



Fort Caspar Museum Association

Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2023

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Fort Caspar Receives \$723,500 Grant



FCMA Chair Con Trumbull and Vice Chair Johanna Wickman worked with museum and city staff to write a \$723,500 grant for the National Park Service's Save

America's Treasures Historic Preservation grant program.

Five reconstructed log buildings, situated on concrete foundations, make

up the 1865 Army post on Fort Caspar's property. In 1971, the buildings were listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Fifty years later, they underwent an examination, which found that "the sill logs forming the base of the log buildings, which were placed in concrete and are now rotting, need to be replaced to stabilize the base of each building." Though funds were budgeted for fiscal year 2022, they were not "sufficient to complete the needed work for even one building."

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Message from the Chair

By Con Trumbull



After a very busy year we are getting ready for, you guessed it, another busy year! Between the headstone project, the Cole Creek Train Marker project, and our living history programs this is sure to be an exciting year. None of this would be possible

without YOUR support. While your membership dues and donations are an important part of what we do, your participation is even more crucial to our success! I encourage everyone to come down and check in on the museums latest exhibits, take part

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Artifact Spotlight: Gavel



The Fort Caspar Museum is pleased to receive donations to its collection relating to Casper and central Wyoming history. Highlighted here is one recent addition to the museum's collection.

This gavel was used at meetings of The Ladies Auxiliary United Spanish War Veterans in Casper.

The Ladies Auxiliary of the United Spanish War Veterans was a support and service organization founded for the mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters of the veterans of the Spanish-American War, the Philippine Insurrection and the Chinese Relief Expedition. The function of the Ladies Auxiliary was to care

for the sick and distressed families of the Spanish War Veterans, assist in Patriotic services, see that respect to the flag and uniform was taught in the schools and assist The Spanish War Veterans Camps in social events.

Fort Caspar Grant cont'd

Thus, the museum association and city staff completed a grant for Save America's Treasures, a grant program designed for preservation projects, among other things. The grant money we received will be enough to complete the work on the officer's

quarters and the blacksmith building.

Should the construction costs come in below estimated on those two structures, staff will request a grant amendment so that another building can receive necessary rehabilitation efforts.

FCMA and museum staff hope to have the project completed by July 2025.

This national grant is extremely competitive with Fort Caspar being awarded among only 32 other sites.

Message From the Chair cont'd

in our programming and be sure to tell your friends and family to stop by as well!

On a personal note I'm excited to announce that we have launched a fundraising campaign

for a monument for the Cole Creek train wreck. In September we commemorated the 100th anniversary of Wyoming's worst rail disaster. This monument will be placed in memory of those who were on the

train on that fateful night. We are planning on having the monument ready to be installed this summer, stay tuned for more details!

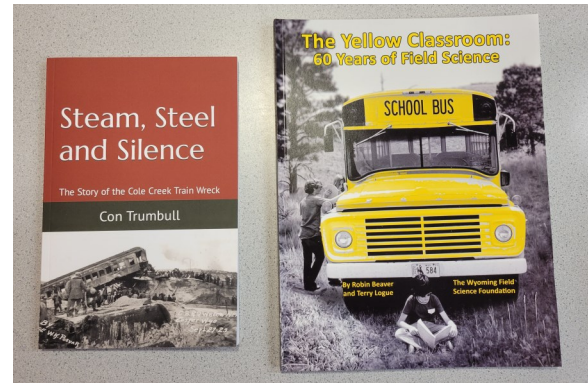
New Books and Ornaments in the Gift Shop



Members receive 15% gift shop purchases!

FCMA Board Chair Con Trumbull's history of the Cole Creek Train Wreck entitled, "Steam, Steel, and Silence" was released to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the tragedy this September.

Also available now is, "The Yellow Classroom: 50 Years of Field Science" about the Wyoming Field Science Association by Robin Beaver and Terry Logue.



The gift shop also has a unique assortment of ornaments including a new laser cut wooden Fort Caspar ornament!

Coming Soon: "Hollywood in Wyoming"

A new exhibit on view February 7th to June 18th, 2024.

The rolling hills, steep snow-capped Tetons, and broad plains of Wyoming have served as a backdrop for more than 120 movies in the last 120

years. Western films have been the majority of films shot in Wyoming but not all. Come and see how many of the movies you've seen.



On Exhibit: "Wyoming Rural Landscapes"

On view through February 4, 2024.

This exhibit of photos from the Wyoming State Museum ponders the question of what rural Wyoming will look like in twenty years, with in-

creased development encroaching on the state's wide-open spaces and small communities.



Coming Soon: Central Wyoming Railroads

New Annual Exhibit:

Central Wyoming Railroads

Opens: March 19, 2024

Closes: February 22, 2025



CHICAGO & NORTHWESTERN DEPOT AND THE MONUMENT.

Wyoming grew with the railroads. The Union Pacific Railroad across southern Wyoming was completed

in 1868, starting train service to Wyoming. Twenty years later, the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad

arrived in Casper on June 15, 1888. The Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad established train ser-

vice from Casper to Billings, Montana in 1913. To learn more, check out this new annual exhibit.

Opens March 19, 2024 and on view through February 22, 2025.

Ghost Tours: April 26 & 27

Ghost Tours

April 26 & 27

From: Specific time slots available

Call the Fort Caspar Museum to purchase tickets on April 2, 2024. Tickets are \$15 each

Guides will lead guests around the fort grounds and buildings (weather permitting) looking for paranormal activity. Try out ghost hunting equipment like spirit boxes, infrared thermometers, audio recorders,

and laser grids. All digital evidence captured will be shared with participants. Limited, time-specific tickets are \$15 each.

No one under 16 is allowed without a paying adult.

Tickets will be sold at Fort Caspar Museum beginning April 2nd. Call 235-8462 for more information.



Candlelight Christmas December 2nd

Join us for an evening exploring the past. Experience 19th-century frontier life by candlelight with army and civilian re-enactors in the fort buildings and on the grounds.

See the Fort illuminated by candles, meet 19th-century

characters, kid's crafts, listen to live fiddle music, explore the museum exhibits, and start or finish your holiday shopping in our gift shop.

This fantastic FREE event will be on Saturday, December 2nd from 5:30 to 8:30 pm!



11th Kansas Descendants Reunion



This summer the FCMA hosted a reunion of 11th Kansas Volunteer Cavalry descendants. Over 20 people came representing 15 different soldiers, and spent three days in Casper visiting historic sites connected to their ancestors' service, touring the museum, and attending Caspar Collins Day events and lectures. They had a group portrait taken by renowned wet plate photographer Robert Szabo which is now a part of the Fort Caspar Museum collection.

They came to see the "Soldiers of the Republic: Stories of the 11th Kansas Volunteer Cavalry" exhibit and view artifacts that belonged to their ancestors. It was an incredible experience to bring folks from Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Arizona, Colorado, and Wyoming together to discuss their common history and watch them forge new friendships just as their ancestors did. Being able to connect history and people together is one of the most profound and wonderful things we can do as historians. This summer was truly unique!

Watch “The Senator” on YouTube



This September, the FCMA partnered with Stage III and the Theatre of the Poor to put on a production of the lost 1890 Broadway play, “The Senator.”

The main character of Senator Hannibal Rivers was based on Kansas Senator Preston B. Plumb who served as Lt. Colonel of the 11th Kansas

Volunteer Cavalry and was stationed here at Fort Caspar in 1865.

If you missed seeing the live performance (or would just like to see it again) you can visit the Fort Caspar Museum Association channel on YouTube and watch livestreams of all three performances!

Lunch & Learn

January 20th

From: Noon -
2:00 pm

Optional lunch served at noon, followed by the lecture at 1:00 pm. Reservations are required for the luncheon, and can be made by calling 307-235-8462. The cost is \$5 for FCMA members and \$8 for non-members.

Lunch & Learn: January 20th

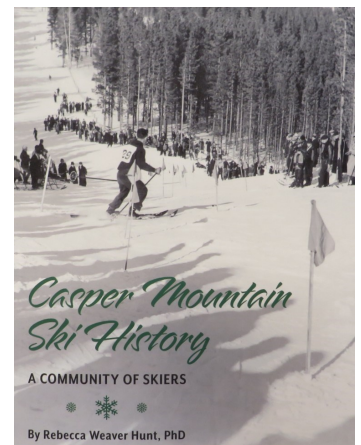
Rebecca A. Hunt, Ph.D. lives in Denver but grew up on Casper Mountain. She received a BA in elementary education from the University of Wyoming in 1974. She then got her Master of Liberal Studies degree from the University of Oklahoma and in 1997, earned a Ph.D. in Western American history from the University of Colorado Boulder.

Rebecca worked in museums for many years and then had a twenty-year second career teaching history and training people to work

in museums at UC Denver. In 2020 she retired from UC Denver and she is now a full-time writer. Her most recent book, “Casper Mountain Ski History: A Community of Skiers” is a history of skiing on Casper Mountain, Wyoming. It came out in June 2022.

To create this book our amazing team conducted over forty oral and video histories of area skiers. The team also did all of the fund raising for the project. Rebecca will share the journey to create the ski history book and

then she will share stories of Casper Mountain’s skiing and its community.



Phase I Complete of Fort Caspar Cemetery Project

We are pleased to announce that Phase 1 of the Fort Caspar Cemetery Project is complete! Nine headstones for members of the 11th Kansas Volunteer Cavalry who died in service at Platte Bridge Station (now Fort Caspar) in 1865 have been installed alongside the eleven 11th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry headstones already present at the site since the 1970s.

The Fort Caspar Cemetery holds the remains of five unknown soldiers and one unknown civilian woman, as well as cenotaphs for soldiers who died while in the line of duty. In most cases, their remains are lost along the old telegraph route. These headstones provide a place of remembrance and reflection for their families and the public alike.

Our next phase is to raise

funds to add five headstones for members of the 6th West Virginia Cavalry, followed by the 18th U.S. Infantry, 6th U.S. Infantry, and additional stones for members of the 11th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry. When complete, the cemetery will number approximately 50 headstones, as opposed to the 11 it has been since the 1970s.

To find out more about our ongoing project or to contribute, please visit <https://www.fortcaspar.org/cemetery>

We are tentatively planning a dedication ceremony for the nine members of the 11th Kansas Cavalry for sometime in early June. Details to be announced as they are finalized. Many thanks to Casper Monuments & Rick's Rocks, as well as the Wyoming Veterans Commission and Old

Abe Camp #16, Department of Kansas, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War for their support of this project. And we would also like to thank the many private individuals who contributed to this project--in some cases sponsoring the headstones of their family members. This has been a community project from the beginning and we are excited to move on to Phase 2 and continue our efforts!



“Soldiers of the Republic: Stories of the 11th Kansas Volunteer Cavalry” Exhibit

One of the headstones recently installed is for Private William T. Bonwell of the 11th Kansas Cavalry.

Bonwell started to write his mother of his new camp out here, but he never got a chance to finish that letter. He was killed in a skirmish with Native Americans on June 3, 1865. Private Bonwell was buried at the camp

and then later moved to F.E. Warren AFB in 1899 (then Ft. Russell).

Bonwell's unfinished letter and tintype photograph are currently on display in the museum's "Soldiers of the Republic" exhibit.

This exhibit contains a number of artifacts from the 11th Kansas Cavalry

that have not been here since 1865: including arrows from the Battle of Platte Bridge, Lt. Colonel Preston B. Plumb's saddle, and one of their guidons.

"Soldiers of the Republic" will be on view through February 24, 2024.



Fort Caspar Museum Association

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Volunteer Opportunities!

Fort Caspar Museum Staff

Manager

Rick Young

Curator

Michelle Bahe

Visitor Services

Anne Holman

Front Desk

Joe Hayek & Kurt
Krueger

Front Desk Volunteer:

Volunteers greet visitors, ring up admissions and bookstore sales on the cash register, assist in restocking the bookstore, answer visitor questions regarding site history and area attractions, and answer the telephone.

Docents (Tour Guides):

Docents at FCM lead tours of the fort buildings and guide museum gallery activities. You will receive training about site history, how to work with students and lead these tours. Docents are asked to give one tour (about 2 hours) a week during the spring or fall session

or both, if you wish.

Special Events Volunteer:

Helping with kids and family activities, lectures, Candlelight Christmas, Caspar Collins Day, or evening programs are just some of the possible special events where we can use your help!

Benefits:

We appreciate our volunteers and take pride in their commitment to the museum and the community. Benefits of volunteering at Fort Caspar Museum include:

- a gift card to use towards a purchase in the

Museum's shop

- an invitation to attend a Lunch & Learn program with annual appreciation ceremony
- a free one-year individual membership to the Fort Caspar Museum Association after thirty (30) recorded volunteer hours. (This membership provides free admission, special notice of luncheons and activities, and a 15% discount in the bookstore).

Call or come by the museum to get started!