



"Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" filmed in Grafton

## Interpretive Signs

How to capture what was and is in interpretive exhibits for Grafton is a challenge. How to do justice to all the lives that weave its history. How to evoke the unknown and unknowable joys, tragedies, hopes, and fears that seem to linger in the very air of a historic site. Grafton Designer Sandy Bell of Springdale and myself Greer Chesher, the writer, from Rockville were hired to complete the task of bringing to life, for Grafton descendents and first time visitors alike, the soul of the place. It's a complicated journey, a task of combining Grafton's multicultural past and ongoing history with a careful reading of the *Dictionary of Place* to tweeze from the tangled web a coherent and compelling set

of focusing ideas. We could easily list dates, and places, and names, but information is not interpretation. Why did people come to this seemingly forbidding landscape?

How did they survive? Who else was here? And what happened to them?

The process of interpretation is a process of reading Grafton's vast and specialized *Dictionary*, allowing it to distill in one's mind, and then choosing relevant stories to elaborate on chosen themes. The next step is often to determine what the appropriate media will be. Are signs the best way to go? Brochures? Websites? Audio tours? The Grafton Heritage Partnership (Partnership) has chosen a combination of carefully placed exhibits and an expanded

brochure for the town site and cemetery.

In the near future, visitors will be able to participate in the life of Grafton through appropriate exhibits, Grafton's own *Dictionary of Place*. --Greer Chesher--

The Partnership, on behalf of the Town of Rockville, received a Certified Local Government (CLG) matching grant from the Utah Division of State History to hire two local consultants to work with the Partnership on interpretive planning. After funds are raised for the fabrication of the signs we look forward to installation. Hopefully with the added interpretation, visitors will have a better understanding of Grafton's cultural history and the need to protect this special place.

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## Agriculture

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There was severe flooding along the Virgin River in January 2005. The river deposited a great deal of sand on our agricultural field along the highway. The Partnership felt we should try to restore the field to a pasture as part of our ongoing effort to preserve the agricultural fields and pastures that remain in

Grafton today. The Partnership owns 150 acres in Grafton, and applied for and received a grant of \$13,000 from the Natural Resources Federal Conservation Service to help restore the damaged pasture. The Partnership spent \$4000 to match the grant funds and felt it was important to restore this field because

agriculture is critical to Grafton's history. George Washington talked about the importance of agriculture in 1790.

*"Agriculture-the most useful, the most healthful, the most noble employment of man. I know of no pursuit in which more important service can be rendered to any country than by improving its agriculture."*

We are accepting donations to help with this cost.

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## Cemetery Headstones

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As many of you know we are losing information on the headstones in the cemetery due to weathering. A group of photography students from the Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York photographed each

headstone while they were here for a two week stay working in Zion National Park. This is valuable information that will serve as reference material as information on the headstones continues to erode. Ron Morris, a Partnership Board member is

researching who is buried in the cemetery and we hope to have a list in a notebook for visitors to read at the cemetery. If you have information on a person buried in an unmarked grave please send it to us.

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## Grafton Reunion

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Descendants of Grafton will hold their annual Grafton Reunion, September 30th, 2006 at the Grafton town site from 12-2:00 PM. Everyone is welcome. Bring your lunch, hat and chair and memories to share.

The Partnership will have items to sell to raise funds for the Grafton Project such as used books, pictures of Grafton and t-shirts among other things. We are also selling genealogy charts of the Russell, Wood and

Morris Families. If you want to donate an item bring it with you. We will also have a display of historical Grafton photos including photos from the Lynn Clark collection.

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## Other Activities

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During this past year we installed road signs on Highway 9 and elsewhere to provide better directions to first time visitors to Grafton.

A big thank you is in order to Washington County Commissioners and John Willie partners in the Grafton project, for having the exterior wood of the school house painted.

Russell Bezette did some needed adobe maintenance by filling in cosmetic cracks with mud on the schoolhouse and Russell home. The next step on the Russell Home is to repair and/or replace the exterior fascia as well as raising funds to finish the interior.

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We invite you to donate to the Grafton Heritage Partnership Project. Your support is vitally important to sustaining the Grafton Project. Together we are making a difference. Thank You.

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