

Twin Falls County Historical Society Museum

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The Official Newsletter of the Twin Falls County Historical Society Museum



April 2025

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April Fish

If you ever find yourself in France on April first, make sure you watch your back! You may find yourself the victim of le Poisson d’Avril, the April Fish.

Sticking a paper fish on the backs of unsuspecting folk is a common April Fools' joke in France.

The first day of April and its traditions of foolishness date back centuries. As with most old traditions, the origin of the holiday’s association with fish in France is murky.

One common story told online credits King Charles IX’s 1564 Edict of Roussillon. While traveling his kingdom, Charles had noticed areas celebrating the beginning of the new year at different times. Thus, the edict announced that the first of the year would now be celebrated on the first day of January.

Prior to this, New Year's was celebrated at the beginning of spring, usually in late March or the first of April.

The theory goes that some were slow to conform to this change and continued their traditional spring New Year’s celebrations.

These “fools” would be ridiculed and pranked with mock gifts, including fish or fish cakes.

This theory is said to have been disproven, however, as mentions of the April Fish predate the edict.

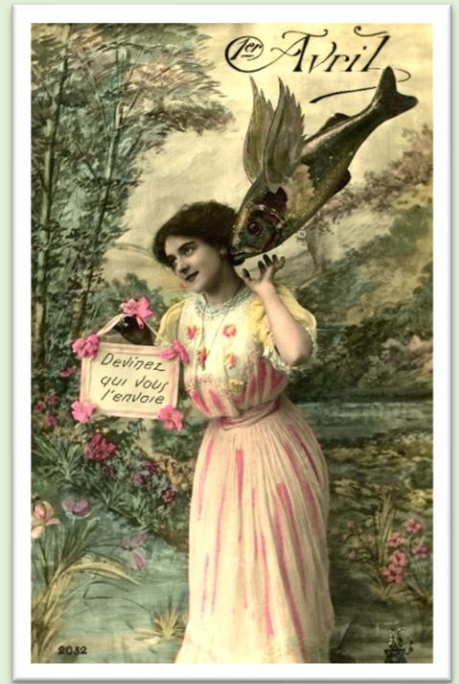
A poem written by Eloy D'Amerval in 1508 contains a line that translates to “infamous mackerel of many a man and woman, the April Fish”.

Another popular theory connects the April fish with the Christian practice of Lent, which forbade the eating of meat, excluding fish, making it a popular choice during that time of year.

The start of spring also signifies the beginning of the fishing season in France. Connections could be made between April fish being young and easily caught and the gullibility of “fools.”

The pinning of a dead fish onto a victim may have started as a jest to tease fishermen. Either because it was too early for good fishing or because there was an overwhelming amount to catch.

The Poisson d'Avril tradition has lasted thousands of years in France and is the theme of many springtime events and celebrations.



Exchanging Poisson d'Avril postcards was popular in the 1920s and 30s. This one translates to “April 1st. Guess who sent it to you”.

Item Highlight

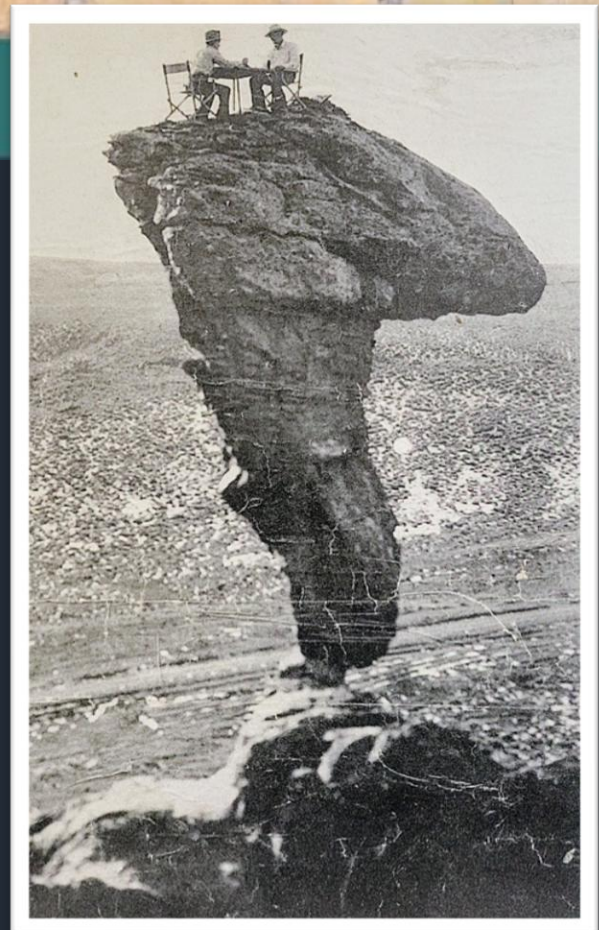
A Balanced Meal

Although the view would undoubtedly be fantastic, this is one picnic spot we would not recommend.

Idaho's Balanced Rock is located south of Castleford in the Salmon Falls Creek Canyon. The odd formation is a rhyolite lava rock standing forty-eight feet tall and weighing approximately forty tons. Shaped by wind and erosion, it “balances” on a 3-foot by 17-inch base.

The rock is a bit farther out than most tourists venture, but the site and its park are well known by locals.

Many are also familiar with the photo of two men seated at a table on top of Balanced Rock.



But who were these brave men, what are they doing, and how did they get up there?

Well, like any good tale from the “olden days,” opinions are mixed, and stories vary depending on who you ask.

According to a Life magazine article, the photo was taken by John Cowles in January 1937.

Cowles had persuaded his brother, George, and friend, Rolland Senften, to pose for a photo on top of Balanced Rock.

The idea was to create a unique image to sell to a soft drink company for advertising use.

The article describes the process of climbing the rock as: “Gaining a hold with a weighted rope they tossed up, they scaled the rock, pulled up their gear.”

Other versions of the story suggest a ladder was used to connect a nearby ledge to Balanced Rock.

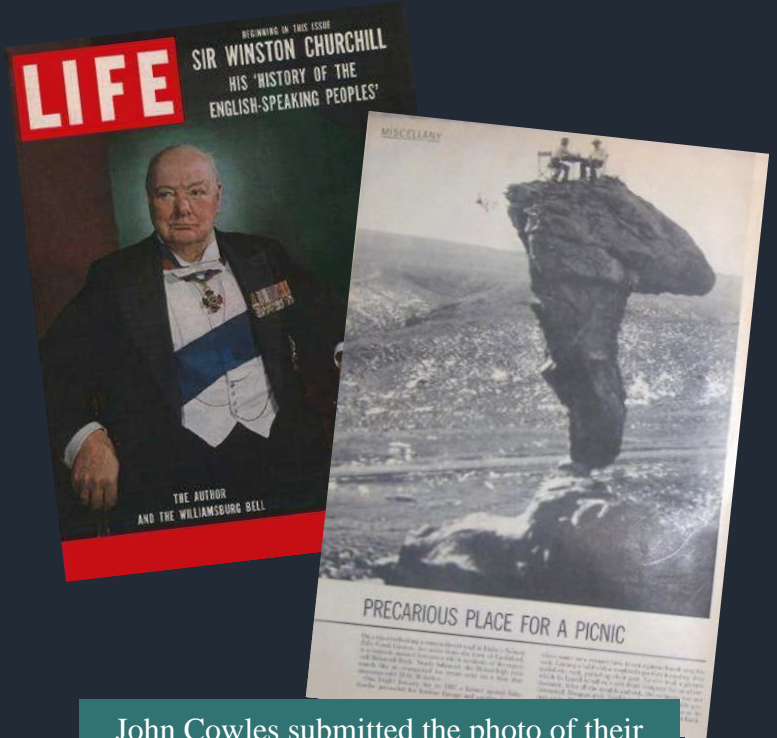
What exactly the men are doing at the table is also debated. Many people believe that the duo is playing cards, while the Life article describes it as a picnic lunch.

Despite their efforts, the drink company showed no interest in the photo.

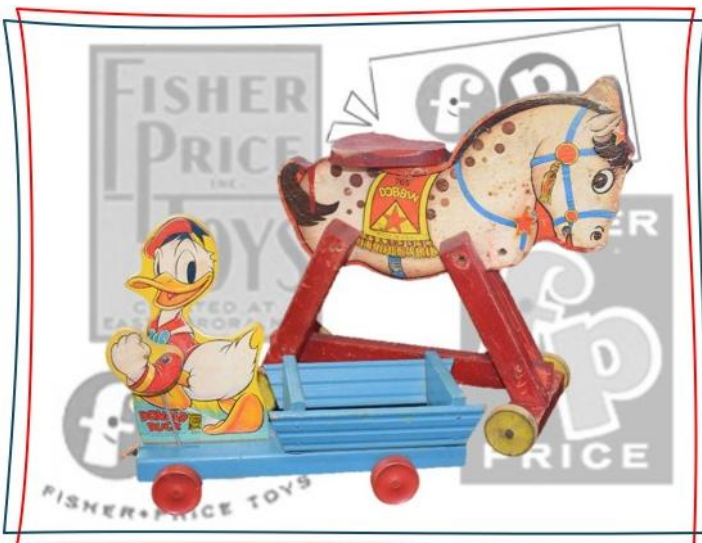
Nineteen years after the men’s risky stunt, John submitted the picture to Life magazine. It was published in the March 19, 1956, issue with the title “Precarious Place for a Picnic”.



It is debated whether Cowles and Senften are playing a game of cards or enjoying a picnic atop the Balanced Rock.



John Cowles submitted the photo of their daring stunt to Life magazine. It was featured in a March 1956 issue.



All museum lectures are free and open to the public!

April Lecture!

-Toys from the Past-

Sat. April 26th at 1:00

Explore the history behind your favorite childhood toys!

Gary Sipe, an avid toy collector for over 30 years, will present the early history of the Fisher Price Toy Company and share some favorite pieces from his collection.

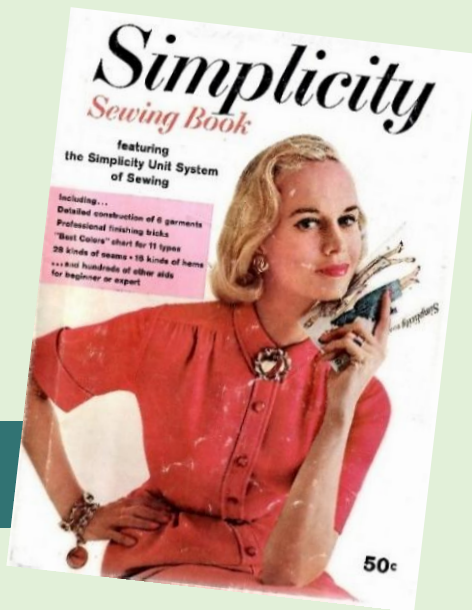
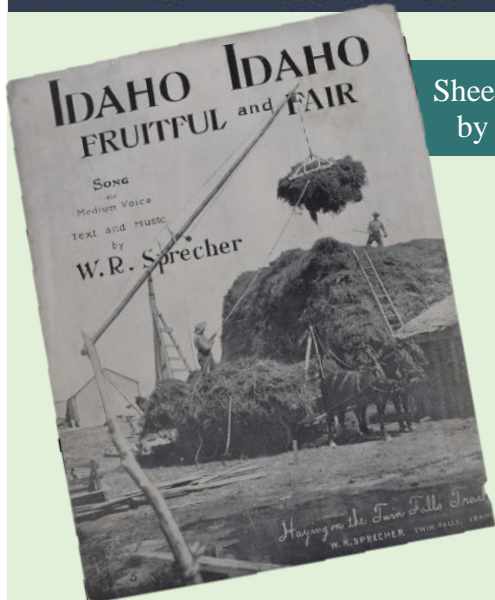
C. E. B. at "Camp Drinking Place" in lovely Hagerman Place in lovely Hagerman Valley where thousands of...

Donations

Hand-crank fanning mill donated by Mark Cofer



Sheet Music donated by Kim Stephens



Sewing items donated by Teresa Sept



Crocheted hangers donated by Kathy Groves



Postcards donated by Libby Walgamott



Newspapers donated in memory of Everett Hull

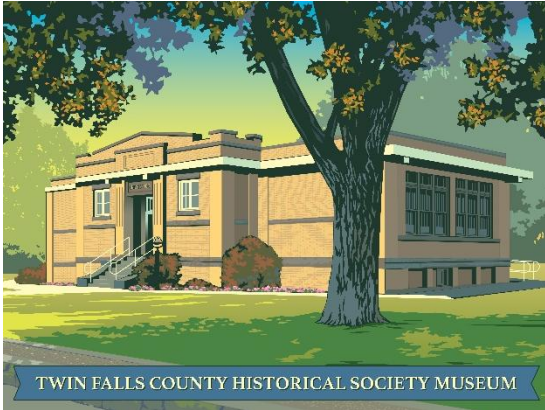


Want to Donate?

Give us a call or stop by the museum if you are interested in donating an item with county history. Keep in mind we only accept permanent donations.

from the cliffs for
25"-1923 Sunday - March 25"-1923

We need volunteers!



Do you love sharing history with the younger generation?

We are looking for volunteers to help guide school groups at the museum. Most groups schedule for mornings to mid-afternoon, depending on the group. We will provide the information and help you create a script that works for you!

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, email the museum at info@twinfallsmuseum.org or stop by the museum for more information.

FARMHOUSE UPDATES!

Painting in the bedroom has been completed, and the farmhouse is open to visitors again! A big thank you to Teresa Sept and Holly Grimm for painting!



AFTER 2025



BEFORE 2022

