



Montana Ghost Town Quarterly

VOLUME 41

SUMMER 2012



Reflections: The Meade hotel, Bannack.
Masthead: The Meade hotel as it normally looks.

Photo, courtesy of SARAH FOURNIER
Photo, TERRY HALDEN

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 M. G. T. P. S.

Summer 2012

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2012 Convention: Tom Lowe & Terry Halden
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The Prez Sez

TERRY HALDEN

I would like to introduce to you two ladies who responded to the help wanted ad placed in the last newsletter. Sally Griffin, newly retired from the Belgrade City volunteered to be our secretary – and is doing an admirable job in her new capacity. Darian Halden, my granddaughter, took pity on me struggling with the members list on Excel and took over. She is now our membership chairperson. One other lady that stepped up to the plate was Loretta Chapman who is now our treasurer.

On behalf of the society I would like to thank them all for stepping forward when needed. With the additions to the board, we were able to identify specific tasks that needed attention and our masthead to the left reflect the positions that board members have volunteered to hold down. Everyone on the board is now working to advance the organisation, but any input YOU feel would benefit the society, please e-mail us or drop us a letter.

Tom Lowe had done a fantastic job in putting together the program for our convention in Dillon, this coming September. The details you can find on page 7. Starting with registration at the Beaverhead County Museum on the Friday (14th) you can tour the museum, re-ignite friendships, enjoy Hors-d'oevres and watch a Power Point talk from Vern Pomeroy about the Hecla Mining area, to the north of Dillon. Saturday, we will be in Bannack, with guided or self-guided tours of the town, taking in the craft displays, re-enactments, tours of the mill and other activities put on as Bannack celebrates its 150th birthday. A packed lunch will be provided. The banquet will be at the U of M Western, Lewis & Clark Room (See Map). If you are planning on attending please indicate if you want the roast beef dinner we have ordered or the vegan meal, a French Vegetable Puff. Our guest speaker will be Tom Satterly who will talk about mining in Butte. We figured you would be 'Bannacked' out by this point. On the Sunday we will car caravan up to Melrose where we will again meet with Vern Pomeroy and his co-guides Ben Goody and Jim Eighorn who will take us up to the ghost town of Glendale and on to the beehive furnaces at Canyon Creek where we will enjoy a Classic Wrap picnic lunch put together by U of M Western catering dept. The convention cost of \$75.00 per person will include dinner on the Saturday and lunches on the Saturday and Sunday, all entrance fees and the cost of speakers.

Motel discounts have been arranged at the Best Western, Paradise Inn and the Comfort Inn in Dillon. A list of the motels in Dillon can be found on page 11. Included in this newsletter is the application form for the convention and as our membership year runs from July 1st to June 30th why not renew your membership at the same time. If you can't make the convention, the form can be used for your membership renewal at this time. New members below and our Life Members are, of course, exempt from renewal costs.

Your editor, along with Darian Halden, Sue Howe, Mel Howe and Coleen Owens recently attended a Montana Site Stewardship Course at the Western in Dillon (which is why we can all attest to the high quality of the meals and packed lunches). A full report will appear in the next newsletter.

See you in Dillon,

Terry

New Members

Membership Chairperson, Darian Halden reports the following **New Members** have joined our Society since the last newsletter. Please make them welcome.

Deen Boe, Crimora, VA

Sharon Rishell, Lewiston, MT.

Rocky Morris, Butte, MT

Mike Starr, Richmond, VA

Jeff Johnston, Bozeman, MT.

Chuck & Pam Thorpe, Anaconda, MT.

Otis & Jo Thompson, Ennis, MT

Laura Wilson, Naches, WA.

Jolene Ewert, Bozeman, MT.

M.G.T.P.S. BOARD MEETING June 2, 2012

The meeting of the Board of Directors, held at the Pioneer Museum, was called to order at 1:00 PM by President Terry Halden. Those present were Terry Halden, Darian Halden, Sally Griffin, Gordon Tracy, Dick Lee, Rosemary Lee, Sue Howe, and Bernice DeHaas.

New Board Members Sally Griffin and Darian Halden introduced themselves, giving a brief background of themselves and their reasons for wanting to be on the Board.

Dick Lee moved to approve the minutes of the Feb. 11, 2012, Board Meeting as published in the newsletter. Gordon Tracy seconded the motion, and it was approved.

REPORTS:

The Treasurer's Report was given and accepted.

Secretary's Report - Sally did not have a Secretary's report because she had already given all correspondence to President Terry Halden..

Membership Report - Darian Halden reported that there are 238 members.

Recruitment Report - Don Black reported that he had signed up 4 new members and had handed out 15 brochures. Please email information on any possible new members to him at donblack76@hotmail.com. He will follow up and contact them personally.

Facebook Report - Meg urged anyone who is on Facebook to visit our Facebook site and "like it". She wants to add links to any information we think would be interesting. Our site is connected to our Web Site and vice versa.

Webmaster Report - Dick Lee reported that our website remains the same. He has updated the Board members and continues to post our current newsletter.

Convention Report – On behalf of Tom Lowe, Terry Halden gave a report on our upcoming convention in September. Copies of information to be sent out were reviewed. We should add guest speaker Tom Satterly's title and sponsorship information. The cost breakdown of the \$75 per person registration fee was given. Any overall profit or loss will go to or be covered by the club. There was a discussion as to whether the \$75 registration fee could be reduced. It was felt that due to the rising cost of food and the number of attendees not being known at this point, we needed to keep the cost at \$75. Information on motels that will give us a discount and the other motels in Dillon will be given our members and will be added to the website. Dick and Rosemary Lee will be responsible for picking up and transporting the meals to the various locations. Darian and Sally will be responsible for the registration on Friday. Dick has the PA system and will be sure to bring it.

Projects Report - Sue Howe has set up some grants guidelines. After reviewing them, Terry Halden suggested that we use Article 3 of our Articles of Incorporation verbatim in order to make it very clear as to what any grants are intended to accomplish. Dick Lee would like to have a Projects Page on our website. After discussion, Dick Lee moved to approve the guidelines. Darian Halden seconded and the motion passed. Sue Howe then suggested that we give a grant of \$1,000 to the Pioneer Museum for the roof they need. Sue moved and Dick Lee seconded that we do this. The motion passed. Bernice DeHaas suggested that we put some publicity about the grant in the newspaper. Sue will talk to Museum Director John Russell about the grant.

Newsletter Report - Terry Halden reported that the newsletter is almost ready to go to press.

NEW BUSINESS

Terry reported that about 4 weeks ago he had attended a meeting in Neihart with the BLM and DEQ. They were giving an update on clean-up operations on Carpenter Creek and Galena Creek running from Hughesville and Barker to the local population, specifically with respect to water quality. When Terry asked about what was to become of the old mining buildings there, he was assured that none of them would be taken down unless it was absolutely necessary. When Terry went back to the area recently, ALL the old Mining and Mill buildings were gone, but the mine was still leaking pollution!

Our Convention in 2013 will be in Helena. Terry reminded us that he can no longer be President after the fall of 2013. He said that the terms for President and Vice President are 2-year, renewable once for a maximum of 4 years and he is coming to the end of his tenure.

There being no further business, Dick Lee moved that we adjourn and Gordon Tracy seconded.

Sally Griffin, Secretary



BANNACK CELEBRATES 150 YEARS OF HISTORY

By Tom Lowe



On January 1, 1862 a severe blizzard blew in and raged for two days and even though temperatures dropped to 40 below zero the spirits of everyone attending the dance at Johnny Grant's ranch remained high. The revelers danced all night and slept all day until finally on January 3 the weather broke and the attendees left for home. For those who attended the dance and those who had settled in the remote outposts of what became Montana, little did they realize just how momentous 1862 would prove to be.

The discovery of gold on Grasshopper Creek on July 28, 1862 was the first major gold strike in Montana, at that time part of the Dakota Territory. Although it was not the first gold discovery in the territory, the richness of the Grasshopper Diggings as they were called kicked off the great gold rush to what became Montana.

The first gold discovery recorded in Montana was in 1852 and is attributed to Francois Findlay, better known as Benetsee, a Red River Métis. He found a small amount of gold on what was then called Benetsee Creek. Granville and James Stuart prospected the creek in 1858 and renamed it American Fork, and on July 14, 1862 it was re-christened Gold Creek. In the spring of 1862 rumors of rich gold discoveries along the Salmon River as well as Gold Creek began circulating. Expeditions of men from Salt Lake City and Pike's Peak Colorado began the long journey to the newly discovered gold fields. Upon arriving at old Fort Lemhi, an abandoned Mormon settlement in the Lemhi Valley, these gold seekers discovered the faint road they had been following disappeared. Fortunately a couple miners returning from the Salmon River mines happened along and shared word of the Salmon River mines. The news however, was not encouraging, all the good placer mining ground was claimed and rapidly being worked out and the route to the area was not passable by wagons.

Some of the gold seekers decided to continue to the Salmon River mines while others decided to look elsewhere. John White and a small party of men including William Eads and John McGavin were from the Pike's Peak area of Colorado.

They had heard rumors of new mines at Gold Creek and decided to try and find their way there instead of the Salmon River. While travelling down the Beaverhead River they were impressed by the appearance of the gravels at the mouth of a creek flowing from the west. They travelled upstream about ten miles and camped about three miles below the future site of Bannack. That evening John White panned out a considerable amount of gold from the creek gravels and knew they were on to something big. The Creek was named Grasshopper due to a large number of the insects along the bank. They were unaware that the creek had been named Willard Creek by the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1805. White is credited with filing the first placer claim in Montana. White's discovery was recorded on August 30 as "Discovery July 28" in Whites district. Other claims were recorded as above or below discovery. Many rich claims were discovered that summer including Jimmie's Bar and the one found by Washington Stapleton on August 23 across the creek from where Bannack now stands.

Word began to spread like wildfire about the new discovery on Grasshopper Creek and miners with visions of great wealth came looking for their fortune. Some claims produced as much as \$100 per day per man but most considerably less. \$5 per day of work was closer to the average claim. Gold was worth \$18 per ounce and this was rich gravel. In the fall of 1862 a crude sign was erected at the confluence of Rattlesnake Creek and the Beaverhead River to guide the gold seekers. The following message was daubed on the rough hewn board with wagon tar:

**Tu grass Hop Per digins
30 myle
Kepe the traile nex the bluffe**



A 4th of July parade in Bannack, Ca 1864. The tall building in the center of the photograph is thought to be the Bank Exchange saloon, which eventually burned down.

Photo courtesy of
BANNACK STATE PARK

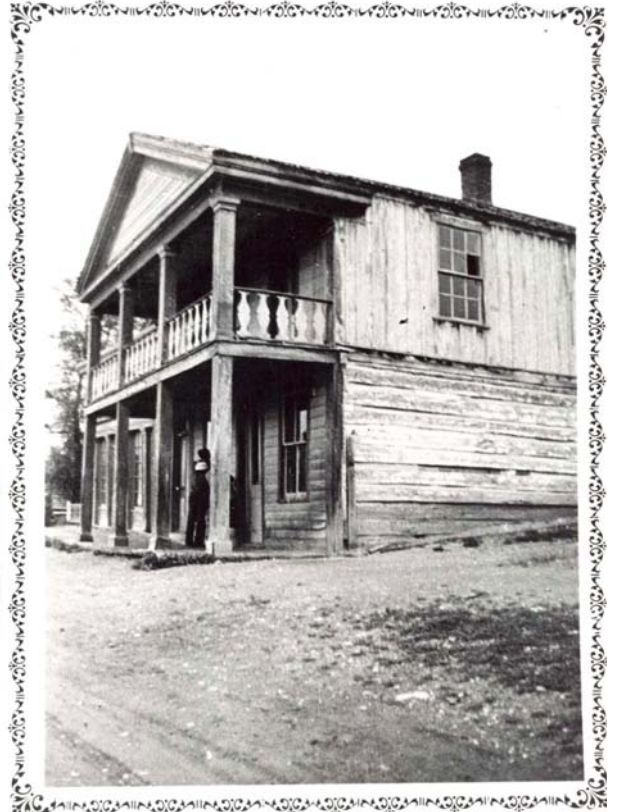
On September 8 the Woodmansee brothers wagon train comprised of ten teams loaded with supplies arrived. Originally bound for Deer Lodge, there was no need to continue farther as eager miners were clamoring for the supplies. John Innes a member of the train reported that when they arrived no cabin had yet been built. However, we know that some small cabins had been built along the creek by this time. Later that fall about 500 miners were busy digging gold with little thought to the oncoming winter. It soon became apparent to the miners that more shelter than could be provided by a wagon tarp or a brush wickiup was needed for the intensely cold weather along the creek. Soon a meeting of miners was called to organize the mining camp on October 6, 1862. William Clancy was elected president, C. H. Howard treasurer and Ivan B. Moore secretary. A town was platted and named Bannack City.

Cabins were hastily thrown up for shelter. These simple cabins were small as the miners did not have much for furnishings and they were easier to heat than a larger structure. Granville and James Stuart decided the prospects were better at Bannack than at Gold Creek. They arrived in Bannack on November 22 and moved into a little cabin they had built for them.

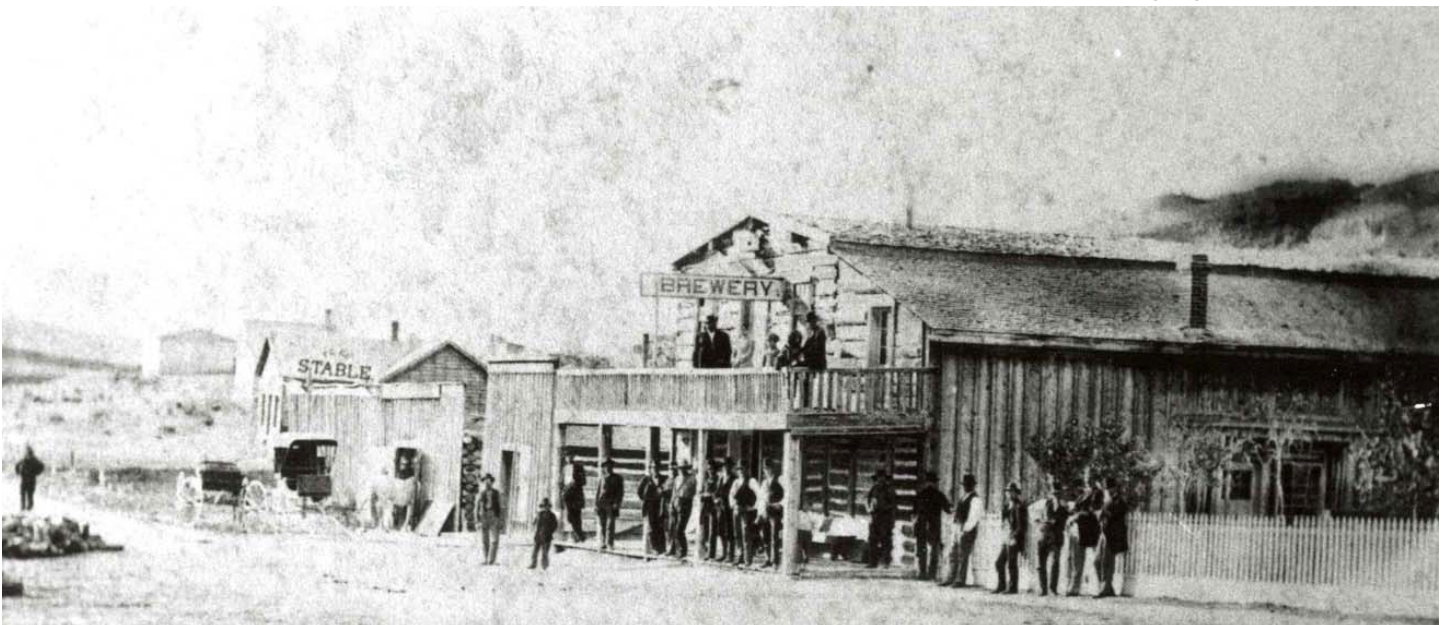
"We have fixed up our cabin quite cozy and home like. There is a fireplace in one corner, two bunks against the wall, a couple of shelves and a calico curtain does service for a cupboard, another shelf holds our five books and James's tobacco pouch and pipe. The table and some stools complete the outfit." The Stuart brothers had been in Montana since 1858 and were much better set up than the newly arrived gold seeker. Their five books were considered a treasure on the frontier. The Stuart brothers opened a butcher shop and by the next spring had cleared about \$3,000.

Commercial buildings were also going up at a rapid pace. Those men with construction skills often found it more profitable to build than dig for gold. William Goodrich built the first hotel in Montana, a beautiful two story building with a balcony that was sometimes used for speeches. Saloons, restaurants, butcher shops, bakeries, stores, blacksmith shops, and boarding houses were quickly built to take advantage of the great amount of gold coming from the mines. Saloons were one of the more profitable businesses and Cyrus Skinner's saloon and others were built that fall and winter. John Mannheim built a large two story building with a porch and balcony, the first commercial brewery in Montana. This building sat where the main parking lot is today.

By the spring of 1863 Bannack was a booming mining camp with 3,000 residents. Montana Territory was created in May 1864. Sidney Edgerton was appointed as the Governor and Bannack became the first Territorial Capital when it convened the first legislature there in the winter of 1864. With the discovery of gold at Alder Gulch in May 1863 and other strikes in the Helena area and Confederate Gulch in 1864, the population of Bannack dwindled.



ABOVE: The Goodrich hotel.
BELOW: The John Mannheim's Brewery
Both photos courtesy
BANNACK STATE PARK





Skinner's saloon, which, in this photo, is a general merchandise store, and the Goodrich hotel.

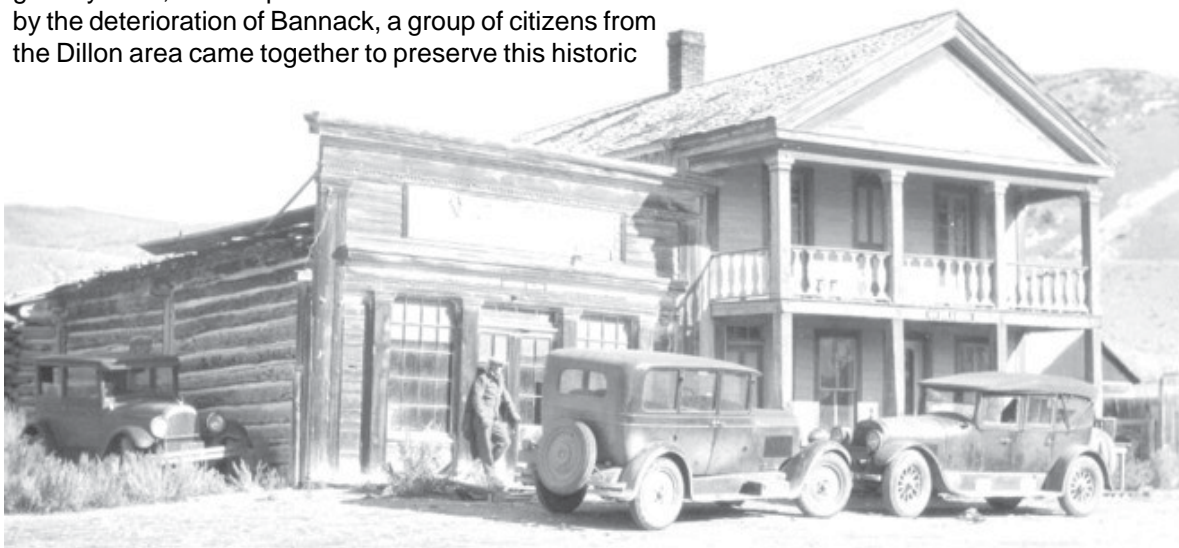
Photo courtesy BANNACK STATE PARK

Bannack's population swelled and shrank depending upon the state of mining activity along Grasshopper Creek. The gold dredging period lasted from 1895 until 1902 with five dredges working the creek. In 1930 electric lines were run from Dillon to provide power to the Gold Leaf Mill as well as the mines and Bannack. This resulted in another boom period during the Great Depression. But in the early 1940s mining at Bannack had all but ceased and many of the buildings were rapidly deteriorating. With the start of World War II, gold mining was prohibited by presidential decree, which further added to the decline of Bannack. By the early 1950s, business was virtually non-existent, the Goodrich Hotel, the first hotel in Montana, was dismantled and moved to Virginia City by Charles Bovey and the school, grocery store, bar and post office had closed. Concerned by the deterioration of Bannack, a group of citizens from the Dillon area came together to preserve this historic

site. They acquired much of the town and donated it to the state in 1954, saving this important historical site as a state park. Over the next 30 years the last private holdings and additional land were acquired increasing the park to 1,600 acres.

Today under the management of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Bannack is one of the best preserved ghost towns in the country. The goal of the park is to ensure that this important historical site is preserved for the enjoyment of many generations to come.

Montana is known as the Treasure State and the motto on the state seal is "Oro y Plata", gold and silver. The seal was designed by Francis M. Thompson, a Bannack merchant. The first pioneers came here seeking their fortunes from 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.



A later photograph of Skinner's saloon and the Goodrich hotel.

Photo courtesy of BANNACK STATE PARK

MGTPS Annual Fall Meeting – Dillon

September 14th - 16th 2012

SCHEDULE

(Subject to minor changes)

Friday, September 14th 2012

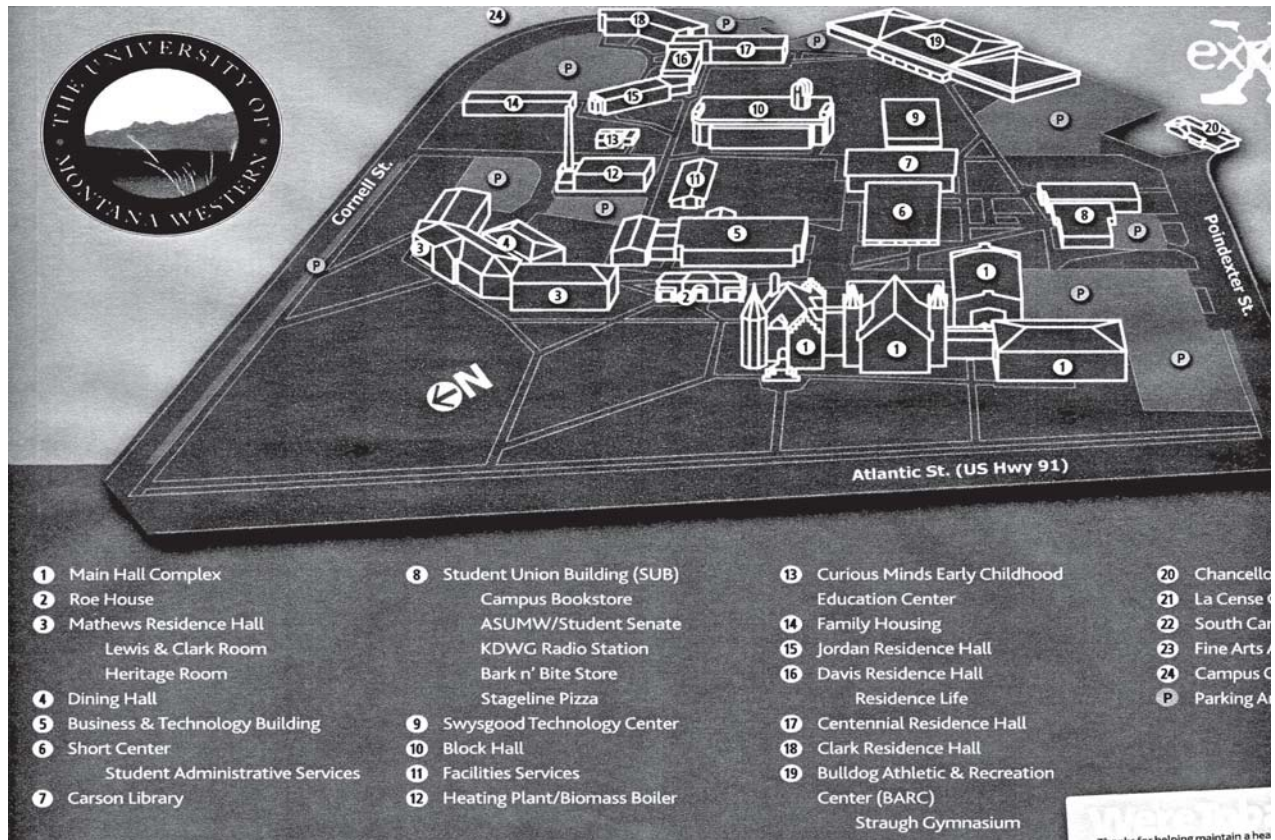
- 5:00 – 9:00 Registration & Reception, at Beaverhead County Museum, 15 S. Montana St., Dillon: Hors-d'oevres. Soft Drinks, Coffee. Tour Museum.
- 7:00 Power Point Lecture by Vern Pomeroy: 'Hecla Mining District'
- 7:30 – 8:00 Board Meeting

Saturday, September 15th 2012

- 9:00 Leave Dillon, in own transportation for Bannack (head SOUTH on I-15, 1 mile to next interchange 60. Take Hwy. 278, 18 miles west, TURN LEFT at signpost to Bannack. Watch for turn-off to park {you will now be on a dirt road} . After entering the Park,TURN RIGHT at sign and proceed to shelter).
- 10:00 Welcome to Bannack, Dale Carlson, Park Manager / History of Bannack, Tom Lowe.
Guided &/or Self-guided tours of Bannack / Guided tours of Mine and Mill / Re-enactments etc.
- 12:00-1:00 Lunch will be provided members in the shelter.
- 1:00 >>> Further programs at Bannack as the Park celebrates its 150th birthday.
- 5:30 – 6:30 Happy Hour, with no-host bar at Montana State University (Western), Lewis & Clark room . (No.3 on map below. You can park on Cornell St.)
- 6:30 Dinner
- 7:30 Annual General Meeting
- 7:45 Guest Speaker: Tom Satterly, who will give a talk on Mining in Butte.

Sunday, September 16th 2012

- 9:00 Meet at Comfort Inn Parking lot for Convoy to Melrose and on west to Glendale and Canyon Creek.
- 10:00 Meet with Vern Pomeroy, Ben Goody and Jim Eighorn, local historians
- 12:00 Picnic lunch at Canyon Creek.
- 1:00 For those adventurous enough, a trip north to Vipond Park and Quartz Hill, for the rest, have a safe trip home



The SHERMAN CEMETERY - IS IT MISPLACED?

by JOHN STONER



The location of the Sherman Cemetery in 2008

Photo courtesy AUTHOR

The Sherman Cemetery, also known as the Duck Creek Cemetery or Upper Duck Creek Cemetery, lies about one third mile due north of Laird Plymale's home ranch buildings. The legal description would place the cemetery in the northeast quarter of the southeast quarter of section three, Township eight north, Range two east.

This cemetery should not be confused with the Fairview and Lavinia/Lavina Chapel Cemeteries, sometimes referred to as the Lower Duck Creek Cemeteries, which lie side by side some three miles southwest of the Sherman Cemetery. The Sherman Cemetery overlooks the north bank of Duck Creek, while the other two overlook the south bank of Duck Creek.

The Sherman Cemetery was adjacent to the Duck Creek (sometimes called the Sherman) Church, and was affiliated with the Methodist Church South. The exact date of establishing the church and cemetery at this location is not recorded, however the one and only headstone with a name and date reads: "Lizzie L. Henton, Died February 19, 1883." It is the opinion of this writer that the cemetery was established before the coming of the church for two reasons. First, the date on the Henton headstone indicates that the land at that time still belonged to the U.S. Government, and secondly... based on other nearby Methodist Church South building activities within what is now Broadwater County, a building date of between 1890 and 1895 seems appropriate. The Duck Creek (or Sherman) Church was dismantled in the early 1890s, and the material was used to build the Methodist Church South parsonage in Townsend.

The Sherman Cemetery was presumably named for Ephraim L. Sherman, who took up a homestead in the area (Patent date of July 12, 1889), and eventually purchased the land where the cemetery is in 1890 from Gustavrus R. Kruger, then selling the land back to the U.S. Government in 1891.

The cemetery records in the Broadwater County Museum & Historical Library list the following for the Sherman Cemetery: "Only the stone of Lizzie L. Henton remains. There are several buried here, all children who died in a diphtheria epidemic. Besides the Henton child (8 years old), there are three Wells children and Elmer Daniels, aged 5 years old." As mentioned before, Lizzie died on February 19, 1883. The "Wells children" probably belonged to Albert H. Wells, a nearby homesteader who received his Patent on 160 acres in 1892, and the Elmer Daniels child would undoubtedly belong to William C. Daniels, another nearby homesteader who had Land Patents dating back to 1880. This writer has observed about a dozen burial sites that are identifiable, either by the marble head and foot stone belonging to Lizzie Henton, or field rock encircled outlines of burial plots. In one case there is a fallen wooden 4x4 post, a common maker in the early days, and probably had the proper identification to begin with, but time and the weather has erased whatever was there.

So now is a good time to bring up the question that the title of this historical analysis ask, that being, of course, is the Sherman Cemetery misplaced? In a sense it may be!

The "misplacement" question arises with the arrival in the area of the Rev. Leaner B. Stateler, a Methodist Church South preacher, probably sometime in 1883 or early 1884. Rev. Stateler (and his wife Malinda) purchased some real estate from Robert and Elizabeth Clark on July 23, 1884 (see Deed Book 12, page 240, on file at the Broadwater County Courthouse) that included forty acres in the southeast quarter of the northeast quarter of section three, Township eight north, Range two east. Less than three months later, the Stateless conveyed a "Deed of Conveyance of Land for Church and Cemetery" on this forty acres to the Methodist Church South, with John W. Henton, John W. Tinsley, John

Andrew, John A. Smith, and Albert H. Wells named as the church trustees. (see Deed Book 12, page 237, dated November 19, 1884, Broadwater County Courthouse).

The "Deed of Conveyance for Church and Cemetery" states that the "Trustees and their successors in office (shall) hold said property for a church and cemetery, in trust that said premises shall be used, kept, maintained and disposed of as a place of divine worship for the use of the ministry and membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, subject to the discipline, usage and ministerial appointments of said church, as from time to time authorized and declared by the General/Conference of said Church, and the annual conference within whose bounds the said premises are situated."

Now here begins the confusion. The Rev. Stateler's forty acres set aside for "church and cemetery" lay not where the little Henton girl was buried in 1883 ... and possibly even earlier burials... which would eventually be known as the Sherman Cemetery, but rather on the adjoining forty acres to the north. The question now must be asked ... did the Rev. Stateler think he was buying the land containing the existing cemetery (which probably had not been named at that point)? There was never a church built, nor a cemetery established on Stateler's forty acres. The later to be called Sherman Cemetery, at the time of Rev. Stateler's arrival, was located on U.S. Government ground, and had not been taken up for homesteading yet.

Certainly the Rev. Stateler must have become aware of his mistake, for indeed a church was eventually built at the Sherman Cemetery site. While not a lot is known about this Sherman Church, one would assume that the Rev. Stateler had a hand in it. The forty acres he conveyed to the Methodist Episcopal Church South for "Church & Cemetery" sat undisturbed until June 28, 1904, when on that date the trustees... then being John W. Henton, Louis M. Potts, and David Hoover ... sold out to Jefferson D. Doggett for \$1.00 and "other valuable considerations" (see Deed Book 22, page 509, Broadwater County Courthouse). This deed was not filed until January 6, 1915.

The Sherman Cemetery is on private land today, having been bounced around from U.S. Government ownership to private ownership, back to U.S. Government ownership, and then back to private ownership. From the looks of the graves, it appears that there hasn't been a burial there since the late 1800s. Few people today have even heard of it, let alone know where it is located. It is located just east of Hwy. 284 on the north side of Duck Creek. Situated on a little level bench, it has a fine view of the surrounding country.

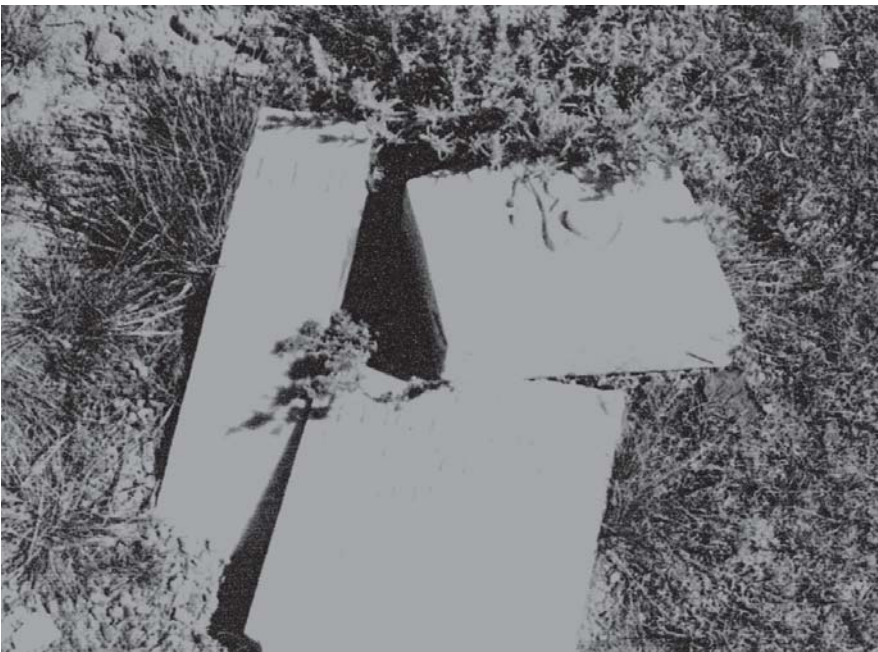
Unfortunately, the cemetery is not fenced, and cattle have access to it. While the cattle do keep it "mowed," they have, at one time in the past, knocked over Lizzy Henton's marble head and foot stones, breaking the headstone in half... probably by stepping on it as it is not very thick marble. This is a true "pioneer cemetery," and is an excellent candidate for some civic minded group to repair the damage, and to fence.

As to the question of the Sherman Cemetery being "misplaced"... well, we know it never moved ... but certainly the Rev. L.B. Stateler was somewhat confused as to its location when he, with ^{all} good intentions... and pocketing \$50.00 in the transaction... conveyed forty acres of his recently acquired land acquisition to the church for a "church and cemetery." The fact that John W. Henton was named as one of the church's trustees in Rev. Stateler's conveyance deed ... a man who had recently buried his eight year old daughter in the Sherman Cemetery... should have given the good Reverend a clue as to the actual location of the cemetery he **was** trying to protect.

While it might have been temporarily "misplaced" at one time years ago, it certainly has been forgotten ... and neglected over the years ... as we enter the twenty-first century.

Perhaps this historical analysis of the Sherman

Cemetery will help keep its memory alive.



The broken headstone from the grave of little Lizzie Henton, who died February 19, 1883, aged 8.

Photo, courtesy AUTHOR

WILLIAM C. ORR & the ORR MANSION

by JOHN DeHAAS

History books praise the efforts and success of numerous men who made their fortunes in mining — gold, silver, and later, copper. Little is written of those who helped settle the country and contributed greatly to the development of the state in other ways. William Orr is one of the latter. Reportedly, 10,000 people were strung out along Alder Gulch alone by 1864. Numerous communities or mining camps sprang up quickly in this area and around Bannack. These men worked hard and needed plenty of protein to sustain them. Wild meat — deer, elk and moose — was available but it meant taking time from the diggings to hunt. Who wanted to hunt when a fortune might be waiting just beneath the surface? The next turn of the shovel might mean wealth.

Several men, in different parts of the state and acting about the same time, responded to this ever increasing demand for fresh meat. Three of the pioneers of the cattle industry in western Montana were Nelson Story, Conrad Kohrs and William C. Orr. Story is noted for the great cattle drive from Fort Worth, Texas, to the Gallatin Valley, while Kohrs brought his cattle into the Deer Lodge area from Oregon. Orr is probably the least known of these men. In the fall of 1864 he drove a herd of cattle from California into the Beaverhead Valley. There were other giants of the cattle industry in the eastern part of the state and in the Dakotas but they came later and their contributions will be recorded elsewhere.

William C. Orr was born in 1830 in Down County, Ireland. When William was about six years old his family immigrated to America and settled in Birmingham, Ohio. At age sixteen he went to Wheeling, Virginia, where he worked in a wagon shop. From there he moved to Vicksburg, Mississippi, to work in a wagon and blacksmith shop and after two years of employment purchased the business. In 1853 he sold the business, purchased a band of cattle and horses, and joined a wagon train destined for Shasta Valley, California, reaching there in October. Here Orr purchased a ranch for his livestock and then engaged in mining on the Virginia Bar on the Klamath River for a short time. In 1856 he sold a half interest in the ranch to Philip Poindexter, forming the P. & O. Cattle Company that was engaged in butchering and supplying meat to the local mines. In the fall of 1863, while Poindexter remained on the ranch Orr drove a herd of cattle to Idaho City, Idaho, remaining there until the fall of 1864.

Hearing of the prosperous gold strikes at Bannack in Montana Territory, he started out in November of 1864 with a herd of cattle. On his drive he was caught in a terrible storm but was able to get his cattle through. Conditions in Bannack were not suitable for wintering the herd and he took them over the hill to the Beaverhead Valley. He obtained land southeast of where the town of Dillon was to be established and began raising his stock on the Blacktail Ranch. In 1866 Orr returned to the home ranch in California and from there he drove another herd of cattle to the Beaverhead. The following year Poindexter purchased 100 head of cattle in Oregon and drove them to their spread near Dillon where he remained.



The Orr Mansion, before it got surriunded by trees.
Photo courtesy BEAVERHEAD COUNTY MUSEUM

Orr again returned to the California ranch, in 1870 and this time he drove some 2,700 sheep and 375 horses to Montana — the latter the increase from the 11 mares he had driven to California in 1853. Not only did Orr and Poindexter furnish fresh beef to the hungry miners but the fine horses raised in the Beaverhead Valley were supplied to the U.S. Cavalry, fire stations in the region and even to the Canadian Mounted Police, so great was the reputation of their stock.

On February 27, 1869, William C. Orr married Rachel Conrad in Birmingham, Ohio, and brought her to the Beaverhead Valley. She bore him six boys. The Blacktail Ranch was sold in May, 1883, and the same month Orr purchased forty acres of land adjacent to the new town of Dillon. On this land he built a mansion for his family which was completed in 1884 or early 1885. It has remained in the hands of the hands of the Orr family; Mrs. Iva Orr, the widow of the youngest son, John, (as of 1976) still lives in the stately mansion, located at the end of South Idaho Street in Dillon.

FUTURE MEMBER (WE HOPE)

In early spring this year we received a letter from Alex S., a grade 4 student in a Helena Elementary school, requesting information about Elkhorn City ghost town, for a school project that she was completing. Both Secretary Sally and your editor responded and we are proud to show you the net result of Alex's project. With her demonstration, along with an oral history of Elkhorn that she was able to relate to her fellow students, she received an 'A' from her teacher. Way to go Alex!



WE'VE LOST ANOTHER ONE



The St. Joseph's mill in Hughesville, as it looked in 2004.

On May 3rd 2012, the Bureau of Land Management and the Department of Environmental Quality hosted a meeting of local residents in Neihart, Cascade County to inform them of the progress the government agencies were making in cleaning up the toxic waste emanating from the mines and mills on nearby Carpenter Creek and from the mine and mill in Hughesville at the head of Galena Creek. Whilst the local populace were satisfied with the cleanup of their water supply your editor, the only one in attendance with an interest in the old mining buildings, asked what buildings would be destroyed when the landscape was rearranged to sanitize the creeks. I was assured that no historical buildings would be demolished unless it was absolutely necessary.

A trip to Hughesville on June 1st 2012, revealed a different story. The glorious mill and all the mining buildings had been leveled, and, unfortunately, for the local residents of the area, the mine is still leaking toxic waste into Galena Gulch, with apparently no effort made to clean it up.

As the area looks today, June 1, 2012.



Both photos, TERRY HALDEN

DILLON CONVENTION HOTELS

BEST WESTERN, PARADISE INN, 650 N Montana, Dillon. (406) 683-4214

COMFORT INN, 450, N. Interchange, Dillon. (406) 683-6831

At the above two motels, Tom Lowe has arranged for a discounted price of \$72.00 per night – just mention Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society, when booking.

OTHER MOTELS:

CRESTON MOTEL, 335 S. Atlantic, Dillon. (406) 683-2341

MOTEL 6, 20 Swenson Way, Dillon. (406) 683-5555

SACAJAWEA INN, 775, N. Montana, Dillon. (406) 683-2381

SUNDOWNER MOTEL, 500 N. Montana, Dillon. (406) 683-2375

SUPER 8 MOTEL, 550 N. Montana, Dillon. (406) 4288

Along with several B & B locations.



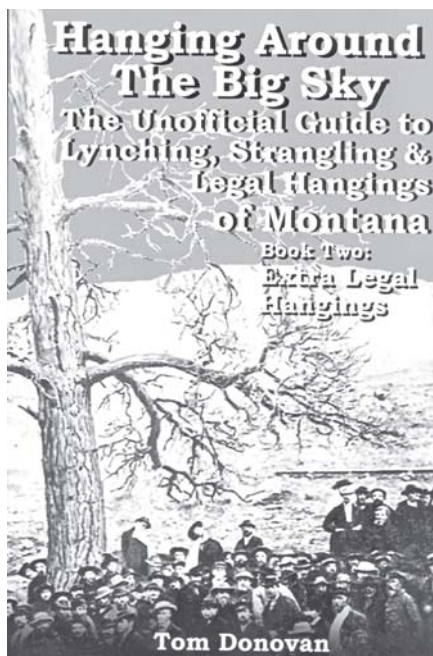
Montana Ghost Town Quarterly

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

REVIEW:

Hanging Around the Big Sky / Book Two: Extra Legal Hangings

by TOM DONOVAN



For those readers who are familiar with Tom Donovan's 'Hanging Around the Big Sky', Book One: Legal Hangings, in which he described in detail the 71 legal executions in Montana from Territory to present, Book Two covers the 164 Extra Legal Hangings in Montana. The author groups the individual executions into: Montana Miner's Courts; Original Vigilantes of Virginia City & Bannack; Various Hometown Vigilantes; Mob Lynching and Cowboy (Stuart's) Stranglers. Whereas the book does little to add to the 'Original Vigilantes' story by blindly following the Dimsdale and Langford versions that Plummer's lynching was justified because he was the kingpin, the author does produce considerable new evidence on the activities of the 'Cowboy Stranglers'. Overall, the book is a worthwhile read for those interested in the macabre history of the extra-legal executions in Montana, although to fully appreciate the research Donovan has done Book One should also be purchased. The books can be purchased at The History Museum of Cascade County or your local bookstore.

Terry Halden