

Phillip H. Vetter

Phillip Vetter's remains were reburied in the Old Trail Town Cemetery in Cody, Wyoming, on June 10, 1978. The following is a reproduction of the memorial plaque on his grave site:

Phillip Henry Vetter was born February 7, 1855, near Woodstock, Shenandoah County, Virginia. He was killed by a grizzly bear on the Greybull River in Wyoming in 1892.

A few years after the Civil War, Phillip's family came West by wagon train and settled in the Wind River Country near Lander, Wyoming Territory.

Through the 1880s, Phillip Vetter pursued the occupation of market hunter and trapper. About 1890, he moved over to the Greybull River above Meeteetse, Wyoming. Here he built a log cabin and continued his hunting and trapping.



On September 1, 1892, Vetter left a note at his cabin which said, "Jake, if you come to get your horses, I'm going down to the river after some bear."

A week or so later John Corbett, an old buffalo hunter, was riding over to John Gleavers on Wood River. When he was near Vetter's cabin, black clouds threatened a heavy rain. Corbett decided to wait out the storm in shelter with Vetter.

He rode up to the cabin. The door stood open. Inside, Corbett found Vetter's body on the floor. Dishes from Vetter's last meal stood unwashed on the dusty table. The storm was forgotten. Corbett jumped on his horse and raced to the Gleaver ranch.

The two men returned and sought to piece the story together. They found Vetter's neatly written note to Jake. In contrast, scribbled on the edge of a newspaper in Vetter's handwriting, in what they believed was his own blood, were several terse messages. The first said something about a battle with a

grizzly bear. A later notation said, "Should go to Franc's but too weak." Vetter's handwriting grew shakier. "It's getting dark. I'm smothering." The final message read, "I'm dying."

One of Vetter's arms had been badly mangled and his chest was crushed. He had tried unsuccessfully to stop the flow of blood.

The men walked down to the river to look for more clues. Near the stream the men found a water bucket and Vetter's hat, and not far away was his rifle. A shell had jammed in the chamber. On the ground lay two empty casings.

The wounded bear had mauled him severely before leaving him for dead. Vetter was able to drag himself back to his cabin where he wrote his death message in his own blood. Thirty-seven year old Phillip Vetter died alone, far from help.

Corbett and Gleaver built a casket of rough boards with timbers hewn from logs for a lid. Vetter was buried on upper river bank, near his cabin. A slab of sandstone with the inscription "P. H. Vetter — 1892" was placed at the grave.



P. H. Vetter's Grave in the Old Trail Town Cemetery