

Relocating the Exact Site of "Spurgin's Beaver Slide"—A Section of Lost Road Comes Back
into the Historical Record

by Kent R. Morby and Lee H. Whittlesey

November 19, 2012

Last additions made January, 2013

The famous Nez Perce (Nee-me-poo) foray across Yellowstone National Park in 1877 left historians with a fascinating, and massive, legacy. Hundreds of published and unpublished writings as well as archeological objects and donated museum items today continue to help us study and learn about events surrounding the complex movements of at least eight hundred Nez Perce men, women, and children squiring fifteen hundred or so horses through a forested, mountain-clad, canyon-girded wilderness.

The affair also generated dozens if not hundreds of questions with which historians continue to grapple today. One of the most interesting questions has concerned the actual location of "Spurgin's Beaver Slide," a steep hillside south of Canyon Village, down which the U.S. Army built a primitive road and drove its supply wagons. That spot ultimately became a near-mythical site on "Howard's Road," the road constructed by U.S. Army Engineers who initially proceeded ahead of General Oliver Otis Howard's soldiers in order to lay out, mark, and crudely construct the route that those soldiers would follow in chasing the Nez Perce through the essentially roadless Yellowstone National Park. For many years, rope-burns on trees—left when the army used ropes to help wagon drivers get down the steep slope—marked the site.

The incident that spawned the term "Spurgin's Beaver Slide" occurred on September 3, 1877, when U.S. Army engineer Captain William Fletcher Spurgin (1839-1904), his "Skilletts" (skilled civilian laborers), and teamsters lowered the wagons of General Howard's supply train down from the park's Central Plateau toward the Yellowstone River, just south of the mouth of Otter Creek. Teamsters drove the wagons down the steep, forested hillside with their horse-teams

still attached, but with the wheels “rough-locked” so that they would skid rather than turn. The wagons skidded down the slope one at a time, being restrained by both the wagons’ wheelers horses and a rope tied to their rear axles. The rope was looped around an uphill tree and slowly fed out by hand to help the single wagons descend. When the wagon reached the end of the rope, it was tied off, the loop moved to a lower tree, and the process repeated until each wagon reached the bottom of the hill. As a National Park Service (NPS) interpretive sign there stated later, “The skid marks made by lowering the wagons resembled the slides made by beaver in moving food and logs to their ponds [which] prompted the troopers to call the site ‘Spurgin’s Beaver Slide’.”¹

Because of removal of the NPS interpretive sign in the area sometime after 1962 and Yellowstone’s large fires in 1988, the actual site of this early hillside-road became difficult to find. Fires consumed many of the standing, rope-burned trees and then the burned trees fell, obscuring the steep hillside with a jackstraw cover. Additionally, new lodgepole-pine growth—known locally as “dog-hair” because the small trees grew so thickly and close together—added to the near-obliteration of this historic site. In the summer of 2012, the senior author of this paper and another researcher—fighting dog-hair and burned jackstraw trees during several visits—relocated the exact site of Spurgin’s Beaver Slide by using historian Aubrey L. Haines’s 1962 notes and photos along with all known historic accounts. Others joined the team later.

Library research was required first. The senior author of this article discovered that the earliest usage of the term “Spurgin’s Beaver Slide” probably appeared in the 1903 edition of historian and road engineer Hiram Chittenden’s book *The Yellowstone National Park*.² Thus

¹. A.H. Hewitt, photo of National Park Service interpretive sign, May 22, 1959, YELL 40210, YNP Photo Archives.

². Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The Yellowstone National Park: Historical and Descriptive* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke Company, 1903), pp. 172, 316. It is not known from whence Chittenden received his information about the name of the place, but it could have come from Captain Spurgin himself who probably would have known what his men were calling it.

Chittenden's influence on events was important and established early. Chittenden had personally escorted William Spurgin, George Cowan, and other participants from the 1877 affair around the park in 1901 to reconstruct their stories. With knowledge of locations and events gained from these individuals, Chittenden revised his 1895 book to tell the Spurgin story a bit more clearly with new details, even though he was probably incorrect in saying that Captain Spurgin traveled to Mud Volcano. Instead, if Henry Buck is to be believed (and his story is consistent with most known facts), at the head of Nez Perce Creek General Howard moved his troops ahead of his engineer and supply train, first to just northeast of Mary Lake and then east to Mud Volcano on September 1. Spurgin was left behind to build the road up Mary Mountain so that his wagons could follow, not reaching Mary Lake with the entire train until noon on September 3. From there, Spurgin resumed his pursuit of Howard to Mud Volcano but soon encountered a courier from the General directing the Captain to divert northeast toward the Upper Falls. (Howard had met the escapee James Irwin at Mud Volcano the night of September 2 and from Irwin's information had decided that the best route to pursue the Nez Perce was down the main Yellowstone and up the East Fork—Lamar River—toward the Clark's Fork.) In accordance with his new instructions, Spurgin and crew moved down Alum Creek and over the flank of the Central Plateau until they reached a timbered ridge above Yellowstone River. Here once again Spurgin gave weight to Chittenden's observation "that Captain Spurgin made a proud record for himself as an officer of energy and resource, and left traces of the campaign through the Park which a quarter of a century has failed to eradicate."³ Chittenden described what happened when Spurgin and his "skillets" reached the top of the steep hill north of Alum Creek's mouth:

³. Chittenden, "Captain Spurgin and His 'Skillets'," in *The Yellowstone National Park*, 1903, pp. 171-172. Our account of the Spurgin and Howard routes beginning on September 1 is based upon the 1878 Hayden map, Henry Buck's manuscript, cited below, and Jerome Greene's book, also cited below. There are some inconsistencies among

The high wooded hill along the river west of the present road, and about two miles above the Upper Falls of the Yellowstone, was descended by cutting a narrow way through the timber and letting the wagons straight down, holding them with ropes wound around trees. The marks on the trees where the ropes burned through the bark are still (1903) distinctly visible. The soldiers called this place "Spurgin's Beaver slide."⁴

Presciently with regard to Yellowstone's 1988 fires that would occur on this hillside eighty-five years later, Chittenden added the statement: "The traces of this old road will not disappear, except through a forest fire, for centuries to come."⁵

Hiram Chittenden also (1903) produced and erected throughout the park eight wayside plaques that interpreted the Nez Perce affair, and they were the first interpretive "wayside exhibit" signs ever erected in the Park. The text of his sign at Spurgin's—which remained at roadside for many years—read as follows:

"Spurgin's Beaver Slide"—Half a mile back from the road is the place where Capt. W.F. Spurgin, 21st Infantry, let General Howard's wagon train down the steep side of the mountain. The marks on the trees, burned in by the ropes used to let the wagons down, are still distinctly visible.⁶

By erecting this sign, Chittenden knowingly formalized the name for the place. It is not known exactly where he placed the sign but it likely was on the same site as the later NPS plaque. By 1939, the *Haynes Guide* located that sign at a roadside turnout 1.3 miles north of the crossing of Alum Creek and on the west side of the Grand Loop Road.⁷

In 1921 and 1923, former teamster Henry Buck returned to Yellowstone Park for two visits to many of the sites he had seen forty-four and forty-six years earlier, in preparation for writing a long reminiscence about his 1877 experiences involving the Nez Perce tribe. Buck, a store owner from Stevensville, Montana, accompanied Captain Spurgin in 1877 as a civilian

these three sources, but they are in agreement as to the location of "Spurgin's Beaver Slide." Chittenden's "quarter of a century" comment was true in 1903 and remained true until 1988, when the large Yellowstone fires that year dramatically changed the hillside.

⁴. Chittenden, *The Yellowstone National Park*, 1903, p. 172.

⁵. *Ibid.*

⁶. The text for all eight of these 1903 signs by Chittenden appears in Lee H. Whittlesey, *Storytelling in Yellowstone: Horse and Buggy Tour Guides* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007), p. 90. Researcher Mary Anne Bellingham has discovered that Chittenden's eight signs were painted by Ansel D. Carley of Helena, Montana.

⁷. Jack Ellis Haynes, *Haynes Guide Handbook of Yellowstone National Park* (St. Paul: Haynes, Inc., 1939), p. 116.

teamster and, according to his account, was a key player in the lowering of the army's wagons at "Spurgin's Beaver Slide." His manuscript contains probably the best account of what Captain Spurgin's "Skillets" did that year as well as the reason for the name of the place. Buck recalled that upon reaching the steep hillside north of Alum Creek:

Suddenly we came up to a full stop on a timbered ridge that extended toward the [Yellowstone] river. Medium sized pine trees grew here. We took a survey of the whole situation and came to the conclusion that the only way to get down was to take a jump of some five hundred feet. Someone suggested [that the only way to get down was] to prepare a slide and go downhill like a beaver.⁸

Buck noted that the pines were not thick and the ground was smooth, although "about as steep as the roof on an ordinary house." He and the other men then began clearing a roadway at an angle down the slope. Once it was finished, they began figuring out a way to get the wagons down the steep new "road." Buck continued:

We had with us a very large rope—one hundred feet long for emergency cases and were now all ready to go. The crews called out, "Here, Buck, you take the lead and if you can make it we will try it." One end of the rope was fastened to the hind axle of my wagon, then two turns were made around a substantial tree, with several men holding onto the end of the rope so that the wagon could not get away, they played it out as fast as the descent was made. Nothing daunting, I climbed up into my spring seat and gathered up the lines—not even taking off my leaders [lead horses].

I made the start downward and nearly stood up straight on the foot rest of the wagon. It was so steep. Slowly and carefully we went the length of the rope when a halt was called, and, with the aid of a short rope made fast to the hind axle and securely tied to another tree, we then loosened the long rope and came down and made another two turns around a nearby tree and was then ready for a second drive; thence a third and so on until the bottom was reached in safety.⁹

Buck stated that the long rope was then carried back up the hill and the process was repeated over and over "until all the wagons in our train were safely landed on the little flat together." The teamsters then drove the wagons to their camp for the night on Yellowstone River a short distance away.

⁸. Henry Buck, "The Nez Perce Indian Campaign of Summer 1877," unpublished manuscript, 1922, original with pasted photos at Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming; copies at Montana Historical Society (SC 492) and YNP Library, pp. 43-44. This account was published with very poor photos in *Great Falls (MT) Tribune*, January 21, 28; February 4, 11, 1945.

⁹. Buck, "Nez Perce Campaign," p. 44.

Driving a car on his way to revisit the old site in 1921, Henry Buck, coming from the south, encountered an NPS sign that he says read as follows: "Three-fourths of a mile up from here is where Captain Spurgin brought General Howard's wagon train down off from the mountain on a beaver slide." Parking his car at this sign, Buck and his son Fred climbed the hillside and found his old road and ten rope-burned trees. "[We] could easily follow our old road with certainty," Buck noted, and he added: "May I make a suggestion here to the effect that the park authorities at least build a trail from the Park highway up to the place where we landed [in 1877 at the base of the Beaver Slide] and there erect another sign board noting the extraordinary feat accomplished in that day of trials." Buck's suggestion may have been the impetus for the NPS's establishing a hiking trailhead from the road to Spurgin's and perhaps on west (the horse-trail already existed), and his 1921 photo of the interpretive sign (opposite page 51) appears to be Chittenden's original sign at that location.¹⁰ The trailhead for hiking parties was later moved farther to the south and today runs west up Alum Creek.

In 1936, interpretive Ranger Wayne Replogle who was assigned to explain the Nez Perce story to park visitors, found his personal research about the affair quickly becoming a published article. He formalized it for the May-June, 1937 issue of *Yellowstone Nature Notes*, noting that Howard's Road in 1877 was "the only means...of getting from Hayden Valley to the Otter Creek valley." Indeed today's main road along the river between Alum Creek and Otter Creek did not exist until 1882¹¹ because of the plateau's steep west wall along Yellowstone River. Replogle found many three-foot stumps, gullies filled in with dirt and rock, numerous tree blazes, and

¹⁰. Buck, "Nez Perce Campaign," pp. 52, 58.

¹¹. Patrick Conger, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of the Interior...for the Year 1882* (Washington: GPO, 1882), p. 6. Conger built this road, writing: "...when we neared the falls and canon I found it necessary to cut a new road along the bank of the river for over three miles to enable tourists to ride to the falls. Heretofore they have been compelled to abandon their carriages, and climb almost impassable mountains on the back of a pony or on foot."

eight trees with rope burns (formed by rope loops or turns, which he called “dallys”) on them. Some of the marked trees had two or three circle-burns on them. In 1948, Replogle went back to the site to cut and collect at least three of the rope-burned tree-sections for the park museum’s collection. Strategically, he made a cut into one of Spurgin’s 1877 tree-blazes so that he could age the blaze. Checking the tree’s rings, he declared that the blaze was seventy years old. Replogle’s blazed-and-cut tree would later figure importantly into Aubrey Haines’s 1962 photos and into our 2012 rediscovery of the site.¹²

In 1962, park historian Aubrey L. Haines engaged Wayne Replogle—his friend and fellow park employee of nearly twenty-five years—to help with a project to document the location of Spurgin’s Beaver Slide. After an initial failure to relocate the “slide,” Haines and Replogle returned to the steep hillside on August 21, 1962. Parking their car near the NPS interpretive sign, they ascended the hill and were successful in relocating the slide and a section of Howard’s road. They found evidence of the road at a point 465 feet from the interpretive sign—old blazes along with rope burns on one standing tree and on three cut stumps. “Above the brow of the hill,” wrote Haines, “the road could be traced for [1,237] feet by the blazes and stumps.” The two men also found a small gully that had been partly rocked-up to get the wagons across and noted that its “crude, dry-masonry” remained in place. They took several photos, measured distances, and calculated locations using latitude and longitude.¹³

¹². Wayne Replogle, “Spurgin’s Beaver Slide,” *Yellowstone Nature Notes* 14 #s5-6, May-June, 1937, pp. 25-26. Replogle’s cutting of sections of rope-burned trees in 1948 is mentioned in A.L. Haines, Memorandum to file 4.2.1 of “Retracement of Spurgin’s road (site 82),” August 21, 1962, in collection 2477, Aubrey L. Haines Papers, box 27, data cards D-HA, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana; and in Haines to Brown, October 2, 1962, in box H-2, YNP Archives. Park Museum Curator Colleen Curry informed Lee Whittlesey on November 7, 2012 that the museum’s accession file states that the tree sections were collected in 1948 but does not state by whom. Nevertheless, Haines’s October 2 memo makes it clear that Replogle made the cut and aged the blaze at this time, and it strongly implies that he also collected the tree sections and gave them to the museum collection.

¹³. Aubrey L. Haines to [historian] Mark H. Brown, September 6, 1962, in box H-2, YNP Archives.

Haines's "site 82 memo" recorded more details. Most importantly, he built a cairn near the uppermost "snub tree," noting "a pile of rocks left to mark [the] point." This was the spot at which the Beaver Slide began its steep, 500-foot descent down the hill. Haines drew a sketch showing the snub tree's and live lodge-pole's bearings and their distances from the cairn. Haines took a photograph of the standing tree with its blaze and the cut-on-the-blaze that Replogle had made in 1948.¹⁴

But even with all of their work, the site would become lost again. Yellowstone's fires of 1988 plus natural tree-fall, removal of the roadside interpretive sign, and incorrect information given in guidebooks and brochures all combined to obscure the site's locale, and some subsequent writers made things worse by placing the site too far to the west.

Researchers Kent Morby and Mary Anne Bellingham began looking for Spurgin's Beaver Slide several years ago with both library research and field work. The two could not locate Haines's "site 82 memo" in the Yellowstone Archives, as was cited in Jerome Greene's important book *Nez Perce Summer 1877*, but eventually Morby found a copy at Montana State University. Hiking into the area, they quickly saw that the site was not discernible because of the time-altered landscape. Nor were they able to find it on subsequent trips. "Much to the consternation of my friends and hiking companions," wrote Morby, "finding the Beaver Slide became something of an obsession with me."¹⁵

On July 3, 2012, Kent Morby returned to the site where he suspected the slide was located with a new idea for yet another search. He knew from the Haines memo that the stone

¹⁴. Haines, Memorandum to file 4.2.1 on "Retracement of Spurgin's road (site 82)," August 21, 1962, in collection 2477, Aubrey L. Haines Papers, box 27, data cards D-HA, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana. The photo is YELL 20290.

¹⁵. Kent Morby, "Relocating the Site of Cap't Spurgin's Beaver Slide," draft manuscript, pp. 1-2, November, 2012, Park Historian's files.

cairn Haines and Replogle had built at the head of the slide was approximately one hundred yards above the (old) Mary Mountain pack trail. Morby selected a location along the trail where he thought it most likely that the slide had crossed (from southeast to northwest) and, leaving his pack and GPS device there, stretched a 310-foot cord up the hill. Here he started a grid search both above and below the end of the cord working among the deadfall, new-growth, and standing burned trees. "After five hours of frustration," wrote Morby,

I decided to abandon my search for the day and went looking for my pack and GPS device. It was at this point that I stumbled upon the cairn, which was under a fallen tree and much smaller than I expected. Thus I was confident I had located the spot described in the memo, but it was getting late so I marked the site with flagging tape, took a GPS reading, and departed.¹⁶

The ultimate confirmation for Morby came on July 20, 2012, when he hiked back to the hillside with Jere Bush. Climbing up to the Haines cairn, the two men began searching until they found the "stump of the upper[most] snub tree," as mentioned in the Haines memo. Then Jere Bush spotted a blaze on a fallen tree some twenty feet below them. The tree had fortunately fallen so that the blaze was visible. Upon examination of it, the men knew that it was the precise, blazed tree that Replogle had re-blazed in 1948 and that Haines had photographed in 1962.¹⁷

Now Morby formally engaged other researchers including park historian Lee Whittlesey, Lee's history VIP Mary Anne Bellingham (already involved), and Wyoming state archeologist Dan Eakin, all of whom had an intense interest in the site and all of whom had expertise on the Nez Perce events. On two different trips to the location in September and October of 2012, we all met at the site to climb the hill and see what Morby had found and later to take GPS readings of the cairn's location and that of the double-blazed, fallen tree (these data-points are now in the Yellowstone National Park Library). For many hours on these two trips, we fought "that God-

¹⁶. Morby, "Relocating the Site," p. 2.

¹⁷. Morby, "Relocating the Site," and various email and personal conversations between Kent Morby and Lee Whittlesey, November, 2012.

awful hillside,” as archeologist Dan Eakin called it, in attempting to trace the route of the old Howard road, today buried underneath several feet of deadfall and obscured by “dog-hair” lodgepole pine trees. Once the area of unburned, old-growth timber was reached on top of the hill and several hundred yards to the southeast of the Beaver Slide, the probable route of Howard’s Road was easier for us to follow.

We hope to eventually document the entire route of it—running southeast, south, and southwest of the Beaver Slide—and that is a future project. For now, it is nice to know that the exact location of Spurgin’s Beaver Slide has been recorded for posterity using more advanced techniques than were available to Aubrey Haines and Wayne Replogle.

But only because of their forward-looking efforts were our determinations possible.

Possible photos for this article for *Yellowstone Science*:

- 1) Captain William F. Spurgin, portrait—may have to come from National Archives.
- 2) Hiram Chittenden's original interpretive sign for "Spurgin's Beaver Slide." Give location if we are certain of it. (May be same as number 4 below)(we may be able to tell from the background when we get a good copy of the photo)
- 3) National Park Service roadside interpretive sign for "Spurgin's Beaver Slide," located 1.3 miles north of the main road's crossing of Alum Creek. YELL 40210, date?
- 4) Henry Buck standing next to Hiram Chittenden's original interpretive sign for "Spurgin's Beaver Slide," (year: 1921 or 1923). (I can't tell if Buck is next to the sign or if the photo is of the sign alone.)
- 5) Henry Buck standing next to rope-burned tree on the steep hillside known as "Spurgin's Beaver Slide." Buck stated that ten rope-scarred trees were still standing here in 1921. Buck manuscript, p. 43.
- 6) Wayne Replogle holding stick with Howard's Road in evidence behind his hat on August 21, 1962. Photo by Aubrey L. Haines. YELL 20289.
- 7) A live lodgepole-pine tree with the Spurgin blaze on it and Replogle's own additional cut, August 21, 1962. YELL 20290.
- 8) A dead, standing lodge-pole pine tree with rope burns on it, which is probably the one at Haines's "92.41 degrees (true north)," August 21, 1962. YELL 20288.
- 9) Kent Morby's Google Earth map/drawing showing two possible locations for Howard's Road down "Spurgin's Beaver Slide," based upon Haines's locations and using both 1962 magnetic north and 1962 true north. (We now know from the corrected site 82 memo that Haines used true north in his bearings. Morby has redrawn this map with just one route.)

Kent's list of possible photos:

- 1) A graphic of some sort showing the route, Google Earth image or a line on a topo map
- 2) The photo of Replogle with the hat
- 3) The cairn
- 4) The Haines photo of the blazed and cut tree
- 5) A modern photo of the blaze and cut
- 6) A photo of a rope burn, either one of the Haines which I prefer, or one of the sections in the museum
- 7) A photo of the NPS sign because of all the good info on it
- 8) Buck next to the rope burned tree
- 9) The Chittenden Sign
- 10) Spurgin

ATTACH KENT'S DATAPOINTS EMAIL and GIVE COPY of all of this to library.

Kent's top five photos:

- 1-Some sort of map. I assume people will be interested in where it is.
- 2-Cairn. Dull, but it is the "maker of the feast"

3-Chittenden Sign. If we get a good image from Montana or Wyoming. NPS sign more informative, but Chitt is far more significant.

4-Tree with Spurgin Blaze and Replogle Cut (Possibly a combo photo showing the Haines photo of the standing tree combined with the current fallen log)

5-Rope Burn. Buck or Haines or Museum Collection. If only 5 I think I would dump Spurgin for a rope burn. Buck is most historic, but a Haines photo shows the burns to the best advantage.

Caption for Kent's Google-Earth image: This map, drawn in 2012, shows the route of "Spurgin's Beaver Slide" (in red), based upon Aubrey Haines's "Site 82" memo (1962). The green line is the route that Haines and Wayne Replogle walked from the last trace that they found of Spurgin's road back to the NPS interpretive sign and their car on the Grand Loop Road.

Spurgin's Beaver Slide, exact GPS coordinates as calculated by Kent Morby, 2012

Waypoints are in the Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) system using the World Geodetic System (WGS 84) ellipsoid.

Waypoints were taken using a Garmin GPSmap 60CSx

All waypoints were taken on October 9, 2012

The stump of the Upper Snub Tree:

12T 0539452 easting, 4948662 northing

The site of the tree with the Spurgin blaze that in 1948 had a cut taken out of its edge by Wayne Replogle:

12T 0539457 easting, 4948668 northing

The stone cairn erected by Aubrey Haines and Wayne Replogle in 1962 to mark the head of Spurgin's Beaver Slide:

12T 0539453 easting, 4948661 northing

YELLOWSTONE
RESEARCH
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Kent Morby map, 2012.

the cairn left by Aubrey Haines in 1962.

Kent Morby, 2012.

the cairn left by Aubrey Haines in 1962.
Kent Morby, 2012.



Spurgin's Beaverslide

Captain W.F. Spurgin's troops were with the large wagon train for General O.O. Howard's army pursuing Chief Joseph's Nez Perce Indians in August-September, 1877.

Spurgin's troops cleared a route known as the Howard Road. At this end of Hayden Valley it crossed the wooded hill west of the present road. On its north end a steep slope delayed progress.

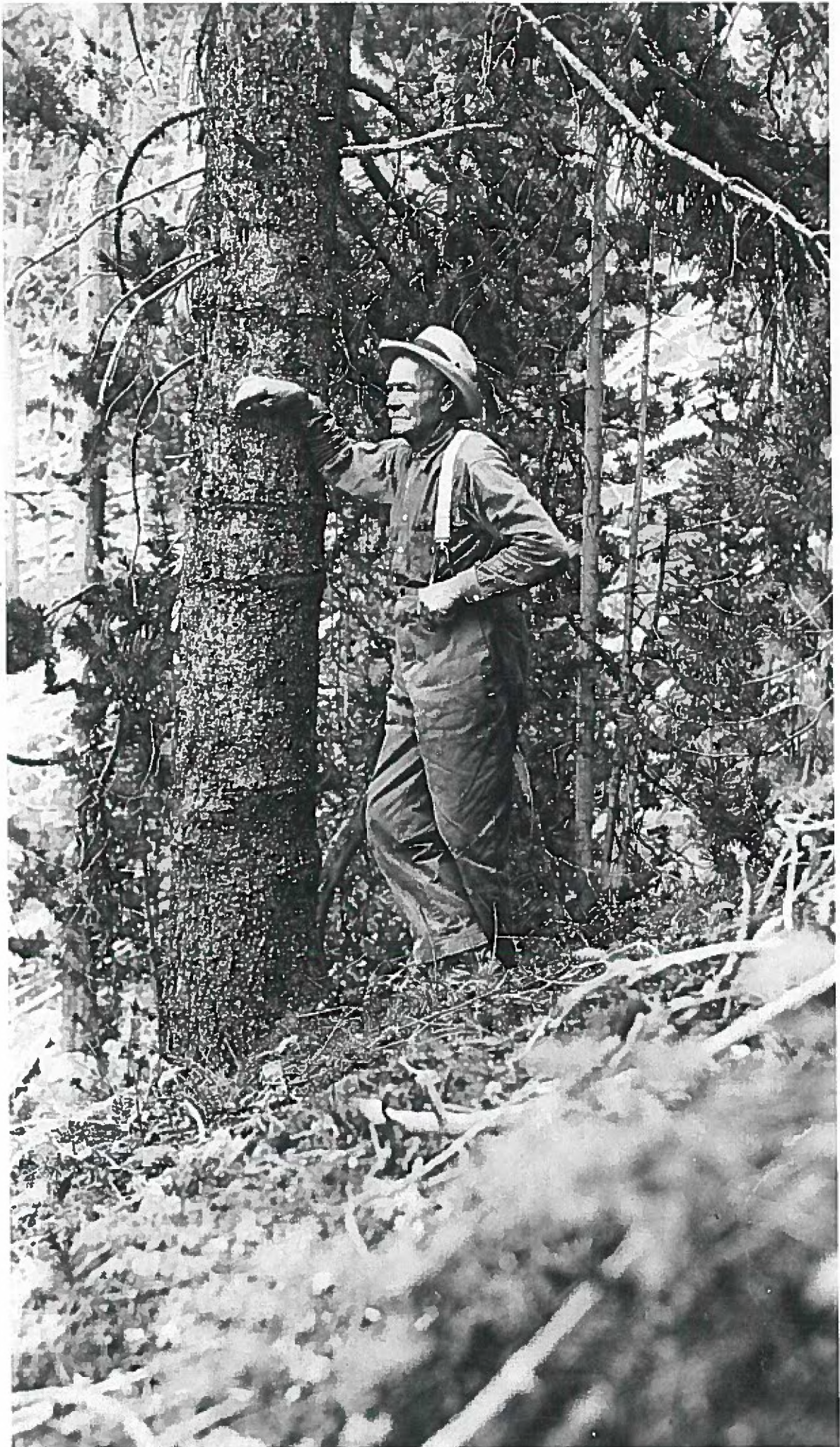
A swath was cleared down the slope, wheels were roughlocked and the wagons lowered by ropes snubbed to living trees. The scars made on the trees are still visible. The rotted stumps of trees they cut are still found. Their wagons came out into the meadow nearby.

The skid marks made by lowering the wagons resembled the slides used by beaver in moving food and logs to their ponds. This prompted the troopers to call the site "Spurgin's Beaverslide".

YELL 40210



Attender's original sign (placed 1903) for Spurgin's Beaver Slide.
Henry Buck, 1921, Montana Historical Society



Henry
Buck

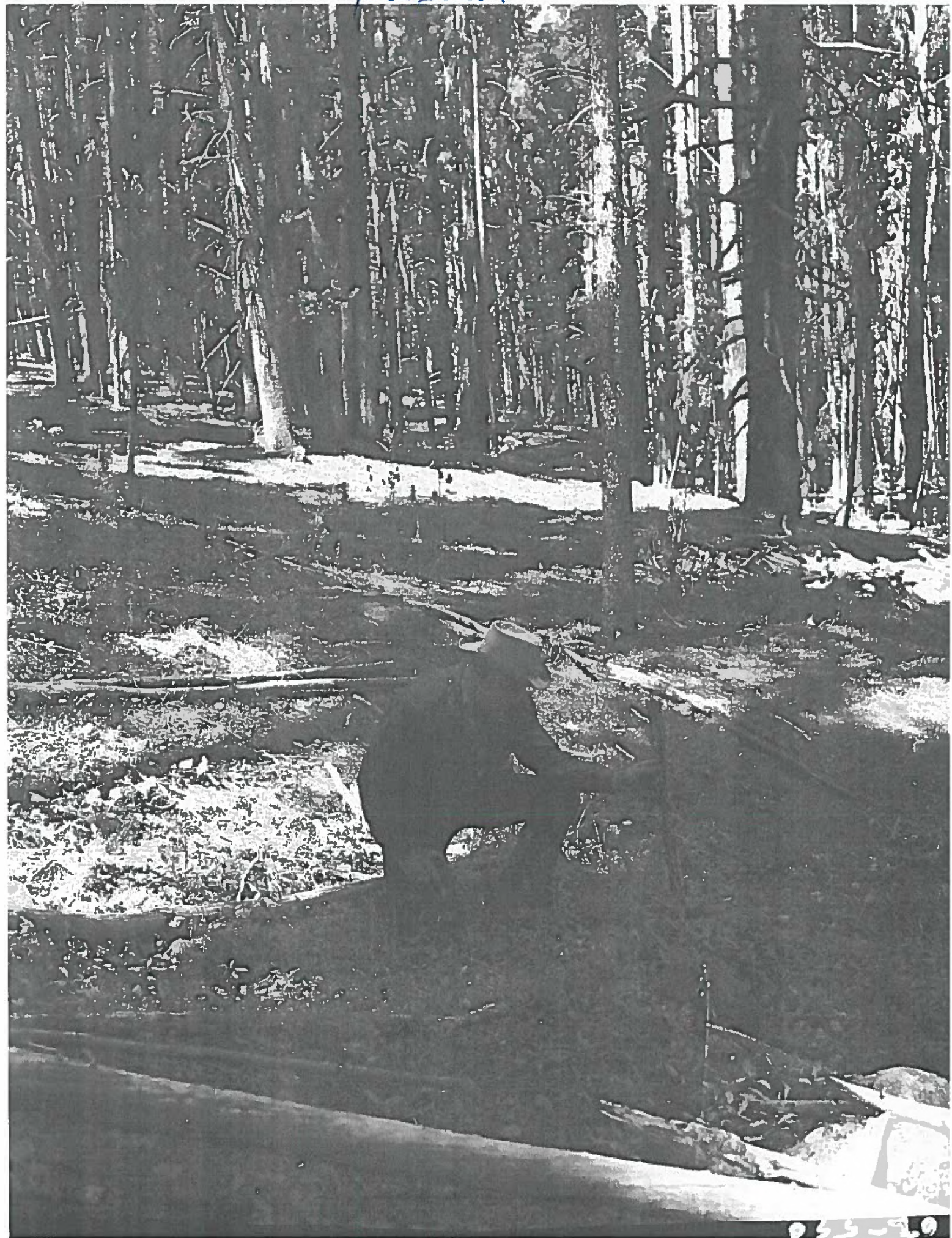
1921

Matara
Historic
Society

YELL 20288-1



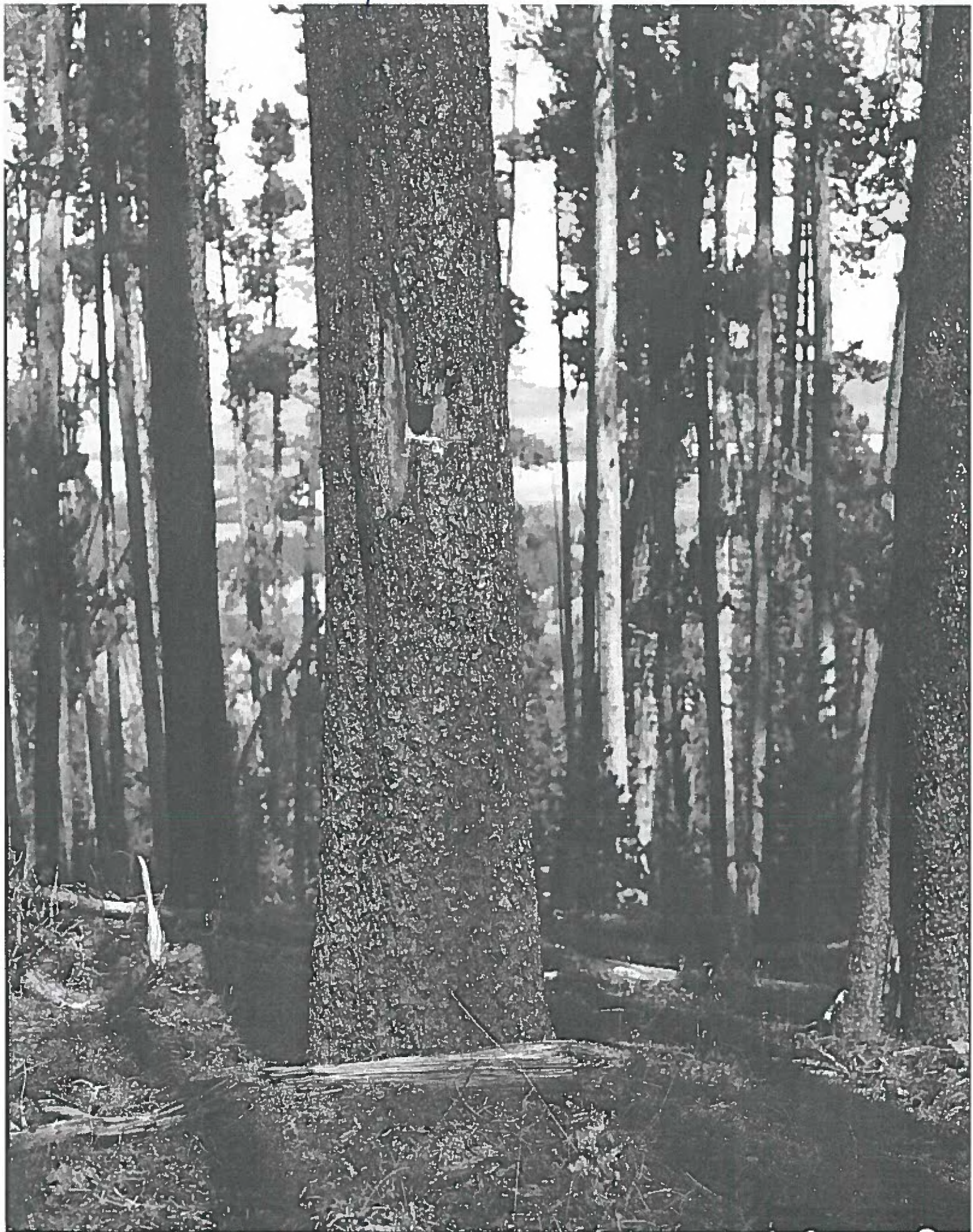
YELL 20289



WAYNE REPLOLE — 1962

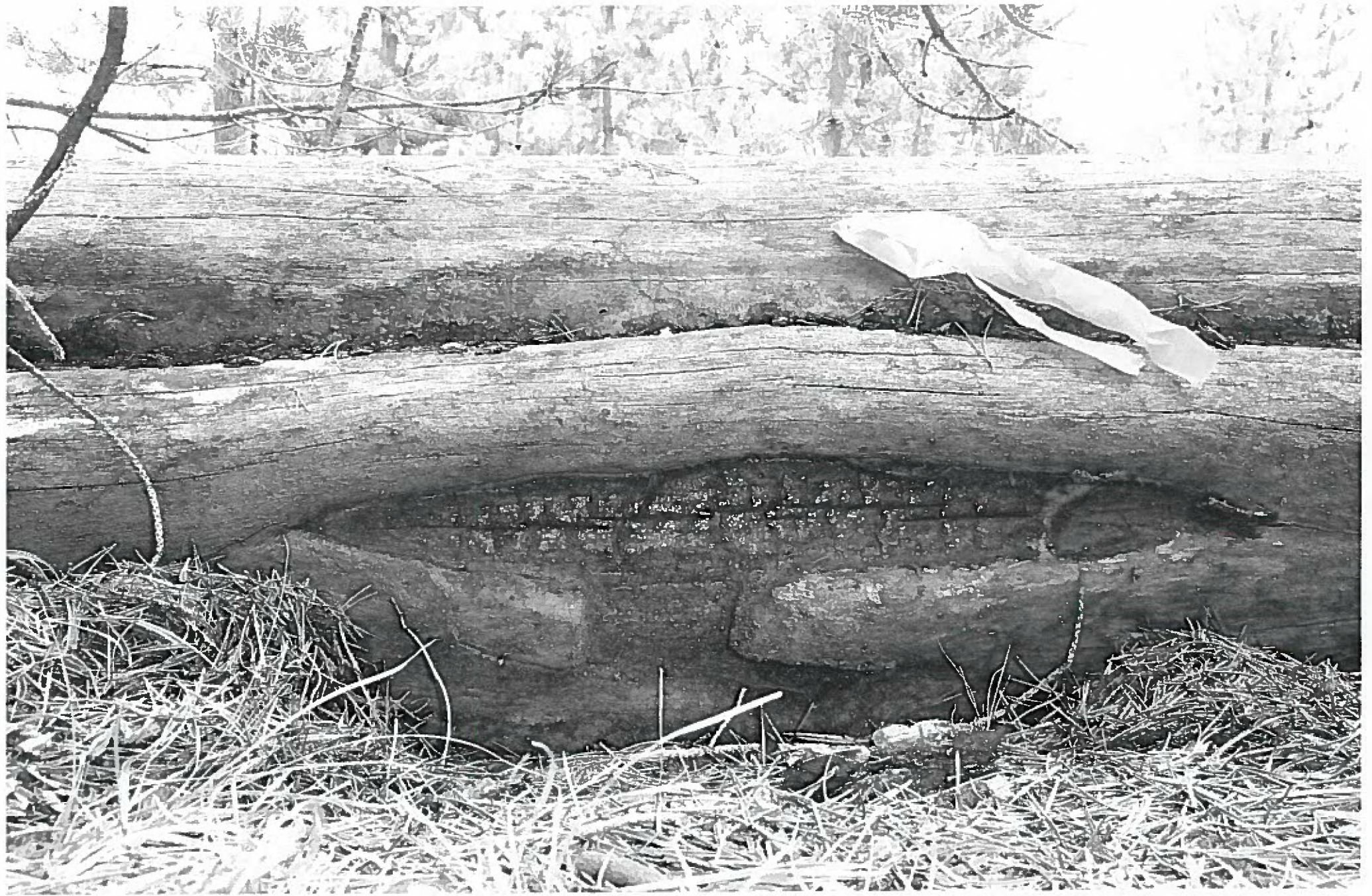
933-20

YELL 20290



8/21/1948 photo by AL Haines - Replogle's double-barked tree

Hopple's double-blazed tree, fallen in 2013 and buried by 1988 fire. Photo by Kent Morley, 2012.





Whittlesey, Lee <lee_whittlesey@nps.gov>

Article from Lee Whittlesey for YELL SCIENCE: "Spurgin's Beaver Slide" with photos attached.

Whittlesey, Lee <lee_whittlesey@nps.gov>
To: Christie Hendrix <christie_hendrix@nps.gov>
Bcc: Kent Morby <kmorby@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 28, 2013 at 9:08 AM

Christie—Attached is the article by Kent Morby and me entitled "Relocating the Exact Site of Spurgin's Beaver Slide..." I sent a copy of it to my supervisor, Tobin Roop, on Friday.

Also attached are three suggested photos with suggested captions below. More photos will follow in the next e-mail.

Please let me know that you've received this material.

Lee Whittlesey
x2261

Photo captions:

- 1) We need a portrait-photo of Captain William F. Spurgin, but unfortunately it does not seem to be easily available. Kent Morby and I have both searched the internet extensively and such a portrait is not there. Nor does his photo appear in any of the literature about the 1877 Nez Perce campaign. I believe that his photo exists in the U.S. Military Academy yearbooks (probably the period 1858-1861 when he was a student there), but those yearbooks are not yet online.
- 2) Map of site of "Spurgin's Beaver Slide," drawn by Kent Morby, 2012, with the help of Google-Earth.
- 3) The cairn, erected on the hillside by historian Aubrey Haines in 1962, and rediscovered in 2012 by Kent Morby and Jere Bush. Note the fallen tree above it that fortunately just missed destroying it when the tree fell after the 1988 fires. Photo by Kent Morby, 2012.
- 4) The NPS interpretive sign on May 22, 1959, removed sometime after 1962, at "Spurgin's Beaver Slide." NPS Photo by A.H. Hewitt, YELL 40210.

(photos continued in next e-mail)

4 attachments



Spurgin's Beaver Slide, GoogleEarth_Image by Kent Morby, 2012, based on ALH and true north.jpg
506K



Spurgin's Beaver Slide, the Cairn of Aubrey Haines, with scale, photo by Kent Morby, 2012.JPG
4779K



Spurgin's Beaver Slide, interpretive sign on May 22, 1959, photo by A.H. Hewitt, YELL 40210.jpg
1108K



Spurgin's Beaver Slide, for YELLOWSTONE SCIENCE, by Kent Morby and Lee Whittlesey.doc
57K

Hendrix, Christie <christie_hendrix@nps.gov>

Mon, Jan 28, 2013 at 9:41 AM

To: "Whittlesey, Lee" <lee_whittlesey@nps.gov>, Tobin Roop <tobin_roop@nps.gov>

Hi Lee,

Tobin mentioned this article as well this a.m. It sounds like a very interesting story.

Here is what I can tell you about Yellowstone Science and the planned content for the next 2 issues. Issue 21(1) is nearly finished, and is focused on Yellowstone Lake. We have decided not to include the Marshall Hotel article that you wrote, as the issue is entirely about the Lake.

Issue 21(2) is tentatively the "Biennial Conference Issue." Dave Hallac has decided that in lieu of printing a proceedings, we will do a double issue of Yell Science dedicated to the conference.

According to Dave, he wants us to focus on only 2 issues for 2012, but if time allows, maybe a third issue will come out. I see this article being in either the 2nd or 3rd issue, depending on a lot of other variables.

I am working in here until 3/15ish and will keep you posted on where things shake out.

Thanks again, will read this soon,

Christie

Maybe you and Tobin can let me know which article is a higher priority for your program, this one or the Marshall



Whittlesey, Lee <lee_whittlesey@nps.gov>

Photos 4-8 to accompany Morby/Whittlesey article "Spurgin's Beaver Slide."

Whittlesey, Lee <lee_whittlesey@nps.gov>
 To: Christie Hendrix <christie_hendrix@nps.gov>
 Bcc: Kent Morby <kmorby@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 28, 2013 at 10:10 AM

Christie—Here are the other photos with captions for the Spurgin's Beaver Slide article.

Lee

4) Henry Buck, in 1921, stands at Hiram Chittenden's original (1903) interpretive sign for "Spurgin's Beaver Slide," then located on the west side of the park's main road between Alum Creek and Otter Creek. Photo taken by Henry Buck's unnamed son. Montana Historical Society, #Pac 76-115.7.

5) On July 24, 1921, Henry Buck stands at a tree with rope-burns made in 1877 during the lowering of his and other wagons by Captain Spurgin's "skillets." Photo taken by Henry Buck's unnamed son. Montana Historical Society, #Pac 76-115.12.

6) A rope-burned tree at Spurgin's Beaver Slide shown on August 21, 1962. NPS Photo by Aubrey L. Haines, YELL 20288-1.

7) NPS Naturalist/Interpreter Wayne Replogle, August 21, 1962, near top of Spurgin's Beaver Slide. The "Slide" (route) of Howard's Road is shown in the background, running from Replogle's hat straight up to the top of the photo. NPS photo by Aubrey L. Haines, YELL 20289.

8) A tree blazed by Captain Spurgin's men on August 23, 1877 is shown here in 1962 after NPS Naturalist/Interpreter Wayne Replogle cut an extra blaze into it to age the tree. This tree was found fallen with its blazes in 2013. NPS photo by Aubrey L. Haines, August 21, 1962. YELL 20290.

5 attachments



Spurgin's Beaver Slide, Chittenden's original 1903 sign, taken 1921 by Henry Buck's son, Henry Buck in photo from his Nez Perce manuscript, Montana Historical Society #Pac 76-115.7.tif 2389K



Spurgin's Beaver Slide, Henry Buck at rope burned tree on July 24, 1921, Montana Historical Society #Pac 76-115.12, from Buck's Nez Perce manuscript, sent by Kent Morby.tif 2496K



Spurgin's Beaver Slide, rope-burned tree, photo by Aubrey Haines, Aug 21, 1962, YELL 20288-1.jpg
619K



Spurgin's Beaver Slide, Wayne Replogle at top of hill, Aug 21, 1962, road above his hat, photo by Aubrey Haines, YELL 20289.jpg
1053K



Spurgin's Beaver Slide, tree with Spurgin blaze plus extra cut made by Replogle in 1948, photo by Aubrey Haines, Aug 21, 1962, YELL 20290.jpg
993K

Whittlesey, Lee <lee_whittlesey@nps.gov>
To: Staffan Peterson <staffan_peterson@nps.gov>

Mon, Jan 28, 2013 at 10:18 AM

Staffan—Here are photos 4-8 to accompany the Spurgin's Beaver Slide article for *Yellowstone Science*.

Lee Whittlesey
x2261
[Quoted text hidden]

5 attachments



Spurgin's Beaver Slide, Chittenden's original 1903 sign, taken 1921 by Henry Buck's son, Henry Buck in photo from his Nez Perce manuscript, Montana Historical Society #Pac 76-115.7.tif
2389K

Hotel one? I do think that some years ago we did do a feature on the underwater archeology work associated with the Marshall Hotel.

[Quoted text hidden]

—
Christie Hendrix
Research Coordinator, Yellowstone National Park

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PO Box 168
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307-344-2211 fax
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Whittlesey, Lee <lee_whittlesey@nps.gov>
To: "Hendrix, Christie" <christie_hendrix@nps.gov>

Mon, Jan 28, 2013 at 9:50 AM

Thanks, Christie, for all this good information!

Lee
[Quoted text hidden]

Whittlesey, Lee <lee_whittlesey@nps.gov>
To: Staffan Peterson <staffan_peterson@nps.gov>

Mon, Jan 28, 2013 at 10:16 AM

Steffan—When you get time (no rush), take a look at this article that a researcher and I wrote, intended for *Yellowstone Science*. Illustrations to accompany it are in this email and another one, which will follow.

I sent Tobin a copy of this article on Friday and he says that once you read it, we will discuss it with you.

Thanks much.

Lee Whittlesey
x2261
[Quoted text hidden]

Peterson, Staffan <staffan_peterson@nps.gov>
To: "Whittlesey, Lee" <lee_whittlesey@nps.gov>

Mon, Jan 28, 2013 at 10:23 AM

Lee - looks like the article is not attached.
Staffan

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Whittlesey, Lee <lee_whittlesey@nps.gov>
To: "Peterson, Staffan" <staffan_peterson@nps.gov>

Mon, Jan 28, 2013 at 10:26 AM

Staffan—Here's the article. Were the first three photos attached?

Lee

[Quoted text hidden]

 **Spurgin's Beaver Slide, for YELLOWSTONE SCIENCE, by Kent Morby and Lee Whittlesey.doc**
57K

Peterson, Staffan <staffan_peterson@nps.gov>
To: "Whittlesey, Lee" <lee_whittlesey@nps.gov>

Mon, Jan 28, 2013 at 10:38 AM

Lee - did not get photos 1-3.

Staffan

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