

MONTANA GHOST TOWN PRESERVATION SOCIETY NEWS FALL '79

MONTANA GHOST TOWN PRESERVATION SOCIETY . P.O. BOX 1001 BOZEMAN MONTANA . ZIP CODE 59715 . PHONE NUMBER 507-0733 .

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

I had my camera aimed to take a picture, but as I was about to press the shutter, a cloud covered the warm sun and I hesitated. A sudden wind clanged some loose tin on the mill across the little valley. It was suddenly cold as the wind blew through the broken window of the little shack where I stood. It whistled through the empty rooms. A board bumped somewhere and torn wallpaper flapped. Then there was silence.

My first impression of the shack was "what an awful place to live!" Walls and doors which should have been straight were leaning at odd angles. Torn pasteboard boxes and ragged wallpaper hung limply. Linoleum, trampled on by intruding cattle, was rotted through in places. At the broken windows, tatters of curtains still clung to a wire. The unforgettable smell of pack rats persisted despite the wind.

But as I looked deeper, more thoughtfully at the pitiful room, other details came to view. Here, people once lived. They made an attempt at beauty and convenience with the bright linoleum where children once played, neat oil cloth on the wall behind the stove, and tidy little shelves made from dynamite boxes that provided storage in odd corners. A miner's wife once made pretty curtains for the windows and pasted cheerful flowered paper over the rough board walls.

From the broken window where I stood, I viewed the dilapidated town. Another gust of wind lifted a tin patch from a neighboring shack and dropped it with a bang and a door blew open and shut. Yet a community once lived here. Its citizens were insulated against the icy blasts of winter by layers of pasteboard boxes, and wood stoves warmed visiting friends who laughed, played cards, and listened to the phonograph. Lights shone from the windows during clear, crisp nights.

The warm sun returned, lighting the little valley, the big mill, the boarding house, the golden quaking aspen and green pines climbing the surrounding mountains. Yet a strange chill had come over me, an odd feeling of sadness. I wonder what happened to the people who once lived here? Where did they go when they moved away? Are any still alive today? Their names and identity seem lost forever.

And yet, we know a lot about them if we just stop a minute to look.

Comet, Montana
September 16, 1979

Our fall meeting in Helena was one of the best for our society. Let me take this opportunity to extend congratulations and sincere thanks to all those who helped make it a success: To speakers Jim McDonald, Bob Chadwick, Larry Gallagher, and Bob Miller. A special thanks goes to Jean Baucus who arranged the thrilling double decker bus tour of Helena's mansions, and thanks to those who so graciously opened their homes for us to admire: Sam H. Sperry (Kleinschmidt house), Ken Korte, Jim Phillips (Kohr House), Margaret Brown (Sieben House), and John and Jean Baucus. And finally, to Al Thompson who organized the meeting, arranged for meeting space and the dinner, and

brought it all together, special thanks and congratulations on a fine convention.

GLENDALE

Florence Johnson

Located in Beaverhead County a few miles west of Melrose, the town of Glendale was a center of mining activity and one of the most modern towns in Montana -- an era beginning in the 1870's and lasting until 1904. At its peak, Glendale had a population of about 1700 and it was estimated that 5000 people lived in the area. Glendale had a bank, a newspaper (The Atlantis), a brewery, numerous saloons, churches, sawmill, lumberyards, doctors, a company hospital, restaurants, an opera house, several lodge halls, a silver coronet band, and other amenities.

A lead/silver lode was discovered in the region in 1873 by a party of trappers who were looking for lost horses. The area became known as the Bryant Mining District, and several towns mushroomed as prospectors flocked in. Trapper City, Lion City and Hecla were established. In 1875 a smelter was built down the mountain from Lion City and became the nucleus of the town of Glendale. A dispute arose over the name of the new town and was settled by writing the name "Glendale" on one side of a wood chip and "Clinton" on the other. The chip was tossed over the walls of a nearby building; "Glendale" came up on top.

Noah Armstrong, an entrepreneur from the Madison Valley, became interested in the mining district and began actively developing it. With capital from Indianapolis, Indiana, he formed the Hecla Mining Company and gradually acquired most of the mines. Henry Knippenberg, Vice President of the Atkins Saw Works in Indianapolis, moved west in 1881 to become general manager of the Company. Knippenberg had a vision of a law-abiding Christian community, as well as a profitable mining company and turned his management talents to both goals.

The first small 20-ton smelter at Glendale had burned in July 1879, with an estimated loss of \$100,000. A new and larger smelter was built. Glendale was soon enlarged by "bull teams" and mule teams which hauled freight and passengers. The base bullion produced at the smelter was hauled by these teams to the terminus of the Utah & Northern Railroad, a constantly diminishing distance as the railroad pushed farther northward. In 1881 the terminus reached Melrose. Silver bullion from Glendale was then shipped to Omaha for further refining.

The extension of the railroad allowed shipping of heavy machinery and made possible the beginning of quartz mining in the area and also provided imported coke from Pennsylvania. Previously the primary fuel for the Glendale furnaces had been charcoal, a major related business that had developed in nearby Canyon Creek. The production and transportation of the charcoal gave employment to many men. The Dillon Examiner (Dec. 25, 1895) reported that the Glendale furnaces were using ten tons of coke per day at a cost of about \$19 per ton delivered to the furnaces, and charcoal was used at the rate of 100,000 bushels per month at a cost of 12¢ per bushel. The Company "owns and operates 38 kilns, besides buying Italians who burn charcoal in pits and deliver it at 11¢ per bushel. This year the Company will use about 1,000 bushels of charcoal", the Examiner stated.

During this period the prices paid for silver were greatly affected by politics. Silver production was stimulated by the passage of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890, but was hard hit by the repeal of the Act in 1893. The defeat of Presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan ended all hopes that silver would regain its former importance. Production of the Glendale mines declined after 1893, in part due to the lower prices, and in part because the richest and most accessible ores had been removed. Henry Knippenberg continued to struggle to operate the Hecla Mining Company, but it finally closed in 1904 owing money to its employees. After the collapse of the Company and following many lawsuits, the mines were sold to a syndicate of Philadelphia capitalists in the mid 1920's. A new Hecla Consolidated Mining Company was organized; however, little work was done on the property and it was purchased by George Conway in 1928. The Hecla group consisted of 22 patented claims. Conway shipped slag from the old dump at the smelters and also ore from the dumps of the mines, but did little active mining.

The townsite of Glendale is in ruins. The elaborate house built by Henry Knippenberg burned more than 20 years ago. The tall chimney stack marks the former location of the smelter. The most interesting relic is the roofless stone and brick building probably built in 1878. (See Sketch) It housed the assay office and Company offices. The once busy mines are now only a memory and Glendale has joined the ranks of hundreds of other Montana ghost towns.

FROM THE EDITOR

We had a fine annual meeting in Helena in September, and wish that all of you could have attended. We are indebted to those who were so willing to present programs and assist in our

field trips. Mayor Kathlene Ramey welcomed us to the City and Robert Miller, long-time resident of Helena and former newspaperman, entertained and informed us with his slide show of views of early Helena. Jean Baucus discussed her books and told of the pleasures of researching old homes in Helena. Architect and preservationist Jim McDonald told about his views on restoration and his work.

Jean also conducted a wonderful tour of half-a-dozen fine old mansions, including her own. We used the English two-decker bus for the tour, and the weather cooperated, as hoped. Larry Gallagher, former HUD director of Helena, discussed finances needed to restore the many Helena buildings and how the City is proceeding with their preservation.

The buffet dinner was followed by a beautiful illustrated slide presentation by Dr. Robert Chadwick on the geographical and geological marvels of New Zealand and Australia. Bob also displayed a number of ore samples gathered from the two countries. The ghost towns of that region which Bob photographed are not as striking as those in Montana.

On Sunday we toured Wicks and Corbin. Delighting us with her knowledge of these towns was Helen Micka of Bozeman. Helen was raised in Corbin and had many tales to tell. After lunch in Boulder the group split; some went to Elkhorn and others to Comet. All in all, it was a great meeting, house tour and field trip. Many, many thanks go to our speakers and guides and to Helena Director Al Thompson, not only for pulling the convention together but also (with the help of his wife and daughters) working the registration desk and seeing to the many details that had to be taken care of. We do appreciate the work that everyone did.

The most important item of business brought up at the business meeting was a suggestion by the Board of Directors, ratified by the members, to give the sum of \$250 to the Western Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society to assist them in a title search and quiet title proceedings on the saloon and Fraternity Hall in Elkhorn. The WMGTPS has presented these buildings to the Montana Department of Parks, Fish and Wildlife, but it is necessary for the title to be cleared. We are pleased to have a small part in the preservation of these noteworthy buildings.

Of interest to all involved in preservation is the reorganization of the State Historic Preservation Office. The Historical Society has a new Director, Dr. Robert Archibald, former director of the Western Heritage Center of Billings. Dr. Archibald is also assuming the duties of State Historic Preservation Officer, and Edrie Vinson has been named Program Manager. The program now has a new archeologist, Tom Foor, and a new preservation architect, Jon Hayt. The position of architectural historian is still open.

The Advisory Council on Historic Sites and Antiquities has also been reorganized and re-named the Preservation Review Board. Its members are: Jeffery Safford, Historian; John DeHaas, Architect; John Lepley, Historian; Tom Roll, Archeologist; William Melton, Paleontologist; Ron Holiday, State Liaison Officer for Land and Water Conversation Funds; David Rivenes, Public Member; and Margaret Warden, Public Member. Those of you who are interested in having certain buildings placed on the National Register of Historic Places should contact Edrie Vinson, State Historic Preservation Program, Montana Historical Society, Helena, for forms and information on the procedures. It is important to have public input and suggestions on buildings, districts and sites that are worthy of being included on the National Register of Historic Places.

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OFFSET CHIMNEY FLUE - GLENDALE ASSAY OFFICE.