://www.jacksonholehistory.org)

## Hot Off the Press!

The latest book by the author of "We Married Adventure" - 344 pages of true stories and adventure in the high mountains of Jackson Hole!

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by **GAP PUCCI**



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