

Museum Musings...

Lula W. Dorsey Museum

YMCA of the Rockies



Winter-Spring 2003

In this issue:

*Personal ramblings,
weather & critters*

*Museum annual appeal
targets renovation*

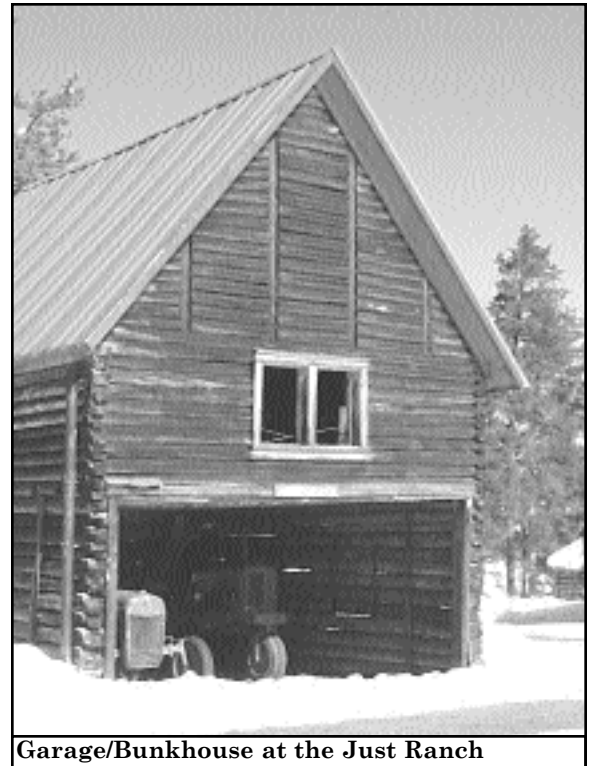
*Former President/CEO
passes away*

*Y receives grant for
Mountainside Lodge*

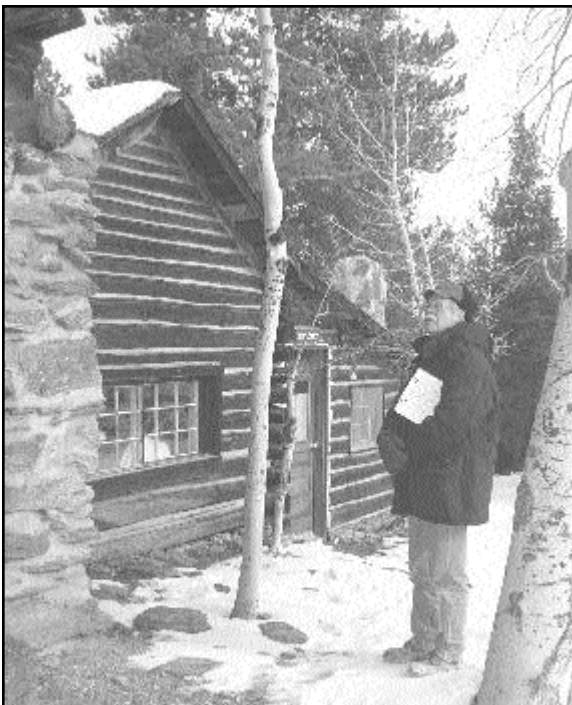
*Pondering the fate of the
Just Ranch*

*Looking for our former
employees*

*Summer archaeological
update*



Garage/Bunkhouse at the Just Ranch



Architect Gary Long inspects masonry at
Mountainside Lodge

Our Mission:

*To support the YMCA of the
Rockies' mission through preser-
vation and documentation of
our corporate history by:*

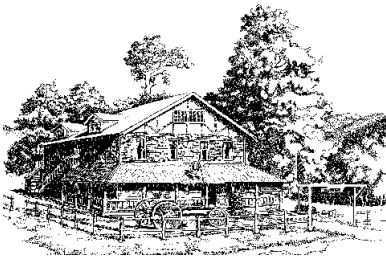
*Collecting, preserving, and
interpreting cultural artifacts
related to the YMCA's history
in a museum venue;*

*Offering interpretive pro-
grams to guests and members;*

*Identifying and participating
in the preservation of histori-
cally significant buildings
and sites;*

*Actively researching and pub-
lishing materials related to
the our history.*

View From the Museum Porch



We want to extend a hearty welcome to over 500 of you who are receiving "Museum Musings" for the very first time. We hope you enjoy our personal ram-

blings and folksy style as we share with you the work of preserving the Y's heritage.

Long time readers no doubt notice this edition of "Musings" is more than just a little late. This is the first time in nineteen years we missed printing our fall edition. We decided that with all the upheaval associated with the museum remodeling this winter it was impossible to print a full spring edition. Consequently, we are sending you this post Holiday edition to cover fall and early spring.

As you read these words we are knee deep in bubble wrap and boxes packing away twenty-three years of work. After everything is packed, Buildings and Grounds will move the museum into a trailer in the parking lot. As you can imagine our anxiety level is somewhere in the vicinity of a personal visit by the IRS!

The museum had a very busy fall. Most fall weekends see downtown streets packed bumper to bumper and ice cream cone to ice cream cone. At the Y most available cabins were rented as were many lodge rooms through mid-October. Many visitors are families looking for a getaway from the hustle and bustle of growing Front Range communities.

We've been working at the museum long enough to see folks returning as empty nesters and grandparents. They smile remembering summer family vacations twenty years ago. But their smile widens as they talk about the beauty and quiet of a fall vacation far removed from the crowds of July.

Coping with fall museum visitors was made much easier this year with the help of volunteers Judy Stephenson and Lorrie Dawes. Judy was with us last spring and returned to work on alumni files and greet guests. Lorrie joined our ranks after retiring from nursing. She loves to work in the yard and paint. Needless to say, we kept Lorrie very busy.

John Cowan came for a week in October to paint and help with general maintenance. He promised to return in January to help pack the museum. We hope to convince him to return in March to help reverse the whole process.

We had some late October fun when students from the Estes Park Center's Circle of Friends Montessori School came to the museum to "hunt" pumpkins hidden by the school staff. As you can see from the photograph everybody had a good time.



Now its time for weather and critters... In late August the aspen leaves started turning about ten days early by our calculations. We speculated it might be an uneventful fall color season due to the drought. To everyone's surprise nature put on a very intense but shortened show.

Fall provided us with the usual crisp nights and calm, sunny days. Several days were so perfect that we found ourselves battling a severe case of "fall fever." The symptoms are similar to spring fever except there is a cure. The elixir is a long walk along trails bathed in light filtered by golden aspen trees.

Drought continues to plague Colorado and the West. The summer monsoon rains never appeared for any sustained period. However, a wet spell at the end of September greened up the museum yard.

As we moved into late October, we started to see signs of normal winter weather patterns. Every few days moisture arrived from the west and was overridden by cold air from the north.

On October 28 it clouded up and turned bitterly cold. By evening it began to snow. It snowed off and on for the next three days piling up around 8"

of snow. Then on Halloween evening it began to snow in earnest. By the next morning we had 18 inches on the level. Denver recorded the lowest maximum highs in 130 years for October on the 30th and 31st.



Needless to say, we couldn't grump as we shoveled the results of this wonderful storm. The next week a massive storm struck the Western Slope. In Estes we received several more inches of snow. By mid-November the snow pack was about 30% above normal to the delight of ski areas.

As Thanksgiving approached so did another major cold outbreak. As if to tease us, Mother Nature gave us a spectacular 60 degree day on November 21. The Thanksgiving storm was neither as cold or snowy as first predicted. We shall see what the rest of the winter and spring has in store for us.

Our most interesting critter sighting didn't occur around the museum or even in Estes Park. During a visit to SMR on November 5th to survey the Just Ranch, Jack heard a raucous bird call. He had to rub all his brain cells together to identify what he thought were Sand Hill Cranes.

When he located the birds in the bright sky he discovered they weren't Sand Hill but over twenty Whooping Cranes! Typically, they are seen on the Eastern Plains during migration season. As one birder explained to Jack, the harsh weather on the eastern side of the Divide interfered with many fall migration patterns.

Another bird sighting on September 1, while not unusual, provided more fun. If you've ever tried to find Ptarmigan on the tundra you know its almost impossible. So well camouflaged are they, that the best way to find them is to stand still and look for running "rocks."

As we walked along the north side of Tombstone Ridge, Lulie looked up at a rock out-

cropping fifty yards above us. There, silhouetted in the sun was a Ptarmigan. We climbed up to the rocks and found a hen and several chicks gobbling ripe raspberries. We took turns eating raspberries and herding the Ptarmigan trying to get the best photographic angle.

The Thunder Mountain turkey, Henrietta, was last seen in mid July. She deposited a couple of nice pen feathers in our yard and disappeared. We've been hoping she would reappear as winter approached but no luck. We don't know if some gobbler lured her away or if she fell prey to a coyote or mountain lion.

Like the leaves, the bull elk got frisky a week or so earlier. There were several enormous bull elk around the grounds. One in particular had a rack to rival the legendary Sampson. The younger bulls just reaching maturity have a heck of a time holding onto their harems with so many big bullies around.

On September 24 Jack and Judy got to witness a battle for supremacy with an unusual outcome. That afternoon they heard the sound of crashing horns. Jack looked out his office window to see a cloud of dust through the boughs of the big pine.

Rushing out on the porch they saw two bulls in a battle royal. Usually these struggles last a minute or less. These two boys went after it for several minutes. One was obviously larger and older. Most often the outcome is predictable with the younger combatant losing. This time, however, the youngster fought the old guy to a draw and eventually sent him packing off into the woods. The victor gathered up his purloined ladies and herded them off in the opposite direction bugling in triumph. We laughed speculating if he would be dethroned before the night was over.

Since this is a combined fall-winter-spring edition we've got a lot of ground to cover. In this issue we announce our first annual campaign for the museum, surveys of the Just and Rowley homesteads and progress on the rehabilitation of Mountainside Lodge. So, we had better bid you farewell. We ask for your prayers and support as we embark upon our museum renovation. Jack is not sure where he will office during the chaos, but somebody should know where he is. We should reopen on a limited basis in mid-March.

**FIRST ANNUAL MUSEUM CAMPAIGN
TARGETS IMPROVED
GUEST SERVICES**

The YMCA of the Rockies' mission is all about service to its members. Each department carries out their portion of that mission in its day-to-day work and activities. At the museum we serve the Y's members by educating and entertaining them. Our mission extends beyond the confines of the museum as we lead interpretative programs into Rocky Mountain National Park.

In 1979 the museum opened its doors with sparsely furnished rooms and a few photographs and documents. Now there are four buildings. Our photograph collection numbers in the thousands and grows with each passing year. File boxes and cabinets now contain ninety-six years of Y history. As the Dorsey Museum has grown, so has the cost of preserving your YMCA history.

Tens of thousands of persons have enjoyed the museum during the last twenty-four years. While they have trod gently, the museum is showing its age. This past summer the Buildings and Grounds Department rehabilitated the museum's exterior. In 2003 we turn our attention to the interior where we serve the Y's guests.

The finish on our wood floors has completely worn through in high traffic areas. Sheetrock is stained and cracked from old water damage. No amount of scrubbing will clean painted surfaces. Our electrical and lighting systems are inadequate.

The physical museum structure is the tablet upon which we interpret your Y history. It is time to update our permanent displays with new information and artifacts. It is also time to replace some displays.

Operating today's museum requires an investment in technology. Our old copy machine is terminal. The museum's Pentium II computer is not up to the task of editing digital photographs and video. Servicing our ancient LaserJet printer costs more than replacing it.

For these upgrades we need your help. The projected budget for interior renovation for improved guest services and technology upgrades is:

Refinish floors: \$4,800
Update electrical including new lighting: \$4,400
New and revised exhibits: \$7,250

Refurbish piano: \$500
Cleaning Navajo rugs and textiles: \$750
Packing materials: \$450
Replace copy machine \$500
Replace Pentium II computer and printer \$2,000

Total: \$20,625

The Charles and Betti Saunders Foundation pledged a challenge grant in the amount of \$8,400. They will match dollar for dollar your contributions up to that amount. We have already made out our check out to the museum. We ask that you join us in supporting this annual campaign to preserve the YMCA of the Rockies' history.

We have taken the bold action of starting the renovation before the money is raised. Each time we have called upon our friends for help they have supported the museum. We have faith that you will do so again.

If you haven't made a commitment to help preserve your YMCA family heritage, we hope you will consider doing so. If you are a previous contributor we know we can continue to count on you. You can contribute via the form on the back page of the newsletter.

**GENE GARRIS FORMER
PRESIDENT/CEO PASSES AWAY**

On Tuesday November 5 we were notified that Gene passed away at his home in Estes Park after a long illness.

Gene began his forty-one year career with the YMCA as a seasonal employee in the Y-Grocery. He returned to become staff counselor. Gene was next hired as Personnel Director. He served as the Estes Park Center Managing Director before assuming the position of CEO/President from March 1987 until April 2002.

A memorial service was held at Hyde Chapel on November 16th. For almost 100 years the YMCA of the Rockies has been blessed with volunteers and staff who have made the Y a place where families and conferences come to stay in a wholesome and beautiful environment. During the service we were reminded that all who serve the Y leave their mark on this organization.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Gene Garris scholarship fund c/o the YMCA of the Rockies.

YMCA RECEIVES STATE GRANT FOR JOHN TOMOTHY STONE'S MOUNTAINSIDE LODGE

Since Mountainside Lodge closed to overnight use in 1994, the museum has conducted several structural and engineering assessments of Mountainside Lodge. All the experts agreed that the building was deteriorated but structurally sound.

When Kent Meyer took office as President/CEO one of the first things he told Jack was that he wanted to see Mountainside rehabilitated and reopened for use by Y guests. We suggested the Y apply for a State grant to conduct a formal comprehensive analysis of the Lodge incorporating our previous work. The goal is to formulate a renovation plan for the Lodge while maintaining historic integrity. Considering our decades long love affair with this building you can imagine we jumped at this opportunity.

Since Mountainside Lodge is on the State and National Register of Historic Places, the Y is eligible for grants from the State Historic Fund (SHF) to conduct a Historic Structure Analysis (HSA). We secured an \$8,800 grant that was used to secure the services of Long Hoeft Architects of Georgetown, Colorado.

Any use of public money requires that every "t" be crossed and every "i" dotted. We felt confident our work met State standards. After submitting the application, Jack received a telephone call. He had used the ugly words "remodel" and "renovate" in the grant. We quickly substituted "rehabilitate" making everybody happy.

Gary Long and Kathy Hoeft have completed over one hundred rehabilitation and adaptive reuse projects. They conducted the first informal survey of Mountainside Lodge in 1984 at the direction of then executive director Dick Protzmann.

They arrived on November 14 to begin work. Buildings and Grounds spent most of the previous day opening the road up to the Lodge. For two days Kathy and Gary inspected every square inch of the building. We did turn on the heat such as it is warming one corner of the dining room. The rest of the building contained that cold, dead air that chills you to the bone.

One part of the HSA requires that we determine what was original and what was added. Our previous research for the National Register answered most of those questions. However, trying

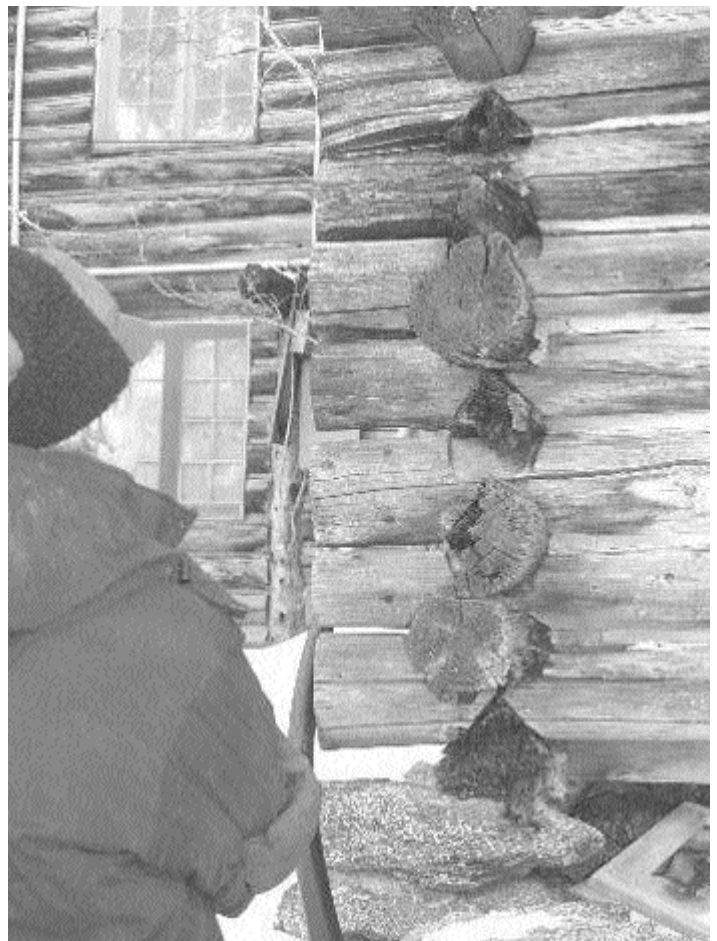
to ferret out the original configuration of the second and third floors was a daunting task. We looked at nail head types and workmanship to decide what was done when.

The HSA includes eight main points that provide a detailed snapshot of the building's present condition resulting in as built measured drawings. The fifth point, Preservation Plan, will provide us with a prioritized work plan, phasing plan, and most importantly estimated cost.

Production of the final product is a slow process. The first draft will be ready by January 1. After a 30-day comment and revision period the second draft is prepared with time for comment and revision. Bottom line is that we will have our final report by March 1.

Kathy and Gary issued a verbal report before departing. They indicated that the dining room is in such distress that we may lose it from a leaking roof and prior moisture damage unless measures are taken within the next year.

Needless to say we will keep you posted as events unfold over the next several months.



Gary Long inspects rotten logs on circa 1924 kitchen addition.

SPANNING A CENTURY GOING, GOING, GONE!

In May 1992 Johnson Publishing delivered 4,400 copies of YMCA of the Rockies - Spanning a Century. As the deliveryman dumped several pallets of books, we wondered how the Y would ever sell all of them.

In late October the General Store called to tell Jack they were out of Spanning a Century. When he went to storage to pick up a couple of boxes Jack found there were less than 100 copies. He smiled knowing that leftover books would not serve as ballast in his casket!

Our original plan was to print an updated history in late 2006 just in time for the centennial. Instead we've pushed the publication date up to spring 2005.

During the ten years since Spanning a Century was published we've expanded our knowledge of early Y history in many areas. Revisionist history has bad connotations especially when history is rewritten to fit a specific agenda. For us revisionist history means revisions due to additional information and understanding.

The new edition will include expanded information on the founding of the YMCA movement in 1844. We'll also revisit the YMCA of the USA archives to review the context in which the YMCA of the Rockies was founded. Throughout the new publication we'll relate how outside historical, social and political events shaped our Y history.

The new edition will contain a chapter on geology for both centers written by Dr. George Stone. Lulie and Jack will write a chapter written on the Native American use of our land during both prehistoric and historic periods.

This time around the Y will employ the services of a professional to layout the cover, contents and photographs. We're already started a file with notes on additions and revisions.

As this project evolves we'll be asking for your help to ensure historical accuracy.

YMCA PONDER'S FUTURE OF THE JUST RANCH

We both remember visiting Snow Mountain Ranch not long after it opened. Clarabelle and Rudy lived at the homestead operating the Just Ranch as it had for decades. Sheep grazed about the grounds of Snow Mountain Ranch far outnumbering Y guests!

Rudy Just died in 1989. Clarabelle move off the Ranch in 1990 to a nursing home. For several years a small interpretative museum was operated in the original 1880s homestead cabin. That aside the Ranch's thirteen buildings have stood vacant during the ensuing years. The ravages of time, weather and vandalism have taken their toll.

Numerous discussions have been held concerning the Ranch. The realm of possibility at the extremes is complete removal of the buildings or complete rehabilitation for use as a living history museum. The former is considered not desirable and the latter not within the mission and scope of the YMCA of the Rockies. The answer lays somewhere in the middle.

This past summer President/CEO Kent Meyer and SMR Center Manager Julie Watkins asked us to inspect the Just Ranch to offer our perspective. As we walked around the Ranch our hearts sank as we inspected the deteriorating buildings. We knew immediately that we were in way over our heads. We asked permission to call in Gary Long of Long Hoeft Architects since we were already working with them on the Mountainside Lodge survey.

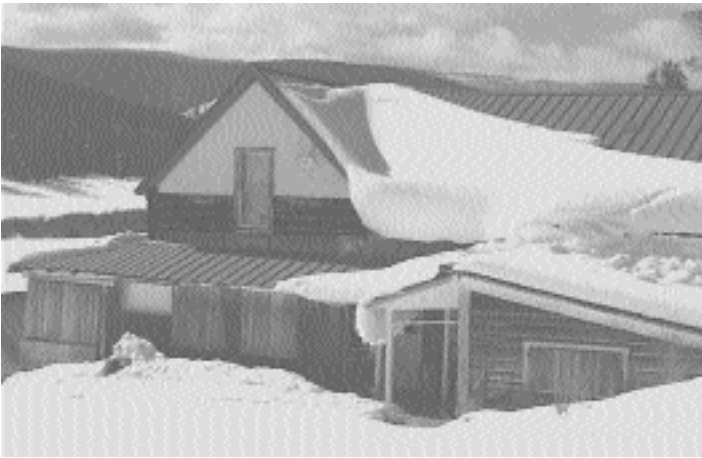
On November 5th Gary and Jack conducted a preliminary assessment of the Ranch. The snow lay deep around the buildings preventing an in depth inspection. In his report he said:

Given the historic value of the ranch buildings, there is reasonable argument to preserve them.

With the staying power of the YMCA, it is not difficult to imagine a steady increase in the cultural value of these buildings as the years go by. As ranches such as this are lost, the Just buildings will become special if not unique. (They) will be a stellar attraction to visitors, say, a hundred years from now, far more than they are now.

In addition, few ranches command a valley of such untrammelled unobstructed beauty. There are few comparable ranches in Colorado, or, for that matter, the American West.

At the same time, we recognize that Snow Mountain does not have function ready to fit into these buildings. Perhaps mothballing would be appropriate now until such later time that Snow Mountain programs find need for these buildings.



The Ranchhouse at the Just Ranch

Gary offered an eight-point program of stabilization to mothball the buildings within the capability and available resources of the YMCA of the Rockies. Additionally, he suggested that we place the Ranch on the State Register of Historic Places. Then the Y could apply for a Historic Structure Assessment similar to what was done for Mountainside Lodge.

Even if the buildings are stabilized for future generations, Snow Mountain Ranch is left with the question of how to best utilize the Just Ranch within the context of the YMCA's mission and Snow Mountain Ranch programs.

ALUMNI - WE'RE LOOKING FOR YOU

Many of our readers are former employees of the YMCA of the Rockies. In conjunction with our 2007 centennial celebration we are planning employee reunions at all three facilities. In order to make this a reality we need your help.

Unfortunately, many of the addresses in our database are incorrect. Here is where you come in. We want you to dig through your address book and forward to us names of fellow alumni. In turn we will contact them and ask for more names.

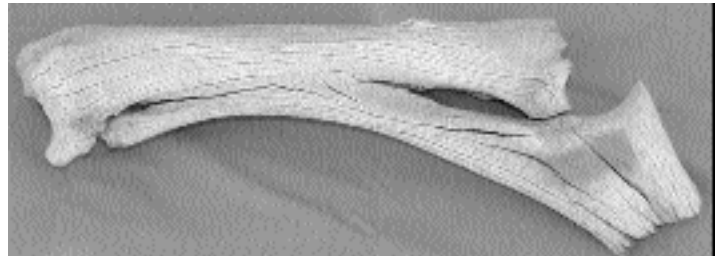
Send alumni information to the address listed in our masthead on page two.

SUMMER YIELDS SOME INTERESTING FINDS

As the summer heat and drought persisted, snowfields in the high country all but disappeared. Glaciers turned an ugly gray as ancient underlying ice was exposed. This led to a very interesting discovery by Y hike leader Paul Yoder.

While on a solitary journey in the Mummy Range he discovered a very large bone obviously uncovered by melting snowfields. He brought it over to the museum for Jack to look at. Jack is no biologist but he knows enough to tell it wasn't a deer, elk or sheep. Besides it appeared very old.

Jack took the bone to the Park archaeologist. Bill Butler pulled out a book and identified it as a buffalo ulna. There are no recorded sightings of buffalo dating back to the first Anglo visitors to Estes in the 1830s. Bill speculates the bone could be 250-350 years old!

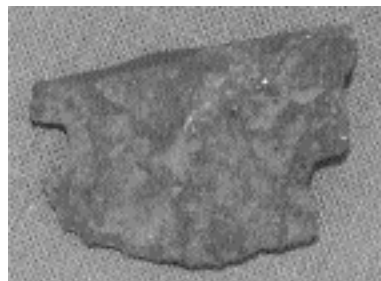


On July 22 we led a Y hike to Ptarmigan Tarns at the base of Notchtop Mountain. Among the group was museum volunteer John Cowan and his teenage daughter Kristen. We made our usual stop in the meadow before reaching Lake Helene. There we talked about the archaeological site initially discovered by Lulie several years ago. Even though the Park Service has surveyed the area and supposedly removed the surface artifacts we can usually find some flakes.

Jack gave his usual talk expecting this to be little more than an extended water break. After he finished Kristen walked up and quietly handed him the base to a 2,000 4,000 year-old projectile point! Beginners luck and younger eyes...

When Jack went to turn in the point to Bill Butler he learned that "Lulie's" site has been earmarked for possible excavation. A test survey yielded Ute pottery and numerous artifacts. The archaeologists believe that we found the base camp for the Flattop Game Drive walls, a couple thousand feet above.

You never know what you'll find if you keep your eyes open.



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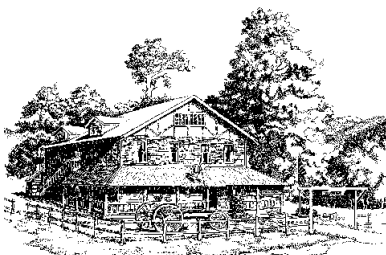
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