



Montana Ghost Town Quarterly

VOLUME 39

SUMMER 2009

**DUES ARE DUE / DUES ARE DUE / DUES ARE
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WHAT IS IT?

YOUR ONLY CLUE IS, IT IS LOCATED IN FRONT OF A CHURCH YARD.



FOR THE ANSWER, SEE PAGE 3.

**MONTANA GHOST TOWN PRESERVATION
SOCIETY
BOARD MEETING
June 13, 2009**

The meeting was called to order by Vice-President Terry Halden at 10:30 a.m. at the home of Dick and Rosemary Lee. Members present were Terry Halden, John and Bernice DeHaas, Bryon McAllister, Nettie Warwood, Susan Howe, Margie Kankrik, Loretta Chapman, the Lees, and guests Kay McAllister, Bill Chapman & former officer, Shirley Powell.

Minutes of the November 8, 2008 board meeting were approved as read, as was the financial report. Rosemary reported a current checking balance of \$5,730.82, with \$12,452.16 in the Edward Jones money market account, as of March 31, 2009.

Old Business

Nevada City signs. Dan Thyer, Montana Heritage Commission has not yet let us know when the signs will be installed. The board will be notified.

September 11/13 Conference at Povah Community Center, West Yellowstone. Susan Howe and Kay McAllister distributed a schedule of events for the weekend, which will be included, with a registration form, in a soon-to-be-published newsletter. There will be a panel discussion Saturday morning, intro to and history of the Museum, and, after lunch, history and a tour of Old Faithful Inn. The banquet will be a catered buffet, followed by speaker Mark Miller's "Side Saddles and Geysers" presentation about women's early visits to Yellowstone Park. Sunday, we will drive to the Crail Ranch at Big Sky and also visit Deer Creek. Optional box lunches will be available. We will take our speaker system. A book auction will be held during the day on Saturday. Shirley Powell is preparing information packets for all attendees.

The board agreed it would be wise for MGTPS to carry liability insurance, as suggested by Jan O'Brien, and Margie Kankrik will look into coverage of Directors and Offices Liability Insurance at \$500 for coverage of \$1,000,000.

New Officers. The following slate will be presented to our membership in September: President—Terry Halden, Vice-President—Gordon Tracy, and Secretary/Treasurer—Margie Kankrik.

New Business

Future Convention Sites. In 2010, we'll headquarter in the Mission Valley between Polson and St. Ignatius. The Steindorf families in Charlo have offered to assist with arrangements. We will invite them to attend our board meeting(s) in West Yellowstone this year to begin making plans. Several locations for 2011 were discussed, and Dillon and Philipsburg were chosen. The final decision will be left to the membership in September. Terry will ask Tom Lowe and Gordon Tracy to make brief presentations about their areas at this year's convention.

To encourage younger people to join MGTPS, Terry recommended reaching teenagers, possibly through a preservation class at Belgrade High School. There are limited available grants (Gallatin County Preservation Board and Rural Property Brick & Mortar, for example). We will try to learn of a project where youngsters may get some hands on experience doing preservation/restoration work. Please contact Terry if you have suggestions.

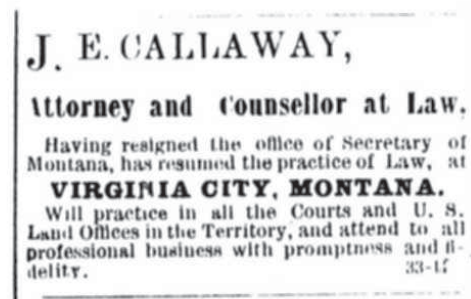
John DeHaas hopes members will offer to give talks and/or slide presentations to service organizations around the state to inform and further promote MGTPS.

There will be a 150th anniversary celebration of the Mullen Trail in Fort Benton in May 2010.

Terry requests that members submit articles of interest for our quarterly newsletter. Please help!

The meeting was adjourned at noon, followed by lunch and visiting.

Rosemary Lee, Secretary/Treasurer



WHAT IS IT ON PAGE ONE?



Located in front of the church of St. Brynach, (founded in the 6th century) at Nevern, Pembrokeshire, Wales, they are mounting steps.

In the 17th and 18th century, when the local squire rode to church, this was where he dismounted and remounted his horse after services. It was also the custom for a bride and groom to use the steps to mount their bridal horse and ride away together on the same mount, chased by the other wedding guests.

Whether or not there are any mounting steps in this country (possibly in the New England states), I do not know. But if you come across any, at least, now, you will know what they are.

THE GOLD DREDGES of BANNACK

Part two

by TOM LOWE

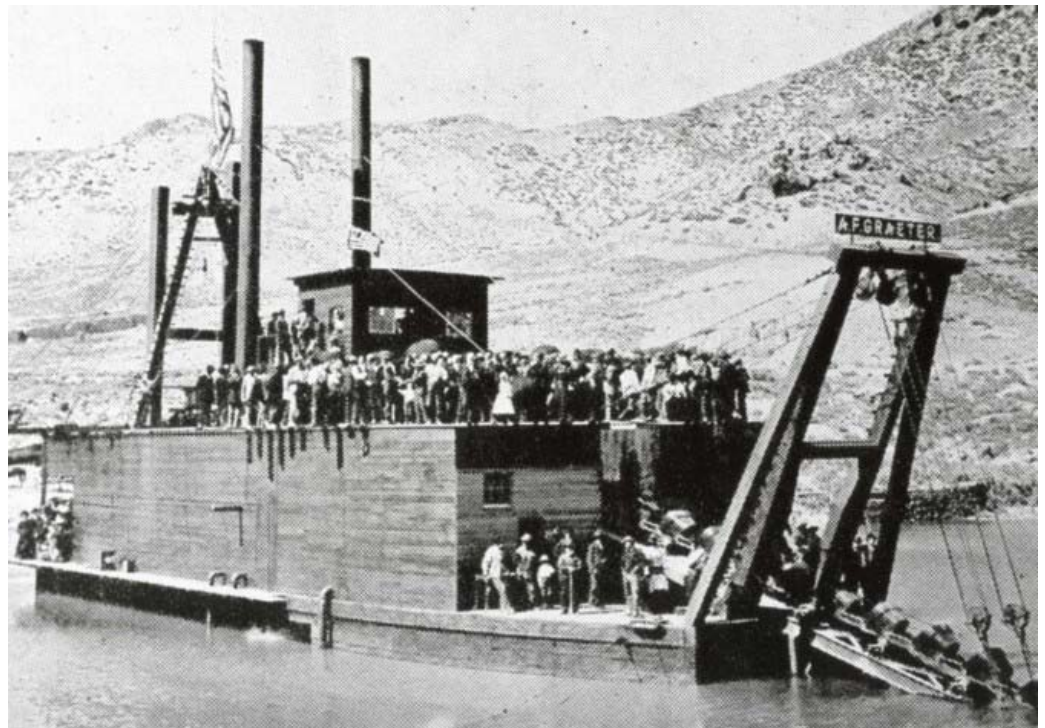


The owners of the F. L. Graves dredge were encouraged by their success and formed a new company with other associates known as the 'Bannack Dredging Company.' They acquired new placer ground and began construction of a larger, steam-powered dredge that was better designed than the Graves dredge. This dredge also burned eight cords of wood a day. The wood was hauled from West Mountain twelve miles away and during the dredging period many men were employed cutting wood for the boilers of this and the other wood-fired dredges. The dredge was built near the Gold Leaf Mill at Marysville and was launched with a great fanfare and many people in attendance. The Dillon Tribune reported:

"Saturday, June 12, 1897, the "A. F. Graeter," the third and the largest of the gold dredges now operating on Grasshopper Creek near Bannack, was christened with interesting ceremonies and was started on its mission of recovering gold from the rich alluvial deposits of the creek. The boat is operated by the Bannack Dredging Company of which H. J. Reiling is president.

Mr. Reiling gave a speech and after the cheering subsided, Mrs. L. C. Bonney, of Chicago, the wife of the treasurer of the company, was assisted to a place upon the huge buckets, and raising a bottle of champagne into the air and

saying, 'I christen this boat in the name of A. F. Graeter,' broke the bottle and sprinkled the sparkling fluid upon the line of buckets that were destined to dig untold wealth from the creek bed."



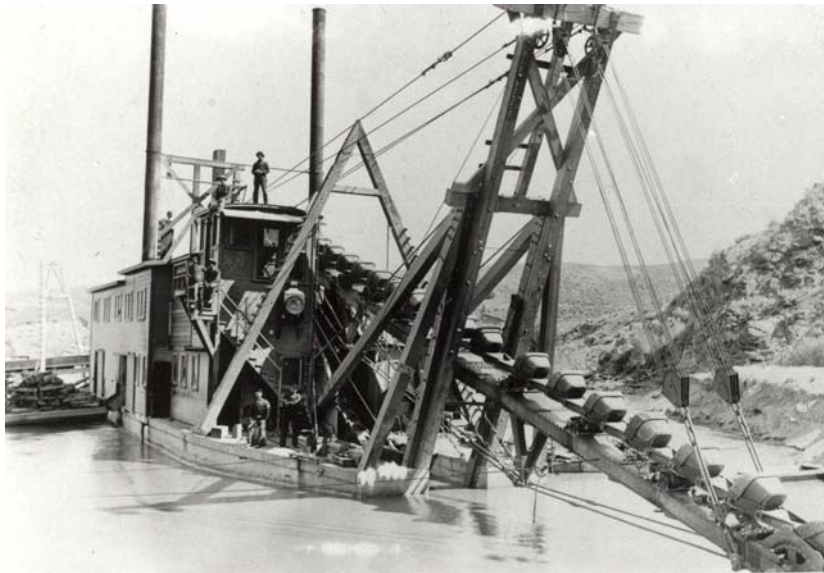
THE A. F. GRAETER DREDGE.

Photo courtesy of the Beaverhead County Museum

This dredge was considered state of the art at the time and operated into 1902. The Graeter worked the ground from Marysville up stream to Bannack then reworked the ground that the Graves had previously worked. The Graeter was considerably larger and could dig deeper than the Graves allowing it to reach gravels previously missed. On October 2, 1901 the Dillon Examiner had a very interesting article about this dredge and some of the interesting finds dredged up at Yankee Flats where many of Bannack's earliest homes were located:

"A great many relics of the days when Bannack was in its infancy are being constantly brought to light and saved in the sluice boxes. Only a few days ago, a heavy 18K gold ring was dug up, and it had evidently been buried since the early days. A cabinet in the company's office is filled with these relics and they consist of coins, cartridges of all kinds, medals, a part of an old pistol, curious nuggets, belt buckles and a hundred different articles. The oldest of the coins is a ten-cent piece dated in '33. At a point, which is said to have been the site of Henry Plummer's cabin, a cache was evidently encountered as the buckets brought up ten \$1 gold pieces, nine \$2.50 gold pieces, one \$5.00 gold piece, and three 50 cent silver pieces, one dated '58, '62, and '58. The majority of the coins are dated from '58 to '61, although a few are of recent years. The largest nugget ever taken out was egg-shaped and weighed \$150."

After all of the gold bearing ground had been worked the dredge was dismantled and what remains of the Graeter can be seen in the creek at the west end of the Bannack parking lot.



THE BON ACCORD AFTER SHE HAD BEEN RE-CONSTRUCTED.
Photo courtesy of Beaverhead County Museum

Bannack was in the midst of a full-scale mining boom when an English corporation, the 'Bon Accord Company', decided to build another steam powered dredge. Work began on the largest of the dredges, the Bon Accord, about three miles below Bannack in the fall of 1897. Mr. Ball was the construction superintendent and high hopes were held for this huge dredge. The buckets held nine cubic feet and fed into a grizzly fifty feet above the water line and then into the onboard sluice boxes. The top-heavy design was doomed to failure and the dredge tipped over and sank a few days after going into service. Although some people suspected the dredge was deliberately scuttled, the faulty design was responsible for its sinking. The Bon Accord was righted and the equipment removed. The dredge was remodeled and returned to service in the spring of 1898. The company had spent a great deal of money constructing and remodeling the dredge and although the new design worked well they soon ran out of profitable ground and the company went bankrupt. In 1901 the dredge was purchased by the Oregon Placer Mining Company. The machinery was removed and shipped to Oregon

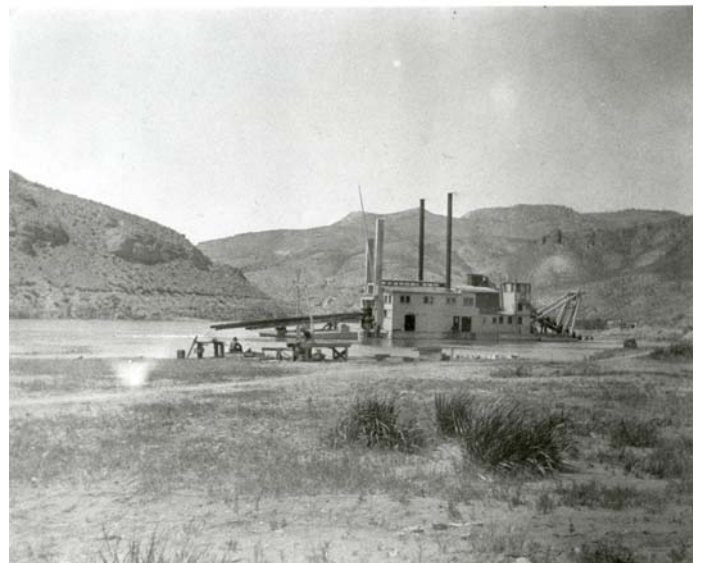
and installed on a new hull to mine the gravels of the John Day River. The old wooden hull was left to rot in Grasshopper Creek.

In 1898 the last dredge was built on Grasshopper Creek near Spring Gulch downstream from Bannack. The "Coast" was also known as the "Cope" for the owner of the mining claims where it was built. The project was financed by the 'Coast Dredging Company' of Monmouth, New Jersey, a subsidiary of the successful 'Montana Gold Dredging Company.' The Coast was a steam-powered, single-lift Bucyrus type dredge and was equipped with five cubic feet buckets. Twin grizzlies screened out the larger rocks and the fine gravels were first run over onboard coco mat lined sluices and then sent to outboard sluices mounted on scows. The Coast operated in the White's Bar area until 1902 when it was dismantled.

Although not located on Grasshopper Creek, one more dredge was built in Jeff Davis Gulch at Horse Prairie southwest of Bannack. John C. Brenner organized the company and the "Brenner" was launched on October 1, 1899. This steam-powered dredge was similar in design to the Bannack dredges and was also equipped with five cubic yard buckets. The Brenner operated successfully until 1904.

Many visitors to Bannack are surprised that they do not see the big piles of rocks found in other dredge locations. Unlike the dredges that operated later along Alder Gulch and elsewhere, these first dredges did not use a conveyor belt stacking system and the larger rocks simply went off the rear of the dredge. The finer gravels were washed through the sluices and dumped on top of the larger rocks. Over time the riparian area seen at Bannack has regenerated itself and little evidence of the dredging operations remain.

Gold dredging added another chapter to the rich history of Bannack. The F. L. Graves was the first electric powered gold dredge in North America. The connected bucket dredges of Grasshopper Creek were a real boost to the local economy and provided significant wealth to the investors. The lessons learned here contributed to the advance of gold dredge design. Dredges produced great wealth from the rich gravels of Alder Gulch and many other sites in Montana. Unfortunately, many acres of creek bottom still bear the scars of these operations. Although gold dredges no longer operate in Montana, mining operations are now required to post reclamation bonds and follow guidelines established by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality to ensure that the land is not left permanently disfigured. Montana is known as the Treasure State and the motto on the state seal is "Oro y Plata", gold and silver. The first pioneers came here seeking fortunes in the rich gold and silver deposits in the streams, gulches and mountains of Montana, we in turn, have been left with a fortune in history.



THE COAST DREDGE.
Photo courtesy of Beaverhead County Museum

HISTORY OF THE TOSTON SMELTING COMPANY

by JOHN STONER

In 1884 a young mining engineer by the name of William Lawrence Austin was looking for a suitable site to build an experimental smelter using the pyritic process of smelting, up until that time untried in the United States. The site he chose was near the Toston ferry crossing the Missouri River between the Northern Pacific Railroad tracks and the river, which was then in Meagher County. The pyritic process required ores high in iron sulphides to fuel the combustion process in the blast furnace and these were readily available at nearby Radersburg. The site also offered access to nearby lignite coal deposits up Sixteen Mile Creek together with an abundant supply of limestone.

Austin formed a partnership and the smelter began to take shape during the summer of 1885, with its first trial run occurring in August of that year. Success of that first run prompted the partnership to incorporate, filing their Articles of Incorporation in White Sulphur Springs, and calling themselves the Toston Smelting Company.

The original small pilot sandstone furnace was replaced by a Herreshoff cast iron, water jacketed blast furnace, but encountered many problems and only ran intermittently until August 1887. At that point the Helena Mining and Reduction Company (HMRC), Samuel T. Hauser's company, took over the operation under the terms of a sixteen-month lease. The HMRC immediately abandoned Austin's experimental pyritic process and converted the operation to a conventional lead-silver smelter, which proved highly successful until the lease expired in 1889.

With HMRC gone, the Toston Smelting Company resumed control of the plant, again only operating intermittently until the end of 1891, when it closed its doors for good.

By the year 2008, the only remaining evidence of the old smelter....other than a stray firebrick or two.... was the slag pile on the bank of the Missouri River. The glossy black slag pile had become somewhat of a tourist attraction with its "bucket cast" impressions left when the hot bucket loads of slag were originally dumped there.

In the fall of 2008, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) removed not only the slag pile, but the supposedly contaminated soil from where the smelter had once sat, to a repository site. Fortunately, the DEQ saved several of the individual bucket casts for a future interpretive display and signage at Toston.



THE 'BUCKET CASTS' IN THE OLD SLAG HEAP.

Author's photo



POVAH COMMUNITY
CENTER,
WEST YELLOWSTONE,

Our convention base

MGTPS Annual Fall Meeting – West Yellowstone

September 11th - 13th 2009

SCHEDULE

Friday, September 11th 2009

| | | |
|----------------|---|----------------------------|
| 4:30 – 8:00 pm | Registration & Reception | Povah Community Center, |
| 7:00 – 8:00 | Board Meeting Silent Book Auction begins | Povah C. C. Povah C. C. |

Saturday, September 12th 2009

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|---------------|---|---|
| 8:00 – 9:00 | Registration | Povah C.C. |
| 9:00 – 10:00 | Panel Discussion | Povah C. C. (Wally Eagle, Roger Robinson and others) |
| 10:00 – 10:30 | Coffee Break | Povah C. C. |
| 10:30 – 11:00 | Jennifer Cantu | Povah C. C. Introduction to & history of Museum |
| 11:00 – 12:00 | Visit museum (walking distance) | Yellowstone Historic Center Museum, |
| 12:00 – 2:30 | Lunch on your own and drive to Old Faithful Inn in the park | |
| 2:30 – 3:30 | Ruth Quinn | Old Faithful Inn History of building and a tour |
| 5:00 – 6:00 | Happy Hour | Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort (across from Povah C. C.) |
| 6:00 | Banquet (Please note, there is NO liquor or wine allowed at Povah Community Center.) | Povah C. C. |
| 7:15 | Annual General Meeting | Povah C. C. Silent Auction of books concludes |
| 8:00 | Mark Miller, Guest Speaker | Povah C. C. “Side Saddles and Geysers” (see below) |

Sunday, September 13th 2009

| | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|--|
| 7:30 – 8:30 am | Board meeting | Old Town Café |
| 9:00 am | Meet, with cars Picnic lunch | Povah C. C. Tour of Gallatin Canyon, Crail Ranch, & Deer Creek |

The MGTPS is very pleased to have as our guest speaker, Mark Miller, who will give a talk entitled

“Sidesaddles and Geysers: Women’s Adventures in Early Yellowstone”

In the nineteenth century hundreds of women risked being mauled by a bear, or scalded in a geyser, or captured by an Indian to see the wonders of Yellowstone Park—and lived to tell their stories. Bozeman scholar Miller presents the very best of these travelers’ tales selected from his collection of more than 200 first-person accounts of Yellowstone travel. He covers the period between 1872 when the park was established through the Model T era in the 1920s. Yellowstone Park changed dramatically in this period and the presentations describe how developments such as roads, railroads, and hotels altered “The Yellowstone Experience.” Miller places travelers’ experiences in context with biographical information, bringing the women’s stories to life in the women’s own words and illustrating them with historic photos in a PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Miller is a gifted speaker from the Humanities Montana program which is Montana’s independent nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Humanities Montana was founded in 1972 by thirteen Montana citizens—academic and civic leaders—in response to Congress’ National Arts and Humanities Act of 1965. Since that time, Humanities Montana has benefited hundreds of Montana organizations and thousands of its citizens, providing support for public programs in the humanities throughout the state.”

More information about Humanities Montana may be found at their website: www.humanitiesmontana.org



Montana Ghost Town Quarterly

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

NEWS IN BRIEF:

VIRGINIA CITY, MADISON COUNTY.....The Virginia City Preservation Alliance will be sponsoring a series of free Walks and Talks throughout the summer. The idea is to take the participants on a journey back in time along some of Virginia City's Victorian era streets to illustrate why some streetscapes survived and others did not. One will also learn where the rich and famous, along with the infamous lived and, in some cases, met a violent death. The walks are expected to be held each Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. and schedules will be posted in the Madisonian newspaper.

HARDIN, BIG HORN COUNTY.....A collection of over 10,000 photographs along with the documentation that goes with them has been donated to the Big Horn County Historical Society in Hardin. The photographs, taken between 1930 and 1970, were by well-known Billings photographer Kenneth F. Roanhen and were bequeathed to the Society by 96 year old Elaine Ooley, Roanhen' neice and heir. The collection, which contains photographs of life on the Crow Reservation, the history and development of the Little Bighorn National Monument and landscapes of Yellowstone National Park, will be displayed in galleries in the proposed expansion of the Big Horn County Historical Museum complex in Hardin.

SUPERIOR, MINERAL COUNTY.....The U.S. Forest Service is planning several events to commemorate the centennial of the forest fire of 1910 in which over 3 million acres of timber ignited in just over twenty-four hours. Julie Molzahn and Carole Johnson of the U.S.F.S. have digitalized over 10,000 photos and will be providing some of the photos, documentation and material to the Mineral County Historical Society for them to display at their booth at the county fair this year.

HELENA, LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY.....The Montana Historical Society is again offering grants to preserve historic farm and ranch buildings. The Rural Property Brick and Mortar Grant program is aimed at buildings such as barns, grain elevators and outbuildings that can be proven to have historic significance. A scoring system is used to determine eligibility with the minimum, matching grant, set at \$5,000.