Staking Their Claim: Pioneer Settlement in the Yampa Valley

Exhibit Opening – You’re invited! Wednesday, June 21 from 5:30-7pm.

What did it take to be a homesteader? What were the requirements of the Homestead Act of 1862? Who were the first to come and where did they come from? What was life like for the first settlers and why did they make the journey west? How did the railroad impact the settlement of the region?

Through pioneer stories, recollections, and historic photographs, the Tread of Pioneers Museum’s newest exhibit, “Staking Their Claim,” tells the story of pioneer settlement in the Yampa Valley. The exhibit will feature sound clips from oral history interviews with early settlers, film segments detailing the rules of the Homestead Act of 1862, and fascinating pioneer artifacts from the museum’s collection. The exhibit pieces together the stories of hardship and success of making a home and a living in one of the last regions settled in the West. Come discover the stories of isolation, dangers, opportunity, and freedom.

As valued museum members, you’re invited to this feature exhibit preview and opening reception and our Annual Meeting on Wednesday, June 21 from 5:30-7pm. The event will include wine and hors d’oeuvres as well as prize giveaways. We hope you will attend!

Steamboat Round the Bend is Back in Print!

Steamboat Round the Bend, a local history book by the late Dee Richards, is back in print through a partnership between the Steamboat Pilot & Today and the Tread of Pioneers Museum. Steamboat Round the Bend is considered one of the premier history books about Steamboat Springs’ early years. The book was compiled and written by Richards, editor of the Steamboat Pilot from 1965-1990, and published by the Steamboat Pilot in 1976.

“The book has a wealth of information culled from early Steamboat Pilot newspapers, woven together with many early photographs and an interview with the founder of Steamboat, James H. Crawford,” said James L. Crawford, local historian and great-grandson of James H. Crawford. “Dee wrote in a very entertaining style, with each chapter able to stand on its own.”

Steamboat Round the Bend is the museum’s ‘go to’ book for researching exhibits and confirming town history, and we are thrilled we could partner with the Steamboat Pilot & Today to make this great resource available to the public after decades of being out of print.

Get your copy of the book at the Tread of Pioneers Museum Store today!
The Three Wire Winter online magazine and oral history project brings the voices of Routt County’s past to your computer or smartphone. The project allows us to hear first-hand stories from the individuals who traveled to Routt County in covered wagons; started the “strawberry boom” in what is now called Strawberry Park; rode the first passenger train into town in 1909; crossed high rivers without a bridge in the spring, just to get to school each day; and fought on enemy lines in World War II.

So what is Three Wire Winter?

During the winter of 1975-76, Steamboat Springs High School teachers Bill McKelvie and Tanna Brock, launched the Three Wire Winter magazine and oral history project to help celebrate the Bicentennial of the United States. The students’ publication, which produced 24 issues for 12 years, provided a rare historical insight and record that chronicled the lives and stories of Routt County citizens.

Many years after the magazine ended, McKelvie gifted all of the Three Wire Winter records to the Tread of Pioneers Museum to preserve for future generations. The museum began digitizing the photographs and audio cassette tapes of the interviews, while hard copies of the magazine articles were available in the museum’s research center. The Three Wire Winter magazine and oral history project is a shining example of the limitless value and potential contained in the museum’s vast collections.

In 2015, the Tread of Pioneers Museum joined forces with the Bud Werner Memorial Library, in order to take this historical archive to the next level. Each organization provided its own unique services, expertise, and resources to bring the project’s wealth of 284 oral history interviews and 304 magazine articles, as well as associated photos and other documents, online and completely searchable through the library’s catalog (http://steamboatlibrary.marmot.org/). In the coming year, the collection will also become part of the Digital Public Library of America—bringing our rich local history to a global audience (https://dp.la/).

Hands-On Pioneer Bedroom Opens

By Katie Adams, Curator

The Tread of Pioneers Museum has created a dedicated kid-friendly exhibit that represents a typical child’s bedroom in Steamboat Springs around 1900. Special exhibit features are pioneer clothes to try on, and historic and replica toys from the turn-of-the-19th-century ready for touching and experimentation. Framed portraits on the wall feature local families and children from the early 1900s.

Information and fun history tid-bits on every item in the bedroom can be found within the “Discovery Cards” drawer. Having the information located in a drawer keeps children involved and requires them to seek and find answers—which often leads to better information retention.

Another unique exhibit feature is the “What is This?” game that includes historical objects for kids to hold, bend, and smell in order to figure out what it is. Some of the items are glove stretchers, button hook, garters, hand warmers, and a darning egg.

While the goal for the room is to serve, educate, and entertain children of elementary school age, the room is open to all museum visitors and is sure to delight kids of all ages. Exhibit support materials explain local history themes for all ages and types of visitors, including how the town changed with the coming of the railroad; how families worked together to survive the harsh Yampa Valley winters; one-room rural school-life; town economics; and the history of the local strawberry boom.
Volunteer Spotlights

**Marilyn Mastoras**

My husband and I moved to Steamboat Springs 17 years ago when he retired. We wanted to be in a beautiful place where we could ski, hike, and bike. For five years, I volunteered at the museum’s front desk and now enjoy being a docent for school tours and programs. I taught school for 20 years and love history, so being a tour guide at the museum allows me to bring history alive for children.

**Mary O’Connor**

I’ve lived in Steamboat off and on for 30 years, but after traveling back and forth overseas for my husband’s career, we bought a home here four years ago. I’m originally from Boston, and years ago I came to Steamboat for a ski trip and loved it so much I decided to make it my new home. I love volunteering at the museum because there’s so much interesting history here that I never knew. I also really enjoy the “concierge” aspect of volunteering, such as helping visitors with things to do, sights to see, and where to dine. It’s nice to see how many locals visit and really appreciate this gem in our community.

*If you would like to join the museum’s volunteer team, contact Tamra at 879-2214 or tmonahan@treadofpioneers.org*

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Steamboat Springs/Ute Indian Cultural Exchange Event

The Tread of Pioneers Museum collects, preserves, and shares the rich heritage and history of the Steamboat Springs area. Museum staff strives to tell the story of our local heritage through the voices and perspectives of the people who lived it.

In this effort, the Tread of Pioneers Museum creates opportunities for our local residents and visitors to hear from and learn first-hand from the Ute people themselves, their story, in their words. Exhibit and program public surveys indicate that patrons are most interested in Native American history. As a result, the Tread of Pioneers Museum seeks opportunities to bring meaningful Native American programming and exhibits to Steamboat Springs. It is an honor to serve as a conduit for Ute Indian cultural appreciation in our community.

On May 15, the Tread of Pioneers Museum proudly hosted the Steamboat Springs/Ute Indian Cultural Exchange Event. Students from the Nah-na-mah Culture Club at the Uintah River High School of Fort Duchesne, Utah, performed pow wow dances and music and explained the history and meaning of the dances in three presentations—two at Soda Creek Elementary and one for the public at 5:30pm at Library Hall at the Bud Werner Library.

In addition, Tread of Pioneers Museum staff led guided museum tours to the students and an opportunity for the students to review and provide feedback on the museum’s Ute exhibits. The students also participated in a lunch discussion with Steamboat Springs High School students, before taking time on their own to explore the town and soak in the local hot springs, a Native American tradition.

“Through this event, we hoped to increase awareness and appreciation of Ute Indian history and culture and to connect Ute Indian youth with their ancestral lands and history in Steamboat Springs,” said Candice Bannister, Executive Director of the Tread of Pioneers Museum. “A deeper understanding of our rich heritage and culture, for both Steamboat Springs residents and Ute students, is a valuable opportunity for all. When we better understand our past, are inclusive and welcoming, and share our strengths and talents, both communities involved can benefit.”

The project was envisioned by Bannister as part of her Change Leader Certification project through Colorado Creative Industries. The certification program aims to develop skills and support for cultural and civic leaders across the state to become catalysts for positive change in their communities.

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**Curator’s Collection**

**WISH LIST**

- Antique bicycle
- Ice chest/box
- Early men’s work clothing and accessories i.e.: cuff links, suspenders, ties
- Early local football, baseball, basketball uniforms/items
- Early agricultural items

If you would like to donate any of the above items that have ties to Routt County, please contact our Curator, Katie Adams, at 879-2214 or kadams@treadofpioneers.org

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The Tread of Pioneers Museum, Steamboat Springs, Colorado
Looking Back

Students learn the significance of branding cattle during a 2017 school tour and program.

A Uintah River High School student demonstrates the Ute Indian jingle dance on May 5, 2017 at Soda Creek Elementary (see page 3 article).

Museum intern Sara Sweeney shares Mount Harris coal mining history at the museum's History Happy Hour series at the Butcherknife Brewery.

Local artist Susan Gill Jackson paints Olympian skier and outfitter Ray Heid in front of the museum for the Colorado Creative Industries site visit.

Linda Long shares a story about her family’s handmade butcher knife during the 2017 Taste of History cooking series.

Kids explore hands-on in the new Pioneer Kids Bedroom.