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THE NATIONAL FUR TRADE SYMPOSIUM

The Sublette County Historical Society/Museum of the Mountain Man was proud to host the National Fur Trade (NFT) Symposium for the United States and Canada this past September 5 – 8th, 2012. “The 200th Anniversary of Robert Stuart and the Astorians, 1811 – 1812” was the theme of the conference which took place right here in Sublette County and Wyoming over two centuries ago. The Green River Valley is considered the crossroads of the Astorians during the 19th century fur trade.

The four-day conference was an overwhelming success and our Wind River Mountains and Museum of the Mountain Man provided an excellent backdrop for the historical lectures, educational sessions and tours that presented a visual and interpretive experience into the fur trade of our area.

Twelve academic professors and scholars presented a variety of research papers, historical insights and educational perspectives. Their presentations enhanced the knowledge and understanding of this significant part of Wyoming heritage and its place in the realm of national history that contributed to the economic, cultural and social development of the peoples and geographic area.

An all-day historical tour took place on Thursday, visiting fur trade and Astorian sites of the Green River Valley, with the lectures on Friday and Saturday. Evenings were reserved for “Socials” that were open and free to the public including the mountain man shrub bar. These special programs featured an 1811 living history camp, the Saga of Marie Dorion, a Crow Sun Dance Lodge presentation by Dr. Adrien Heldenreich and the Big Day Family of the Montana Crow Nation and a unique play on the Astorian Seven.

The NFT Symposium was very well-attended and represented by visitors from 22 different states around the country and 2 provinces of Canada. This was the third time MMM hosted the NFT Symposium in its 25-year history. It is held every three years at institutions throughout the United States and Canada. The 2015 Symposium will be hosted by Bent’s Fort, Colorado.

“Hosting the National Fur Trade Symposium was an honor for the Museum of the Mountain Man, Sublette County and the State of Wyoming,” says Director, Laurie Hartwig, “and the visiting conference-goers and academic community were very impressed with our epicenter of the fur trade.”

Thank you to our 2012 Fur Trade Symposium Donors & Volunteers

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The Sublette County Historical Society/ Museum of the Mountain Man was the recipient of a beautiful bronze statue this past August entitled, “Wyoming Outfitter” in memory of local, long-time cowboy and outfitter Tom Jesse Mollring.

Tom was born in Pinedale on December 17, 1929 and attended Pinedale schools and the University of Wyoming. After a stint in the Air Force, Tom returned to Pinedale and became a big game outfitter in the Hoback Basin as well as working local ranches in the Pinedale and Jackson Hole area. Tom was an avid fly fisherman, loved the outdoors and formed many lasting friendships throughout his life.

The three and a-half foot bronze was created by Bill Nebeker, a prestigious member of the Cowboy Artists of America, and traveled here from Prescott, Arizona. Bill’s intricate detail and three-dimensional work in ‘Wyoming Outfitter’ captures an authentic portrayal of the working cowboy of the American West.

The Nebeker bronze was graciously donated by Erivan and Helga Haub, long-time supporters of the Museum. The Haubs, avid art collectors and close friend of Tom, wanted a beautiful, long lasting legacy to honor their friend as well as an exceptional piece of art to be enjoyed by the public. ‘Wyoming Outfitter’ will be displayed in the upper gallery of the Museum of the Mountain Man.
Landmark Trail - New Fork River Park

Lander Trail/ New Fork River Historical Park Development on the New Fork Historical Park continued in 2012 thanks to many, many organizations, individuals and volunteers. Through a private donation by an Anonymous Donor, another 22 acres that was connected and parallel to the property, was acquired, making the area a full 104-acre park.

The Sublette County Road and Bridge, through the generosity of the SC Commissioners, donated time and equipment, relocated the main entrance, built a parking lot and the footprint of an ADA walking path, which will be completed this spring. The National Park Service continued site and interpretative signs planning, as well as a second field season of archaeology work by Cannon USU Archaeological Services. This was due in part by a generous grant from the Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund. Forty 40 volunteers, donating over 500 hours of service, completing many tasks during a week-long session in late September. Ena Olsen and family allowed the crews to cross her private ground and river to the east side of the old island where more surveys took place. Bill Wadsworth and Sam Drucker helped clear out several hazardous trees to develop trail pathways.

The Historical Society anticipates the park will be open to the public beginning June 1st, with a Grand Opening and Dedication planned for September 6, 2013.
SOMMERS RANCH HOMESTEAD

The Sommers Homestead continues to expand and was open for regular hours to the public on Fridays and Saturdays from 10am to 3pm during the summer of 2012. Thanks to the volunteer staff, especially Jonita Sommers, Toni David, Ashley Anderson and Clint Gilchrist. We had 668 visitors sign the guest book and over $1,000 raised through the donation box, although admission is free.

“Hands-on Living History Presentations” were presented for visiting school groups in the late fall. Special thanks goes to volunteers JB Bond for a blacksmithing demonstration; Jamie Brewer for showing how to churn butter; Caroline Brazzell and Sandy Bousman for spinning wheel demonstrations; Jonita Sommers presented how to clean eggs, cook and iron; Dawn Ballou demonstrated early laundry washing; Chad Espenscheid roped and Sam Drucker and Dave Vlcek gave talks and tours on prehistoric archaeology.

A beaver slide hay plunger was added to the children’s playground and the garage, cellar and barn were completed by Roscoe Co in 2012. Alex Price donated an old barn which was disassembled log by log and brought across the Green River. Next on the restoration list are the bunk house and ice house. All will be open to the public in 2013.

This historic site is managed jointly by the Sublette County Historical Society, Green River Valley Museum and siblings Jonita and Albert Sommers.
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