



Fort Caspar Museum Association

Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2023

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Soldiers of the Republic



The Fort Caspar Museum opened a new annual exhibit entitled "Soldiers of the Republic: Stories of the 11th Kansas Volunteer Cavalry." The museum worked with the

FCMA to coordinate the artifacts on exhibit, as well as designing and installing the exhibit.

In 1865, the 11th Kansas spent six months in the

area that is now Casper. Explore the history of the regiment from its time fighting in the Civil War to their final posting on the western frontier. Through 22 soldier biographies, you will learn about the individual Kansas soldiers—those who perished here and those who survived to return home.

Museum staff and volunteers worked with museums in Kansas and private collectors to bring in objects for this exhibit. Here is your chance to see artifacts owned and used

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Message from the Chair

By Con Trumbull

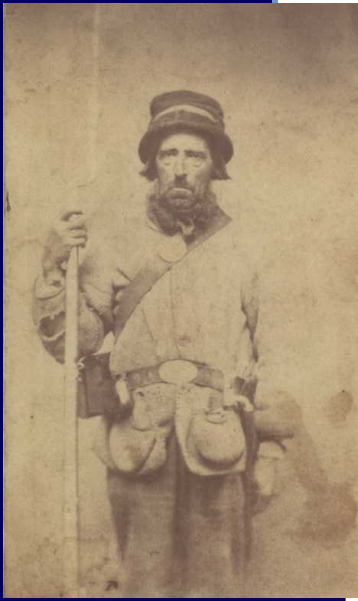


Throughout my years of service to the FCMA I have seen our team do amazing things. From the 150th Anniversary Celebration, to successful grant writing to publishing books, there is always something going on. Just when I think we can't get

any busier we seem to find a way! The next couple of years are going to be heavy on the monuments and markers side of history. Between the headstone project on the Fort grounds, to a monument for the Cole Creek Train Wreck to placing

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Soldier Spotlight: Sgt. Adolph Hankammer



This is a new feature of the newsletter to share a little about a soldier who served at Platte Bridge Station (Fort Casper).

Our first featured soldier is Adolph Hankammer of the 11th Kansas Cavalry. Hankammer enlisted in the 11th Kansas (then an Infantry regiment) in August of 1862 at the age of 22. He was from Germany, but had emigrated to the United States and was living in Alma, Kan-

sas when the Civil War broke out.

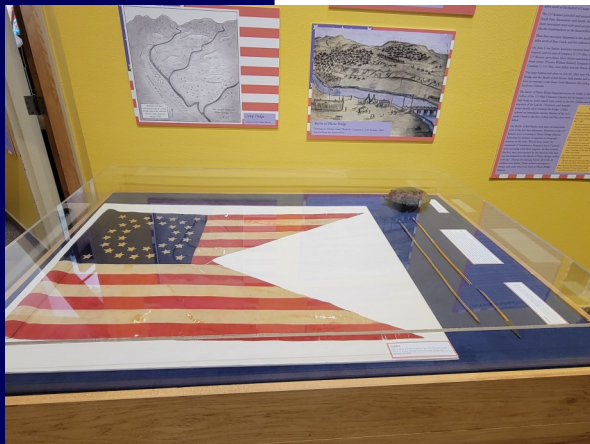
Sgt. Hankammer was severely injured during the Battle of Platte Bridge with a spear thrust in the back and another spear wound in his leg. He had ridden out across the bridge with Lt. Caspar Collins, and on the retreat back to the fort his horse was shot, tumbled over, and pinned him to the bridge. The remaining

soldiers at the fort had come out to cover the retreating soldiers and rescued Hankammer.

He was discharged in September 1865, and married Wilhelmina Schanke shortly after. They had 10 children together.

Adolph Hankammer died in 1906 at the age of 66, and was buried in Alma, Kansas.

Soldiers of the Republic cont'd



by the troops at Fort Casper that have not been here since 1865. Local historian and author Johanna Wickman helped organize the exhibit and says, "Visitors will see items on view that were involved in the very bat-

ties that gave Casper its name." On exhibit are tintype photographs, firearms, shoulder insignias, a saddle, guidon (flag), and arrows from the Battle of Platte Bridge.

Message From the Chair cont'd

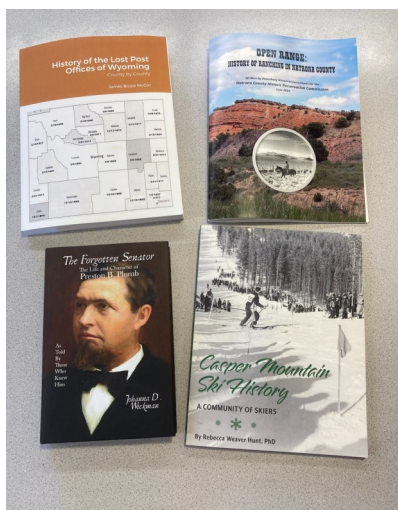
headstones on unmarked graves in the cemetery you are going to hear a lot about the stories and history surrounding these individuals.

On top of all of this we

will be continuing to provide a wide range of programming and assistance with exhibits, grants and other special projects. As always, we invite you to reach out to us with

any ideas, questions or concerns you might have or stop by and visit with us at one of our regularly scheduled board meetings.

Four New Book Titles in the Gift Shop



Members receive 15% gift shop purchases!

Four new books have been recently added to the Fort Caspar Museum's gift shop!

FCMA Vice Chair Johanna Wickman's biography *The Forgotten Senator: The Life and Character of Preston B. Plumb* includes new information on Plumb's service here in 1865 as Lt. Col. of the 11th Kansas Cavalry, as well as many previously unpublished stories of his colorful career as a U.S. Senator.

Dr. Rebecca Hunt's *Casper Mountain Ski History* tells the story of Casper's exciting ski past.

The Natrona County Historic Preservation Commission has produced *Open Range: History of Ranching in Natrona County*, written by Rosenberg Historical Consultants.

James Bruce McGirr's *History of the Lost Post Offices of Wyoming* will be the topic of May's Lunch & Learn.

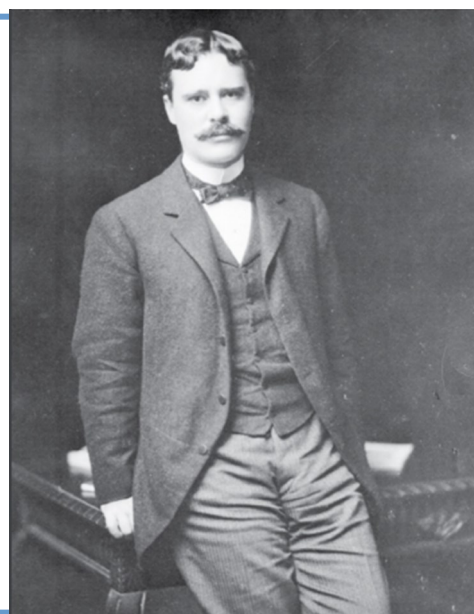
Coming Soon: "The Virginian"

A new exhibit on view June 7th to September 10th.

Written by Owen Wister in 1902, the novel *The Virginian* is widely considered to be the prototypical American Western novel. This exhibit

from the American Heritage Center provides insight into its creation.

Right: Author Owen Wister of "The Virginian" series. Courtesy American Heritage Center



On Exhibit: "Stimson Colors Wyoming"

View a selection of hand-tinted photographs of Wyoming taken by Cheyenne photographer J.E. Stimson in 1903 for the St. Louis Louisiana Purchase Exposition of 1904. Stimson was tasked with locating the best representations of the state's natural beauty and

thriving economy. His photographs capture Wyoming ranches, farms, houses, irrigation canals, mines, Indian settlements, and natural scenery. This exhibit is on loan from the Wyoming State Museum and Archives.

"Stimson Colors" will be on exhibit in the museum's multi-use room through June 4th.



"Stimson Colors Wyoming" on exhibit in the museum's multi-use room.

Saturday Morning Living History

Saturday Morning Living History & Crafts

May 27, June 24 & August 26

Living History From: 10:30am - Noon

and Kids Crafts From 1:00pm - 2:00pm

Explore life on the frontier with soldiers, civilians, Native Americans and mountain men through living history demonstrations from 10:30am - Noon. Kids programs will be featured from 1:00pm - 2:00pm. Check the Fort Caspar Museum or Fort Caspar Museum Association Facebook pages for details. This event is free with museum admission.



Archaeology Day: August 19th

Be an archaeologist for the day! Join volunteers from the Fort Caspar Museum Association and the Wyoming Archaeological Society to look for evidence of the Fort's past. Participants will screen dirt that has been removed from the grounds. (All materials

found are property of Fort Caspar Museum.)

Things found during previous screening events include: metal and shell buttons; pieces of bullet cartridges; broken pieces of ceramic plates or cups; pieces of glass from bottles;

screws, bolts and rivets from wagons; and metal pieces from horse tack or saddles.



Archaeology Day is a fantastic event for both adults and children alike!

Caspar Collins Day: July 22nd

This free event features tons of fun activities: meet soldiers and pioneers; play games that were popular 150 years ago; enjoy a history lecture and museum exhibits; participate in ranching activities; pull a Mormon Handcart; shop from local craft vendors; and enjoy food trucks. From 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.



Photographs from Caspar Collins Day 2022, courtesy of clockwise from top: Brian Higgins, Karl Falken, Shannon Tippit, and Johanna Wickman.

Ghost Tours

FCMA and the Fort Caspar Museum held a spring Ghost Investigation on April 28th. The sold out event was popular with attendees and raised funds to support the FCMA and the upcoming October Ghost Investigations.



Lunch & Learn

May 13th

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.

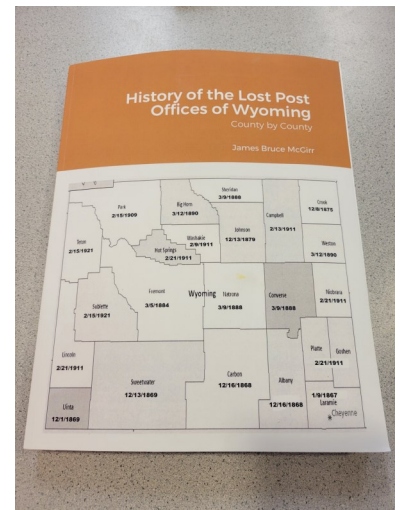
Lunch & Learn: May 13th

Join us for a Lunch & Learn program on Saturday, May 13th! This month's talk will be on some of Wyoming's forgotten post offices. The program will be presented by James Bruce McGirr, author of *History of the Lost Post Offices of Wyoming*.

"Post office history in the State of Wyoming has to be accompanied by the historical development of the state." McGirr's book covers pre-territorial, territorial, county formation and county changes in post office history.

An optional lunch will

be served at 12:00 pm, followed by the lecture at 1:00 pm. Reservations are required for the lunch and must be made by Noon on May 11 (call 235-8462). The cost for lunch is \$5 for FCMA members and \$8 for non-members; the lecture is free with paid lunch or free with paid Museum admission. The lunch will feature fried chicken, sides, dessert, and beverages served cafeteria style.



Copies of McGirr's book may be purchased in the museum gift shop.

Commemorative Headstone Project

Since the early 1970s, visitors to the Fort Caspar Museum have no doubt noticed the eleven commemorative headstones placed near the main entrance. These stones were installed to honor eleven soldiers of the 11th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry who died while serving their country at Platte Bridge Station (Fort Casper).

However, there were many other soldiers who met the same fate here who do not have markers. There are another nearly twenty more from the 11th Ohio, nine from the 11th Kansas Volunteer Cavalry, and still more from the 6th West Virginia Cavalry who are not represented in the museum's commemorative cemetery.

The FCMA is working to

rectify this oversight by installing period correct marble headstones to honor those dead whose graves have been lost to time along the telegraph route and around the fort itself. This project will begin with the installation of the nine 11th Kansas headstones.

Sponsorship opportunities are available for any individuals or businesses who would like to contribute to this cause. Please visit www.fortcaspar.org and click on "Projects" to read more about this endeavor and to see the list of 11th Kansas Cavalry names who will be honored with headstones. You can donate via the website or in person at the Fort Caspar Museum.



*"He [soldiers]
will through
[throw]
himself down
in some shade
to dream of
home and
friends long
left behind
[behind]."*

*—Pvt.
Bonwell's
unfinished
letter home*

Private William T. Bonwell, 11th Kansas

One of the headstones to be installed is for Private William T. Bonwell of the 11th Kansas Cavalry. The 11th Kansas was formed in the fall of 1862, but Bonwell enlisted later, on February 29, 1864 from Lyon County, Kansas. He fought at the Battle of Westport in Missouri—a battle often called the "Gettysburg of the

West" because over 30,000 soldiers were involved. In mid April of 1865 he arrived at Platte Bridge Station and was garrisoned at the newly constructed Camp Dodge at the base of Casper Mountain.

Bonwell started to write his mother of his new camp, but he never got a chance to finish that letter. He was

killed in a skirmish with Native Americans on June 3, 1865. 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.



Fort Caspar Museum Association

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Website: www.fortcaspar.org



Volunteer Opportunities!

Fort Caspar Museum Staff

Manager

Rick Young

Curator

Michelle Bahe

Visitor Services

Anne Holman

Front Desk

Joe Hayek & Cyndi
Kruhmin

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!