

FIRST DRAFT

Palisade archaeologist writes of Utes' wood shelters, lives

When Curtis Martin visits the remnants of an old campsite — say 120 to 150 years old — he can often determine by the trash residue if it was occupied by white people or Ute Indians.

"The white men just threw away their tin cans," Martin said recently. "The Indians were more resourceful. They recycled the cans, making arrow points" and other useful items from the metal they had acquired from whites.

Martin, of Palisade, is the author of "Ephemeral Bounty: Wickiups, Trade Goods, and the Final Years of the Autonomous Ute," published by the University of Utah Press this spring.

He is scheduled for a book reading and book-signing at 6:30 p.m. July 27 at Out West Books, 533 Main St., Grand Junction.

Wickiups were human shelters made from juniper, pinyon, aspen or other tree branches, which were covered with leaves, branches, dirt and sometimes hides. They could be free-standing or constructed to lean against live trees, rocks or rock walls.

Martin is also an archaeologist who has spent the past 13 years as the principal investigator for the Colorado Wickiup Project under the auspices of the Dominguez Archaeological Research Group Inc. of Grand Junction. His book is a result of that work.

The Wickiup Project received grants from Colorado State Historical Fund and the Bureau of Land Management. It has worked with the BLM, the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and importantly, representatives of the Ute Indians during its research.

Led by Martin, members of the project have examined 86 archaeological sites in Colorado, detailing 434 wooden structures that included wickiups, storage facilities, brush fences and more. At many of the sites, the researchers also found remnants of European or American-made trade goods.

"One of the most interesting things we discovered was how rapidly horses and trade goods were adopted into the Ute lifestyle," Martin said. "In one generation they went from stone tools to metal arrow points to guns."

The archaeological sites and structures investigated by Martin and the other researchers date from as early as 1795, while others are as recent as 1915, based in part on tree-ring dating of wooden features found at the sites.

Historians and archaeologists have long known that many Utes traveled back into Colorado for hunting or other activities after the Uncompahgre and White River Utes were forcibly removed to Utah in 1881. But the research by Martin's team has demonstrated that some Utes were actively living in western Colorado well into the 20th century.

Evidence of that has been found primarily in what were small, isolated camps, well secluded from the major roads and trails used by whites. Most



BOB SILBERNAGEL



Photos by CURTIS MARTIN/Special to the Sentinel

An aspen pole wickiup near Glade Park.



A tipi frame near Dinosaur National Monument.

were probably seasonal camps, and no one knows for certain how many Utes resided in Colorado then.

Camps such as those, and earlier ones from the mid-to-late 19th century, can be dated not just with tree-ring data, but from the type of trade goods found on site. Various styles of metal tools, bullets and rifle cartridges, horse tack, and even glass beads all can provide clues to the dates of an encampment.

Glass beads, which Indians used for decorations, were traded by Europeans to Indians throughout North America.

As bead-making technology improved over the centuries, the beads became smaller and the methods of producing them changed.

As a result, Martin wrote that he and his crews can now estimate "within a few decades the age of occupation at a wooden feature site simply by observing the size of the glass seed beads represented there."

Earlier sites, especially those without evidence of trade goods, are more difficult to date.

"Until the Utes had metal axes, they just collected dead wood" to construct their wickiups, Martin said.

So, while it's possible to use tree-rings to determine when branches used in such a structure were alive, there is no way of knowing how long they may have been dead before they were collected by Indians.

Martin has an entire chapter on the methods used and difficulties encountered in dating "aboriginal wooden features." He notes that dead juniper or pinyon wood could stand 200 to 800 years before being collected by Utes to be used in wickiups and other structures.

Distinctive Ute arrow points and pottery shards have also helped in dating older sites.

After they acquired horses,



Curtis Martin of Palisade documents a site near Dotsero. He has spent the past 13 years as the principal investigator for the Colorado Wickiup Project under the auspices of the Dominguez Archaeological Research Group Inc. of Grand Junction.

the Utes began to use tipis like those popularized by plains tribes. The long lodgpoles and hide or canvas coverings were portable, transported by horse and travois, while wickiups were abandoned when people moved on.

Even after they acquired tipis, the Utes continued to employ wickiups as temporary shelters, for storage, and perhaps for other uses. In some cases, they even constructed a sort of hybrid shelter, with tipis partially leaning on living trees.

Martin's book examines in detail six sites recorded by the Colorado Wickiup project. They range from a site dating to 1795 to one occupied in 1894 at the earliest. There are sites from western Colorado, the Front Range and the Rio Grande Valley. Site maps show where wooden features and artifacts were discovered.

Some of the sites Martin and his crews first visited in the early years of the project have since deteriorated,

mostly through natural causes but at least one from human vandalism. The Colorado Wickiup Project is continuing to examine as many sites and structures as possible before they disappear.

And Martin is still enthusiastic about the work: "I've found glass beads that were manufactured in Venice ... brought across the ocean on a sailing ship, carted out to the West on some mountain man's mule, traded to the Indians, sewn onto a moccasin or gun scabbard, and then lost on some ridge top in the Piceance Basin where I am blessed to find them 200 years later! ... I don't have the easiest job in the world, but I may very well have the coolest."

Information for this column came from interviews with Curtis Martin and from his book, "Ephemeral Bounty."

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REGION SENTINEL WIRE SERVICES

Truck chase causes several small fires

FORT MORGAN — Authorities say a truck that was reported stolen ignited several small grass fires while it was being chased by sheriff's deputies on Saturday.

The Morgan County Sheriff's Office says the wrecker truck was reported stolen in Weld County. Authorities spotted the vehicle and during the slow-speed pursuit, the suspects drove for miles on flat tires, which eventually started to spark.

The truck burst into flames, and two suspects were arrested. Their names have not been released.

More human remains found at ski resort

BOULDER — The Boulder County Sheriff's Office says human remains found Saturday may be related to remains found inside a snow boot at a Colorado ski resort.

On June 1, an employee of the Eldora Mountain Ski Resort found the boot near the base of the mountain while working in the area. The new remains were found about three-quarters of a mile outside the front gate of the ski resort.

Investigators say they don't believe the remains belong to a missing 20-year-old man from Lafayette who worked at the ski resort. Family and friends of the man, who went missing in January after leaving work, also say they don't think he owned that kind of boot.

Loveland may change public comments

LOVELAND — The Loveland City Council is considering proposals to change how members of the public can address council members at open meetings.

Council members on Tuesday will vote on a proposal that would allow groups to have a 30-minute study session to discuss issues in depth if 10 residents and two council members support the issue.

The proposal comes as the council has been dealing with so-called "daisy-chain" comment periods at meetings. Recently a resident wanted to show a series of videos at a meeting. Once her allotted three minutes were up, supporters of her issue took the floor and ceded their three minutes for the first woman's videos.

Council members say the change would speed up meetings without losing public insight.

7-year-old fatally hit by SUV identified

BLUFFDALE, Utah — Authorities identified a girl who died after being struck by a car in Bluffdale.

Saratoga Springs police say 7-year-old Tacie Sorenson was pronounced dead after she was hit by an SUV at 12:40 p.m. Saturday.

Sgt. Jeremy Wright says the incident happened near 14000 South 4000 West.

The 62-year-old man who was driving the SUV, which was pulling a trailer, told authorities the girl started out into the road and he could not stop.

Investigators do not suspect impairment or speed played a factor. It remains unclear how the child ended up in the street.

Glen Swallow, the child's uncle, said the family holds no ill will toward the driver. He says the whole thing is simply a tragic accident.

Carpools could ease skiing traffic

SALT LAKE CITY — A so-called "casual" or "slugging" carpool system — in which strangers ride together in personal cars — that's already popular in other major cities is being discussed as a way to alleviate traffic congestion up through Little Cottonwood Canyon during ski season.

Salt Lake County Council member Richard Snelgrove has proposed the people-driven ridesharing as a way to combat the hour-long delays skiers can face during the high season.

The practice of "slugging" is common in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco where commuters use it as a way to use carpool lanes.

Snelgrove says ski resort officials have expressed interest in the program and perhaps providing preferential parking as an incentive.

The county took no formal action, but Snelgrove says he will continue working to organize the effort.

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BLOTTER COMPILED BY SENTINEL STAFF

Motorcycle thief sought

Crime Stoppers of Mesa County is asking for help finding the people who stole a motorcycle from a Grand Junction business March 7.

Sometime between 11 a.m. March 6 and 2 a.m. March 7, unknown subjects cut through a chain-link fence surrounding Colorado Customs, 285 25 Road, and entered the business. Once inside, a subject stole a

blue 2003 Yamaha TTR90 four-stroke 125cc motorcycle. The total estimated loss and damage is more than \$1,100.

Anyone with information about this crime should call 241-7867. All information is anonymous and any leading to an arrest can earn up to \$1,000.

According to the Grand Junction Police Department:

- Items valued at more than \$2,000 were

stolen from a vehicle parked in the 2900 block of Lurvey Lane on Thursday evening.

- Items valued at more than \$2,000 were stolen from a residence in the 600 block of 29 1/4 Road on Friday afternoon.

According to the Mesa County Sheriff's Office:

- Deputies responded to a report of a sexual offense in the 400 block of Stepping Stone Court early Saturday morning.

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