



*The Historic Display – Ya Ha Tinda Ranch (est. 1999)*

At the time Johnny became Manager at the Ya Ha Tinda in 1996, tours of the ranch buildings had been in place to provide the public an opportunity to see the Ya Ha Tinda Ranch horse breeding and training operation. By 1999 I was becoming more and more interested in the rich history of the ranch from the prehistoric era to the time of the Brewsters' operations, on through the years when the Ya Ha Tinda was a Warden Station, and later as the headquarters for the raising, training and wintering of patrol horses for the Mountain National Parks.

The tours were very basic in nature with a simple walk through of the historic buildings – i.e. dates of construction of the log barn, blacksmith shop, and bunkhouse; the function of each building at present and current operation of the ranch at that time.

At that time the small log building that the Historic Display now occupies was a granary. However, the ranch purchased the large metal grain silo and thus the little log building was emptied of grain. Chief Wardens Bob Haney and Perry Jacobson and Johnny all agreed to grant my request to convert the old granary into an interpretive display. I felt that this would enhance the visitor experience for the visitors to the ranch and provide an opportunity to display artifacts, objects of interest and photos of past and present life at the Ya Ha Tinda. I was thrilled to have been granted this opportunity and so began several years of collecting items.

Other Parks Canada staff caught the spirit and assisted by locating items such as the old wood stove, the old telephone, chainsaw, etc. I found the telephone line repair equipment in the Blacksmith Shop and packed a well-preserved original telephone pole from West Lakes to include in the display.



*"Packy" built by Mike Schintz for the Ya Ha Tinda Historic Display*

"Packy" the little wooden packhorse was made by a Mike Schintz, a retired Park Warden. He has included supply items in the pack boxes and it adds flavour to the tour to unpack the little pack horse and show folks the contents. Re-packing "Packy" is fun as both the kids and adults can get involved in that and help tie the diamond hitch. In addition to the donated items, I have included several historic photos of interest to folks who take part in the tours. There is an interesting story included in the display about the original and much larger "Packy" built by Andy Anderson for packing training at Warden Schools. Over the years the little demo horse would disappear only to emerge again a year later at the next horse packing school. The name of the National Park where he had wintered was painted on him. Over the years he accumulated the names of several national parks and it also became apparent that he had spent a winter with the RCMP as he returned with their brand added to the collection!

The buffalo skulls were found locally by ranch staff, as were the fossils and cougar skull. Fossils can be found in both Scalp Creek and Bighorn Creek and over the years the accumulation of fossils has increased.

The building itself was built in 1937 and was originally used as a Warehouse. Over the years it was converted to a bunkhouse and finally a granary. The logs are in excellent shape to this day. Note the dove-tailed corners.

Tours of the ranch buildings can be arranged by contacting ranch staff who will schedule a tour.