

## SELWAY RIVER CHRONOLOGY

8/2/2007 edit.

1878 – Several of White Bird's band were said to have lived in the upper reaches of the Selway after their return from Canada after 1877. (Pioneer Days in Idaho County (PDIC), Vol. II, 48.

1890 – Three Links Creek on the Selway was named for three links carved into the bark of a large spruce tree on the creek banks in 1890. The Indians called it Warm Springs Creek. PDIC, II, 48

3/3/1897 – "Tragedy in the Wilderness." Jim Smart and Jim Nolan reported that Gilroy had been shot by his partner, Murphy. . . and was lying in his cabin, on the banks of the Clearwater, about 25 miles below their cabin. . . suffering awful agony when seen by Nolan. Fifteen days after the shooting, Smart and Nolan arrived in Darby. . . while coming out on snowshoes they encountered fearful weather along the "storm swept grizzly infested trail." One night they built a fire and on awakening in the morning, 13 feet of snow had banked up around them. The trappers are quite certain that the poor unfortunate on the Clearwater is dead by this time, and as that region is beyond the jurisdiction of the Montana authorities, no action toward apprehending the man who did the shooting has been taken. (WN 3/3/1897)

3/3/1897 – A party of 7 or 8 hardy adventurers, guided by Smart and Nolan, the Clearwater trappers, left for that region this morning. They will attempt to relieve Gilroy, the wounded trapper and hope to arrive in . . . time to save him. A sufficient amount to pay the expenses of the trip was quickly raised among the employees of the Bitter Root Stock Farm where Gilroy was formerly employed. (WN 3/3/1897)

3/17/1897 – "A Hazardous Journey." Lengthy narrative of George W. Solleder, one of the rescue party who went to Clearwater in aid of a wounded trapper. Group left Darby on 3/3/1897 to rescue Anthony Gilroy, shot by Peter Murphy on 2/12. Party consisted of Solleder, Eph Gognon, Neil Parks, Ed Barril, Pete Hotts, Chas. McQuirk and Fenwick Collins. They left Darby at 1000, made Lost Horse canyon at 1:30 or 2 p.m. There they made a hasty dinner and arranged their packs. Four pairs of Web and three pairs of "Skies" snowshoes. "and we were loaded about 35 lbs. to the man. James Smart who came out with Nolan, returned with us. We left our first camp about 3 o'clock and made about six miles that night. We carried no blankets on account of having to carry all the provisions we could. We built up a big fire and set around telling the usual camp stories of bear, elk, moose and fish."

They left camp early the next morning, made about 8 miles by noon. Solleder broke a snowshoe. The group decided to let two return after more supplies and meet group on the summit on the 9<sup>th</sup> day, "as we were short of provisions." Hotts and Collins returned; Parks and Solleder took their snowshoes, and their packs were divided among the group. It snowed heavily and retarded progress. "McQuirk had the Skies snowshoes on and the snow stuck very bad, and when we arrived at the foot of the summit, McQuirk could not

climb the mountain with his pack, and we were compelled to take his pack to the top.” Over a foot of snow fell in four hours. They arrived at Twin Lakes about six o’clock. Camped there as Burrell gave out. It snowed all night. The group was in much distress, but no one complained. “The fire melted the snow in spite of our precautions and sunk down about eight feet,” the snow here was 12 feet deep. They had plenty of medicine, were prepared to bring the wounded man out on a taboggen [sic], “the distance is 80 miles over the roughest country imaginable.” Crossed the divide 20 minutes after breaking camp. Two feet of new snow atop old snow. They took turns breaking trail, made the trapper camp of Matick by one o’clock. Burrell gave out there with a lame foot. Party had had no sleep. It kept on snowing, but no one complained. They left camp early the next morning, going down Moose Creek, through Hell’s Canyon and made Smart’s cabin by 2 o’clock. Here they made a hasty dinner. Barrell gave out completely; group left him with Smart, who remained at his cabin. The Group camped 6 miles farther down, where the snow was still 6 feet deep. They were almost exhausted for sleep, but pushed on at daylight. It was heavy going in the afternoon due to thawing. They arrived at Nolan’s cabin Sunday at 5 o’clock. They found Murphy there with his feet badly frozen. He said Gilroy died the night of the same day he was shot. Murphy was alone and in bed for 15 days with no wood. When Gilroy died, Murphy had tried to go to Nolan’s cabin. In crossing the Clearwater, his raft ran against a rock and he fell in. he had to swim out, then travel 5 miles and froze his feet. Nolan had already gone to Darby. The group got their first sleep at Nolan’s cabin Sunday night. Murphy kept the fire all night for them. The next day they proceeded down Moose Creek to the Clearwater, built a raft and went to Gilroy’s cabin. Gilroy had been dead for 24 days. “We dug a grave in the cabin, after making an examination of his body, we wrapped him in a blanket and covered him in canvass and buried him. We wrote a note and placed it on the head board, giving the date of his death, and then we hastened to return. We arrived back at Nolan’s cabin at 5 o’clock and put in two hours patching snowshoes. We started on our return trip the next morning. (WN 3/17/1897)

3/17/1897 – Letter from Pete Murphy to Gilroy’s sister. Stated shooting was an accident while they were preparing to hunt deer. Gilroy owned 2 horses and 35 traps, “half of the outfit.” One of the relief party too Gilroy’s rifle out. (WN 3/17/1897)

3/17/1897 – “Relief Party Returns.” Party arrived back in Darby Thursday afternoon (3/11/1897). They covered the 70 miles to Smart’s cabin via the Lost Horse trail. From Smart’s to Nolan’s it was another 25 miles. Murphy’s hands and feet were frozen and his wrist broken, he is in a bad way. Anthony Gilroy was 22 years old, formerly of Greely Co., Nebraska where his parents still reside. Gilroy’s cousin, F. Meagher, came to Darby. Both Gilroy and Murphy had been employees of the Bitter Root Stock Farm. Murphy was 34 years old, and also a cousin of Gilroy. Murphy a man of good reputation. (WN 3/17/1897)

3/17/1897 – editorial item re: the Clearwater Country: “This romantic and almost inaccessible wilderness is frequented solely by hermit trappers and occasionally invaded by an adventurous party of summer tourists. It’s a grand outing place in the summer time for those adventurously inclined. . . . The Idaho authorities should see that law and order

prevail as too many mysterious deaths and disappearances have been reported from that tragic domain where it would seem murderers and outcasts may roam with impunity.” (WN 3/17/1897)

3/31/1897 – Jim Nolan and Albert Hammond left Tuesday by the snowshoe route for the Clearwater country to spend the remainder of the spring trapping for furs. They will be expected to return about the 1<sup>st</sup> of June. (Darby Sentinel cited in WN 3/31/1897)

4/14/1897 – After Untold Hardships. Peter Murphy, partner of Anthony Gilroy, who was shot at his cabin on the Clearwater on Feb. 12, arrived in town last evening after a wearisome tramp lasting 7 days covering a distance of about 70 miles. He left his cabin on the Clearwater April 7, traveling on snowshoes. His feet had been frozen and were not well yet and for lack of proper food he was weak and emaciated. On the divide he became lost in a blinding snowstorm, but struggled on, almost famished and finally came to a cache of provisions at the mouth of the Lost Horse, where he cooked and ate some food. On account of the snow balling in the web of his snowshoes, he had abandoned them. Murphy arrived at Hamilton, foot sore and completely exhausted and it will require several weeks good care to pull him together. He'll seek employment in the vicinity for the summer. Mr. Murphy appears consumed with grief over his recent awful experience in the Clearwater, although he converses freely about the affair, and courts a thorough investigation. (WN 4/4/1897)

5/5/1897 – “The Carlin party returned from the Clearwater Saturday evening after a hard trip. There is less snow on the summit this season than there has been for years. The expedition for the purposes of photographing wild game and scenery was entirely successful.” (WN 5/5/1897)

5/26/1897 – C. Boutier, of London, England, is sojourning at the Ravalli. He intends to pass the summer in the Clearwater country and will probably accompany the Carlin party, which will leave shortly. (WN 5/26/1897)

5/26/1897 – Carlin Party. The Carlin party, including Mr. and Mrs. Carlin, C. Boutier, W.H. Wright, the guide, and Herrick the cook, will leave for the Clearwater country some day next week. (WN 5/26/1897)

7/7/1897 – Jim Smart, Albert Hammond and wife and Miss Stella Tanner to leave from Darby after the Fourth for a month long trip in the Clearwater country. (WN 7/7/1897)

August 1898 – Wesley Fales made his first trip into the Selway in August 1898, over Lost Horse Pass and down Bear Creek. Late in the season. He did not have time to get his supplies in that fall. He went back to the BRV and worked in a logging camp through the winter. The following summer (1899) he gathered a pack string and went back to the Selway with traps and supplies. “I left the Bear Creek trail a few miles below the pass and struck Moose Creek a few miles below Dead Elk Creek and went to White Sand Lake where I built my home cabin.” (PDIC II, 226)

9/14/1898 – Al Shappee and R Gwin returned from hunting and prospecting trip in the Clearwater country – had a splendid time. (WN 9/14/1898)

12/7/1898 – Billy Fields who has been mining in the Clearwater country for the past six months returned Saturday evening. He came across the range on snowshoes and says there were no poetical suggestions on the trip across the rugged, snow-capped mountains and that his poetical bump has somewhat diminished on account of his constant contact with the ragged edges of nature. . . . has some good placer ground somewhere over in the wilds of the Clearwater. (WN 12/7/1898)

Stuart Hot Springs were named for Jesse Spotted Eagle, an Indian surveyor who first reported them. Jesse Pass, between the head of Three Links Creek and the West Fork of Gedney Creek, was name for Jesse Spotted Eagle, who also first reported the pass. PDIC, II, 50.

c. winter 1899 – There is a grave situated adjacent to the trail on a southern slope overlooking Running Creek, a well defined mound of earth with a bush at the foot and a cross at the head. The cross was hewn from a small fir tree and squared to about 4 by 4. The inscription is nicely carved and though weathered is still legible. P}} The name “ARCHER” is carved on the vertical stick. The horizontal bar has the line: “Look Before You Leap.” L.M. Powell told the story as it had been related to him by George Matteson, present owner of the Running Creek Ranch (where the grave is located). “Archer was killed in a skiing accident while running a trapline maintained by him and his partner, Martin Moe. Apparently Archer ski-jumped over a cliff during a blizzard. When Archer’s dog returned alone to the cabin, Moe with the aid of Phil Shearer, conducted a search for Archer. The blizzard had buried all trace of the man however, and Moe returning to the Bitter Root Valley, presumably the Darby-Hamilton area, reported the incident of the trapline venture and of his unsuccessful search for Archer. P}}”Suspicion is such cases often reared an ugly head with the result that Moe for a time was held by the law until he was able to convince officers of his innocence. This tragedy of the hills, like similar incidents where lives were lost either by accident or through such sicknesses as scurvy, eventually resulted in truth clearing honest mountain characters of accusation. It is believed the death of Archer occurred in the winter of 1899. It came about after 1900 that a woman and her young son with a party in the Running Creek hills, found a man’s hat along their trail and soon afterward came upon the body of Archer with the skis near and his rifle which had been fired several times, possibly by Archer in attempts to get help. Moe, telling of the force of the storm, he had witnessed the blizzard while in the cabin, but had not heard rifle shots, possibly because of the storm. When Archer’s dog came back alone and giving barks of troubled nature, Moe went searching all the trapline distance, but snow was deep and no trace could be found. Powell said he had heard of Archer’s grave and the wording on the cross on his first trip to Running Creek in 1946 when he manned the lookout on Shearer Point. He was surprised to find the cross still standing during a survey of the old Running Ranch this month. He said purpose of the survey was to delineate portions of the ranch being purchased by the Forest Service as well as the remainder being retained by the Mattesons. (BK Monroe in RR 7/7/1976)

1905 – “. . . a trapper and all-around mountain man, Tom Running of Darby, wintered at various times in the Selway, but his last trap season was tragic for snow blindness came unmercifully and Tom Running was rescued by friends and brought home for the rest of his time. “Blind Tom” as he became known, stayed around with old friends of the hills, Abe Leeds and Tom Stella, both seasoned trappers and guides in the Clearwater for three decades.” (BK Monroe in RR, 7/7/1976)

6/1905 – “Along a rocky, winding trail, over fields of snow, through a tangled mass of undergrowth, carried on a cot for sixty miles, crossing swollen streams lashed on the back of a horse, Thomas Running, accompanied by his four brave, tender-hearted rescuers, reached Darby about 9 o’clock Friday night, blind and almost dying. It had been a weary desperate journey of six days and nights. The members of the rescue party were Jerry T. Wilkerson, John Stelly [Stella], Adolph Gorus and Ed Galloway. They had to cross two flooded streams, the Clearwater and Bear creeks, by swimming horses. The blind and helpless man was lashed on the back of a trusty horse and carried safely across. Two Clearwater pioneers furnished the horses, and, when the snow on the other side was reached turned back to their homes. From there the four came alone. Tuesday the unfortunate man was taken to Helena for treatment. He was accompanied by John Stelly [Stella]. Running’s misfortune stirred the sympathy of the people of Darby and Saturday night a dance was given for his benefit. A total of \$139.50 was raised. . . .” (RR, “History – 100 Years ago,” 6/29/2005, p. 10)

Meeker Creek is named for a man who lived on Harris Ridge and marked his name on a tree along the Creek. Meeker later moved to California. PDIC, II, 50.

1914 – Wesley Fales took up a forest homestead at what is now Fales Flat. He didn’t prove up on the homestead, and it was cancelled on June 24, 1929. The cabin burned around 1940. (Schumaker MSS)

1915 – Abbot Silva, working for the USFS mapped the upper Selway in 1915, according to Than Wilkerson in 1941. Wilkerson thought Silva named Horse Jaw Mountain and Dennis Mountain the same year, but Wilkerson didn’t know the reason. He said Storm Creek was named due to the fierce storm that hit the area when Wilkerson and Silva were mapping the area in 1915. (PDIC, II, 220)

1917 – bad fire year (EK40YRS, 91; TLS, 175-179)

1918 – 1920 – These years were the most exciting of the career of Martin “Marty Bardoff”, “when with his own pack string he did contract packing for the US Forest Service. Headquarters for the forest service for this area was then at Hamilton, Mont. From there he packed into the rugged Selway and Lochsa River area. ‘There were no roads in those days,’ Bardoff said. ‘For instance, the road from Kooskia up the Middle

Fork only went 14 miles and the road from Hamilton, Mont. Only went six miles. All the area in between was wilderness and trails. We packed everything to all the lookouts. We packed with horses in those days, mules were scarce and very expensive as there was so much packing done. It was pretty rugged. Moose and bear would run our stock off at night and we'd have to round them up and start on our way again in the morning. The trip from Hamilton to Elk Summit ranger station over the Idaho line was a three-day trip.' He packed into the Selway area in 1919 when the whole country was ablaze all summer. One fire burned out the beautiful Selway wilderness area, leaving only blackened earth and a few black tree trunks. 'I even helped carry out 14 dead men. I packed them from Idaho to Hamilton.' He said forest fire-fighters who panicked were killed in the fire. 'We once were trapped in a canyon all night during the fire, with the fire rolling burning logs down,' Bardoff said. 'We lost all our supplies, but never lost a man or an animal. The ashes were nearly two inches deep every morning in Hamilton. The skies were lit up like the northern lights.' During his three years packing for the Forest Service Bardoff also competed in rodeos and was one of the top cowboys of his day, making take-home pay of \$7,200 in 1920." ("Idahoan Ran Early-Day Pack String," in Spokane Daily Chronicle, 10/6/1964, p. a3)

1919 – Photos of packer Martin Bardoff and his pack string working for the Forest Service at Hamilton and on the trail in 1919. Photo by Frank Moody. (Spokane Daily Chronicle, 10/6/1964, p. a3)

c. 1920 – [Tom] Stella . . . in the 1920s era, failed to return from his winter on Stella creek in the Selway and rescuers in the spring found he had died evidently after an accident that gave him broken limbs. His grave was made near his cabin. (BK Monroe in RR 7/7/1976)

c. 1920s-1930s – Alvin Renshaw and wife maintained a home/ranch 1 and a half miles from Bear Creek landing field. Renshaw was a mountain man and big game hunter. Director John Huston and wife spent a month with the Renshaws (dates unknown). (PDIC, II, 231)

1931 – About 1931 the p. pine that was the original marker of the Magruder massacre site blew down. Magruder's gold scales are now in the state museum at Boise. (PDIC, II, 223)

c. 1935 – Gabe Creek was named for USFS employee Gabe Harmon, who helped build the Deep Creek Road. (Schumaker MSS)

1944 – Don Williams was 17 years old when he went to work for the Bitterroot National Forest in 1944. BNF then administered the Moose Creek Ranger District. Bob Henderson was the Second Alternate Ranger in charge of the old Beaver Creek Station where Williams was assigned. Williams was trail crew foreman for one of two trail crews on the Bear Creek end of the Selway Primitive area. While stationed there, Williams met Phil Shearer, a homesteader. That Fall, Henderson asked Williams if he would be willing to help Phil Shearer take his cattle out to Darby MT by way of Bear

Creek, Paradise Creek to Belle Lake and down Rock Creek to Lake Como. "It took about 4-5 days. In the evenings, around the campfire, Phil would loosen up and talk a little. He told me about marten trapping and making bootleg whiskey. He said the Revenuers tried many times to catch him packing out whiskey to the bitterroot Valley. Phil would leak out word he was coming out Bear Creek to Lost Horse and he would go out over Elk Summit out through Paradise. Said he made about \$5,000 between the whiskey and trapping. He would then go to Butte and rent a room in a big whorehouse. He brought all the supplies he needed for the winter and then spent all of the rest of the money enjoying his booze! When we crossed the divide at Belle Lake there was a large fire burning. We took the cattle down Rock Creek about a mile to camp for the night. The Ford Tri-motor dropped 8 jumpers on the fire. The next day we trailed the herd the 16 miles to Lake Como where other friends met Phil. I went on to Darby and about 0300 the next morning led a 25-man crew back up Rock Creek to Belle Lake. That was the last time I saw Phil Shearer." ("The Last Cattle Drive" by Don Williams in the January 2006 newsletter, National Museum of Forest Service History, p. 4)

c. 1948 – Alvin Renshaw sold his dude ranch. (PDIC, II, 235)

October 1949 – Packer and hunter Alvin Renshaw died, mistaken for a deer 10 miles east of Kooskia. He had operated a dude ranch for many years on the upper Selway. His clients included Hollywood stars and famous hunters. He sold the ranch around 1948. (PDIC, II, 235)