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The purpose of this publication is to provide scientific and historical data for the use of Park personnel engaged in interpretive activities.

Issues will appear bi-monthly and employees are urged to contribute articles and items of lasting interest. The Park Historian will serve as editor. Contributions or inquiries concerning published material should be addressed to him.

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A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

COLLINS JACK BARONETT

"Yellowstone Jack" is best characterized as a soldier of fortune--a man who was sailor, soldier, miner and guide during his adventurous life. Enough of that life centered on the Yellowstone country to give him the nickname by which he was so well-known and he is an important person in its early history.

Many of the details of Baronett's colorful career come from the brief biography which Chittenden included in his 1895 edition of The Yellowstone. From it we know he was born in 1829 at Glencoe, Scotland--probably as John H. Baronett, and that he went to sea at an early age. But that nautical career was brought to an end when he deserted his ship in China in 1850, making his way from there to the gold fields of California. The lure of gold drew him to other strikes in Australia and Africa, and he made a voyage to the Arctic as the second mate on a whaling ship before returning to California in 1855. He served as a courier for General Albert Sidney Johnston in the Mormon War and took part in the Colorado gold rush on the eve of the Civil War.

In the war between the State, Baronett's sympathies were with the South, so he joined the First Texas Cavalry. Abandoning the "lost cause" in 1863, he took service briefly with the French under Maximilian in Mexico.

Baronett came to Montana Territory in September of 1864 and his movements are better-known from then on. He was a member of one of the prospecting parties which crossed the Yellowstone plateau that fall and he was with the "Yellowstone Expedition" of 1866. He wintered at Fort C. F. Smith and was one of the men who made their way through the hostile Sioux to the Gallatin Valley, to obtain relief for the nearly starved garrison of that northernmost outpost on the Bozeman road.

Service as a scout with General Custer's expedition to the Black Hills and another foray into the Yellowstone country in 1869 increased Baronett's familiarity with the region. Thus, when Truman C. Everts was lost from the 1870 expedition, Baronett was considered best qualified to search for the lost man. As a result, the unfortunate explorer was found in time to save his life.

Immediately after the dramatic rescue of Everts, Baronett built a toll bridge over the Yellowstone River near its junction

with the Lamar, and he operated it for many years as a vital link in the road to the mining region on the Clark Fork River. The care of his bridge was often left in other hands as Baronett guided hunting parties, scouted for the military and continued his search for elusive mineral riches.

One of the men he guided in the Park in 1875--General William E. Strong, has left an excellent description of Baronett. He says:

"Jack Baronett, as he is best known, is a celebrated character in this country, and, although famous as an Indian fighter and hunter, he is still more celebrated as a guide...he is highly esteemed by those who know him and his word is as good as gold. He is of medium stature, broad-shouldered, very straight and built like Longfellow's ship, for 'strength and speed'. Eyes black as a panther's and as keen and sharp; complexion quite dark with hair and whiskers almost black. He speaks well, using good English, and his manner is mild, gentle and modest; is proud of his knowledge of the mountains and of his skill with the rifle. I took to him at once..."

More than that, Baronett even enjoyed the respect and confidence of his former enemies. He was the preferred guide of General Phillip H. Sheridan on several junkets through the Park; and also the only member of the original civilian police force to be retained when the Army took over management of the area in 1886. He thus became the first scout.

Baronett's thirty-five year association with the Yellowstone region has been justly recognized by coupling his name to a most outstanding peak which flanks the road to the Northeast Entrance, but, otherwise, life did not treat him so well. His toll bridge, in which he had invested \$15,000, was taken from him in 1894, and he spent \$6,000 in lawyer's fees to obtain from Congress a niggardly compensation of \$5,000. That money was invested in an expedition to Nome, Alaska, during the last great "gold rush". But his schooner and his hopes were both crushed in the Arctic ice.

Thereafter, the old man's health failed rapidly and he was soon too feeble to earn a living at the rough work available to him. The trail ends at Tacoma, Washington, in late January or early February of 1901, when he was given a ticket by a charitable organization to get him to a friend at Redding, California; and it ends with a touch of irony. Six weeks after Baronett's disappearance, he was sought as the only heir of a titled brother killed in the Boer War.

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THE HIKING SWANS

by

Wayne F. Replogle

A pair of Trumpeter Swans (*Olor buccinator*) and their family of four cygnets have made hiking history in the Yellowstone.

Finding Swan Lake unsatisfactory for nesting, the adult pair disappeared from it in June and I later found them upon a fast-drying swamp three-quarters of a mile to the east. The cob and pen, with their four small cygnets, were in a small pond in the center of the reeds, which concerned me because a move to the larger lake seemed imperative. In coyote country, as they were, their chance of survival appeared very slight away from water. I thought of the dangers of such a move all that evening and awakened in the night to consider how the birds would manage to cross a busy highway, if they did escape the coyotes.

Early on July 8 I went to Swan Lake Flat to see if the move had been made. To my surprise, I met two tall birds coming through the sagebrush covering a slight rise. I circled around them in the hope of driving the family to Swan Lake, which was a quarter-mile distant across the road, but the alarmed parents flew away, leaving the cygnets which "toddled" over to me. The only thing that could be done was to carry the young birds to the lake. That was accomplished with the help of North District Naturalist McClelland and the family was soon united.

But, alas, on the morning of July 12 there were no swans on Swan Lake. Again there was concern over the hiking family. Three days later I made a tour of other lakes south of Bunsen Peak, in company with Ranger Buhlin, and we discovered the swans sailing merrily over Lilypad Lake--Pa, Ma and the four kids, all well. They had walked a mile through sagebrush and forest, again crossing the road.

A daily check was made on the birds until July 21, when they disappeared. However, on the following day they were back on Lilypad Lake, which was rapidly drying up. So--there was further concern for the swan family.

On August 12 Ranger-Naturalist DeSanto took his bird watchers to Lilypad Lake in the frosty early-morning--to find the swans gone! I had also made an early start for the Swan

Lake area and, on arrival, found the swan family back on that lake. They had made another mile-long trek through the sagebrush.

I hope they stay on Swan Lake--at least until the cygnets can fly. They have grown remarkably, but this carefree wandering through coyote country and across a dangerous road could be fatal. Besides, the "hiking swans" are disturbing me; perhaps a swan will make a naturalist swoon.

* * *

Trumpeter swans appear to be holding their own. From censusing for 32 years, it was found that 1963 has been the most productive year.

	Adults	Cygnets	Totals
All states - 1961	536	83	619
All states - 1962	447	104	581
All states - 1963	491	232	723
Breakdown of states			
Montana	232	143	375
Wyoming	89	12	101
Idaho	63	32	95
South Dakota	20	2	22
Oregon	13	16	29
Nevada	11	11	22
In captivity	63	16	79
Yellowstone - 1963	49	7	56
Grand Teton - 1963	23	4	57

* * *

"The year 1903 saw the first federal wildlife refuge established. At that time Pelican Island, in Indian River, a lagoon on the east coast of Florida, became a federal refuge by Executive Order of President Theodore Roosevelt."

I. N. Gabrielson, Wildlife Refuges
(New York, 1943) p. 7.

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A YELLOWSTONE WINTER TRAGEDY

by

Aubrey L. Haines

Yellowstone's winter weather is rarely of Arctic severity, yet it has taken the lives of careless travelers on several occasions. One such incident from the days when the United States Army protected the Park is a story of hardihood worth retelling.

The case of William James, apprehended while trapping beaver at Norris the first winter troops were in the Park, convinced Captain Moses Harris that something more than occasional scouting was required to control the trappers, meat-hunters and buffalo "scalpers" who were making a stealthy living by invading the area in winter. And so, a system of outposts was established, each in charge of a non-commissioned officer who had two or more picked men to patrol the adjacent area. Over the years, the plan was successful and it was adopted by each new unit assigned to duty in the Park.

Stations were occupied at Lower Geyser Basin, Mud Geyser, Norris, Riverside, Snake River and Soda Butte during the winter of 1897-98, and they were isolated earlier than usual by the hard winter which began early in November. The snow soon became too deep for the officers to make their rounds of the stations, and the roads were closed to the quartermaster's wagons and the paymaster's buggy, so that the only remaining contact with Fort Yellowstone was the telegraph line of the hotel winterkeepers, an occasional visit of a scout and the twice monthly trips allowed each station in order to obtain the mail handed along from the Fort.

It was such a routine mail trip that started Private John W. H. Davis, Troop D, 4th United States Cavalry, and an unnamed comrade on skis toward the Thumb of Lake Yellowstone where they were to meet two men from the Snake River Station, which was then on Polecat Creek outside the present south boundary. When the two men left their station at the Mud Geyser, the weather was mild, as it had been up to that date; so they went lightly clad, depending mainly on the exertion of skiing to keep them warm. But as they slept at the Lake Hotel that night a weather change set in and the temperature fell to several degrees below zero before they pushed on at 8 o'clock the following morning.^{1/}

^{1/} Elwood Hofer, "Yellowstone Park Notes", in Forest and Stream (see clipping dated December 19; Yellowstone Park Reference Library, Scrapbook No. 3, p. 29.).

The distance from the Lake Hotel to the cabin where they were to meet the men from Snake River was nineteen miles and the exertions of travel under those frigid conditions soon drained away the body heat of the skiers.

Less than half way, Davis' comrade turned back to Lake Hotel; however, he did not reach its shelter until the following day, arriving with frosted fingers, ears and toes after spending a night in a cabin on the shore of Bridge Bay. A report was immediately made over the hotel company's wire to Captain Erwin, the commanding officer at Fort Yellowstone. He did not seem particularly concerned about Davis at the outset, undoubtedly sharing "Billy" Hofer's view that there was plenty of dry wood along the route and any man would surely have matches.

But the failure of Davis to return coupled with declining temperature on the 16th--at 7:00 a.m. it read -19°F. at Mammoth and -35°F. at Norris,^{2/} finally led to a search. At 11:45 p.m., Sergeant Max R. Welch, in charge at Norris, received orders from Fort Yellowstone to assist, and he left his station with two men within the hour.

They travelled on skis to the Canyon Hotel, 12 miles distant, where they arrived at 7:30 a.m. on the 17th. Though the temperature was -6°F. that morning, they continued on to the station at the Mud Geyser, which was reached at 11:45 a.m. Dropping off Private Hemstead at that point, Sergeant Welch left at 1:45 p.m. with Private Akers for the Lake Hotel. They made it that far by 4:30 p.m., which was 29 miles travelled in 16 hours (from their home station).

On the morning of the 18th, the Sergeant left Lake Hotel at 8:20 a.m. and pushed down the road toward West Thumb with Private Akers. Ten miles out, near a small bridge, they found the body of Davis where he had frozen to death in the road. The corpse could not be moved, so they returned to Lake Hotel, arriving at 4:25 p.m. to make their report. The Sergeant then began construction of a sledge, using a pair of skis for runners, while the soldier went back to the Mud Geyser Station for assistance and horses.

Sergeant Simmons, of that station, brought the animals forward that night, and he, with Welch and Akers went out on

^{2/} The temperature for Mammoth is recorded in the Report of the Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of the Interior, 1898, p. 26, and the temperature for Norris appears in the "Station Report, Norris, December 1897" (Yellowstone Archives, Box 132).

the morning of the 19th to recover the body of Davis. At the same time, Scouts George Whittaker and Joseph Morrisson left Fort Yellowstone in a sleigh with a driver and 4-mule team to bring in the body.^{3/} It took eight men and another 4-mule team to get them through Snow Pass, but, once out on Swan Lake Flat, they did better.

The weariness of the mules made it necessary for them to stop at the Crystal Springs Cabin the first night, and at Canyon Hotel the second. The scouts reached Mud Geyser Station at noon on the 21st, to find the canvas-wrapped body there, ready for the trip back to the Fort. Though it was snowing and the temperature was sub-zero, the six-man party started back with their cargo at 1:00 p.m.

The return trip was the same slow pull for the straining, steaming mules. They stopped overnight at the Canyon Hotel, then pushed on for Norris through snow up to four feet deep. There, Private Hemstead was left, but Sergeant Welch and Seggeant Simmons (who hame back in place of Private Akers), skied on with the sleigh to Crystal Springs Cabin.

The body of Private Davis was delivered to the General Orderly at Fort Yellowstone at noon on the 23rd. The unfortunate soldier was buried in the Post cemetery that same afternoon in grave No. 12.

Sergeant Welch returned to his station, completing 132 miles on skis in eight days--most of it under sub-zero temperature conditions. It appears that neither he nor any of the other men received even the most perfunctory recognition for what they did, but some good resulted from the tragedy.

Regulations covering winter patrols in the interior of the Park were strengthened, forbidding travelling alone in winter and prescribed the clothing to be worn by the men. Perhaps that is why Private John W. H. Davis was the last man to freeze to death while on patrol in the Park.

^{3/} George Whittaker, "Scout's Diary...December 19, 1897, to May 29, 1898", MS. in Yellowstone Archives, pp. 1-5.

^{4/} "Record of Interments - Post Cemetery, at Fort Yellowstone, Wyo.", MS. in Yellowstone Archives, Item 155, p. 2.