



VOLUME 40

Montana Ghost Town Quarterly

SUMMER 2010

An Invitation from the Steindorf Families:

The cover of Michael McCoy's book published for the Insider's Guide series of books says it all through the title and cover photograph. The photo shows the spectacular Mission Mountains as a backdrop looking across the Flathead River. The title of the book says the rest "Off the Beaten Path; A Guide to the Unique Places of Montana."

Of course, all of Montana has unique places but no other place has the Mission Mountains as its backdrop. I'd like to take this opportunity to encourage all of our fellow Ghost Town Preservation Society members to plan on attending this year's convention in Polson, Montana.

Even though the area doesn't have any "real" ghost towns, it has some very unique history. Such as the oldest building in Montana, Fort Connah, that predates the gold rush era. We have the longest continually operating Catholic Mission in Montana at St Ignatius, established in 1854. But one of the main historical events that made the Mission Valley what it is today was the opening of the Flathead Indian Reservation to homesteading in 1910.

How did this come about? In 1909, 81,363 people entered a lottery to gain access to this land. Why such interest? Today the population of the Flathead Reservation is 20% Indian and 80% White. How does that work? Dr. Joe McDonald, the retiring President of the Salish and Kootenai College, and I will try to answer these questions and many more during our talks on Saturday evening. Dr Joe McDonald is a direct descendent of Angus McDonald, the Fort Connah's first Chief Trader under The Hudson Bay Trading Company in 1846.

My immediate family grew up here in the Mission Valley. My grandfather homesteaded the farm I live on when the reservation opened up in 1910. A lot of the information that we will be sharing with you is new to us also. We are very excited to be able to share it with everyone. We are looking forward to seeing you in September.

Sincerely,

David Steindorf and the Steindorf families

Montana Ghost Town Quarterly

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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.

Summer 2010

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Newsletter Editor: Terry Halden
Website Administrator: Shannon Gilbert
2010 Convention Co-Chairpersons: Jim, Betty, David & Tammy Steindorf

The Prez Sez

TERRY HALDEN

In this issue of the newsletter, I am pleased to introduce you to two new contributors, Alan Patera, and Larry Roland. Alan is the editor of the Oregon Postal History Journal and was kind enough to let me reproduce an article he wrote for that newsletter about his search last summer for the town of Cavendish, down Grasshopper Creek from Bannack. Larry and his wife Vivian are long time members of our society and their photographs were published in the book, 'Montana: Mining Ghost Towns'. Rounding out the articles, is one from our 'Dean' of Bannack, Tom Lowe, about the saloons of that burg and a short essay from yours truly about St. Ignatius Mission which we will be visiting this September.

On page 9 you will find a complete itinerary for the convention and I'm sure you will agree with me that the Steindorfs have done a fantastic job of putting together this convention. Their personal invitation to join them in the Mission Valley is on the front cover. Cost per person has, unfortunately, risen to \$70, mainly due to the rising cost of food and catering. However, the registration fee includes the bus trip, all entrance fees to the places we shall visit, the banquet and two lunches. So above that, all you have is the cost of your motel room, dinner on Friday evening, and a couple of breakfasts. As the hotel is catering the banquet, and not a private caterer, we should not experience the problem we have run into in the past in that those at the end of the line up have 'slim pickin's'.

Speaking of motels, the KwaTaqNuk Resort, Best Western (406-883-3636) still have some rooms put aside for us at \$79.99 and although there are other motels in Polson, there are none of any national chain.

At a recent board meeting (see minutes, opposite page) we welcomed Meg McWhinney to the board. Meg is a full time student at MSU in Bozeman studying in the visual arts department. It is hoped that Meg can demonstrate the skills she has by video-taping some of the events at our upcoming convention.

On May 8th Shannon Gilbert of your board of directors gave an illustrated lecture at the Bozeman Pioneer Museum about ghost towns and the reasons to preserve them. Judging by the attendance of over 50 people, it was well received and following the talk we had the pleasure of welcoming some new members. This Power Point demonstration will be an asset in future talks to service clubs, schools etc, as we try to increase our membership.

John Stoner who is the man to go to if you need help with any history project to do with Broadwater County, and a frequent contributor to this newsletter, sustained a serious accident last year. He was photographing dredge heaps in Broadwater County when he lost his footing on the top of a load of rocks, fell and landed on his head. The result was a blood clot on the brain, but after numerous surgeries he is now recuperating at his home in Townsend. When I dropped in, recently, to see how he was recovering, he was up and around and I am pleased to say, almost back to his old self. We all wish him a complete and speedy recovery. See you in Polson,

Terry

New Members

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

Peter Hoveland, Big Fork, MT

Jeff Cunningham, Orting, WA

David Paul, Cordova, TN

Roberta Barrows, Helena, MT

Virginia Holman, Bozeman, MT

Julie Videon, Bozeman, MT

Joyce Grande, Bozeman, MT

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

May 8, 2010

The meeting was called to order by President Terry Halden at 1:00 pm at the Pioneer Museum in Bozeman, MT. Board members in attendance were: Mike Byrnes, Bernice DeHaas, Shannon Gilbert, Terry Halden, Margie Kankrlik, Richard Lee, and Gordon Tracy. Board members that were unable to attend: Loretta Chapman, John DeHaas, John Ellingsen, Rosemary Lee, Tom Lowe, Jan O'Brien, Marie O'Brien, Nick Shrauger and Nettie Warwood.

Minutes of the January 10, 2010 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. Dick Lee made a motion that we dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve the minutes as distributed earlier. Gordon Tracy seconded the motion, a vote was called and the minutes were approved.

The Treasurer's Report was given by Margie Kankrlik. After discussion, Gordon Tracy made the motion to accept the Treasurer's report as read, Mike Byrnes seconded the motion, a vote was called and the motion passed.

Old Business

Terry Halden gave an update on the convention in Polson in September. With the agenda almost complete and estimated costs submitted, it was proposed that the convention cost per person be \$70. Bernice DeHaas made a motion to accept the proposed cost per person, Dick seconded the motion, a vote was called and the matter was settled.

Gordon Tracy gave a brief update on the 2011 convention which will be in Philipsburg, MT.

New Business

Terry Halden then brought to the board's attention that the Articles of Incorporation of the Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society states in Article II, "That the term for which the corporation is to exist is forty (40) years from and after its date of incorporation." An amendment to the Articles of Incorporation needs to be filed with the Secretary of State replacing the above wording with: Article II, "The corporation shall remain in existence until the Board of Directors dissolves the company, at which time, the company shall be dissolved in accordance with Section 501 (c) of the Internal Revenue Code." Gordon Tracy made a motion to amend the Articles as stated above, Mike Byrnes seconded the motion, a vote was called and the amendment passed.

Next was a discussion on how to use the ghost town presentation Shannon Gilbert prepared and presented at the Pioneer Museum during history month. The consensus was that the Power Point presentation was a valuable tool to spread the word about ghost towns and should be used at every opportunity. Shannon agreed to send a disk to all board members with the presentation so any of us could use it as needed.

Meg McWhinney joined the meeting. Meg gave a brief update on her filming of the Hanging of Sheriff Plummer and will have excerpts to show at our next board meeting.

Terry Halden then proposed to make Meg an official board member. Margie Kankrlik made the motion to accept Meg McWhinney as a board member of the Ghost Town Society, Gordon Tracy seconded the motion, a vote was called and the proposal passed. The board welcomed Meg to the group.

Next, Dick Lee, our Webmaster, stated he was pleased to announce that he had asked Shannon Gilbert to replace him as the club's Webmaster and that she had accepted. The board thanked Dick for his past efforts and welcomed Shannon to her new position.

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

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

Margie Kankrlik

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PHILIPSBURG ITEMS.

"Chips," writing from Philipsburg to the Inter Mountain, gives the following batch of mining notes. Our mines are looking unusually well. The Hope is working on a splendid body of ore which they are taking out faster than the mill can handle. Mr. Perkins intends increasing the capacity of the mill by a sufficient number of stamps to enable him to work 25 tons a day in the spring.

The Algonquin mill is running principally on ore from the Salmon, which is yielding better than it ever did before and bids fair to hold out.

Mr. C. McClure has made a rich strike in the Granite Mountain mine.

A. Rother has struck in his lower tunnel the same immense streak of rich ore which he found in the upper level. He taps it 280 feet deep, and has six feet of ore which assays from 100 to 200 ounces. This, taking into consideration that he has the hanging wall only—not having yet reached the foot wall—tempts me to state that it is the largest and richest silver mine in Montana.

Work on the Trout mine, under the quiet management of Mr. M. Caplice, and Mr. Chris. Hart, his capable foreman, moves steadily along, always yielding some ore and making very little fuss about it.

Mr. J. Ullery will resume work in a few days on the Mountain Boy.

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TAKEN FROM THE MADISONIAN, JANUARY 2, 1882

We will be in Philipsburg for our convention in 2011.

The SALOONS of BANNACK

By Tom Lowe

Bannack was typical of many gold rush towns and was noted for the large number of saloons that provided liquid refreshment to the thirsty miners, freighters, merchants, etc of the Grasshopper diggings. One of the most notable was the two-story Goodrich Hotel, the first hotel in Montana. The Goodrich, besides providing rooms had a saloon and offered a venue for political speeches from the upstairs balcony. Before Bannack built a church in 1877, the Goodrich and other saloons would sometimes close for an hour so that a traveling preacher could hold services. The miners were generally respectful and liberal with their gold dust. However, the saloons did not enjoy a good reputation with many of the town's people. In 1863 a young man named Webster arrived in Bannack and made this comment in his journal.

"Thursday, October 22: Have been over in town. It is located on the east bank of Grasshopper Creek. It looks to me as if it was all saloons, and in fact most of the places are; only two clothing stores; no dry goods stores; in fact I don't think there is any need of any as I do not see any women on the street. There is only one street. I do not think there is but one butcher or meat shop; fact is there isn't much of anything here; three grocery stores. You can get whiskey anytime you want it. It is a desolate place indeed. I have been looking around but do not find anything satisfactory. Was offered \$250 per month by a Mr. Durand to tend bar for him in a billiard hall, board and washing free, but do not want to sell whisky, only as the last resort to keep from starving. There may be money in it, but I don't like the business and the associations connected with it."

Mr. Webster certainly didn't like the whiskey trade as \$250 a month plus board was a high paying job in those days.

With the onset of winter many men would spend much of their time and gold dust in the saloons where tempers often flared as the liquor flowed. On a cold morning, January 14, 1863, Henry Plummer got into an argument with a drunken bully, Jack Cleveland. When the smoke cleared, Cleveland was left dying in a pool of blood from several bullet wounds from Plummer's pistol. Plummer was later exonerated in the killing of the unpopular Cleveland at a miner's court. Sadly, the Goodrich was dismantled around 1950. Charles Bovey hauled the front of the Goodrich Hotel to Virginia City and attached it to the old Anaconda Hotel. You can see it there now; it is called the Fairweather Inn.



SKINNER'S SALOON, SANDWICHED BETWEEN THE MEAD HOTEL AND THE GOODRICH HOTEL, Ca 1940's
Beaverhead County Museum photo

Durand's Billiard Hall and Saloon, Madame Hall's Saloon, The Gem, Peabody's, Mikus' Saloon and Dance Hall, Ford's, Madame Grogan's Hurdy Gurdy House, Burdick's and many other watering holes served Bannack's thirsty citizens over the years. Of Bannack's many saloons the Bank Exchange was one of the most prominent. This large two-story building sat on the south side of Main Street just east of where the Ovitt store is today. Once owned by Bannack pioneer Amede Bessette many tales surround the saloon. One of the more interesting stories was reported in the Dillon Tribune on January 15, 1910 concerning an event that happened years earlier.

The remains of Plummer and Stinson remained undisturbed for a number of years, we have been unable to learn exactly how long, when one day several small boys, one of whom was George R. Metlen, our well-known civil engineer, meandered up the gulch to the graves. George proposed that they dig up the skulls of the men and it was no sooner proposed than every boy began scratching gravel. The skulls were soon exhumed, placed on the ends of sticks and they went marching down into Bannack and through the main street. The skulls were left at a saloon called the 'Bank Exchange.' Mr. Metlen says that afterward the saloon burned and the skulls were reduced to ashes along with the rest of the building.

Many of the buildings in Bannack were destroyed by fire over the years. The Dillon Tribune reported on a fire in the Friday October 28, 1898 edition.



THE BANK EXCHANGE
SALOON

Beaverhead County
Museum photo

Swept by Flames. Bannack the Scene of a Big Fire Thursday Morning

At an early hour yesterday morning when the inhabitants were peacefully slumbering in the little town of Bannack, which nestles among the hills and mountains 26 miles from the railroad, they were awakened by the cry of fire and men, women and children rushed to the scene of the conflagration.

The blaze was discovered by the watchman aboard the F. L. Graves dredge boat in the rear of the Bank Exchange, which was being used as school house and was unoccupied at the time the fire started. The watchman gave the alarm and willing hands went to work to try and save the adjoining buildings. They did not succeed, however, in getting the fire under control until about four o'clock a. m. when it had burned the Bank Exchange and spread down the south side of Main Street burning Chas. Mikus' saloon and dance hall, Babcock's fruit store and a building belonging to Mrs. May. The fire stopped at Mikus' dwelling. Although saved it is very badly damaged. It is learned that there is only the Mikus residence, Rettallack's blacksmith shop and a big frame building owned by L. R. Grannis and occupied by Penaluna and Anderson as a saloon, left along that block. The fire is supposed to be the work of a miscreant.

There is no water supply in Bannack other than a well and a big ditch some distance from the scene of the fire. This ditch is on the side of a hill and was tapped in three places turning three streams of water down to the fire.

Much good work was done by the citizens of Bannack and those whose property was saved have cause to be thankful. When daylight broke yesterday morning Main street was full of all kinds of household goods and fixtures.

This should be a warning to Dillon people and force upon them the necessity of a good water works and system.

Today, the best-known saloon in Bannack still stands, Cyrus Skinner's Antlers Saloon. Skinner's had a bad reputation as many of the rougher members of Bannack, including some of the Road Agents frequented the bar where brawls and shootings were common. In one incident a card game turned deadly when accusations of cheating were leveled. Incredibly neither of the card players who were shooting at each other were injured but a stray bullet killed George Carrhart, who was sleeping in a bunk at the back of the saloon. Skinner also met an early death, his involvement with the road agents resulted in his being hanged by the Vigilantes at Hellgate in January 1864. Sometime later A. F. Wright and John McMeen turned the saloon into a grocery and general merchandise store that was operated for many years. After the store closed it was used as a garage for a time. After years of neglect and deterioration former park manager Roy Herseth and maintenance worker Roy Cranmore restored Skinner's saloon in the late 1970s. A fine old bar was returned to Bannack from the defunct Elk Park Inn and now graces the saloon. Skinner's saloon is once more one of the most popular buildings at Bannack.

The SEARCH for CAVENDISH, MONTANA

By Alan H. Patera

Cavendish, Montana, according to the official records, had a post office from November 2, 1891 to October 18, 1893, with John E. Fleming as postmaster. But that fact poses a number of problems. Why was it needed? The site location report filed for Cavendish shows it to be in Section 9, Township 8S, Range 11E, which places it less than two miles east of Bannack. Other information on this report shows that Mr. Fleming estimated his patrons to be “120 in the village, 150 total.”

Bannack City had been a boom camp in 1863 and rode that prosperity to become the first capital of Montana Territory. It soon lost that distinction and most of its population to Virginia City. Bannack City had obtained one of Montana’s first post offices on November 21, 1863, and even though it was a sleepy little town in 1893, it still had a post office and functioned as a trading center. It didn’t really need another post office in close proximity. Why then Cavendish?

Bannack City’s post office name was shortened to Bannack on March 12, 1898 and was eventually discontinued on February 15, 1938, and the town site with its many buildings subsequently became a Montana State Park. I made inquiry of the Park Superintendent, who knew nothing of the post office. Inquiries at the County Museum at Dillon in 2008 met with no results; all they had on Cavendish was a folder, empty except for a list of post offices with the name Cavendish on it, taken from Dr. Lutz’ book, **Montana Post Offices and Postmasters**.

Examinations of the USGS quadrangle for the area added to the puzzle. Section 9 is comprised almost entirely of steep, rugged terrain, and contained almost no roads and no water, though the southwestern corner comes close to Grasshopper Creek. At one time there was a road (since washed out) from Bannack downstream along Grasshopper Creek to the placer mining area at Bonaccord. There was one road that crossed the summit through the section, said to have been built as a bypass for the road that washed out. It had one spur to the north that passed near some mines in the next section north. There was another spur that went south to a dead end above the canyon of Grasshopper Creek. That was it. Could the post office have been at a roadhouse, perhaps at the summit?

To answer these questions, I decided to walk the ground. So I returned to Bannack in August 2009, determined to walk the ground to see if I could determine a site for the Cavendish post office. From Bannack one can see the road over the summit switch backing up the steep slope. As a road, it leaves much to be desired, though passable by ATVs and high-clearance vehicles. It looks daunting, and on a hot August Montana day it could be a most unpleasant hike. But we were in luck - the weather was cool and sunny and walking was quite pleasant, although the steepness of the uphill invited rests whenever there was shade. This area has a few scattered trees and is quite beautiful for the varied terrain.

Entering Section 9 and sloggng uphill, I kept scanning both sides of the road for any sign of a building site, but there was nothing. No one with experience in site hunting would claim to be infallible, certainly not I, but I think I’m pretty good at detecting signs of human disturbance, through both training and experience. There was nothing. Attaining the summit, where perhaps a roadhouse might be kept, there was nothing. The spur road north seemed to offer no hope for a building site while it was still in Section 9. So we continued downward to Bonaccord, again examining any possibility for a building site until exiting the section. There was nothing.



BANNACK AND GRASSHOPPER CREEK, SEEN FROM THE ‘HIGH’ ROAD TO CAVENDISH AND BONACCORD. Author’s photo

The road reaches Grasshopper Creek again near the former site of the Bonaccord post office. Here were a few building sites, but this was not Cavendish. This put us at the lower end of Grasshopper Creek’s canyon, below the washout. I followed this road to where it crossed the creek at a point the map shows to be the Bonaccord Placer Mining claim. This is on the outside of a bend in the creek, where the land rises steeply for hundreds of feet.

Studying the map, it seemed that if we could get to the other side of the bend, we would be close to the end of the last road in Section 9 that we had not already walked. I didn’t really want to reverse course and cross back over the summit again, so it seemed appealing to make the attempt. Once you work through the willows, there is a “trail” which goes straight up the rocky slope at the angle of a step staircase. After about 100 feet of scrambling it brings you to a bench (wide ledge) above the creek, along which ran a faint path. This brought us to a point high above the creek — and precisely to the turnaround of the dead-end road I was seeking.

There was nothing at the turnaround to suggest there were buildings there. If there were any other purpose it would be as a location from which one could lower supplies to the Bonaccord placer claims. So we walked north on the only road not yet taken, a road not taken by very many, ever.

Then, about a quarter mile above the turnaround, there was something. On the east side of the road there was a mineshaft, and adjacent to it was a building site. It was at the head of a gulch that trended southwest toward Grasshopper Creek. Washing in a placer operation had disturbed the ground along the gulch. This must be the site!

We followed the road back to where it joined with the road we had come in by. On one knoll with a small grassy area there was a spot for a tent or a building, or maybe a corral, but other than that I detected no other building sites anywhere within Section 9. In my own mind I have successfully pinpointed Cavendish, but have no documentary proof.

Still unanswered is the question of why there was a perceived need for a post office at that point, with so few potential patrons and Bannack less than two miles away. Sure, it was somewhat difficult to get to, but many other mines were more remote. From the lack of any other building sites and the lack of anyplace to put a village (anywhere in Section 9!), it would seem that John Fleming's estimate of 120 population "in the village" was more than slightly exaggerated.



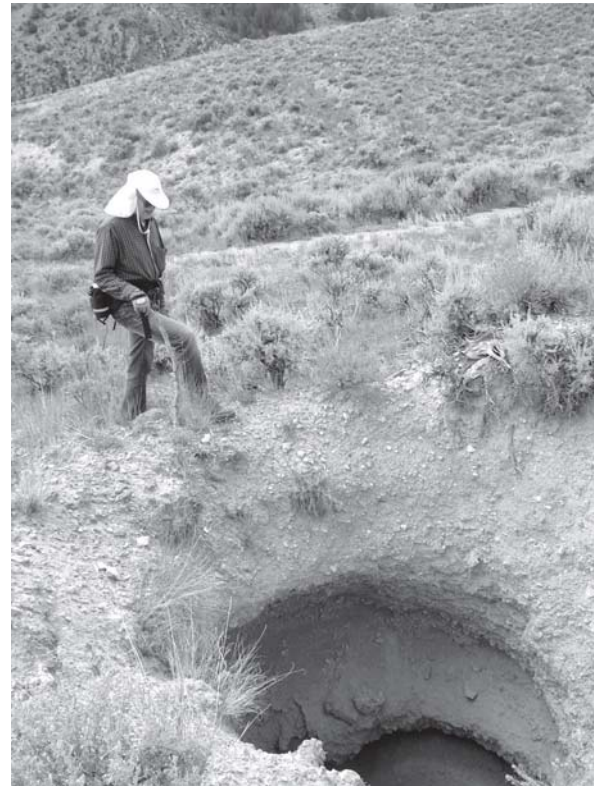
THE ONLY APPARENT BUILDING SITE IN SECTION 9, THE AUTHOR SURMISES THIS TO HAVE BEEN THE SITE OF CAVENDISH POST OFFICE. Author's photo.



ONLY A FEW FOUNDATION ROCKS AND A PIT TESTIFY TO HUMAN USE OF THE SITE.

Left: THIS SHAFT IS ADJACENT TO THE BUILDING LOCATION.

Author's photos.



Cavendish post office was discontinued in 1893. Within a year major dredging operations were begun in Grasshopper Creek in the area between Bannack and Cavendish. It's a likely scenario that the mining effort at Cavendish was abandoned as the focus of attention centered on the streambed. A post office was established at Bonaccord on March 3, 1899, which lasted until only until December 30 of the same year. There really wasn't enough population in the area to justify a post office other than Bannack.

I could find no photograph and know of no postmarks from the short-lived Cavendish post office, but at least I think I know where it was.

Alan Patera is one of our members on the West Coast and is the editor of the Oregon County Postal History Journal, where this article first appeared. We reprint it with his kind permission.

St. IGNATIUS MISSION

by Terry Halden

In 1831 a delegation of Salish (Flathead) Indians traveled to St. Louis in an attempt to bring back missionaries for their tribe. They were unsuccessful, as were two subsequent trips, but in 1839 they met with Father DeSmet in Council Bluffs, Iowa and after getting permission from the Jesuit Father General in Rome, the following year Father DeSmet moved to the Bitterroot Valley and established St. Mary's mission. Constant raids by Blackfoot Indians caused the Fathers to sell the church to Major John Owen in 1849, who turned the church buildings into a trading post.

Fathers DeSmet and Hoecken, moved west and established the first St. Ignatius mission near the present Washington / Idaho border, but later moved it to its present location in what became known as the Mission Valley. The original log cabin, built in 1854 is still standing and, today is used as a museum. In addition to the small mission and residential cabins, a carpenter's and blacksmith's shops were added. Finally, a saw mill and flour mill were also constructed.

Four Sisters from the Sisters of Providence, in Montreal, Canada, arrived in 1864 to start a girls' school and provided the only medical care in the region, until a hospital was established in 1914. In the latter half of the 19th century the girls' boarding school as well as an agricultural school for boys flourished.



THE FIRST LOG CHURCH, WITH FATHER JEROME D'ASTE IN THE DOORWAY
Oregon Archives

St. IGNATIUS of LOYOLA

Ignatius of Loyola was born in 1491 into a noble Basque family of northern Spain. As was the custom, he grew up to be a swaggering caballero and eventually went into the army of King Ferdinand, the Spanish monarch. While defending the fortress of Pamplona in 1521, a cannon ball shattered a leg, and during a long and painful convalescence Ignatius experienced a transformation. A new desire to serve Jesus replaced his former quest for knightly honor.

In 1539 Ignatius traveled to Rome where he laid out his ideas as to how he could serve the church. The next year, Pope Paul III approved his ideas, and the Society of Jesus was born.



Above: FATHER DeSMET
Left: ST. IGNATIUS MISSION Ca. 1900
Both photos Unknown source.

Construction on the present church began in 1891 and was completed two years later. The missionaries and the Indian people built it themselves. One million bricks were made from local clay whilst timber from the surrounding countryside was cut in the mission sawmill. Brother Joseph Carignano (1853 – 1919) an Italian Jesuit, who served the mission as a cook and handyman, undertook the job of painting the interior of the church. Despite the fact he had received no formal art training he painted fifty-three murals and frescos on the walls and ceiling of the church, all depicting scenes from the Bible or of various saints. They appear today as awe inspiring and vivid as when first painted.

MGTPS ANNUAL FALL MEETING 2010 – POLSON

September 10th – 12th 2010

Friday, September 10th 2010

6:00 – 9:00 p.m. Registration at Reception Polson – Flathead Historical Museum, 708 Main St. Polson
Self guided tours of Museum

Saturday, September 11th 2010

9:00 a.m. Buses pick up everyone from parking lot at Best Western Kwataqnuq Inn 49708 US Hwy 93E Polson

9:30 a.m. Arrive Nine Pipes Museum. Guided tours of Museum

11.00 a.m. Re-board buses

11.15 a.m. Arrive St. Ignatius Mission. Guided tours of Mission and original buildings.

12.15 p.m. Re-board buses

12:30 Arrive Steindorf Homestead (Leon Community Center if raining) for barbeque lunch (hotdogs and hamburgers)

2:30 p.m. Re-board buses

3:00 p.m. Arrive Dixon. Lecture on the M. D. of Dixon and the semi-ghost town of Dixon

4:00 p.m. Re-board buses

4:45 p.m. Arrive back at Kwataqnuq Motel

5:30 – 6:30 p.m. Happy Hour in hotel bar across from Michele – Victor banquet room

6:30 p.m. A.G.M. in Michele – Victor Banquet room.

7:00 p.m. Dinner in Michele – Victor Banquet room.

8:00 p.m. Guest speakers: Dr. Joe McDonald, retiring President of Salish & Kootenai College and David Steindorf. Dr. McDonald is a direct descendent of Angus McDonald, the first agent at the Hudson Bay's trading post, Fort Connah, and our host, David Steindorf is the grandson of one of the original homesteaders on the reservation.

Sunday, September 12th 2010

9:00 a.m. Leave Motel in convoy of private cars for trip south on Hwy 93 to Fort Connah.

9:30 a.m. Arrive Fort Connah. Meet your hosts in trapper costumes.
Tour the trading post (oldest building in Montana).
See native crafts: making par fleches, braiding buffalo hair, etc
Visit graves of original Hudson 's Bay agents.
Watch a black powder shoot demonstration..
Surprise Entertainment.
Enjoy original 'trapper's style' buffalo stew lunch

Have a safe trip home.

The ART of GHOST-TOWNING

by Larry Roland

Some ghost towns are easy to find – and easy to get to. They are a lot of fun, have many interesting things to look at, and give a person the chance to learn about the way things were in the past. Me, I prefer my ghost towns 'dead'. I don't want some friendly, helpful tour-guide telling me about everything I see – I want to imagine it in my own mind; to find things for myself; half hidden in the weeds or protruding from under the corner of a collapsed cabin. It seems that the obscure, off the beaten track, half buried by the encroachment of time are the ones that have that aura of mystery; the vague sound of half heard voices; the distant whisper, carried by the wind, of shovels grating on rocks; or the imagined thump of dynamite blasts underground. Let the logs, the abandoned machinery and the graveyards tell me the story. Let me discover the dark doorways into the interior of the earth from which mighty treasures were drawn. In a state of fewer than a million people living among thousands of square miles of mountains and forest, there are bound to be such places – if you can locate them.

My quest for Yreka, was one such search. I had the Forest Service map on my lap as I drove along near Elk Creek, in the Garnets, matching the contours of the road to the lines on the chart. I moved forward, studied the map, backed up a bit and looked out at the bush-strewn terrain. "It should be right out there," I said to Vivian, my wife, "but I don't see a thing. I guess I'll get out and look around." I cut through the tangle of unkempt growth for a way and spotted a half buried steel barrel ahead of me. It went into the earth about twenty feet and was either a ventilation shaft or a well. If it was a well, then there should be a cabin nearby. Circling the spot, I kept scanning the snarled, twisted limbs and suddenly noticed a cut log lying in the grass. Then I saw another, and another. Like a picture slowly coming into focus, I discovered, underneath some branches, two walls of logs, about waist high. Home, Sweet Home to some miner. I took photos and returned to the dusty road and as I climbed into the vehicle, I said "Yreka."



CORNER OF LOG CABIN REMAINS IN YREKA



Even if one knows where to look, however, it isn't always possible to just 'coast' in. When we had made our way up Wisconsin Gulch to Leiterville, on the Tobacco Root Mountains, we decided to continue up the mountain in search of Nobel. On the map it was just a short distance and there was a dirt road. After the first few bumpy yards, I shifted into four-wheel drive, low range, and first gear. The 'road' was more like the bed of a dry creek and progressing at a crawl we wallowed from side to side, squeezing between trees, listening to rocks thud on the underside of the Bronco. We were about two miles in when a couple of men on four-wheel ATVs caught up to us. I asked them "How much further is it to Nobel?" "You are about half way." Came the reply. With no opportunity to turn around we continued and about half an hour later we crested the last climb and emerged onto a dirt track through an open mountain meadow between wooded mountaintops. The remains of a cabin and a frame structure interrupted the grassy expanse. "Looks like downtown Nobel" I commented, as I got out to look around. After photographing everything we could find we headed back downhill, which was more dangerous than coming uphill.

Above left: FRAME BUILDING NEAR NOBEL, IN THE TOBACCOROOT MOUNTAINS.

Below Left: COLLAPSED MINE TUNNEL & ADIT NEAR NOBEL.



When we searched for the cemetery at Diamond City, both difficulties were combined – finding it and getting there – into one exercise. There is nothing at Diamond City except an ‘Interpretive’ sign, but our map showed the graveyard as being close by. We walked and explored, poked and prodded the underbrush, considered and rejected possibilities, until we ended up back at the Bronco with the map spread on the hood. After careful deduction, I pointed to a cliff face next to us and slowly said “I think it’s up there.” Vivian looked at the cliff and said “I’ll wait here.” I loaded my camera, a tripod, a lumber crayon and some newsprint paper and started my ascent by angling up the cliff face using hands and feet. On the top I climbed over a broken down rail fence into a meadow that contained a ramshackle old barn and the ruins of two cabins. Just past them was a dirt lane that led down a creek bottom but when I followed it, it led sharply up the mountain and in the distance I could see a suspicious looking post. I made my way over to it and the sign read ‘Boulder Bar Cemetery’. I made my way from one grave to the next, photographing each one, often having to bush off the overgrowth. When I located a stone that was broken in half, or one that was too faint to photograph I used my crayon and made an imprint. Outside the fence I discovered a very nice monument dedicated to the memory of a lady named Bethsheba and wondered why she was interred outside the cemetery. At the conclusion of my investigations, I made my way gingerly back down the cliff face and returned to my vehicle. My spouse asked, “Did you find it?” so I showed her the impressions I had made.



Top: CABIN REMAINS AT BOULDER BAR
 Below & Below Right: GRAVE STONES AT BOULDER BAR CEMETERY

Occasionally we come upon something totally unexpected – a stamp mill at Independence; a ‘Fresno’ at Blackfoot City; the cast-iron scroll work remains of school desks at a mill in Emery; or mine rail spikes scattered along the Forest Service road which follows the old ore cart path from the Greenwood concentrator to Lion City. Maybe someday we can tell about the treasures we found at Albright, Durant, Gloster or Gold Hill. In every place we explored though, we always expected, and usually found, one thing, a stove. I don’t believe we discovered a single community without finding one, somewhere, rusting under a tree or eroding in the corner of a pile of broken logs. It seems that whatever else the departing miner took with them, the stove was too much of a burden. In the darkness of what had been the dining hall of a company building at the Gold Mountain mine near Superior, we spotted one that was the size of a car. It was a huge wood burner and I’ll bet it turned out a lot of pancakes in its day.

These are the personal experiences that one just cannot have at the preserved historic communities. Those places just don’t have the mystique and don’t offer the sense of isolation and individual hardship that a ‘true’ ghost town offers. But these obscure places are being destroyed and in a few years will all be gone. Although, we do know a few more places...



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Montana Ghost Town Quarterly

MONTANA GHOST TOWN PRESERVATION SOCIETY
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NEWS IN BRIEF:

LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA.....



In the 1850s five Blackfoot war shirts were given to George Simpson, the then head honcho of the Hudson Bay Company. When he retired, he took them back to England and eventually they were bequeathed to Oxford University where they have resided for a century and a half. They have now been returned to this side of the Atlantic, albeit on loan, to go on display at the Galt Museum in Lethbridge. Before the display was set up, members of the Blackfoot tribe in Southern Alberta and Montana were given a preview of the shirts and asked for their input. The bead work and decorations are fantastic. It is interesting to note, like fighter pilots in WWII that painted swastikas on their aircraft for every enemy shot down, the owner of the shirt at left decorated his shirt with enemies killed, guns stolen and coups made. The exhibition runs until August 29.



BUTTE, SILVER BOW COUNTY.... The new documentary film, "Butte: The Original" was shown over the weekend of June 5th in Butte at the Mother Lode Theater. Film makers Dick Maney and B.J. McKenzie worked on the project, on and off, over the past 10 years with a \$450,000 dollar grant from Atlantic Richfield, Maney said they wanted to capture a tribute to the town's distinctive character and flare. The film mainly reflected on early labor strife and the Granite Mountain mining disaster when 167 lives were lost to a mine fire in 1917. The 84 minute show was worth the price of admission! - Mike Byrnes