

FRENCH PETE SITE

Affirmative Documentation

Big Horn City Historical Society

Mailing address: PO Box 566

Physical Museum address: 335 South Johnson St.

Big Horn WY 82833

blacksmithshop2019@gmail.com

www.bighorncity.org

By Judy Slack

Summer 2026

First - WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHY, WHERE

These are just the facts.

Who was French Pete?

What were they doing in the area?

When was the event?

Why is his death important?

Where did this happen?

WHO was **French Pete**?

He was a trader of goods who had a partner, **Henry Arrison**.

They employed four men to help take the goods to the gold fields in the Gallatin Valley near Bozeman, Montana.

There were **6 men** total. This can be found in several military reports.

The employees: **Joseph Donaldson, Wm. Dowaire, Thomas Moss, Thomas Burns.**

French Pete or Louis Pierre Cazeau

[There are many different spellings of his last name: Gasseau, Gassout, Cazeau, Gasson, Gassou, Gassoux, Gazzous, Gassaur, Gazeau, Gazzoux, Gassous]

He had an Ogalala Sioux wife and 4 children. Their oldest daughter was married. So there were 5 young people with them on the trip.

French Pete was born in France in 1805. He later immigrated to the United States and became a licensed trader with the Upper Platte Indian agency (on February 6, 1860 his license was approved.)

WHAT were they doing in the area?

They were headed to Montana to sell merchandise in the gold fields. And along the way they would trade with the Indians.

French Pete had just sold his ranch in Colorado and partnered with Henry Arrison in the Spring of 1866. If the Montana venture was not successful, they would go on to California.

The goods they were selling: Canned fruits, liquors, tobacco, beads, cutlery, crackers, cheese, buffalo robes, antelope & elk skins, sugar, coffee, calico, blue & scarlet Indian cloth.

WHEN was the event?

French Pete and his crew were in the wrong place at the wrong time. Much had happened between the Indian leaders and Col. Carrington. French Pete was warned by friendly Cheyenne Indians that they should go back to Fort Phil Kearny for protection because the Sioux were upset that the soldiers were building a fort. FPK was being surveyed on July 15, 1866. No buildings had been built at this time. Carrington had just arrived on July 13th.

The traders were attacked in the early morning of **July 17, 1866.**

WHY is his death and those in his group important to the Bozeman Trail History?

He was the first person killed in what later became known as Red Cloud's War. By sunup, all six men were killed. The Sioux were not only feared by the white soldiers but also other tribes in the region such as the Cheyenne. Col. Carrington was not to build forts in the Powder River Basin per the request of the Indians. It was an *'appeal to the white man to leave their country and spare their people.'*

WHERE did this happen?

Our research found it was a small area of **land, owned by Larry and Mary Durante.** T54 R83 Sec28 (W 1/2 SE ¼ & E1/2 SW ¼ of Sec 28) 73 Upper Prairie Dog Road – Sheridan WY 82801

The kill site is in the northwest corner.

The burial site is in the southwest corner of the property on a knoll.

The soldiers buried the dead on the flattest piece of ground in the vicinity. It was away from the wagon road.

NOTE: There is not one map or document that tells the whole story. No smoking gun. But a culmination of military reports, newspaper articles, book publications, maps, interviews and local common knowledge. We continue to find papers on this subject at the State Archives and the Wyoming Room. All papers are shared with the state.

This is like a murder mystery, and we will gather all the witness statements and clues.

I have two 3 ring binders filled with military reports, homestead records, interviews, maps, & documents.

AFFIRMATIVE DOCUMENTATION FOLLOWS ~ just the facts

LIST OF HISTORIANS PROVIDING AFFIRMATIVE DOCUMENTATION REGARDING THE LOCATION OF THE FRENCH PETE SITE:

Susan Badger Doyle

Robert Murray

Elsa Spear Byron

Jim Gatchell

Posey Ryan

Glenn Sweem

Mark Badgett

Sonny Reisch

Mary Ellen McWilliams

Helen Graham

Primary sources:

Posey Ryan

Frank Kirkpatrick

Scholars who are assisting
with more documentation:

Susan Badger Doyle

Donovan Sprague

**NOTE: none of these references
have ever been refuted !!**

There are 14 documents ~~ **The facts will accumulate**

#1 There are many military reports on the event.

[there are more than 25 pages in this section – I will share only a couple of reports.]

More paperwork will be provided on our website. Research papers can be ordered from the National Archives if the Wyoming Room does not have them in the collection.

Durante's have had this document in their files for over 20 years. Their files are EXTENSIVE!

Fort Reno Dakota Territory
July 18th 1866.

Captain A. S. G. 10th Ind Inf
Commanding Post

Sir

I have the honor to report that yesterday July 18th 1866. Accompanying Post Captain Adair and command in pursuit of some Indians I found in a small valley a small distance from the Post on the Big Horn Road under and near two almost obliterated logs the dead bodies of the following Persons

1st Pierre Cassin. Rifle shot about right nipple. 1 Revolver in hand below nipple. Rifle lower left dorsal. 1 arrow right groin.

2nd Young about 25 years of age name unknown. Rifle right temporal reg. 1 arrow right inf. lob lung. 2 arrows left lumbar reg.

3rd Mrs. Thomas throat cut. 1 Revolver. Rifle Right fore arm. 1 arrow left inf. lob lung. 1 Revolver in hand.

4th Henry Morrison. Rifle right side wrist. 1 do below large x. 1 arrow below last left false rib. 1 do left lower dorsal reg. 1 arrow left lower thigh.

5th Thomas Burns. attempt scalping from behind right ear. 1 arrow left thumb. 1 arrow right and right dorsal reg. 1 arrow left lower thigh.

6th Will Souwair. throat cut. arrow left groin. 1st post inf will reg. died whilst attended to.

The bodies of the above killed men were decently interred near the spot where

found except those of Thomas and Morrison taken to the Post for burial.

Respectfully,
Signed, Dr. Herman Baalon
M. M. Surgeon

A true copy
John J. Nelson
1st Lieut & Regt Adj't Gen. 10th Ind Inf
Post Captain U.S.A.

Dr. Baalon's autopsy report
July 18, 1866 - he examined 6 bodies

Letter from Dr. Baalon

Fort Reno Dacotah Territory
July 18th 1866.

Captain T.T. Eyck 18th US Infr
Commanding Post

Sir

I have the honor to report that yesterday July 17/66
Accompanying Brt (Brevet) Captain Adair and Command in pursuit of enemy Indians I
found in a small valley & some distance from the Post on the Big Horn Road under and
near two almost plundered wagons the dead bodies of the following persons
No 1 Pierre Gassoux – 1 Rifle shot above right nipple. 1 Revolver ibd. (*shot imbed-
ded?*) 1 arrow below nipple. 1 Rifle lower left dorsal. 1 arrow right groin.
No 2 Young about 25 years of age name unknown. 1 Rifle right temporal reg (*region*) 1
arrow right inf lobe lung. 2 arrows left lumbar reg. (*region*).
No 3 Inof (?) Teamster throat cut 1 Revolver 1 Rifle Right fore arm 1 arrow left inf
lobe lung – Revolver ibd (?).
No 4 Henry Arrison – 1 Rev (*revolver*) right exter maxil (*maxitrol? Eye?*) 1 do below
larynx. 1 arrow below last left false rib. 1 do left lower dorsal reg (*region*). 1 arrow left
lower thigh.
No 5 Thomas Burns. Attempt scalping from behind right ear. 1 arrow left thumb 8 ar-
row righ (*right?*) and right dorsal reg (*region*) 1 arrow left lower thigh.
No 6 Will Dowaire. throat cut. arrow left groin. 1st post inf axill reg. (*region*) died
whilest attended to.

The bodies of the above killed men were decently in-
terred near the spot where found except those of Burnes and Arrison taken to the post for
burial.

Respectfully,

Signed, Dr. Herman Baalon
H. Surgeon

A true copy
John J. Adair

Newspaper article written by Dr. Baalon.

New-York-Herald.-August-24th.-1866.-Page-2,-column-6¶

INDIAN-OUTRANGES-ON-THE-PLAINS.¶

Marauding-bands-on-the-emigrant-route.¶

Through-Dakota-Territories.¶

List-of-emigrants-killed.¶

TO-THE-EDITOR-OF-THE-HERALD.¶

Fort-Phillip-Kearny.-Dakota-Territory.-July-31,-1866.¶

Sir:-Within-the-last-fortnight-several-marauding-bands-of-Indians,-
supposed-to-belong-to-the-Sioux,have,on-the-route-between-Fort-Reno,-
Powder-River-and-Pinot-Creek-attacked-emigrant-trains-as-well-as-small-
detachments-of-Colonel-Carrington's-command,-18th-United-States-Infantry.-
Wherever-a-chance-offered-they-not-only-committed-murder-but-perpetrated-
the-most-barbarous-outrages.¶

→ Enclosed-is-a-list-of-casualties,-so-far-as-they-came-under-my-personal-
knowledge,-with-the-publication-of-which-you-would-greatly-oblige-your-
obedient-servant,¶

Dr.-Herman-Baalon,-Post-Surgeon.¶

Attacked-and-killed-near-Pino-Creek,-July-17th,-1866.-¶

Pierre-Gazzous,-from-Toulouse,-France.-Manager.¶

Young-man-about-20.-Five-years-of-age,-name-unknown,-supposed-to-be-from-
New-York-State.-Donaldson-or-Moss¶

-----From-Massachusetts,-a-Teamster,throat-cut.-Donaldson-or-Moss¶

Henry-Harrison-(Arrison),-from-Denver,-Col.¶

Thomas-Burns,-Teamster.¶

William-Dewaier,-France.¶

→ The-bodies-of-the-above-were-decently-interred-near-the-spot-where-
found,-with-the-exceptions-of-Burns-and-Harrison-(Arrison),-taken-to-the-post.-
For-burial.-George-Livensberger.-Ohio.-Comanv-F.-18th-United-States-Infantrv.¶

Head Quarters 2nd Batt., 18th U.S. Infantry
New Fort Reno D. T.
July 20th, 1866.

Bat. Captain F. Phisterer
18th U.S. Infantry
AAAG Mountain District
Dept. of the Platte

Captain:

I have the honor to report that about five o'clock on the morning of July 11th, 1866, learning that a party of Indians had dashed inside of the Picket line and were driving off the stock belonging to our supply trains, I, with my orderly, at once started in pursuit and ordered a number of mounted men to follow me as soon as possible. I followed the trail which led directly up and crossed the Piney Fork about four miles above Camp, and came in sight of the herd two miles beyond heading down Peno Creek, a branch of Tongue River.

Ret. Lieut. Col. Kinney, Acting Asst. Surgeon H. M. Matthews, a few men and citizen teamsters had by this time joined me and several with swift horses had gone beyond and were close up to the herd at a point about twelve miles from Camp the Indians turned from the herd upon these advanced men and a running fight ensued which resulted in fatally wounding of Private George Livensberger of Company F of this Battalion and the shooting of an Indian by Musician William H. Haney of Company "G". Owing to the numerous sloughs and the broken character of the country, further pursuit was deemed useless and I signaled the advanced pursuers to return.

Previous to coming to this conclusion, I had noticed a large party of Indians about three miles to the right who evidently intended to fall into our rear and cut us off from Camp. Collecting what men were near I moved towards them, they were observed to detach a large party to their rear, and the remainder formed upon a bluff across which ran the Virginia City road. I at once commenced the attack and drove them some distance down the road. Our party being small and being convinced of the presence of a large body of Indians, and fearful of running into an ambuscade, I withdrew the men and started on my return to Camp. The Indians at once commenced following, deployed along the hills and streams with the intention of surrounding us, and quite a brisk fire was kept up for some minutes. Arriving at a small clump of trees on a branch of Peno Creek, I halted, dismounted and opened a heavy fire upon them. They advanced so boldly that I ordered a charge which at once dispersed them and they did not again approach very close to us, although their Scouts followed us along the ridges.

Upon passing over a small elevation from the creek, two wagons and twenty-two head of cattle were discovered on the road. The wagons were broken into and large quantities of robes, canned fruit and trading goods were scattered around. Lying close to under the wagons were four dead men and one more mortally wounded. The outfit was recognized as belonging to Pierre Gassoux (they spelled it a couple different ways), an old Indian Trader commonly known as "French Pete". They had been killed since sunrise and the party we had been fighting had

1 grave
4 men

undoubtedly committed the deed. Upon reaching the rising ground between Peno Creek and Piney Fork we were overtaken by a small party of soldiers and one citizen teamster Benjamin Taylor, the latter and three of the soldiers being wounded with arrows. They reported that they had come up from Camp after my party had given up the pursuit, and in attempting to follow us had struck into the road beyond where the Trader and party were killed, were attacked by Indians and one of their party, Joseph Donaldson a citizen teamster killed. The family of Gassoux consisting of a Sioux Squaw and five children were discovered by the roadside in the bushes trying to find our Camp. I halted my party. Sent the wounded and the Trader's family into Camp, requested reinforcements, an ambulance and tools to bury the dead. Upon their arrival under Bat. Captain Bisbee and Adair, I returned to the wagons and found the wounded man - Moss still alive. He received proper medical treatment but died in a few minutes after the arrows were extracted. I buried in one grave the bodies of Pierre Gassoux, William Dowaire - Moss and one man unknown, and brought into Camp for burials the bodies of Henry Arrison the partner of Gassoux, and the citizen teamster Joseph Donaldson, who was found in the road about three hundred yards beyond the wagons. None of the dead were scalped, but they were horribly mutilated by arrows, balls and knives.

I brought into Camp twenty- two head of cattle and the two wagons heavily loaded with goods of various kinds and turned them over to 1st Lieut. Frederick W. Brown, 18th U.S. Inf. Regimental Quarter Master.

It being late in the day and the body of Soldier Livensberger (who had been reported to me as killed) being several miles off the road, I did not deem it safe to attempt to recover it. On the 19th inst met up with a party. went out to the spot and found him still breathing, although in a dying condition. He died in a few minutes after I reached him and his body was brought into Camp for burial.

The Indians got safely off with between seventy and eighty heads of mules and horses.

I have since learned from the Trader's wife and the Cheyennes that the Indians belonged to the Sioux tribe and numbered several hundreds.

I am much indebted to Bat. Lieut. Col. A. C. Kinney and Doctor H. M. Matthews for assistance during the fight. The men of my Command acted in a brave and soldierly manner. I enclose a list of casualties.

Seven Indians are reported killed.

I am Sir Very Respectfully Your __?
(Signed) Henry Haymond
Captain 18th U.S. Inf.
Comd'g Detcht.

A True Copy John J. Adair
1st Lieut and Regtd. Adj. (Adjutant?) 18th U.S. Inf.

Bat. Captain U.S.A. A. A. Genl. (?) Mt. Dist. (Mountain District)

Date of report: 1st March 1867

87	John Wassar	"	"	"	"	"	
88	Burns	Citizen	-	-	-	July	17
89	Harrison	"	-	-	-	"	"
90	Glover	S.M. Employe	-	-	-	Sept.	"
91	Jas. H. Walton	Citizen	-	-	-	"	27
92	Thomas Carnovans	"	-	-	-	Nov.	6
93	James Wheatly	"	-	-	-	Dec.	21
94	Risher	"	-	-	-	"	"
95	Thomas Moss	"	-	-	-	July	17
96	Pierre Gasson	"	-	-	-	"	"
97	Wm Downie	"	-	-	-	"	"
98	Unknown	"	-	-	-	"	"

A true copy.
Lsgt - James Collins,
Major and gmn.

Five miles north of Post.

Fort Phil. Kearney, D.T. 1st. March 1867.

6 men killed ~~ 2 taken back to the fort

Military Reports.

This is a work in progress.



FRENCH PETE RESEARCH

French Pete's name has been spelled many different ways: Louie Gasseau, Gassout, Cazeau, Gasson, Gassau, Gassoux, Gazzous, Gassaur

& name order

This list is in order of Col. Carrington's list. We determined his paperwork as the official list. #1 French Pete #2 Henry Arrison #3 Joseph Donaldson #4 Wm. Donnaire or Dowaire #5 Moss #6 unknown (or name determined by officer)
If the author states the location of a person's burial, it is noted by pink or blue. Otherwise, the author just lists the names of those killed. EX: Van Voast did not say where anyone was buried, hence, white.
The number of those killed varies. This listing is an attempt to track the names and number thought to have been killed in the skirmish. NOTE: many different spellings of names!
The killings occurred on July 17, 1866

buried at skirmish site
taken to fort - buried at fort

	M. Carrington <i>Ab-sa-ra-ka</i>	Haymond July 17, 1866	Baalon July 18, 1866	Col. Carrington July 30, 1866	Van Voast Aug 20, 1866	Dr. Baalon: NY HERALD 8/24/1866	Ten Eyck Diary	Death list from FPK found at Nat Archives - Mar 1867	Death listing from FPK	Combined list:		1890 news article	1892 news article on grain cultivation
NAMES OF THOSE KILLED:	1 Louis Gazzous	<i>Pierre Gasseau (Gassoux)</i>	Pierre Gassoux	French Pete Gasseau	Pierre Gassout: citizen	Pierre Gassaur:	French Pete	#36 Peirre Gassow	French Pete Pierre Gassoux: trader, civilian	Peter Cazeau: trader	1	4 bodies had been buried in the same grave	
	2 Henry Arrison - partner	Henry Arrison	Henry Arrison	Henry Arrison	Henry Arrison	Henry Harrison	Harrison	#89 Harrison-citizen	Henry Arrison: civilian	Henry Arrison: trader (H. Arrison or Harrison)	2	The two lower ones having been covered with barrel staves & the heads with a box.	
	3	Joseph Donaldson (with Ben Taylor party)	young man 25 - unknown	Joseph Donaldson: Gvt citizen teamster	Joseph Donaldson: teamster	Young man - 25 years old	no name	#38 Unknown	Joseph Donaldson: teamster - civilian with Ben Taylor	Joseph Donaldson: citizen teamster killed nearby	3	Frank Grouard was the man in charge of reburial to Ft. McKinney	
	4 "6 men lay dead & mutilated"	Wm Dowaire	Will Dowaire	Wm. Donnaire	Wm Donald: citizen	Wm. Danaire	no name	#37 Wm. Downnie	Wm Donaire: civilian	Wm. Dowaire: trader	4		
	5	-----Moss	teamster	-----Moss	-----Moss: citizen	unknown: citizen	no name	#35 Thomas Moss	-----Moss: civilian	Thomas Moss: trader	5		
	6	unknown	Thomas Burns	unknown	unknown: citizen	Thomas Burns: teamster	Barnes	#88 Burns - citizen	Thomas Burns: civilian	Thomas Burns: teamster	6		
							plus others (he says 8 men, women & children murdered. Incorrect-no women nor children killed. Only 6 men-traders.)						[side note: there was plowing on the ranch as early as 1891 per the homestead affidavit.
	6	6	6	6	6	6							J.W. Kirkpatrick Sr. & Son [John Frank] are located on the next ranch. Grain and cattle occupy their attention. Alfalfa hay is their favorite variety, of which they raise a considerable amount.
	Sioux wife & 5 children	Sioux wife & 5 children	Under & near two almost plundered wagons	Sioux wife & 5 children	2 wagons (soldier George Livelsberger killed in the livestock pursuit)		He also says 1 man of F.Co. was killed and 5 more died. He was not accurate on other facts in this diary.	5 miles north of post - written in margin of #35, 36, 37, 38				confirmed: 4 bodies had been buried in the same grave	
		4 bodies had been buried in the same grave											
	Carrington, Margaret. <i>Ab-sa-ra-ka: Home of the Crows</i> . Philadelphia: Lippincott Co. (1868) 120.	U.S. War Department. Records of the Adjutant General's Office. Department of the Platte, Post Returns, Fort Philip Kearny, 1866-67. RG 393, H-45, 1866.	U.S. War Department. Records of the Adjutant General's Office. Department of the Platte, Post Returns, Fort Philip Kearny, 1866-67. RG 393, H-45, 1866 need to verify.	Fort Phil Kearny/Bozeman Trail Association & Big Horn City Historical Society. <i>Henry B. Carrington Reflections of His Life and Times (1824-1912)</i> . Self published. (2023) 51-57.	U.S. War Department. Records of the Adjutant General's Office. Department of the Platte, Post Returns, Fort Philip Kearny, 1866-67. M619, R469, F482-499.	Baalon, Dr. Herman. "Indian Outrages on the Plains." <i>New York Herald</i> , August 24, 1866, pg 2 c 6.	Special Collections Dept., U of Arizona Library, Tucson, AZ. <i>Tenodor Ten Eyck Diaries, 1866-67</i> .	U.S. War Department. Records of the Adjutant General's Office. Department of the Platte, Post Returns, Fort Philip Kearny, 1866-67. Brig. Gen. G.B. Dandy, D.T. (Dakota Territory) List of Names of Officers, Enlisted Men & Citizens buried at or near Fort Phil Kearny, D.T. since the date of its establishment as a post. RG393	French Pete. Biography file, Wyoming Room, Sheridan County Library, Sheridan, WY.			<i>The Sheridan Post</i> , 1890. Vol 3, #51, May 1, page 1 col. 3.	<i>The Sheridan Post</i> , 1892. Vol. 6, #7, June 23, Page 1.
	She writes about meeting the family and traders June 24, 1866												

1 grave

4 men

buried at the site

#2

1890 – Kirkpatrick letter & newspaper article regarding the discovery of the bones. Then the reburial of the bodies by Frank Grouard to Ft. McKinney in Buffalo.

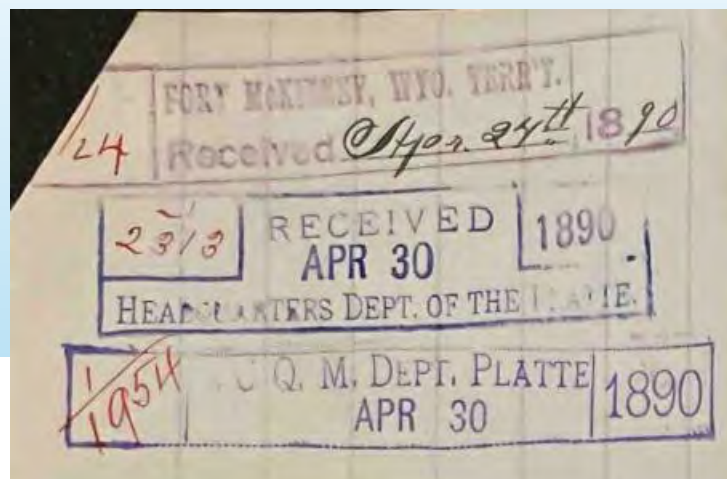
You will hear the name **Kirkpatrick** referenced several more times – books, articles, military records, interviews

Banner
 Sheridan Co Wyo Ter
 April 23rd 1890

To the commanding officer at Fort McKinny
 or Sir

There is a grave of dead soldiers (or I presume they are soldiers) in the field of Z. Burress (his ranch is joining mine) which I suppose is part of the men that was killed in the massacre of the soldiers of the Massacre Hill Slaughter. Burress found them while he was plowing. They are very shallow covered some of the bones out of the ground. He got a shovel and took enough dirt to see in what shape they are in. There appears to be four skeletons. 2 on top of 2 below. A ball hole in one of the skull of one and would indicate that he was killed by a gun shot. There is what appears to be government shoes, when the bodies of the soldiers was moved from Piney. Frank Grouard (the government skout) was looking over the battle ground for another grave and I suppose this is the one he was hunting for. Burress wants them removed. It is about 2 miles north of Banner. Chaplain Plummer knows where my place is.

Respectfully Yours James Kirkpatrick



Banner

Sheridan Co Wyo Ter

April 23 (25) 1890

To The Commanding Officer at Fort McKinny

Dear Sir,

There (*there*) is a grave of dead soldiers (or I presume they are soldiers) in the field of Z. Burress (*Burris*) (his ranch is joining mine) which I suppose is part of the men that was killed in the massacre of the soldiers of the Massacre Hill Slaughter. Burress found them while he was plowing. They are very shallow covered. Some of the bones out of the ground. He got a shovel and took enough dirt to see in what shape they are in. There (*there*) appears to be four skeletons. 2 on top of 2 below. A ball hole in one of the skull of one and would indicate that he was killed by a gun shot. There (*there*) is what appears to be government shoes, when the bodies of the soldiers was moved from Piney. Frank Grouard (the government skout (*scout*)) was looking over the Battle Ground for another grave and I suppose this is the one he was hunting for.

Burress (*Burris*) wants them removed. It is about 2 miles north of Banner. Chaplain Plummer knows where (*where*) my place is.

Respectfully yours,

James Kirkpatrick

Let us review the homestead records on this land.

The Kirkpatrick's: James, Sr. (1826-1914) - Also known as Jim (the dad died in 1914)

James, Jr. (1857-1940) - Also known as Jimmy (sold out & left ranch and Wyoming in 1910 - died in Long Beach, CA 1940)

John Frank (1867-1953) - Also known as Frank (homestead 1891 – inherited the family ranch in 1914 – sold ranch in 1941)



= James Kirkpatrick Sr. (1890)



= John Frank Kirkpatrick paid in April 1889 on a Declaratory Stmt.

Frank held this land until 1941 when he sold.



= Unpatented land in 1890

Elisha Terrill's grave



Kirkpatrick's house

THE SHERIDAN POST.

VOL. 3. NO. 51.

SHERIDAN, WYO., THURSDAY, MAY 1, 1890.

PRICE 10 CENTS.

erwhelmingly
And if Dele-
na on anticipa-
is the man

New Goods.

Neckwear, gent's summer underwear
and gent's furnishing goods of all kinds -
also a large line of cigars at
50 WIDGOTT'S.

Ever since the time of the famous In-
dian massacre of 1867, at what is still
known as Massacre Hill about 20 miles
south of Sheridan on the stage road, the
remains of four of the massacred soldiers
have been missing. On Wednesday of
last week, Z. Burris while plowing on
his ranch near the Banner school house,
but a mile or two from the battle ground,
discovered the remains of four human
bodies buried but about a foot beneath
the surface. His young son had found
some bones which were believed to be
human bones, and his father led by the
appearance of the ground directed his
son to dig at a certain place while he
continued plowing. A few minutes work
disclosed a skeleton and upon closer ex-

amination it was found that four bodies
had been buried in the same grave, the
two lower ones having been covered with
barrel staves and the heads with a box.
The graves were not further disturbed,
and Mr. Burris had the find reported to
the commanding officer at Fort McKin-
ney. The discovery has been reported to
headquarters and an order will likely
be issued to have the remains removed
to the Custer burying ground and buried
beside their comrades whose remains
were removed from the Piney to Custer
about a year ago.

I am now prepared to receive applica-
tions for loans on real estate security at
reduced rates of interest.

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First page - 3rd column

4 bodies had
been buried in
the same
grave.

The two lower
ones having
been covered
with barrel
staves and the
heads with a
box.

ORDERS FOR FRANK GROUARD AT FT. McKINNEY:

1 grave
4 men

One copy
forwarded to
the det. chgt.
Brig.
Dep't. Plate. Order
No. 89.

Fort McKinney, Wyo.
May 23rd 1890.

Order
No. 89.

A detail of two Privates of Co. K
21st Inf. will leave this Post, tomorrow the
26th inst. and proceed north to the Piney
and Goose creeks, and bury to this
Post, for interment, the remains of
Soldiers improperly buried. The detachment
will take with them, the box made for
this purpose, and will be rationed for
four (4) days. The Q. M. will furnish

one four mule wagon for transporta-
tion.

The Post guide Frank Grouard, will conduct
the detachment to the places referred to
and know to him.

By order of Major Henry
Charles Dwyer
2nd Lieut. 9th Cavalry
Post Adjutant.

#3

1929 – Jim Gatchell's interview with Posey Ryan. Posey is a **primary source**. He was a soldier the day the bodies were found and originally buried.



*Life and Early History of John "Posey" Ryan **

(Interesting Bits of History in the Career of Old Western
Character)

By

T. JAMES GATCHELL

Posey and Jim both knew the Kirkpatrick's and their ranch. At the time of the interview, Frank Kirkpatrick's ranch was the only one left in the county. His dad, Jim, had died in 1914 & his brother had moved to California in 1910.

Trouble with the Indians began almost as soon as work was started on building the fort, as on July 17 the stock belonging to Major Haymond's battalion was stampeded by the hostiles, and though troops were hurriedly sent in pursuit, the horses were not recovered, while the pursuing party suffered the loss of two men killed and three wounded. Ryan was with this contingent, and had his first experience in Indian warfare. While returning from this pursuit they found that the trading post of Louis Gazzous had been destroyed and Gazzous and the five men in his employ had been killed by the hostiles. Gazzous, a squaw man, known as "French Pete," had established his trading post on Peno (Prairie Dog) creek, a little above where the Bozeman trail crossed the stream, on land that is now part of what is known as the Jim Kirkpatrick ranch in Sheridan county. Gazzous had been advised of the danger of locating in this isolated place, but having every confidence that his Sioux wife would be his surety against molestation

HOMESTEAD PROOF—TESTIMONY OF WITNESS.

Robert B. Robinson, being called as witness in support of the Homestead entry of John F. Kirkpatrick for N² 8 1/2 E 1/2 NW 1/4 Sec. 28, T. 54 N. R. 83 W. 6th P.M. in Wyoming, testifies as follows:

Ques. 1.—What is your name, age, and post-office address?

Ans. Robert B. Robinson 49 or 39 years Postoffice Banner, Sheridan Co. Wyo.

HOMESTEAD PROOF—TESTIMONY OF WITNESS.

Emory E. Suprenant, being called as witness in support of the Homestead entry of John F. Kirkpatrick for N² 8 1/2 E 1/2 NW 1/4 Sec. 28, T. 54 N. R. 83 W. 6th P.M. in Wyoming, testifies as follows:

Ques. 1.—What is your name, age, and post-office address?

1891-James Kirkpatrick, Sr. & son Frank of Banner shipped 26,000 pounds of oats by wagon last Thursday

Circa 1894

one of the finest pieces of real estate that can be found in Wyoming. Uncle Sam bestowed a rich gift upon J. W. Kirkpatrick when he gave him his deed. The south part of the ranch is made into a large pasture while the northern is a vast field of grain, alfalfa and other varieties of hay. He threshes from three to six thousand bushels of grain each year, and puts up a vast amount of hay. His house is a large frame structure with ample grounds surrounding it, which are

HOMESTEAD PROOF—TESTIMONY OF CLAIMANT.

John F. Kirkpatrick, being called as a witness in his own behalf in support of homestead entry, No. 524, for N² 8 1/2 E 1/2 NW 1/4 Sec. 28, T. 54 N. R. 83 W. 6th P.M. in Wyoming, testifies as follows:

Ques. 1.—What is your name, age, and post-office address?

Ans. John F. Kirkpatrick 49 or 31 years Postoffice Banner, Sheridan County, Wyoming

Ques. 2.—Are you a native-born citizen of the United States, and if so, in what State or Territory were you born?

Ans. I am a native born citizen of the United States. Born in Illinois

Ques. 3.—Are you the identical person who made homestead entry, No. 524, at the Buffalo, Wyoming land office on the 12 day of April, 1892, and what is the true description of the land now claimed by you?

Ans. Yes I am the identical person. The true description of the land is N² 8 1/2 E 1/2 NW 1/4 Sec. 28, T. 54 N. R. 83 W. of the 6th P.M. in Wyoming

Ques. 4.—When was your house built on the land and when did you establish actual residence therein? (Describe said house and other improvements which you have placed on the land, giving total value thereof.)

Ans. September 1, 1891. 500 house weather boarded one story - five rooms. 2 Corral - 2 Cellars - all fenced - 25 acres broke - all under crop and hay. Total value \$2,400.00

Ques. 5.—Of whom does your family consist; and have you and your family resided continuously on the land since first establishing residence thereon? (If unmarried, state the fact.)

Ans. Family consists of wife and one child. Myself and family have resided continuously on said land since Sept. 1891

Ques. 6.—For what period or periods have you been absent from the homestead since making settlement, and for what purpose; and if temporarily absent, did your family reside upon and cultivate the land during such absence?

Ans. Never been absent

Ques. 7.—How much of the land have you cultivated each season, and for how many seasons have you raised crops thereon?

Ans. 25 acres each season from 1891 to present time

Ques. 8.—Is your present claim within the limits of an incorporated town or selected site of a city or town, or used in any way for trade and business?

Ans. No

Ques. 9.—What is the character of the land? Is it timber, mountainous, prairie, grazing, or ordinary agricultural land? State its kind and quality, and for what purpose it is most valuable.

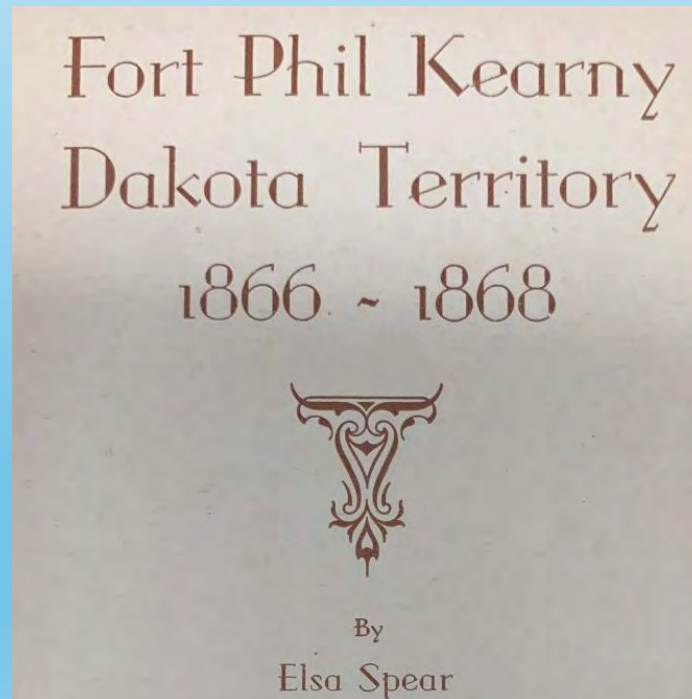
Ans. Rolling - Grazing and ordinary agricultural land - mostly valuable for grazing

Ques. 10.—Are there any indications of coal, salines, or minerals of any kind on the land? (If so, describe what they are, and state whether the land is more valuable for agricultural than for mineral purposes.)

Ans. None whatever that I have ever seen.

#4

1939 – Elsa Spear Byron's FORT PHIL KEARNY book



Copyright, 1939

by

Elsa Spear

1939:

All of Elsa's facts are accurate. They were returning to the camp. 6 men were killed. 4 men were buried on the little knoll near Peno Creek (present Prairie Dog Creek). His wife was Sioux and there were 5 children with them.

His name spelled Gasseau could be correct depending on the province in France where he was born. (We are still researching this.)

Four days after the troops reached Piney, the Indians started their depredations. They attacked the trains of Major Haymond, killing two and wounding three with arrows. When Major Haymond and his party, who pursued the Indians for a short distance, returned thru Peno (one fork of present Prairie Dog Creek) valley, they found the family of French Pete. His wife was a Sioux squaw, and she with five children were in the bushes trying to crawl toward camp. French Pete Gasseau, with a small outfit, had been moving in advance of Carrington's command, for the purpose of trading with the Indians. He was returning to the camp on Piney when the party was attacked, and the six men were all killed. Four of these men were buried on a little knoll near Peno Creek on what was later the Kirkpatrick ranch.



#5

1964 Elsa Spear Byron gives tour of French Pete site for the state meeting. It describes the location of the graves as being north of the Fetterman marker.

The image shows the front cover of the 'Annals of Wyoming' journal. The title is written in a large, elegant, black cursive script. Below the title, the volume, date, and issue number are printed in a smaller, black, serif font, spaced out horizontally.

Annals of Wyoming

Volume 36

April, 1964

Number 1

#6

1970 – Bob Murray's map





#7

Circa 1980 – tour & interview of Elsa Spear Byron with Sonny Reisch

After passing the Banner Community Hall we came to a sharp U in the road...

...buried inside the U in the road.

She remembered shallow depressions. This statement was **very significant** to the Assistant State Archeologist during our Sept 2025 testimony in Cheyenne.

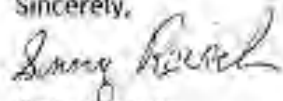
October 1, 2022

Larry Durante
P.O. Box 6126
Sheridan, WY 82801

Re: Elsa Spear Byron comments on "French Pete" burials

During the early 1980's I drove Elsa Spear Byron to visit several local historic sites. During one trip, we went east on Upper Prairie Dog Road near Banner, WY. After passing the Banner Community Hall we came to a sharp U in the road where it enters the Prairie Dog Valley. Elsa said that several of the bodies from the French Pete killings of July 17, 1866 were buried in shallow graves inside the U in the road. Although we did not explore the ground directly, she said that she remembered some shallow depressions she saw when first visited the site decades before. At the time of our visit, Elsa would have been in her mid-eighties.

This is all of the information I remember from our conversation.

Sincerely,

Sonny Reisch
1623 North Gould
Sheridan, WY 82801
307-683-7887

P.S. I am also enclosing a copy of a report from the Fort Phil Kearny records in the National Archives dated July 18th, 1866 describing the finding of the French Pete bodies on July 17, 1866. Hope you can decipher the penmanship.

#8

In 1984, Per Tad Bartimus an Associated Press Writer states that:
Mrs. Byron, 88, is descended from one of the first Wyoming pioneer families...Mrs. Byron has been photographing her heritage since 1908, and her recollections are accepted as gospel by the state historical society."

1988 – Elsa Spear Byron's interview with Mary Ellen McWilliams

ELSA SPEAR BYRON

Interviewed by Mary Ellen McWilliams

of the Ft. Phil Kearny-Bozeman Trail Association

September 3, 1988

May 2024 – Judy Slack listened to the interview to correct some spelling errors from the original transcription. Several areas noted by '_____' are still left blank since I too could not understand Elsa's words. JS

I am interviewing Elsa Spear Byron who is one of the pioneers who did research on the Fort. We'll be talking about the events and people she has known throughout her lifelong study of the site. Elsa was named Queen of the Bozeman Trail by National Geographic in its 1979 book Trails West. She received the Trustees Award of 1982 from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City for her work as a historian, photographer, and writer. An exhibit of her early day Indian photographs is in the permanent collection at the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman. In 1987 she was named Wyoming's Outstanding Citizen of the Year. These are only a few highlights of her achievements. Elsa also served as special advisor to the Ft. Phil Kearny-Bozeman Trail Association which recently reprinted her three small books, Ft. Phil Kearney-Dakota Territory, Bozeman Trail Scrapbook, and Trailing the Campfires.

SIDE B [on page 13 of transcript...]

Last night I played the tape that you loaned me that Mark Badgett made with you in 1979. That's a very interesting tape. You talked about some things on there that I want to ask you about. You were talking about Kirkpatrick and the French Pete bodies, and I believe you also talked about Kirkpatrick in relation to 1888 when they dug up the bodies there at the cemetery. Who was this Kirkpatrick? There were Frank and Jimmy Kirkpatrick and those were the sons of the early Kirkpatrick's who settled...well the old Kirkpatrick house was down, still stands there, over on Prairie Dog when you'd go over the crossroads there by Harry Williams', over to the other dry landing. You'd go right by there, the old Kirkpatrick place. They were sons of the Kirkpatrick's there in the '80s. I think it was '84 or '85 when they came there.

You told me something about, didn't they find the French Pete bodies or something? No, in 1890 I told you Frank Grouard came there to find the remains of those four bodies that were buried there that were in French Pete's group. There were 6 of the men that were killed there who were French Pete's. They put two of them, I suppose in the story you've heard of how terribly they were mutilated by the Indians, must have been the two who weren't so badly mutilated they took back to the fort to bury. They buried the other four on that knoll. You know where the beehives were for so many years? On that crossroads. Not too far from down there. That regular highway used to go by that place. From that corner where there was beehives, it ran straight up to the Banner store and on the east side of the pond that was called the Carroll (JS confirms it is Terrill) pond.

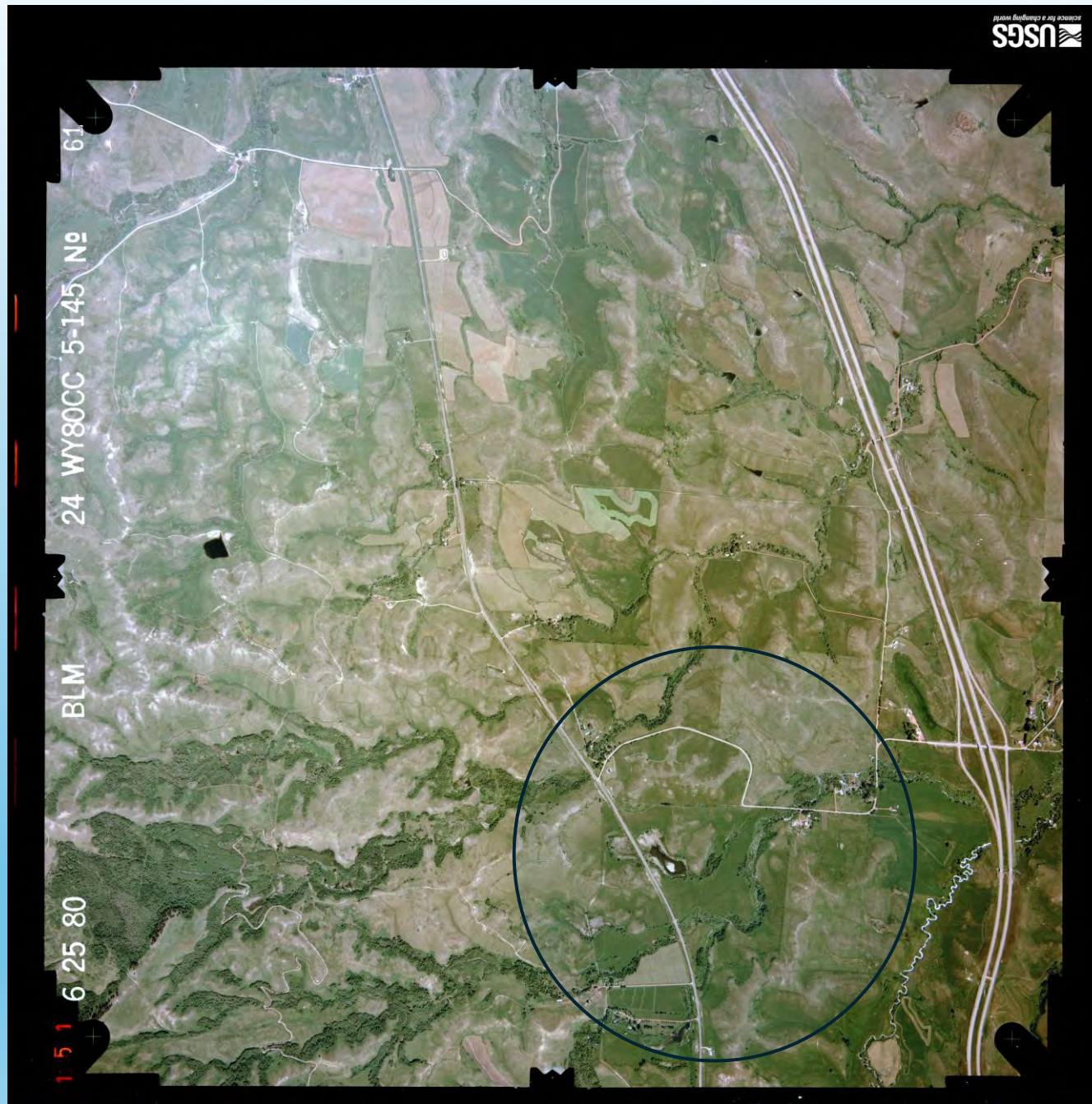
“They put two of them...they took back to the fort to bury. They buried the other four on that knoll. You know where the beehives were for so many years? On that crossroads.” Elsa

Beehives and crossroads were terms used to identify the location. Both existed only a short period during the 1900s.

Let's review -- THE CLUES:

THE FACTS

- Old **Kirkpatrick** house was down...over on *Prairie Dog*...
- Crossroads by **Harry Williams'**
- She tells about **Frank Grouard** finding the remains of the 4 bodies in French Pete's group.
- There were **6 of the men killed** there. They put 2 of them, (I suppose they weren't so badly mutilated they took back to the fort to bury.)
- They buried the other **4 on the knoll**. You know where the beehives were for so many years.
- On that **crossroads**.
- That **regular highway** used to go by that place.
- From that corner where there was **beehives**, it ran straight up to the Banner store and on the east side of the pond...that was called the "Terrill" pond.



June 25, 1980

The images are very clear.

The French Pete site is within the circle.

Old **Kirkpatrick** house was down...over on Prairie Dog...

Crossroads
by **Harry
Williams'**

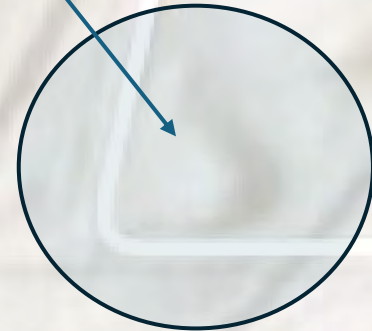
As told to
Sonny: After
passing the
**Banner
Community
Hall** we
came to a
sharp U in
the road...

...buried
inside the U
in the road.



“They put two of them...they took back to the fort to bury. They buried the other four on that knoll. You know where the beehives were for so many years? On that crossroads.” Elsa

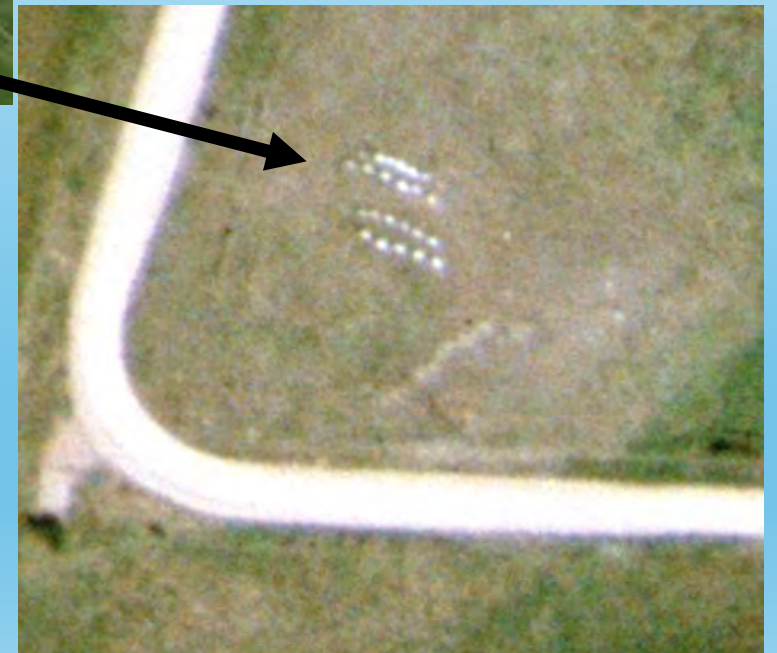
The knoll





[Below: enlarged image of the
beehives]

Location of the burial site per Elsa Spear Byron. On the
knoll where the beehives were.



Old Highway 87. There were two different roads that led north out of the Banner area. They both went by the Durante property.

They built the roads on level ground and away from the pond & creek bottoms. The hills were also a problem. This area has many steep and rocky bluffs.

REFERENCE TO CROSSROADS

Yellow circle: old stagecoach stop
Orange square: French Pete site.

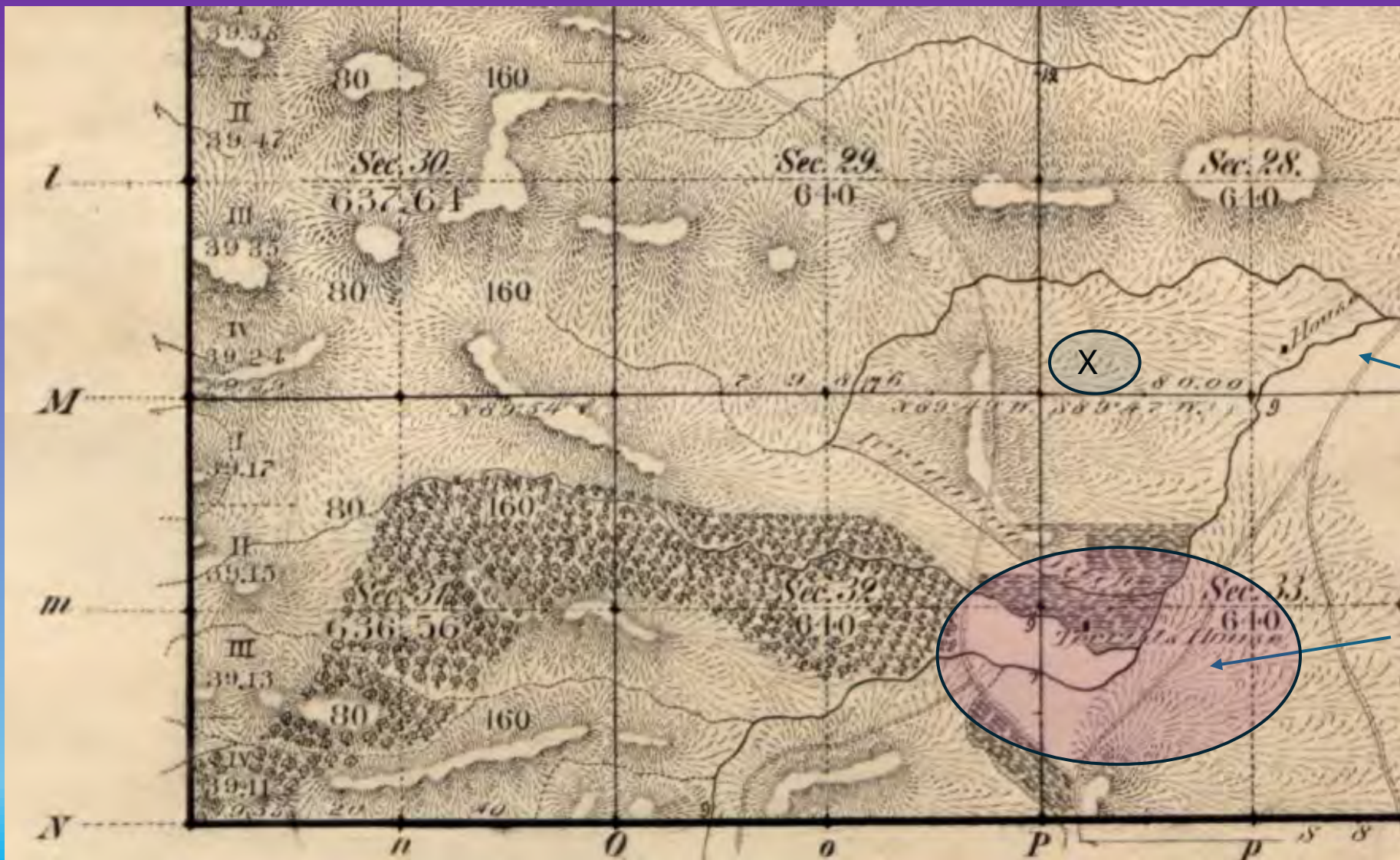
Aerial map – Sheridan County – 1954 WYRM



Early road maps are hard to find and hard to read.

Elisha Terrill's grave and homestead. Also the pond used to be known as Terrill's Pond.





HOUSE

X = French Pete site

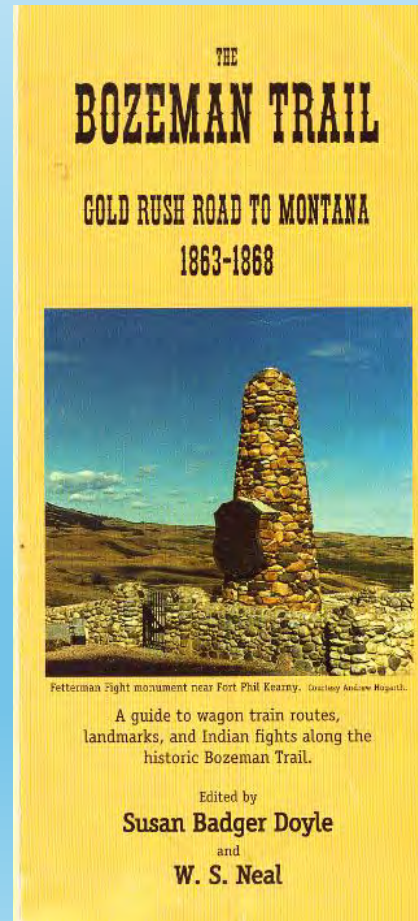
Elisha Terrill's house

GLO (Government Land Office) **1881 map** T54 R 83

#9

2024 – Susan Badger Doyle's notes and map.

She wrote *JOURNEY TO THE LAND OF GOLD*



[illegible]

She marks the fight site with a star. The burials were near to the south per a zoom meeting in May 2024. She agrees with Elsa Spear Byron's location of the burial site (see accompanying map.)



Location of the kill site. Just a few yards north of the burial site.

1866: *William K. Thomas, Aug 3.* . . . about a half a mile drive from camp this morning on the **hill side to the left** of the road is a grave.....

[Exactly where Elsa places the burial site.]

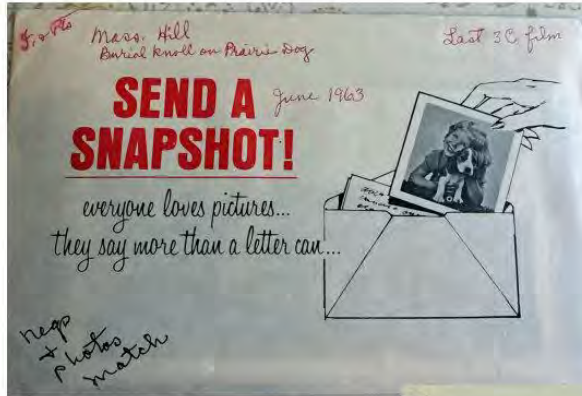
Note: The soldiers who buried the dead on July 17, 1866, only had rifle butts and were surrounded by angry Sioux Indians. The only easy digging, level ground, away from the wagon road was the small flat top of the knoll.

#10

1963 – Elsa Spear Byron's photograph of the knoll

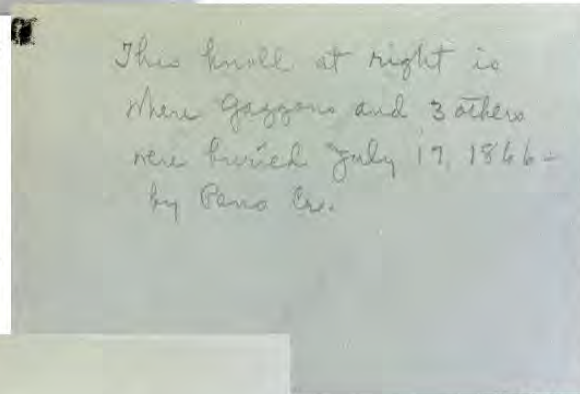
**JUNE 1963 PHOTO TAKEN BY ELSA SPEAR BYRON
OF THE FRENCH PETE BURIAL SITE.**

Envelope and photo found in the Big Horn City Historical Society collection during a scanning project in the summer of 2025.



AT left: Burial knoll on Prairie Dog
June 1963 (she also took photos that same day of Massacre Hill—just two miles south of the French Pete site—in upper corner it looks like she wrote “Fre Pts”

AT right: Elsa wrote: *This knoll at right is where Gazzous and 3 others were buried July 17, 1866—by Pena Cr.*



Today, September 5, 2025, (see next page) the rocks on the knoll at right are still in the same place. Trees have grown up along the road. We will take photos when the leaves are gone.



**JUNE
1963**

**TOP IMAGE: JUNE 1963 PHOTO TAKEN BY ELSA SPEAR BYRON
OF THE FRENCH PETE BURIAL SITE.**

Big Horn City Historical Society photo collection

(We will take images when the leaves are gone. There are too many trees along the roadside in August 2025.)



At right & below: August 2025 photographs taken by Larry Durante of the French Pete burial site knoll. Note the rocks on the hill & the hills in the background.



**AUG
2025**



DEPREDATION CLAIMS - 7 in total

Page 1

FRENCH PETE RESEARCH (killing took place July 17, 1866)
DEPREDATION CLAIMS

Mary (mother) -OgalalaSioux (4 children and 1 son-in-law) [Mary had become a wife of Chief Spotted Tail after French Pete died. The family went back to Nebraska then S Dakota. She had passed away by 1892]

AGE IN 1866 at time of father's death: Louisa (daughter - half sister to other 3 children - married to James Green) age 19 + Mary (daughter) age 12 + Millie (daughter) age unknown + Peter (son) age 2 [son-in-law James Green - age unknown]

	Date of document/claim	Items / Value of claim ETC	# of family members on claim	Name on claim	Name on claim	Name on claim	Name on claim	Name on claim	Name on claim	Other names - on depositions
1	1867 May 15		4	Mary Cazeau	Louisa Green	James Green	Mary Cazeau			
2	1873 Oct 20	* info		Mary Cazeau (White River Agency DT)	Louisa Bordeaux (White River Agency DT)					
3	1891 Dec **	\$13,680 **see below	4 + next of kin		Louisa Green (Rosebud SD)	James Green (Steinbach bei Haiger, Germany)	Mary L. (Pine Ridge SD)		Peter (Pine Ridge SD)	
4	1892 Sept-Oct Depositions **** (case 8265-4)	Sept 9, 1892	4+3 non family (only 5 were interviewed - bold)		Louisa Green (Rosebud SD) [Louisa Greenwood] 09/29/1892 (married 3 times Green, Bordeaux, Greenwood)	James Green (Steinbach bei Haiger, Germany)	Mary L. (Pine Ridge SD) [Mary Charging Bear] 10/10/1892		Peter (Pine Ridge SD)	Joseph Brown (Pine Ridge) 10/11/1892 & Todd Randall (Pine Ridge) 10/18/1892
5	1893 April 22	@ Spotted Tail Agency DT		family of Mary Cazeau						
6	1894 Feb 16									
7	1894 Dec term ***	*** \$13,680 **see below	4		Louisa Green (Rosebud SD)		Mary L. Cazeau (Pine Ridge SD)	Milly Cazeau (not married)	Peter Cazeau (Pine Ridge SD)	
	Final document - not dated	"...to wit, July 18, 1866, the claimant was not a citizen of the United States; and the court is therefore without jurisdiction to hear and determine this cause." '		Peter Cazeau et al VS The US & the Sioux Indians # 10107						
			*** next of kin of Peter Cazeau, deceased, survivor of							

\$13,680 value of goods, livestock and equipment

FRENCH PETE RESEARCH (killing took place July 17, 1866)
DEPREDAATION CLAIMS

Page 2

[FYI~ All spreadsheets are a work in progress.]

Donovan Sprague is assisting us with further research into the Indian oral histories.

He is related to French Pete's wife, Mary.

French Pete's wife, Mary, later married Chief Spotted Tail

		* traveling enroute from Ft Laramie WY Terr. to Gallatin Valley MT Terr. [4 wagons plus \$5,000 in satchel]		**** RG 123: US Court of Claims Cazeau 8265 (some of Louisa's info is different from the military reports)		1892 (green)			
			** 4 mules 5 horse						
			21 working oxen		" Bear in the Woods/Timber: 61 - he was there when Indians had taken the property and were distributing it but	"had been @ Ft. Laramie 8 years, before starting to Calif. = & had been in Colorado			
			2 wagons		" Louisa "I know some of the Indians now" who killed her father	"Mary: the & sister & brother & mother were hiding in the thick timber and when the soldiers came up they came out. The soldiers put them on horse behind them and took them to the fort. Before then had been living at fourteenth of Laramie 1.5 miles from fort. Didn't know what happened to cattle, wagon, etc.	" Todd Randall: 65 attack raider living on Bear Run. Through the Lodge Creek on Pine Ridge River. Knew Peter Cazeau 10 years before his death. Saw him a month before he died for last time on the Platte. 7 miles east of Ft. Laramie. Had just arrived from Colorado. 3 wagons. He saw that Pete had money, gold and silver in a purse attack.		
			5 sets of harness		" (ready made shirts)		"TH: he thought C was a naturalized citizen. Conversation in 1862 - C had taken out his papers. Claimed the right to trade because he was a citizen. Says C told him he came		
			401 buffalo robes		" Louisa knew # of cattle because she herded them				
			600 tanned buck antelope & elk skins \$3 each		" It was pretty hot.	" Mary: says Indians were Bad Faces and Wajaries (now living at Pine Ridge) Yellow Wolf, Crazy Bear, Iron Crow			
			\$1200 in lawful money of US		" The Indians came about 4pm July 16 & begun fighting her father, fought all night. Her father killed before sunrise & others killed at the same time.	" Joseph Brown: hired to go with Cazeau. Met him in 1863 on road, going north from Denver to trade with Cheyennes in July 1866. Hired by C & partner Henry Arrison as			
			canned fruits, sugar, coffee, calico, blue & scarlet Indian cloth the other Merchandise.		" When her father was shot and fell down, she went to him to pick him up and one of the Indians hit her on the head with a bow. The Indians tried to take her mother, herself, etc with them but her mother begged them to let them go.	" Buffalo Wallow about a day's drive north of Fetterman, the Indians are getting so bad it scared him. He quit and came back to Ft. Laramie. He was paid at Bridger's Ferry - says Arrison had \$5000 in money with him and put it with Pete's. Says they had 3 wagons: one big one, covered with iron axle, a smaller one, and a mess wagon. Cazeau had a ranch on Cache La Poudre. Joined			
			About 6 miles from Fort		" They rode on the back of the horses with the soldiers.	" JB: Arrison not married. Saw the big wagon at FPK after the event.			

French Pete's name has been spelled many different way: Louie Gasseau, Gassout, Cazeau, Gasson, Gassou, Gassout, Gazzous, Gassaur, **Gazeau**, Gazzouin, Gassous. The number of those killed varies. This listing is an attempt to track the names and number thought to have been killed in the skirmish.

The killings occurred on July 17, 1866

Barry Hagan, Eli Pickett, Robert Utley,

A few Books written on the subject. (so far I have over 30)

[illegible]

11 Sheridan County Historic Preservation Committee 2016 –

Map of the Bozeman Trail and other historic sites. It reveals the location of the trail as it crosses the Durante land.

Sheridan County Historic Preservation Commission

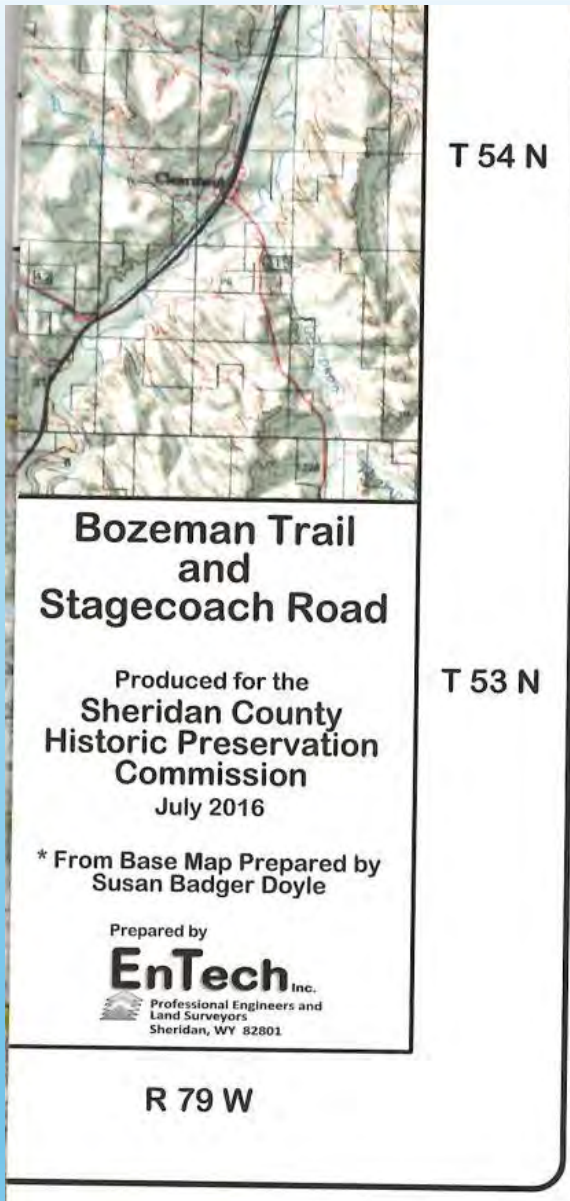
Map work done by:

Mick Kaizer

Billy Little

Jim Laughrey

Assisted by the Wyoming Room



#12 Historic Human Remains Detection teams - Map

The HHRD dogs were still able to detect the odor of human remains in the highlighted areas. General areas of dog alerts are shown in yellow, with areas of more concentrated alerts shown in red and then pink.

The dogs are trained to find the odor of human remains. The key word is Odor. They are trained to find odor, not things.

The odor of human remains doesn't always correlate to a buried body in that location. The odor of human remains can remain in the soil from blood, body fluids and other human decomposition, scattered skeletal remains, or transference of human remains to other items such as bullets. (CF)

Next is the gps map provided by Colette. We can layer two other maps over this one to reveal the activity at both the kill site and the grave.

Kill site noted by:
~ Susan Badger Doyle's map

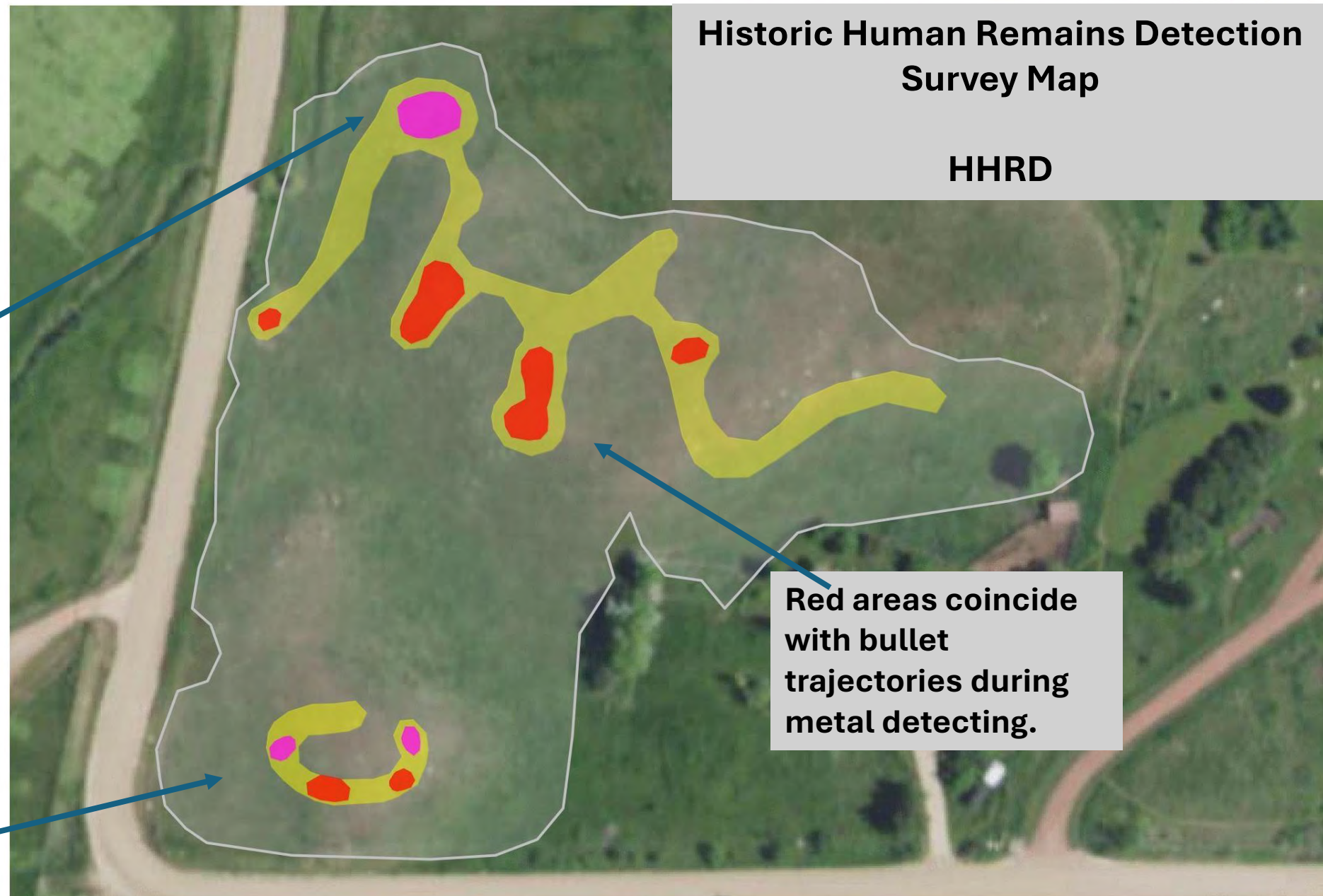
~ concentrated finds during metal detecting

~ numerous alerts by the Historic Human Remains Detection teams

Burial site noted by:
~ Diary entries in Susan Badger Doyle's *Journey to the Land of Gold*

~ Elsa Spear Byron regarding the beehives

~ many alerts by the Historic Human Remains Detection teams



Historic Human Remains Detection Survey Map

HHRD

Red areas coincide with bullet trajectories during metal detecting.

2026 HHRD Dog Survey

WGS84

UTM Zone 13T



mi

USDA Farm Service Agency. Scale **1:1061** 1 inch = 88 feet

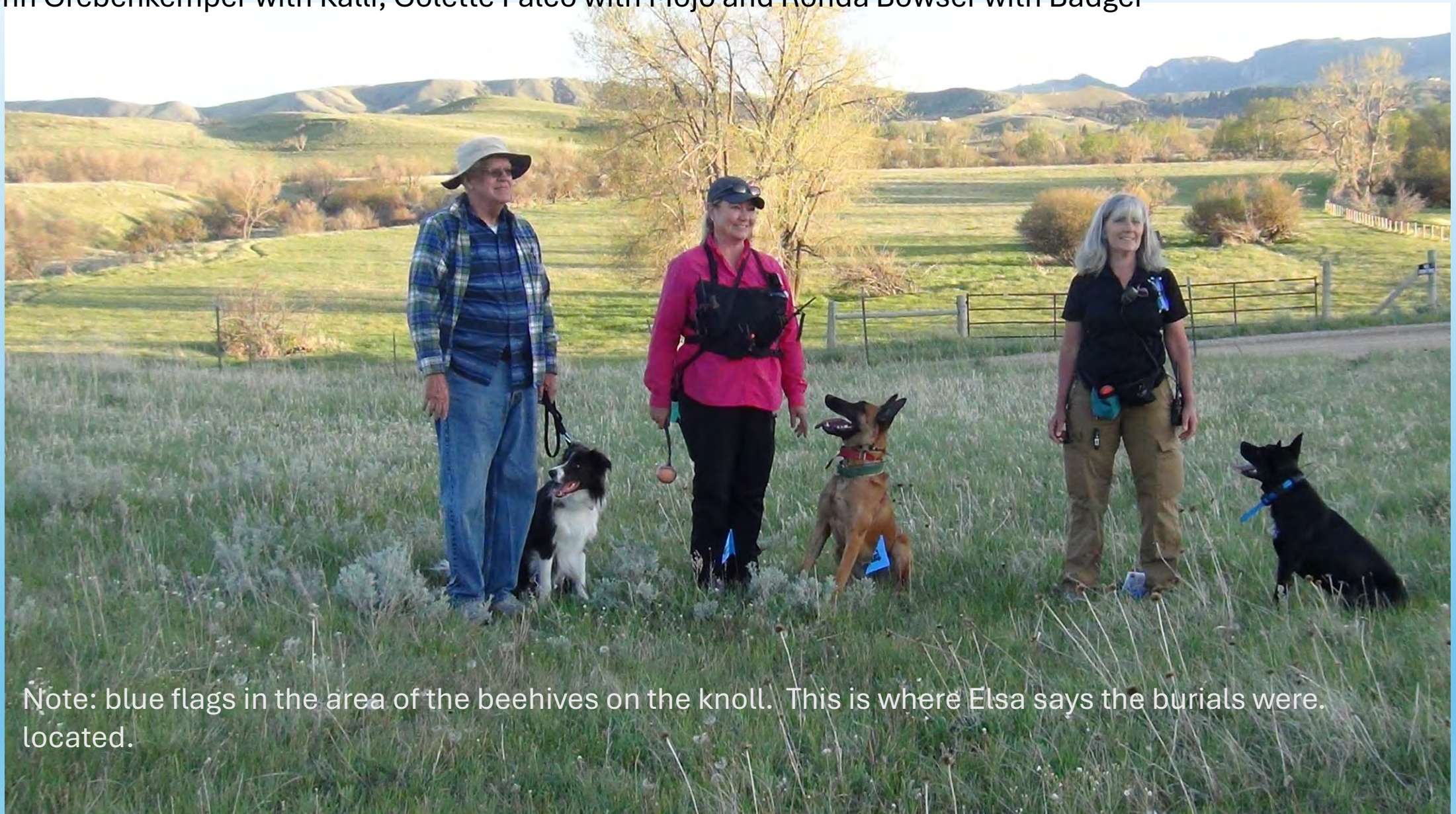
0.1 km



The visiting teams :

May 9-11, 2026

John Grebenkemper with Kalli, Colette Falco with Mojo and Ronda Bowser with Badger



Note: blue flags in the area of the beehives on the knoll. This is where Elsa says the burials were located.

For more information: Institute for Canine Forensics

#13 Frank Kirkpatrick was the homesteader and landowner until 1941. Frank is a **primary source** regarding the location of the grave. **He knew about the men murdered and the grave on his ranch. He showed Frank Grouard where the grave was in 1890.**

[recently found at the state archives in August 2026]

May 10, 1978

Mark Badgett interviewing Elsa Spear Byron

RE: the French Pete site

[This is found on side one of the cassette tape. At 17 minutes and again at 30 minutes.]

*... And then that one... where the one that's over on Prairie Dog where Pete Gazzous and the men that were with him that the Indians murdered. . And Mr. (Frank) Kirkpatrick told me about that in the 30s. Also, he didn't know who it was, who was murdered there.... They buried the four men there. And then took two of them back to the Fort. Isn't it curious that no one ever knew where they buried the civilians. They didn't bury them in the Fort cemetery.... . **Mr. Kirkpatrick told me: that in 1890 that Frank Grouard came there and wanted to know where the burials were.***

******Frank Kirkpatrick showed Frank Grouard where the bodies were IN 1890. ******

#14 Glenn Sweem gave a tour for the FPK/BTA tour.

Bozeman Trail Days 1995

Bus Tour Guide

The Bozeman Trail diverged into two routes at the base of Fetterman Ridge. The emigrant route continued north to Prairie Dog Creek, staying east of highway. The second route was the military road which went northwest across the hills to Little Goose Creek at Big Horn.

Turn right (east) onto Sheridan County 127 (Upper Prairie Dog Road). After the road bends to the south and heads toward a sharp turn to the east, the site of the attack on French Pete's camp on July 17, 1866 is on the hillside on the east (left) side of the road.

Stop along the road (Sheridan County 127) before it turns, to view Prairie Dog Creek (ahead) and the grave site (east of the road).

Early in the morning on July 17, 1866, about three hundred Sioux warriors attacked the trading camp of Peter "French Pete" Cazeau and Henry Arrison on Prairie Dog Creek. Peter, Henry, and three other men employed by them were killed in the attack. Peter's wife Mary, an Oglala Sioux, and their five children escaped and were taken to Fort Phil Kearny by soldiers.

Soldiers from the fort buried Peter Cazeau and his three employees on the hillside by the camp. They took the bodies of Henry Arrison and a civilian teamster, who was killed nearby in a separate incident, to the fort and buried them in the cemetery.



December 23, 2025

Larry Durante
Big Horn City Historical Society
335 South Johnson Street
PO Box 566
Big Horn WY 82833

re: French Pete Site Investigations

Dear Mr. Durante:

Thank you for consulting with the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding the above referenced project. We have reviewed the associated information and documents. The information appears to be complete and makes a compelling argument about the historical significance of the site. We agree with your conclusion that the site represented in the materials is the location where French Pete was killed. The Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office fully supports the ongoing preservation of this site.

This letter should be retained in your files as documentation of a SHPO concurrence with your finding of the property's significance. We look forward to continuing to work with your office on this project. If you have any questions, please contact me at 307-777-8594.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. Beadles".

Brian Beadles
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

'We agree with your conclusion that the site represented in the materials is the location where French Pete was killed.'

'The Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office fully supports the ongoing preservation of this site.'

Alfred Bunker - Chairman
Dana Dicks - Treasurer
Laurie Thomas - Secretary



ARTS, PARKS,
HISTORY



FRENCH PETE

One of the routes of the Bozeman Trail passed through the small valley before you. The old wagon ruts can still be seen in the spring of the year from the county road and are enclosed by a rail fence 100 yards to the north.

On July 17, 1866, the trader French Pete (Pierre Cazeau or Gassoux) and the five men with him were slain by Sioux warriors on this site. These six men were the first casualties after Chief Red Cloud declared war with the whites.

Soldiers found the two freight wagons and men later that morning and buried four of the men on the small knoll 50 yards to the east. The men's gravesite was not rediscovered until 1890. All six men are now interred at the Little Bighorn Battlefield Cemetery.

"The Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office fully supports the ongoing preservation of this site." December 23, 2025

*scan the QR code to learn more.

BIG HORN CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

www.bighorncity.org



The installation will be sometime this fall.



FUTURE TESTS & OTHER TASKS:

[when funds are available]

- ~ Ground Penetrating Radar**
- ~ DNA testing of the dirt with the aid of the Forensic Cadaver Dogs**
- ~ SH515 – find this survey to determine who filed it with the state**

THANK YOU.....

BIG HORN CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

bighorncity.org

~~~More to be posted on the website.

Big Horn City Historical Society

Mailing address: PO Box 566

Physical Museum address: 335 South Johnson St.

Big Horn WY 82833

[blacksmithshop2019@gmail.com](mailto:blacksmithshop2019@gmail.com)

[www.bighorncity.org](http://www.bighorncity.org)

**If anyone wants to learn more, call me and we can educate you on our research and all the documents.**

## SIDE NOTE:

Larry disclosed that the HHRD dogs surveyed the area where he had dressed a deer with no interest shown, changes of behavior, or alerts given by the dogs in that area. (per Colette)