



Montana Ghost Town Quarterly

VOLUME 40

SPRING 2010

THE RE-ENACTMENT OF THE LYNCHING OF SHERIFF PLUMMER.
FULL STORY PAGE 8.



Montana Ghost Town Quarterly

The **Montana Ghost Town Quarterly** is published
four times a year by the
Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society,
P.O. Box 1861, Bozeman, Montana 59771.
Phone: 406-522-3856
e-mail: mtghosttown@yahoo.com
http://ghosttown.montana.com
Copyright © 2010, all rights reserved.

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.

Spring 2010

President: Terry Halden
Vice President: Gordon Tracy
Secretary-Treasurer: Margie Kankrlik
Immediate Past President: John Ellingsen

Board of Directors:
Mike Byrnes, Loretta Chapman, Bernice DeHaas,
Shannon Gilbert, Rosemary Lee, Tom Lowe,
Nick Shrauger, Nettie Warwood.

Ghost Town Advisor: John DeHaas
Newsletter Editor: Terry Halden
Website Administrator: Richard Lee
2010 Convention Co-Chairpersons:
Jim, Betty, David & Tammy Steindorf

The Prez Sez

TERRY HALDEN

In this issue of your newsletter you will find two new contributors, Robert V. Goss who has submitted an article outlining the early gold discoveries along Bear Gulch, which runs east from Gardiner and new board member Shannon Gilbert. Shannon had already submitted an article on the Garrison Mill, when she was asked, on short notice, to attend and report on the Bannack Association's re-enactment of the lynching of sheriff Plummer and his two deputies. Both articles and her photos are inside. It is hoped that we receive more articles of this caliber from both authors.

At the upcoming convention in Polson, one of the stops on our itinerary will be at the remains of Fort Connah, the oldest building still standing in Montana. It operated as a Hudson's Bay trading post from 1846 until 1871, twenty-five years after the 49th parallel had been established as the boundary between the United States and the British possessions, as they were then known as. I thought you might be interested in the history of the fort, prior to visiting it this fall. The Steindorf families of the Mission Valley, who are co-chairpersons of the convention, have arranged for the guides at Fort Connah to be in trappers outfits when we visit and we will be given demonstrations of buffalo hair braiding, making parfleches, black powder shooting, stretching hides and get to partake of a genuine bufflo stew lunch.

Speaking of the convention, it looks like we might have two guest speakers at our banquet. One to give the settlers view of the Settlement Act of 1910 (when parts of the Flathead Reserve was opened up for white settlement) and a member of the Flathead Tribe to give us the Indians' side of the story. The convention dates, again, are Friday, September 10 to Sunday September 12. Our allotment of rooms at the KwaTaqNuk Resort, the Best Western Inn are fast being taken up and I would encourage anyone thinking of going to call the Inn at 1-406-883-3636, mention Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society, to get the discount rate of \$79.99. In the next issue we will have the complete line up of attractions.

One final note on the convention the Historical Museum on our front and back page masthead is the Polson-Flathead Historical Museum where we will be holding our registration on the Friday evening.

Getting back to the Newsletter, there are also two pages outlining the two projects that your society has been involved in recently, thanks to Dick Lee and Jan & Margie Kankrlik. We are currently looking for another worthwhile project and it has been brought to the attention of your board that the ghost town of Coolidge, which is on the National Historic Register and is now part of BLM jurisdiction, is in need of help, possibly in inventory and writing interpretive literature. Looks like it may be a nice summer project. More info, next newsletter.

Until next time.....

OLD KENTUCKY WHISKY.

I HAVE just opened out, one door below
the Madisonian Office, in Virginia City,
a large stock of fine

OLD KENTUCKY WHISKY.

COME and examine my stock before pur-
chasing elsewhere.
J. D. THOMAS.

New Members

Secretary Margie Kankrlik reports the following **New Members** have joined our Association since the last newsletter.
Please make them welcome.

COLLEEN OWEN, Helena, MT
CAROL DAVIS, Rockledge, FL
ALLAN MATHEWS, Missoula, MT

WARREN WINN, Libby, MT
PHIL ASHBURY, Calgary, Alberta
GREG ODGEN, White Sulphur Springs, MT

MEG McWHINNEY, Bozeman, MT
TRIXIE GRIFFITHS, Fairfield, MT
DOUG MASON, Corvallis, MT

M. G. T. P. S. BOARD MEETING

January 30, 2010

The meeting was called to order by President Terry Halden at 10:05 am at the Pioneer Museum in Bozeman, MT. Board members in attendance were: Mike Byrnes, John Ellingsen, Bernice DeHaas, John DeHaas, Shannon Gilbert, Terry Halden, Margie Kankrlik, Richard Lee, Rosemary Lee, and Gordon Tracy. Board members that were unable to attend: Loretta Chapman, Jan O'Brien, Marie O'Brien, Tom Lowe, Nick Shrauger and Nettie Warwood.

Terry Halden introduced two new board members, Mike Byrnes and Shannon Gilbert and asked them to give everyone a little of their background. The board welcomed them to the group.

Minutes of the September 26, 2009 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. Gordon Tracy made a motion that we dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve the minutes as distributed earlier. John Ellingsen seconded the motion, a vote was called and the minutes were approved.

Margie Kankrlik gave the Treasurer's Report. After discussion, Gordon Tracy made the motion to accept the Treasurer's report as read, John Ellingsen seconded the motion, a vote was called and the motion passed.

Next, Terry Halden introduced a graduate student at MSU in the film department, Meg McWhinney. Meg recently joined MGTPS, heard about the vigilante hanging of Sheriff Plummer and his two deputies re-enactment in Bannack and attended the event. Meg video taped the hanging, interviewed many of the participants in character and showed her film at the meeting. Everyone really enjoyed the five-minute presentation and encouraged her to film our Fall Meeting in Polson and to become actively involved in the group.

Old Business

The next order of business was an update on MGTPS's project on the Lower Bridger Canyon one room schoolhouse. Margie Kankrlik stated the project was complete and everyone was satisfied with the work. There was also a write-up in the Bozeman newspaper. The Bridger Canyon Preservation Society, operators of the schoolhouse, expressed their thanks and held an open house shortly after the work was complete. It is the intent of the Bridger Canyon Preservation Society to arrange for children from various schools to experience a one-room school environment.

Terry Halden gave an update on the convention in Polson in September. Almost everything is in place and Terry asked for preferences on the banquet. By a show of hands, it was agreed that a buffet would be served as opposed to a sit down dinner.

The 2011 convention will be in Philipsburg, MT and Gordon Tracy gave a brief update.

The 2012 convention will be in Dillon, MT.

Terry Halden then updated everyone on the newsletter. He stated he had a large backlog of articles and could easily issue a 12-page newsletter for the next year. Everyone agreed that the newsletter is the major means of communication with our members, the articles were interesting and informative, and he should continue with the larger editions.

Terry Halden then discussed the formation of various committees. He agreed to be Committee liaisons for 2010 Convention, since he is already doing the job, however, he would like someone to assume the responsibility starting next year. Shannon Gilbert agreed to be Membership Chairman and may consider Projects Chairman. No one accepted the Grant Chairmanship, however, until a project is identified, considered, and approved, a Grant Chairman is not needed at this time.

Dick Lee informed the board that the signage project at Nevada City was now near completion. After a problem with the signs, they have now been received and will be placed at the appropriate places early this spring. He showed photos of the various signs and each will have our logo and the logo of Bitterroot Valley Forest Products who generously donated toward the cost of the signs.

New Business

Terry Halden then discussed delinquent/complimentary accounts. He defined complimentary accounts as preservation societies, museums, and other organizations that relate to preserving history. Delinquent accounts are members who have not paid their dues for the current year by December 31st. John Ellingsen made the motion that current members who have not paid their dues by December 31st be dropped from the membership list. Gordon Tracy seconded the motion, a vote was called, and all agreed.

Next, Terry Halden expressed an interest in redesigning the web site. Dick Lee, our Webmaster, stated he is not artistic and cannot design a web site but he can maintain it. Terry asked that we contact the MSU computer department and see if we could pay a stipend to a student to do the work.

The next board meeting will be held in the spring, at a time to be determined later.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

Margie Kankrlik

FORT CONNAH

by TERRY HALDEN

the oldest building in Montana

In 1846, the Oregon Treaty established the 49th parallel as the northern border of the United States. Included in the treaty was a proviso that the Hudson's Bay Company, which had numerous 'forts' or trading posts south of the border, would be compensated for its property. Unfortunately, the news of the treaty traveled slowly, and it was not until sometime later HBC agents received instructions to inventory their forts, as of 1846. However, Fort Connah, which had been under construction that year, had been omitted from the list of forts.

Prior to 1846 the HBC had the Flathead Post on the Clark Fork near the Thompson Falls, but decided to move the post to the Mission Valley, to be closer to the Salish tribes and to counteract the growing business that American traders were stealing. In 1846, Neil M. McArthur, the clerk in charge of the Flathead Post, was instructed to begin construction of a new post some sixty miles to the east. The following year Angus McDonald, who was a clerk at Fort Colville in present day Washington, replaced McArthur at the new post, which he named Fort Connen after a river in his native Scotland. The Indians, soon started calling it Conna and eventually it became known as Connah.



ANGUS McDONALD 1816 - 1889
Photo Unknown source

According to a traveler at the time, the fort consisted of a wooden, one storey building, with a bark roof, twenty-four by sixteen feet; one wooden bastion, about fourteen feet square, two store rooms each about ten foot square and a sixty square feet corral. George Simpson, a HBC employee, who assisted McDonald in the construction, in a letter to his father, stated "We have within the year moved and erected buildings and by which plan I may say the Company will gain advantage by, as it is much nearer the road the Indians pass than at the old Post. A small farm is now cultivated, the soil is capital and [we] may expect in a year or two to raise sufficient grain, so as to enable us to live without it necessary the expense of transporting flour".

In 1850, an official declaration was issued by Dr. Anson Dart, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon Territory, which had been formed in 1846, that Hudson's Bay posts within his domain should immediately cease to operate. He referred to the Intercourse Act of 1834, which barred foreigners from Indian territory and subjected them to penalty. Located in the wilderness, having faced real dangers from marauding Blackfoot Indians, the heat of summer and the extreme cold of winter, the occupants of Fort Connah took little heed of the verbal barrage from some far off politician. Besides, the United States government had been a little lax and had still not made any financial remuneration to the Company, so a 'sit tight' policy was adopted. That year, serious competition appeared, when Major John Owens purchased the old St Mary's Mission in the Bitterroot Valley and turned it into a trading post. However, competition was on a friendly basis. The HBC fort, besides trading for furs, as did its competitors, also carried on a trade in dried buffalo meat, pemmican, buffalo tallow, horse accoutrements, parfleches, dressed skins, and rawhide of buffalo hair. They also had for trade, English steel items, which, at the time, were regarded as the best in the world and much treasured by the Indians. The HBC traders had been dealing with the Flathead, Kalispell and Kootenai Indians since 1821, and naturally, the Indians preferred to trade with them than elsewhere.

In 1850 or 1852, Francois Finlay, a Métis known as Benetsee, appeared at Fort Connah and purchased some supplies, which he paid for in gold dust. He claimed to have found it in a stream feeding the Clark River southeast of the fort. (The location was re-discovered by the Stuart brothers in 1858 – and started the Montana gold rush era). McDonald was promoted to Chief Trader at Fort Colville in 1853, which effectively made him HBC boss of the entire region.

But times were changing. Captain Isaac I. Stevens made a geographic survey of the region in 1853 and the following year the Jesuits built St. Ignatius Mission, six miles south of Fort Connah. Indian raids by the Blackfoot, which had been a yearly menace, ceased in 1855 when Stevens, who had been made Governor of Washington Territory, negotiated the Blackfoot Indian Treaty between the Blackfoot Confederacy and the Flatheads. Stevens, in a letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, stated: "the Treaty guarantees the Indians the undisputed possession of their reservation as against the claims of the Hudson's Bay Company growing out of their trading post within the reservation. It consists simply of three old log houses and two acres of land that has been cultivated. An estimate of its value will be submitted with my annual report. Notice will be given to cease trading with the Indians, and if persisted, the buildings will be torn down and the traders sent out of the Indian Country".

The Flatheads were now wards of the government and had lost their right of self-determination and were to be encouraged and assisted in the pursuit of agriculture. Major Owen was made Indian Agent, which was to the detriment of his competitor.

AGENTS AT FORT CONNAH

NEIL M. MCARTHUR	1846 – 1847
ANGUS McDONALD	1847 – 1853
MICHAEL OGDEN	1853 – 1861
LACHLIN MCCLAUREN	1861 – 1865
NAPOLEON FITZSTUBBS	1865 – 1866
JAMES MCKENZIE	1866 – 1867
DUNCAN McDONALD*	1867 – 1871
*SON OF ANGUS	

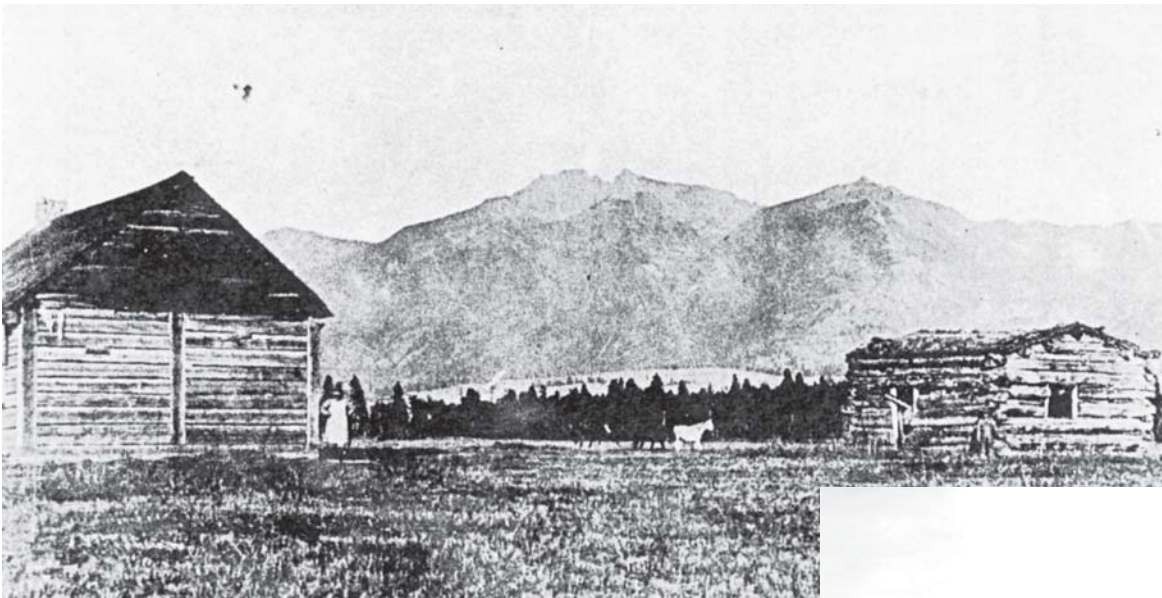
1858 to 1860 saw the construction of the Mullan Road from Walla Walla, Washington, to Fort Benton and it quickly became the main east / west thoroughfare. It was forty miles south of Fort Connah, and with the Montana gold rush of the early 1860s, the traffic on the road was so great that the little town of Hellgate, moved and expanded rapidly to become Missoula. By 1862 nearby Frenchtown had been established. All this siphoned off trade from Fort Connah.

In 1863, the United States and Great Britain formed a joint board to sit down with representatives of the Hudson's Bay Company. Testimony was heard from many employees and an attempt was made to determine the amount of money owed the Company, in accordance with terms of the 1846 treaty. In the meantime, Fort Connah, which was still under the radar, so to speak, continued its existence as a trading post. The discovery of gold in the Kootenai region of southern B.C. in the 1860's brought an influx of prospectors heading north and many stopped at the fort for outfitting.

A. H. Chapman replaced agent Owens in 1866 and again the old argument of the Intercourse Act was brought to the attention of Governor Edgerton of the newly formed Territory of Montana, and again the traders at Fort Connah turned a deaf ear - they took their orders from the Company in London. It wasn't until September 10, 1869 that joint U.S. / British representatives signed a formal agreement as to the value of the Hudson's Bay's possessions south of the International Line. The Company received \$450,000 and in the spring of 1870, Roderick Finlayson, the Chief Factor did a tour of 'the southern portion of our interior stations'. Of Fort Connah, his report stated: "we received a fair lot of furs last year and its immediate abandonment would cause serious loss, arrangements were made with Chief trader Duncan McDonald [the son of Angus] to continue with business until the close of the Outfit and to close the post next spring".

Duncan McDonald attended to the details and the following spring, 1871, the Union Jack was finally taken down from the flagpole at Fort Connah. The McDonald family subsequently acquired the property, and Angus and his Nez Perce – Iroquois wife along with several of their ten children are buried in the little cemetery behind the fort.

Today the Fort Connah Restoration Society own the property, and although only the main building remain it is open to the public during the summer season and at other times by arrangement. Each September a 'rendezvous' is held at the fort, complete with a black powder-shooting contest for the mountain men that attend.



FORT CONNAH AS IT APPEARED IN 1908, & RIGHT, AS IT IS TODAY

Photos Unknown sources.



“AND FINDING...A HAIRLESS CUB, CALLED THE GULCH, BEAR.”

Being an Early History of Bear Gulch and the Sheepeater Mining Districts

by ROBERT V. GOSS

The naming of Bear Gulch, located a scant few miles from Gardiner, Montana, was related by Eugene S. Topping in *Chronicles of the Yellowstone*, his classic 1885 history of the greater Yellowstone Valley. Topping had worked on the Union Pacific Railroad, fought Indians in Wyoming, prospected for gold in Wyoming, South Dakota, and Montana, built roads in Yellowstone, and sailed the first commercial boat on Yellowstone Lake. As a man who lived through the adventures and adversities of early Montana life, he knew first hand many of the important events and personages in Montana's early days.

Topping claimed that in 1863 a group of thirty miners, lead by George Huston, prospected their way up the Yellowstone River from the mining community of Emigrant Gulch and continued past Soda Butte toward what later became the New World mining district. Attacked by Indians who ran off all their horses, the prospectors cached their excess supplies and continued afoot toward Clark's Fork with one lone jackass. Finding a few prospects, but no pay, they returned back along the Yellowstone. Continuing the story, Topping related that, "On the way they found fair prospects in a creek on the east side of the Yellowstone, and finding also a hairless cub, called the gulch Bear." Even though today the creek goes by the name Bear Creek, the name Bear Gulch, also referred to as the Sheepeater District, still identifies the classic mining areas around the town of Jardine, Montana.

Sporadic prospecting around Bear Gulch continued uneventfully the next few years after Huston's journey until Joe Brown and partners John Zimmerer, Dan Royer, and an unknown man struck rich, gold-bearing gravel on a bar at the mouth of Bear Gulch in 1866. They staked a claim and reportedly took out \$8,000 in gold. Moving up the gulch the following season to follow the source of the gold, the men were joined by Nelson Wannamaker and three other miners who made a claim just above the mouth of Bear Gulch. News traveled quickly in the mining communities and in 1867, Lou Anderson, A.H. Hubble, George W. Reese, Caldwell, and another man discovered gold in a crevice at the mouth of the first stream above Bear Gulch, and named it Crevice Gulch.

That same year George Huston returned to the area and built a cabin on the flats across the Yellowstone River from Bear Gulch. Living on land that later became part of Yellowstone National Park, Huston's cabin is believed to be the first white residence in Yellowstone. Miners Arch Graham, Jack Crandall, and Finley (or Dougherty) also moved into the area and began working a claim at the mouth of Crevice Creek, and continued at least through the following year and part of 1869. That year Crandall and Finley made the unfortunate decision to try their luck in the Clark's Fork region. Later that fall Adam "Horn" Miller and the Bottler brothers found the unlucky miner's beheaded bodies in their camp, apparently victims of an Indian attack. That nearby creek eventually became known as Crandall Creek.

Prospecting and light mining continued in the Bear Gulch area for the next dozen years, but those ventures were somewhat stymied by the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie. The treaty established the boundaries of the Crow Reservation as running east from the Yellowstone River to the Absaroka Mountains, south to the 45th Parallel, and encompassed the mines of Emigrant, Bear and Crevice gulches, the Boulder River and Clark's Fork mines.

Although mining on Reservation lands was legally prohibited, in reality the statutes were not enforced. But the laws did serve to limit the scope of operations and prevent legitimate claims from being filed on the lands. This issue was resolved in 1882 when the federal government forced the Crow to readjust their boundaries to eliminate the mining lands. Within a few years mining activities increased significantly in Bear Gulch.

Meanwhile, placer mining was conducted on gravel bars along the creek, or in ancient channel deposits accessed by tunnels or drifts into the hillsides. During the years 1875-77, Joe Brown and other miners built over 3000 feet of ditch to carry water to the various gravel bars they were working. In either 1870 or 1874, depending on sources, Joe Brown and James Graham discovered quartz gold deposits in upper Bear Gulch on a hill later known as Mineral Hill. Although not developed for several years, the Bozeman Times reported in July 1877 that Wm. Heffner, Joe Brown, and James Graham were successfully crushing ore with a crudely-built, mule-drawn device known as an arrastra, based on a primitive design from the early Spanish and Mexican miners. The paper also noted that George Huston and Stoker Henderson would have their arrastra operating by October. Hard rock mining escalated in 1878 when Z.H. "Zed" Daniels and three other men began working a quartz lead on Bear Gulch and built an arrastra to process their ore. In July the Bozeman Times reported that George Huston, Jimmy Dewings, and Joe Brown discovered a "fine gold lead . . . [that] panned out one dollar to the pound of rock." A later article described a nine-foot vein with free gold running through it; a four-ton run through the arrastra yielded \$50 per ton.

Although still within the Crow Reservation, Bear Gulch mining continued mostly unabated and miners continued to stream into the area. Even though mining claims could not be legally filed, mining communities typically kept their own set of books that described claims that were made, the owners, and other pertinent data, in anticipation of their district being legally recognized. In 1879 the following mines were recorded at Bear Gulch: Legal Tender (Joe Brown); The Wonder of the World (Beattie, Anderson, and Lovely); The James Graham Lode; Joe Brown & Graham; The Monitor; The Mountain Bride; The Coan & McCauley Lode; The Mountain Chief (Geo. Huston); The Champion Lode; The Summit Lode; The Great Western; Mountain Chief (Brown, Huston, & Graham); and the Home Stake.

Various newspapers touted the richness and auspicious future of both Bear Gulch and Crevice Gulch, where similar successes and operations were occurring. The Bismarck Tribune in May of 1879 claimed, "The belief is that ere long Bear Gulch is destined to become one of the richest camps in the Territory." In a similar vein, the Bozeman Avant-Courier portrayed the miners having "a bright future before us, and trust by another year to be adding to our tribute of gold to the nation's wealth." The paper also reported in April that a new town site was being laid out with corner lots going up, a harbinger of anticipated stability and prosperity. Outside investors were now beginning to see the potential of Bear Gulch and as a sign of things to come, Huston and Dewings sold a third of one of their claims for \$3500.



Above: HYDRAULIC MINING IN BEAR GULCH ca 1885.

Right: JOHN F. CURL, 'HORN' MILLER & 'UNCLE' JOE BROWN.

Both photos, Doris Whithorn collection

Huston went on to concentrate his efforts in the New World Mining District, amassed dozens of claims, and became one of the original founders of Cooke City.

With the exclusion of Bear Gulch from the Crow Reservation in 1882, big money started to take over. Typically, the early prospectors and miners in a mining district did not have the capital, backing, or expertise to engage in large scale mining and were generally limited to placer mining and small scale hard rock operations. After time, their best option was to attempt to sell their claims to moneyed investors and move on to greener, or golden as the case may be, pastures. Miners were oft-times a restless lot and the prospect of finding new and richer claims was often more exciting than the day-to-day drudgery of actual mining.

In 1882 Major George O. Eaton and a man named Sturgess formed the Bear Gulch Placer Company and filed articles of incorporation in Gallatin County with capital of \$40,000. Eaton bought out Brown's Legal Tender mine and over the next few years purchased other mining properties. His crews tunneled into the canyon walls following old river channels in search for placer gold. Eaton also began hydraulic mining in 1884 on Joe Brown's 40-acre placer claim on Bear Creek, about three miles below what would later become the town of Jardine. Installing equipment served by 1200 feet of 12-inch pipe with a vertical drop of 400 feet through a six-inch nozzle, it was reported to be the most powerful hydraulic placer operation in the world. Blasting away huge sections of the canyon walls in the quest for auriferous bounty, Eaton realized few riches from his efforts and left a scarred landscape, still visible to this day. Changing direction, Eaton built the first quartz mill in Bear Gulch, a five-stamp combination mill to process the oxidized ores from the various lode claims. The mill operated successfully for about two years, but shut down around 1886 due to internal company dissention and the difficulty in hauling ore to the Cinnabar railhead.

Minimal organized mining efforts occurred until 1890 when the firm of E.D. Edgerton and W.E. Jewell of Helena took over the operation and added five stamps to the mill. Operating successfully for three years, the operation was shutdown during the Panic of 1893 and the resulting economic depression. By 1895 a few mines and two stamp mills were again in operation. In the midst of the mining operations, a few businesses had been established, including a hotel, sample room, general store, and four log cabin residences belonging to George Welcome and two other men. Together, the buildings took on the vague appearance of a town. Despite promising discoveries by Uncle Joe Brown and others, the community remained relatively quiet until 1898, when the arrival of Harry Bush inaugurated a new era in Bear Gulch. Securing a lease on the Legal Tender mine and the Edgerton & Jewell properties on Mineral Hill, Bush organized the Bear Gulch Mining Company, and began buying additional claims that included the Sowash mine on the same vein as the Legal Tender, the Revenue from George Phelps, and five mines from George Welcome. Bush enlarged the Eaton mill to twenty stamps, attracted additional investors, and layed out the townsite of Jardine. Within a year 130 new buildings were built in town, businesses developed, and the mining district boomed. With the beginning of the 20th Century close in sight, a new epoch was emerging that would experience the cyclic triumphs and failures, joys and sorrows, so typical of the mining industry.

BANNACK ASSOCIATION'S COMMEMORATION OF THE 1864 HANGING OF SHERIFF PLUMMER AND HIS DEPUTIES

by SHANNON GILBERT



On a cold and overcast Saturday in January, the Bannack Association presented a re-enactment of the 1864 hanging of Sheriff Henry Plummer and two of his deputies, Buck Stinson and Ned Ray. The re-enactment commemorates the 146th anniversary of the dramatic event that occurred in the town of Bannack, prior to Montana becoming a territory. The lively re-enactment narrates the story of how the Vigilantes wrestled these three men from the places they were staying and then marched them up to the gallows, where they were subsequently hung without trial. The re-enactment was well attended by folks, many of whom had spent the early afternoon ice skating on the old dredge pond.



In the evening of the same day, the Bannack Association held their annual membership dinner which included keynote speaker, archaeologist Daniel Hall. Mr. Hall has been conducting archaeological excavations at Bannack State Park in preparation for stabilization work on the Parsonage, Marge Griffith Cabin, and Building 8. He presented an interesting presentation of the unearthed artifacts, which include toys, beads, jewelry, tools, beer bottles, ceramic fragments, butchered bone, tobacco pipe fragments, cans, building materials, and a bullet casing from a .44-50 Henry Flat rifle. Toys were found in all of the excavations around the buildings suggesting that children had a large presence in the town of Bannack. Bison, deer, antelope, and badger are among the animals identified in the bone that was recovered; however, surprisingly several pieces of butchered bone were identified as domestic dog and cat indicating that these animals were also supper items. Several of the journals indicate that during the winter supplies were unable to be delivered because of the weather and all there was to eat was flour. The archaeological evidence suggests that domestic dog and cat supplemented the diet during these lean times. Artifacts from the excavations eventually will be part of the visitor center displays and interpretive talks.



ALL PHOTOS BY SHANNON GILBERT, EXCEPT ON THE LEFT BY MEG McWHINNEY FROM HER VIDEO.

The GARRISON MILL near VIRGINIA CITY

by SHANNON GILBERT

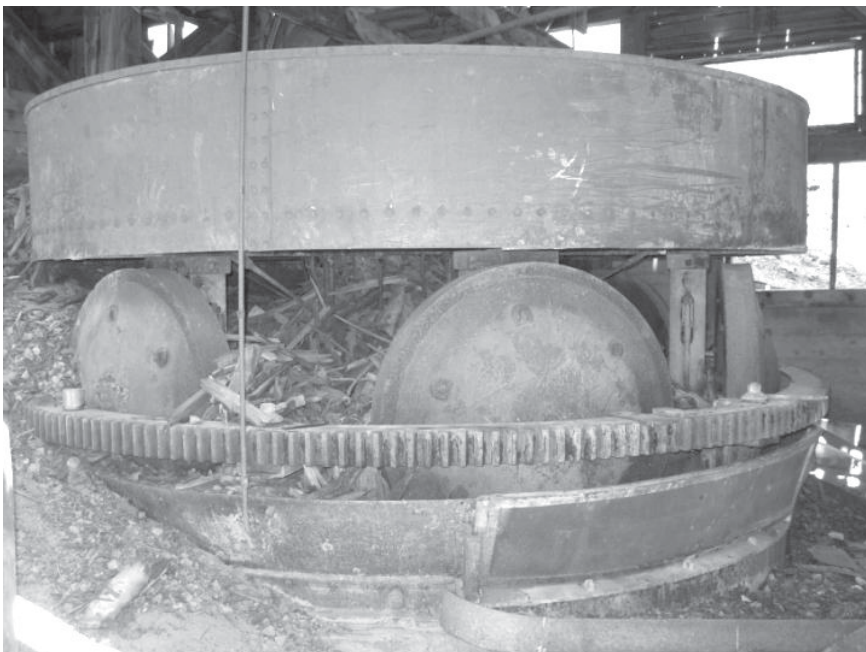
Ten miles south of Virginia City, near the headwaters of Alder Gulch and north of Baldy Mountain, is the Garrison Mill. The Garrison Mill, described as a Lane Amalgamation and Concentrating Mill, was built between November 1934 and May 1935 on the northern portion of the Baldy Placer. It was owned by Rupert Garrison of the Virginia City Mining Company and was built by Hugo and John Johnson. The value of the mill at the time of construction was \$30,000. Mr. Garrison and the Virginia City Mining Company had leased the Baldy Placer from the estate of William Andrews Clark.



THE GARRISON MILL AS IT APPEARS TODAY.

Both photos by Shannon Gilbert

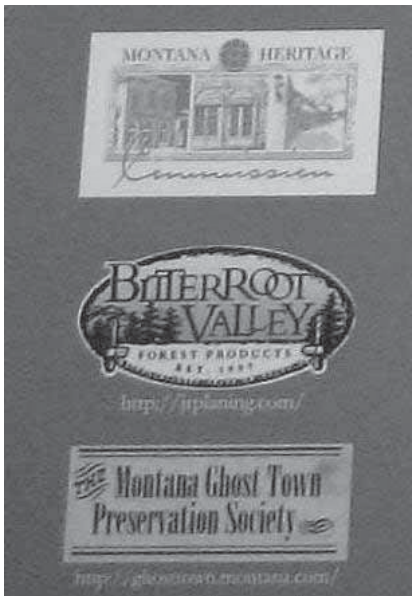
THE LANE CHILEAN CRUSHER.



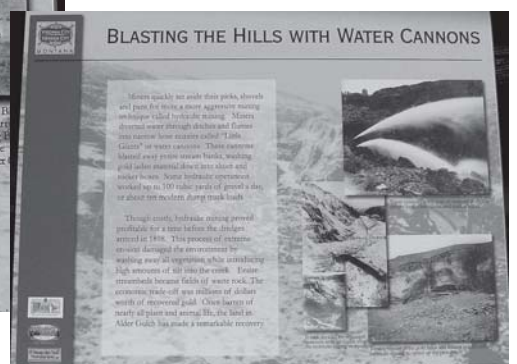
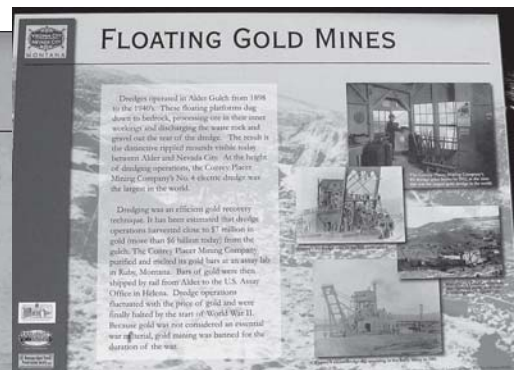
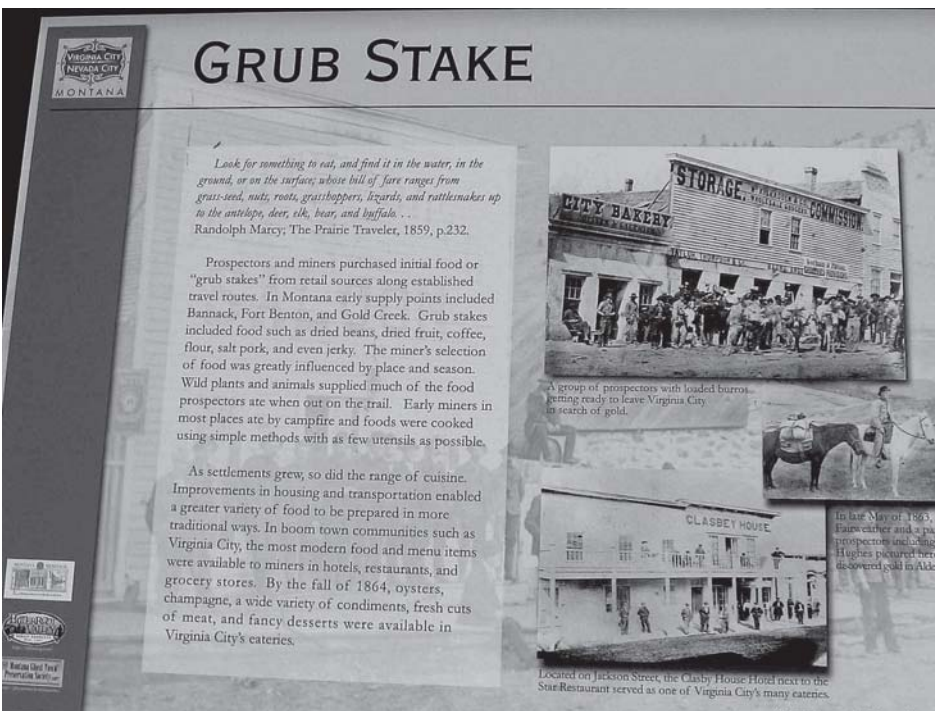
The four-story mill is built into the side of a tree-covered hill and is masterfully constructed with large wooden beams and mortar and tendon joists. The Lane Chilean Mill, crusher, grizzly, engine mounts, and tables are still present in the building. The Lane Chilean Mill is a slow-speed machine mill that is able to crush 2.69 tons of ore per hour. It was used throughout the west after the turn of the twentieth century and was known as an excellent amalgamator for its time. A wooden trestle connected the top of the mill with the road, which allowed trucks to unload ore.

Remarkably, the mill does not display much physical evidence that it was used nor is there archival evidence to suggest that the mill operated at anytime. No large tailings or ore piles are around the mill. The stairs do not show foot traffic. Furthermore, no used cans that may have contained cyanide or other types of concentrating compounds are found around the structure or in the gully east of the building. The mill appears to have been a promoter mill used by Rupert Garrison and the Virginia City Mining Company to increase the amount of authorized capital stock in the corporation during the Depression. In 1934 (the year before the mill was built) the amount of authorized capital stock in the Virginia City Mining Company was \$200,000 according to the company's annual report. However, by the end of 1935 (the year the mill was completed) the amount of authorized capital stock in the company was \$300,000. However, the 1938 annual report indicates that "on the account of insolvency [the Virginia City Mining Company] has ceased to be a going concern, and has ceased voluntarily to incur financial obligations, and has not done any business for more than three years past." This statement lends support that the mill did not operate after it was completed in 1935. Nonetheless, the building is an excellent example of engineering during the 1930s and is unique in that it represents gold promoting efforts during the Depression.

NEVADA CITY SIGNAGE



Dick Lee informs us that the five signs that we sponsored, along with the generous donation from the Bitterroot Valley Forest Products, (which make the Ghost Wood product), will be ready for installation this spring. Delays were encountered when the manufacturer of the signs made an error and they had to be re-edited, but the problem has been rectified and the signs will be installed near Nevada City as soon as weather permits. The five signs illustrate the following topics: Gold Rush; The Road to the Buffalo; Hydraulic Mining; Dredging and Miners' Diet. The signs are high-pressure laminate, digitally imaged paper and layers of phenolic resin impregnated stock, pressed under intense heat and pressure. The layers are fused together into a solid core that will withstand any weathering. The signs are in color, although shown here in black and white. Each sign bears our logo and the logo of the Bitterroot Valley Forest Products on the lower left.



AT WORK

BRIDGER CANYON SCHOOL HOUSE



Main photo: Bridger Canyon Schoolhouse, proudly displaying its Christmas lights this year. Insets, clockwise from the left: Daniel Boone, repairing the windows / the door frame / & one of the original desks.

All photos, courtesy Gary Sager



Although it was structurally sound, the Lower Bridger Canyon one-room schoolhouse was in need of numerous cosmetic repairs. Daniel Boone (honestly, that was his name) a finishing carpenter, submitted the lower of two estimates and the Bridger Canyon Preservation Society, the owners of the building, which is listed on the N. R. of H. P., authorized the work after your board of Directors authorized a grant of \$1,500 to cover roughly 50% of the needed work. About half the total estimate was for painting the exterior, which your board felt could wait a few more years. The work is now complete and schoolhouse board has expressed their thanks for our assistance. We also got a nice write up in the Bozeman paper.





Montana Ghost Town Quarterly

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

NEWS IN BRIEF:

GARNET, GRANITE COUNTY..... Allan Mathews, historian with the BLM, in Missoula, informs us that preliminary documents have been filed to add Garnet to the National Register of Historic Places list. He is also researching the Garnet Mountains area with the idea of writing a new history book on Garnet, Coloma, Beartown, Top o' Deep, Copper Cliff, Reynold's City and Yreka mining/ghost towns.

FORT BENTON, CHOUTEAU COUNTY..... Having carved a wagon road over mountains and through dense forest from Fort Walla Walla to Fort Benton, in two years, U.S. Army Lieutenant John Mullan finally reached his destination in 1860. The 150th celebration of the event will be held in Fort Benton from May 20 – 22 this spring. The Mullan Road Conference will include a reception at the American Fur trading post of old Fort Benton, displays of artifacts used in the expedition, such as the original diary kept by Mullan's wagon master John A. Creighton; a banquet and a road trip along the Mullan road to the Sun River valley and the location of old Fort Shaw. More details can be found at their website: www.fortbenton.com/mullan/

BUTTE, SILVER BOW COUNTY..... The PBS documentary Butte, America, - the Saga of a hard rock mining town, (reviewed in the Spring 2009 newsletter) which was playing in selected theaters around the State last winter, and was shown on Montana PBS last fall, is now available in DVD format. If you cannot find it in your local DVD store you can order in on line from www.montanapbs.org But be sure to purchase the extended 67 minute version, as opposed to the 54 minute version (it's only a dollar more) as the longer version includes the poignant "in memoriam" addition at the end of the show, listing the Butte residents who passed away during the making of the documentary. For anyone interested in Butte or mining history in general, this DVD is a must buy.

BONNER & MILLTOWN, MISSOULA COUNTY..... For more than a century, the confluence of the Blackfoot and Clark Fork rivers, on the eastern outskirts of Missoula has been the center of the timber industry of western Montana. Around the massive timber mill was erected two company towns, Bonner and Milltown, similar in type as Walkerville was to the Mountain-Con mine near Butte. But like Butte's mines, the mill is now silent; the most recent owner was Stimson Lumber Co, which closed down in 2008. Now the company built homes of Bonner and Milltown have been added to the National Register of Historic Places, as the residents face the future without the mill.