



Montana Ghost Town Quarterly

MONTANA GHOST TOWN PRESERVATION SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 1861, BOZEMAN, MONTANA 59771-1861
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Fall 2008

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

"Seven-Up Pete" McMahon and two fellow prospectors, Frank Riff and Peter Slater came to the Butte Valley via the Pipestone Pass, sometime in 1864. Once in the valley, they followed a small stream that ran west from the Divide and eventually decided to camp for the night. Whilst his companions set up their camp, "Seven-Up Pete" took a shovel and proceeded to dig down to bed-rock in the stream. He was excited to find about 75 cents worth of gold in his pan when he washed the dirt. Early the next morning all three miners were busy digging in the stream before dawn. As the sun came up over the mountain crest to the east, light danced off of the ripples in the stream, causing one of the party to comment "Look at the Silver Bows on the water". According to "Seven-Up Pete" from then on the stream was known as the Silver Bow. Not only was the stream called Silver Bow, but a little town west of Butte also has the name and in 1881 the new county assumed the name.

The Anaconda Standard of February 14, 1892 had a postscript to this story when they reported that an old-timer, suffering from malnutrition had collapsed and been taken to the Sisters of Charity in an unconscious condition. He died a few days later. Alone, forgotten and uncared for, "Seven-Up Pete" had passed on.

The name given to the city of Butte was derived from the round hill or butte to the north of the city on which the suburb of Walkerville now sits. Butte grew rapidly and encompassed all of the early settlements of Meaderville, McQueen and Centreville.



MEADERVILLE WAS LOCATED APPROXIMATELY WHERE THE TREES IN THE CENTER OF THE PHOTO ARE. THE PHOTO WAS TAKEN, FACING EAST, FROM THE MINE DISASTER MONUMENT IN WALKERVILLE.

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Founded in 1969, the Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society is a 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to educating the public to the benefits of preserving the historic buildings, sites, and artifacts that make up the living history of Montana.

Opinions expressed in the bylined articles are the authors' and do not necessarily represent the views of the Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society.

Fall 2008

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Prez Sez John Ellingsen

On Friday, September 5 through Sunday, September 7, 2008, (the weekend after Labor Day) the Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society will be holding its annual meeting in Butte, Montana. The historic and architecturally significant Finlen Hotel will be the Convention Headquarters, with registration in the Finlen's marble lobby beginning at 4:30 p.m. Friday.

Butte is always a wonderful place to visit at any time. The fabulous architecture of Butte's uptown buildings easily transports visitors back to its great days about a century ago when its huge underground copper mines ran day and night, and wealth was everywhere. Terry Halden is lining up some wonderful special tours for our group which will be an extra special treat even for those familiar with Butte. This meeting is no doubt going to be one of the best.

I am enjoying my retirement from the Montana Heritage Commission, which began July 1, 2008. I have been devoting a good deal of my time to writing a book on Virginia City, which will eventually be published by the Montana History Foundation. While in the roughest of draft stages yet, I have been typing "as fast as I can" trying to jot down my memories and stories told by "old timers" of Virginia City (many of whom are gone now) before I forget them myself.

Hope to see you all in Butte for a wonderful convention.

John Ellingsen

GHOST TOWN CLASSIFICATIONS

This was spotted on a website. Our Society members might be interested.

- **Class A...** A barren site.
EXAMPLE: Diamond City
- **Class B...** Only rubble and/or roofless building ruins
EXAMPLE: Kendall
- **Class C...** Many standing abandoned buildings (with roofs), no population, except maybe a caretaker.
EXAMPLE: Castle
- **Class D...** Semi/near ghost towns. A small resident population, many abandoned buildings.
EXAMPLE: Marysville
- **Class E...** A busy historic community, yet still much smaller than in its boom years.
EXAMPLE: Virginia City
- **Class F...** Not a stand-alone class, but an addition to any of the above. This class usually designates a restored town, state park, or indicates some other "additional" status.
EXAMPLE: Bannack

New Members:

Secretary Rosemary Lee reports the following New Members have joined our Association since the last newsletter. Please make them welcome.

Cheryl & Jim Miller, Spokane, WA.

Lynda & Richard Reiley, Belgrade, MT

Ross Lipke, Lewistown, MT

PULL UP A CHAIR Terry Halden

Well, I didn't get any feedback after my first effort at editing this newsletter, so either you approve or you are too shell-shocked with the new format to respond. I imagine I will get some static in Butte. I did get one response from member Professor Jeffrey Safford, who was kind enough to point out some of the facts I'd overlooked in describing the history of the Red Bluff general store in the "We've Lost Another One" article. He offered to write a more detailed history of the building, but as of press time I haven't received it. Hopefully it will arrive in time for inclusion with the next issue. Which brings up a point. If any member would like to contribute an article about any historical topic that may be of interest to other members, I'd love to hear from you. This is your newsletter, I'm just the ramrod. I can be reached at terryhalden@hotmail.com
See you in Butte!

Terry

MYSTERY CAMP

I'll give you one more chance to identify this ghost town. One clue, it was mentioned in the last newsletter (hence the clue, 'It's going to be interesting to see how many people actually read this rag!')

E-mail your guess to terryhalden@hotmail.com or you can mail it to Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 1861, Bozeman, MT 59771.

All correct answers will be thrown into a hat and the winner drawn at the convention in Butte. He or she will receive a copy of my book, *Ghost Towns and Mining Districts of Montana*.



BENNETT BROTHERS, OF BUTTE CITY,

Have Secured the General Agency for Montana for the Rocky Mountain

COMMON SENSE BOB SLEDS



AND DUBUQUE CUTTERS,

We now have Eight Car-loads en route to Butte, comprising all the Latest Improved Styles of BOBS and CUTTERS, which will be sold at Eastern Prices. We also keep in stock a full line of Wagons, Carriages, and Agricultural Implements.

E. E. CONGDON, Manager.

POSITION VACANT

APPLICATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED FOR THE POSITION OF BOARD MEMBER.

JOB REQUIREMENTS:
AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN THE RUNNING OF OUR SOCIETY / ATTENDING TWO BOARD MEETINGS PER YEAR.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED:
MEMBERSHIP IN MONTANA GHOST TOWN PRESERVATION SOCIETY

SALARY:
SATISFACTION OF A JOB WELL DONE.

APPLY:
P.O. BOX 1861, BOZEMAN MT, 59771
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We are an equal opportunity employer.

THE MONTANA POST August 26, 1865

Letter from Helena.

HELENA, Aug. 22d, 1865.

Ed. Post:—Since my last, our town, especially the lower part of it, has presented a lively appearance. Buildings of better style than those of six months ago, and most of them with tastefully designed fronts, are rising daily, as if by magic. Business, however, in everything, except provender and building, is slack, the miners not having yet commenced to lay in their winter's supply, and I am afraid that they will not do so, until goods of all kinds take a rise of fifty per cent. A large number of miners are making preparations for a visit to their homes. The several Mackinaw Boat Companies are organizing for the purpose of giving security to passengers from the attacks of either red or white marauders, both by the numbers of the company and the shelter afforded by the boats. Sprague & Co.'s fleet of six ball proof boats will leave Fort Benton this week, with two hundred and fifty men. Should they reach the lower river in safety, this mode of leaving the Territory will be adopted by all, next season, as it affords to the traveller a method of transit comparatively easy, when compared with the tedious overland journey by teams.

Notwithstanding the widely spread rumors of marauding Indians and road agents, I notice, every day, that single teams leave town, with four to five passengers, bound, as they say, for "America." I can safely prophesy that there will be a great scarcity of skilled hands during next winter, owing to this cause, and, perhaps, the main interest of Montana—lead mining—may suffer somewhat in consequence. The real and only reliable basis of prosperity in this Territory is to be found in the gold and silver bearing quartz, of which there is abundance, both in quantity and quality. When Eastern capital and labor shall be turned in this direction, and mills erected throughout the Territory, we shall be able to give an account of ourselves that will astonish the world, and set Wall street crazy with the "Montana Gold Fever." Emigrants coming into this Territory need not go to work in the mines, by the day; for a large scope of country, east of the Missouri, lies unexplored, needing only the hand of the sturdy prospector to develop it, and reap a rich harvest of the precious ore. But it is a sorry fact that our placer digging prospectors, after discovering a good gulch will not go to work; but in most instances they "gobble" as many feet as they can, in their own and fictitious names, and hold them to sell, but not to work, and in all cases, will demand an exorbitant price—in some instances, as much as a man can take out of the claim. Were it not for this malpractice, hundreds of men that are now leaving the Territory would stay here, and the consequences would be beneficial in their results to the community. Goods in large quantities have been pouring into Helena from all quarters, last week, and the prospect of a sufficiency is pleasant to contemplate, after a retrospective view of the scarcity of last year.

Oliver & Co., the most energetic and persevering of pioneer stage companies, have now started a line to Confederate and White's gulches, completing a perfect communication with all the principal mining camps of the Territory.

The weather has been very pleasant during the past week, the thermometer ranging from seventy to ninety degrees. The evenings and early mornings are cool, insuring a pleasant night's rest to all mankind and

BUMMER.

THE STONE HOUSE NEAR WINSTON

Just south of Winston, on the west side of Hwy 287 / 12, can be seen a one and a half storey stone house sitting forlornly in a field. It is protected from highway travelers by railroad tracks, a marsh and a barbed wire fence, and no paths lead to it from Winston, a half mile to the north, or the other directions. The building, measuring 28' by 41' was constructed using mortar and fieldstone and has walls over a foot thick. On the downstairs it has seven rooms, with several nooks whilst the upstairs is open with limited headroom where the roof line angles down. It was built for Warren S. Dodge and his wife Julia in 1882 / 3 at a cost of \$3,500. Dodge who was appointed the first postmaster of Winston on December 22, 1892, wheeled and dealt in local real estate, and at one point, in partnership with his brother, Charles W. Dodge was the proprietor of a large rooming house and general store located in the village of Winston.

In 1904 Charles sold all his properties and left the region and in 1907, Warren did the same. Ownership of the building and the 11 acres it stands on can be traced down through the years to its current owners. As it deteriorated over the years it was never used as anything other than a private residence. Today, the windows and doors are missing, while cattle find shelter within its massive, stone walls.



AN UNDATED PHOTO SHOWING THE STONE HOUSE IN THE BACKGROUND
(Photo from the Broadwater County Mueum collection)



THE STONE HOUSE AS IT APPEARS TODAY (Terry Halden photo)

Story compiled from an essay by John Stoner, located in Broadwater County Museum. Used with permission.

GRAY EAGLE

Located on Comstock Hill on Bishop Creek, a tributary of High Ore Creek about four miles northeast of Basin, is the Gray Eagle Complex. The Gray Eagle was discovered in 1891 but not claimed by John J. Holmes and Henry Dahlman until January of 1896. The claimants received a patent on the property in July of 1899. In 1897 silver and lead ore was being extracted by eight men and treated in East Helena. The next year 22 men were employed in the existing shaft and excavating a new one. By 1902 the mine had three shafts, the deepest at 1400 ft and by 1905 10,000 tons of ore worth \$350,000 had been shipped to the smelter. In 1907 the operations of the Gray Eagle and nearby Comet Mine were joined by the Montana Consolidated Copper Company — the Gray Eagle was working a continuation of the Comet vein. By 1913 when the mine changed hands to the Northwestern Metals Company, total production for the mine had risen to \$500,000.



1905

(Montana Inspector of Mines Report)

WE'VE LOST ANOTHER ONE

An unknown prospector discovered the 'Gold Coin' lode claim near the mouth of Daly Creek about a quarter mile from Silver Lake, in about 1894. From 1905 to 1909 a thirty-stamp mill processed the ore and thereafter, intermittently, until it finally shut down in 1940. For the next sixty-six years it stood proudly as a mute reminder of our mining heritage. But taxes on the building and high liability insurance costs finally caused the current owner to dismantle the structure in 2006. It is fondly remembered.



GOLD COIN 2002

GOLD COIN 2008



(Terry Halden photos)

MINE COMPLEX



2003

(Terry Halden photo)

The Basin Montana Tunnel Company purchased the mine in 1926 and the next year extensive improvements were made; the tunnels were extended 3,000 ft and electrical equipment installed. In the mid-1930s the company began treating ores at a new flotation mill that they had built in Comet.

While the Comet Mine was the larger of the two producers, the Gray Eagle contributed substantially. By 1935 the Comet had produced \$13 million in ore while the Gray Eagle produced \$2 million. In 1941 operations were suspended at the two mines. While the tailings were reworked on a lease basis during 1942, the mines never reopened. It has been estimated that 100 - 150 people worked at the Gray Eagle during the peak of productivity.

PRESERVING MONTANA

In March 1886, Helena City Council authorized the Helena Street Railway Company to build and maintain a network of trolley cars. The first cars were horse drawn, followed by steam engines and finally overhead electric cables were installed. The system extended from Fort Harrison to East Helena, connecting all points in between. At its peak about twenty trolley cars were in operation, but with the advent of buses and the availability of the personal automobile, in 1929 the trolley system finally succumbed.

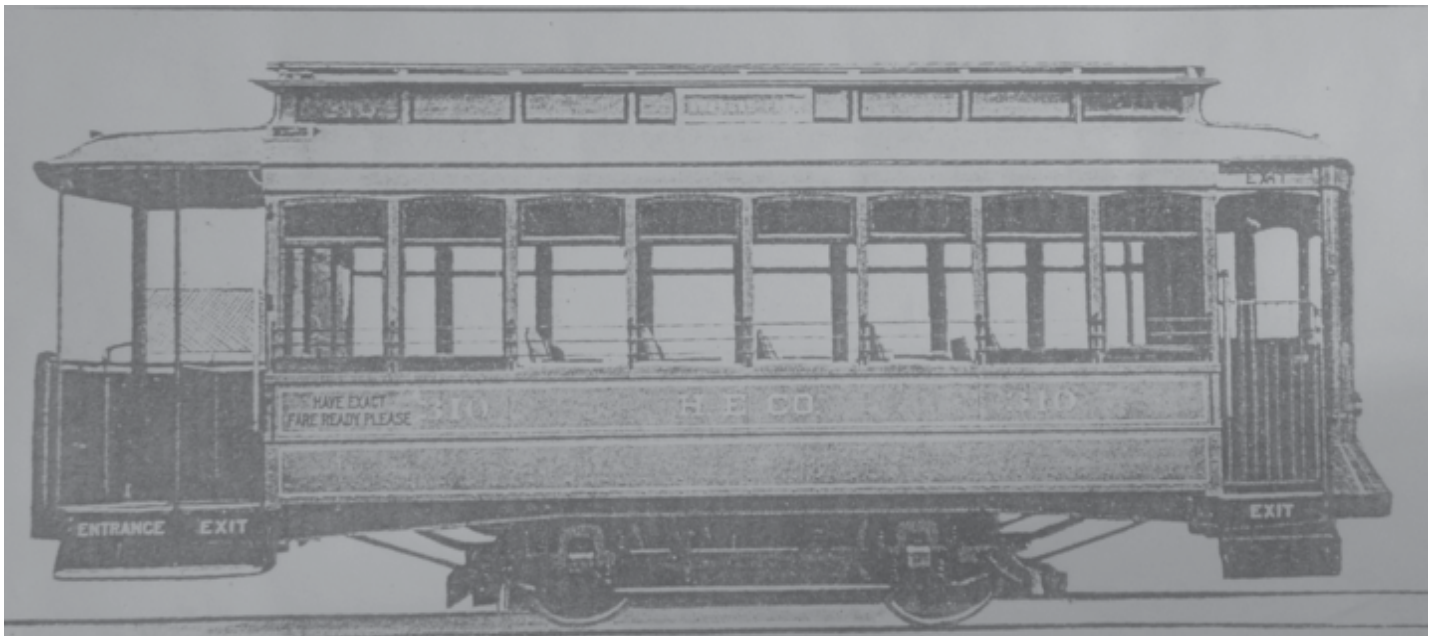
Fast forward to 2001 when old trolley car # 3 was discovered to be residing at a property in Big Sandy, having been used as a temporary bunkhouse for transient farm workers and other farm duties. No. 3 was one of the last trolley cars to go into operation and was used from 1909 until the final shut-down. It had electric lights, a heater, windows that slid down converting it from an enclosed car to an open vehicle and controls that could be easily moved by the conductor from one end to the other, thereby making the car reversible.



TROLLEY CAR No. 3 UNDER RE-CONSTRUCTION (Terry Halden photo)

Despite its sad looking shape, having spent over seventy years exposed to the weather, with no maintenance, being used, and no doubt abused, for a myriad reasons, it was deemed worthwhile to attempt to restore the old relic. In 2006 it was brought back to Helena and a team of people have stripped the trolley down to its flat-deck, carefully numbering and keeping any wood that can be reused. Rotten wood and new window frames have been remanufactured to exact specifications by Capital High School woodworking class. The school's metal shop is making hinges and other metal parts while the computer class has produced a digital model of the trolley. Volunteer Supervisor, George T. Hoff, a former college history instructor, is obviously pleased with the students work, and hopes that the trolley will be completed by its centennial next year.

It is the ambition of the Helena / Lewis and Clark County Historic Preservation Commission to eventually build a trolley car barn at the County Fairgrounds and have track laid around the fairground for the trolley to again operate, giving Helena residents, and visitors the thrill of an old fashion trolley car ride. Donations to cover the cost of the restoration have come from the city of Helena, the Lewis and Clark County Community Foundation, and the Jerry Metcalf Foundation, along with numerous residents and businesses. General Mills donated \$10,000 to the High School to help pay their expenses.



AS IT WILL LOOK, WHEN RECONSTRUCTION IS COMPLETE.

(Terry Halden photo)

On June 22, 2008, the Old Trail Museum at 823, Main Street, Choteau, celebrated its 40 birthday with hot dogs, hamburgers and birthday cake for everyone. The museum was the dream of Bob Zion, who, at an early age, on August 29 1933, climbed the steps to the gallows, that, a few hours later, George Hoffman, the last man to be hanged in Teton County would ascend. Young Zion felt that the event was worthy of remembering in a museum. Today, the story of Hoffman's murder of George Burrell, along with the jail house door, the rope that tied Hoffman's hands, the hood, the noose and the murder weapon (a blood stained lead pipe) are part of the grizzly reminders of that event, that can be viewed at the main museum. For those interested, 'Galloping Gallows' No. 5 was used and it was the first execution in the U.S. officiated by a sheriff of the county where the murder had taken place.

Marion Brandvold, a local fossil hunter discovered some baby dinosaur bones and eggs in 1978 at what became known as Egg Mountain. This led to the discovery of a *Maiasaura* (Montana's State dinosaur) and an entire room at the museum is devoted to a paleontology exhibit. How old do you want your history to go?

On a more modern note, the skeleton of 'Old Sol' is also on display. 'Old Sol' was discovered in a shallow grave in the early 1930's, with four metal arrow heads in him and what appears to be a bullet hole and possible tomahawk blow in his skull. Experts have determined him to be an European man, possibly of French descent, aged 35 – 45, and that the arrow heads were of the type supplied by the Hudson Bay Company in the 1830 / 40's to the Indians. As the arrows came from different directions he was either, still standing until the bullet or blow to the skull finished him, or he was killed and then the arrows pierced him as he lay on the ground. But who was he, and who buried him? And his story, if it could be established, would make interesting reading.

Other exhibits relating to local ranching make up the remainder of the main building whilst in five separate cabins are other displays. These include a complete Métis cabin (the dove-tailing is French Canadian) that has been moved to the grounds and furnished with Métis artifacts; a cabin depicting a grizzly bear exhibit; a cabin dedicated to local artist Jesse Gleason (1891 – 1983); a gift shop with an incredible display of lace doilies, hand made soap and other Made In Montana Gifts. The last cabin is an ice-cream shop, which on a hot summer day is most welcome. A secluded picnic grounds at the back completes the complex.

The museum is open, Memorial Day to Labor Day, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily with a nominal entrance fee of \$3.00.



'OLD SOL', COMPLETE WITH ARROW-HEADS AND BULLET HOLE.



**THE OLD TRAIL MUSEUM IN CHOTEAU
(Terry Halden photos)**

NEWS IN BRIEF

HELENA, LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTYThe Montana History Center is looking to raise \$13 million from private and corporate sponsors for a new State Historical Society Museum on the site of the Capitol Hill Mall in Helena. The campaign to raise the funds is headed by former First Lady Betty Babcock and former Attorney General Joe Mazurek and is in answer to a challenge from Gov. Brian Schweitzer who has signed a letter of intent to buy the mall site for \$6.5 million. However, one of the catches is that the agreement is null and void if the funds are not raised by November 15th. The M.H.C. committee has set up a website to explain the purchase and accept tax-deductible donations at: www.MTHistorycenter.com

BIG TIMBER, SWEETGRASS COUNTY.....In an archaeological dig in Big Timber by U of M graduate student Justin Moschelle assisted by fellow students Chris Merritt and Brent Rowley, over 25,000 Chinese artifacts dating from between the 1880s and the 1930s have been uncovered. It was during this time span that 10% of Big Timber's population was Chinese who ran businesses that included restaurants, laundries, gambling dens and a house of prostitution. Finds include pieces of an opium pipe, ceramic bowls, a coin used at a bordello "for amusement only" and a bluing stone used in the laundry. Moschelle, who graduated from high school in Big Timber had grown up hearing stories of the Chinese community, their businesses and the underground tunnels connecting them and is organizing the dig as part of his master's thesis.

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NEWS IN BRIEF continued from page 7

FORT MISSOULA, MISSOULA COUNTY..... Seventy-five years ago this summer, in the height of the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt launched the Civilian Conservation Corps. Eventually over 25,000 men between the ages of 18 – 25 enlisted for six-month hitches earning \$30 a month and keep. \$25 of their wages was sent to their families. The men were processed in Fort Missoula, organized into squads, platoons and companies and sent out to twenty-four camps in western and central Montana under the supervision of Local Experienced Men, or LEMS. The LEM did the quality work whilst the CCC men were the laborers. Their handiwork can still be seen today; over a dozen buildings at Fort Missoula were built by them, including a store / warehouse which is used today to home the Rocky Mountain Museum of Military History.

CEDAR CREEK, MINERAL COUNTY..... On October 9th 1869, Louis Barrette and Basil Lanthier discovered gold on Cedar Creek that runs to the Clark Fork near Superior, Mineral County. The usual rush of prospectors followed and in no time the town of Louisville was on the map. It even had a post office from 1870 to 1871. But as the gold petered out, the miners moved on and Louisville was taken over by Chinese miners, who mined the area around Louisville until the 1880s. It became known as China Gulch. Eventually the forest reclaimed the area and the exact location of Louisville was lost. Mary Williams, a historian with the Forestry Service rediscovered the location in 1995 when an expedition she was leading uncovered the remains of rock ovens, the first such finds in western Montana. Along with the Mineral County Historical Society, (see News In Brief, last newsletter) the Forestry Service conducted its Passport In Time on June 28 this year. Using volunteer labor, brush was cleared away and a supervised dig was done. Artifacts that were found will be on display at the Mineral County Museum, also featured in the last newsletter.

GARNET, GRANITE COUNTY.....As a result of the rising value of gold, Aaron Charlton, whose family own the mineral rights to 400 acres in and around Garnet has indicated that his company, Grant Hartford Corporation will be applying for permission to commence exploratory drilling in the area. He has assured the BLM, the state DEQ, the Garnet Preservation Association and Granite County Commission that he will work in co-operation with them and keep them informed as to the progress of the drilling. Actual gold mining, depending on the results of the drill tests and the procurement of necessary further permits could be several years away.