

VOLUME 43

WINTER 2014



Photo courtesy: BERT & JOANNE McCROSKEY

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. e-mail: mtghosttown@yahoo.com www.mtghosttown.org Copyright © 2014, all rights reserved.

Founded in 1970, 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.

WINTER 2014

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The Prez Sez

TERRY HALDEN

In this edition of the Newsletter you will find the story of the Copper King mine by Linda Dutcher that was dropped from the last issue because I ran out of space, along with an article by John Stoner about the little known dredges that operated around Diamond City on Confederate Gulch in Broadwater County. My thanks to both authors for two interesting articles.

Also in this issue, I need your help in identifying four photos we received by e-mail. You can find them on page 7 opposite the photos of Elkhorn ghost town, taken in the winter of 1970 that we received from founder Bert McCroskey.

On page 11, you will find the line-up for the convention this year in Lewistown. Don Black is organizing the event and as you can see, he has made arrangements for a top flight convention. On the Friday night registration, besides having well known author Barbara Fifer as a guest speaker, there will be five, half-hour mini clinics presented simultaneously - take them all in or go to only the ones that interest you. Convention cost remains at \$75, per member, BUT, if you register and pay your registration fee before August 1, the price will drop to \$65 per member. As the Cherry Festival is also the same weekend that we are in Lewistown we would strongly suggest that you make reservations at an early date. The Yogo Inn, our base hotel has guaranteed a rate of \$80 (plus tax) a night and the list of other motels in the town can be found under the mast head on the left.

One of two books that you might be interested in purchasing is 'Closer to Home' the fourth book of photos by our member Dr. Richard Buswell. 'Rich', as he's known to friends, has had 42 solo museum exhibitions of his photographs, including at such prestigious art museums as the Frye Art Museum and the International Photography Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City. He sees and photographs items and objects in ghost towns and deserted buildings that most people glance at and never think to photograph. His work is unique. The book is available at the Montana Historical Society gift shop.

The other book is authored by one of the guest speakers at our last convention, Earl Fred, and is entitled 'Marysville, its History and Its People'. I'll be reviewing the book in the next edition of Newsletter, but in the meantime, if any of our readers would like to get a copy, write to Earl Fred at 1641 Grant Street, Helena, MT, 59601 and inquire about the cost of a copy.

Until the next time.....

Terry

New Members

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

Barbara Fifer, Helena, MT. Larry Hoffman, Lewistown, MT. Col. Van & Judy Chappell, Shawnee, KS

Helena / Lewis & Clark Heritage Tourism Council, Helena, MT

M.G.T.P.S. BOARD MEETING January 18, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 1:00PM by President Terry Halden. Other Board Members present were Darian Halden, Mike Byrnes, Dick Lee, Sue Howe, Gordon Tracy and Sally Griffin.

Terry asked that we approve the minutes of the August 24, 2013, meeting as printed in the newsletter. Gordon moved that we approve them, and Darian seconded. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Sally gave the Treasurer's Report for the fiscal year, starting July 1, 2013 to the present. Income was \$5,042.00 and expenses were \$4,783.94, for a net income of \$258.06. Sue moved that the report be accepted and Dick seconded. Motion passed. Terry then gave the final accounting for last fall's convention. Income was \$3,895.00 and expenses were \$4,008.73, which resulted in a net loss of \$113.73.

Membership: Darian reported that we have 237 members. This is down somewhat because we dropped about 50 members who had not paid their dues. Since then the numbers have been increasing again.

Recruitment: Don Black could not attend.

Facebook: Darian reported we have been getting lots of "likes" from everywhere. She thinks we might want to feature a new ghost town every month or two. There were questions about how we could contact the people who "like" us to interest them in joining.

Website: Dick reported that he changed the operating system on his computer so he can once again work on the website. He and Darian will be updating it. Darian suggested that we only put a partial newsletter on the site so that people would have to join to get the full version. Our current website is free as we are a non-profit organization, however once we add features, such as Paypal and advertise such things as T-shirts, maps, and other articles for sale, we might lose the free status. An alternative host might cost as much as \$175 for two years. Overhauling the current website and adding possible new features Dick and Darian will look into.

Projects: Mike said that people from the Fort Maginnis cemetery cleanup project, for which funding had been previously denied, should try again.

Newsletter: Terry reported that it is almost ready to go and should be out by the end of January.

OLD BUSINESS:

Convention 2014: Mike said that Don Black has been doing an extremely thorough, excellent job in putting this together. We can get 500 pamphlets printed for about \$100.

It would be \$65 before August 1 for members and \$75 after that date for members. Dick moved and Gordon seconded that we set a budget of \$250 for the printing and mailing of the brochure. Motion passed.

Logo / T-shirts: Darian showed us the proposed design of our new logo. Mel Howe found that we can have T-shirts made for \$7.50 each if we buy at least 50. The front would have "Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society" spelled out. The back would have our logo and the words "Preserving History for the Next Generation". Darian was to do the art work before the T-shirts are ordered. Final decision was tabled until next meeting.

Terry was to have attended the Montana Historical Society convention in Sydney, but he was unable to, thereby saving \$300.

Changes to the Board: Jolene Hintz will be removed due to non-attendance and non-communication. Jan and Maria O'Brien will be changed to the emeritus, non-voting status. They have not been able to attend a meeting since September 9, 2011.

Insurance: Sally said that Directors and Officers Insurance would protect Board members from law suits due to our actions and decisions – or lack thereof. It would cost \$900-\$1,000/year. The Special Event liability insurance for our convention last fall cost \$449. Liability insurance with year round coverage would be about \$1,000. We were in agreement that liability insurance coverage for the convention is essential. Liability coverage for a full year was questionable due to not knowing what activities we would be doing. For the D & O Insurance, Dick said that most Boards he knows of have this insurance. Gordon asked Sally to find out what coverage would be afforded by the member's individual homeowners policies in the event of a law suit. This was tabled until the next meeting.

The last dues increase was in 1990 and as printing and postage costs have risen substantially since then to the point we are now running at a small annual loss it was decided to raise our dues for 2015. Individual membership will be \$15, Family \$20, and Agency \$25. Life membership will remain at \$250. Motion passed.

2016 Convention location: Fort Benton, Superior, and Missoula were suggested. Mike will check on Fort Benton, and Terry will check on Superior. This was tabled for the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Griffin, Sec./Treas.

The COPPER KING MINE

The remains of the Copper King Mine can be found in an isolated spot at the upper end of Goose Lake, a 1.5 mile hike north from the Absaroka - Beartooth Wilderness Boundary. Goose Lake has been elevated to nearly 10,000 feet and is fed by snowpack runoff from the highest peaks of the Beartooth Mountains and what is left of Grasshopper Glacier with its entombed grasshoppers. On private property, the ruins are reached by traveling 1.6 miles east of Cooke City on the Beartooth Highway, then north 2.3 miles on Custer National Forest Route 6943 and 4.5 miles on strictly fourwheel drive Forest Route 3230 to the wilderness boundary. This now unmaintained road to Cooke City was built by the Copper King Mining, Milling and Development Company (hereafter "the Company") which was organized September 25, 1905 by Bertel R. Holland, Robert M. Mandeville and James Nelson of Cooke City; and Frank C. Byrne and L. O. Caswell of Red Lodge to develop its 1904 copper discovery.

The Goose Lake district is considered to be a subdivision of the Cooke City New World Mining district and has been within the Absaroka - Beartooth Wilderness since President Jimmy Carter signed the area into law March 27, 1975. Since 1881, an estimated 400 claims have been recorded for the Goose Lake district, some probably relocations. Five of them have been patented. One is located on the south edge of the district on Goose Creek. The other four are 1908 serial patents owned by "the Company", all located north of Goose Lake. The Copper Queen lies directly north of the Copper King at Little Goose Lake and contains an adit which has caved and day-lighted. The Lake View Lode borders the Copper Queen claim and contains only a few shallow prospects. The Calumet Lode is around 1,200 ft. east of the Copper Queen and covers 20.64 acres. But the Copper King claim, covering 53.67 acres, was the center of early development of the district as well as the site of subsequent investigations (www.glorecords.blm.gov).

Family legend has it that it was Bertel Holland's life-long devotion to botany, which began in his native Norway, which led to the claim. He pulled a plant up by the roots discovering bits of shiny minerals. With Holland, Mandeville and Nelson each subscribing to \$30,000 of the stock, they proceeded with open-cut work, installation of equipment for shaft sinking and construction of a two-compartment shaft 60 to 100 ft. deep. The property was bonded to W. W. McDowell and associates of Butte in 1906 who continued sinking the shaft and driving some cross-cuts, but dropped the option in the financial panic of 1907. Linda L. Holland, author of "Images of America, Cooke City" and wife of Randy Holland, grandson



The Copper King mine with discoverers Bertel Holland, James Nelson, Robert Mandeville and F. C. Byrne standing center right. Photo courtesy LINDA L. HOLLAND

of Bertel Holland, reports that the deal would have been worth \$1 million. Subsequently, the shaft flooded at the bottom where it was below the level of Goose Lake. The remains from that effort are a wooden structure over the flooded shaft, parts of the hoisting equipment, stockpile and waste dumps and several shallow bulldozer cuts. In 2003, the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology determined that there are no adverse environmental effects due to this activity (Abandoned-Inactive Mines on Custer National Forest Administered Land, Open File Report MBMG 421).

The Copper King Mine was inactive for 15 years but resident manager Frank Byrne claimed the grade of the ore had continued to be good as development progressed. In the form of the mineral chalcopyrite (CuFeS₂), a copper-rich zone 20 ft. thick was reported at the shaft collar and bottom. An 18-ton ore shipment was reportedly made in 1907, destination and grade unknown. E. D. Gardner of *Mining and Scientific Press* reported in 1914 that "37 tons of ore ran 16% copper".

In the course of 1922 to 1925 field studies by T. S. Lovering of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS Bull. 811, Pt. 1), the deposit was classified as a syenite dike intruding granite with "some platinum and a very small amount of silver and zinc" occurring with the copper. Lovering reported Cooke City had a winter population of 75 and 200 residents during the summer made up mostly of claim holders who had assessment work that had to be done. He also outlined the barriers created by the isolation of the district: freight costs of 1 cent per pound to Gardiner and coke cost of \$40 per ton delivered to Cooke meant only the highest-grade ores could be profitable. In 1921, L. H. Brooks, Jr. of *Mining and Scientific Press* reported the dike was 60 to 100 ft. wide and samples assayed 9-12% copper, 2 oz. silver per ton, platinum from a trace to 1/12 oz. per ton and \$2. in gold. He also reported that an assay from the Calumet Lode showed 7 to 10% copper, \$1-\$2/ton gold and 14 oz/ton silver.

The scientific, helicopter equipped prospectors explored the area again in the late 1950's and 1970's. Bear Creek Mining Company, a subsidiary of Kennecott Copper Company conducted geochemical and geophysical studies and drilled seven holes in 1960. One hole 2,300 ft. northeast of the shaft was considered to contain economic grades. The richest zone from 245 to 370 ft. below the surface contained .12-.69% copper, a trace to .2 oz/ton gold and .1 to .5 oz /ton silver. The lease was reportedly dropped since no large surface-mineable ore body was found. In 1970, Kerr-McGee Corporation drilled south and southwest of the shaft but results have not been made available. They relocated 19 claims on



The remains of the mine and mill 2013. Photos courtesy AUTHOR

both sides of Goose Lake, dug numerous trenches and drilled at least four holes before returning the property to the owners. The most unusual results have come from random grab samples taken between 1969 and 1972, during studies required by Congress under the Wilderness Act, from stockpiles and dump materials associated with the shaft (USGS Bull.1391-F). The presence of up to 1.3 oz/ton platinum, 1.06 oz/ton palladium, 1.1 oz/ton silver and 6.8% copper with traces of gold led the US Geological Survey to conclude, "The property is a potential source of copper, gold, silver and platinum-group metals but additional exploration is necessary to determine the extent and average grade of the mineralized zone of the Copper King and adjacent properties".

The closely-held Copper King Mining, Milling and Development Company is, at this moment, approaching its 108th year, having been reincorporated by its stockholders in 1925, 1965 and 2005 in perpetuity. Of the 1 million shares authorized, 738,220 have been issued. The families involved have been a part of the colorful history of Cooke City since the 1880's when the Crow ceded the area back to the public domain.





The Nagle Engine and Boiler Works of Erie, Pennsylvania began producing portable and stationary steam engines in 1879. They incorporated in 1896 and by 1898 had built 12,000 engines and 15,000 boilers.

ELKHORN ~ Winter 1970 Photos by BERT and JOANNE McCROSKEY















HELP!

Via our e-mail we received four photos with the request 'could we shed some light on them?' They were from an old family album and the sender could only say their ancestor was in southern Montana and possibly Idaho at about the turn of the 19th/20th centuries. Can any of our readers help. No prizes, but if any scene looks familiar to you, please e-mail

me at: terryhalden@hotmail.com



РНОТО 2.

Now it gets harder to identify. Do any of our readers recognize the mine / mill on the right? It may be somewhere in Montana, or possibly in Idaho.



РНОТО 1.

This one was relatively easy to identify. It is the dredge A. E. Graeter, which according to the article by our Tom Lowe that we ran in the newsletter in 2009, operated in Bannack from 1897 to 1902. Its remains can still be seen there.

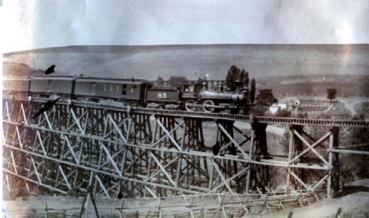


РНОТО 3.

Can any of our readers identify the landscape in this photo? To identify the teamster will get you bonus points!!!



Are there any railroad historians out there that can identify this train and trestle?



DREDGES in CONFEDERATE GULCH



by JOHN STONER

Diamond City in 1865.

Photo courtesy: TOWNSEND STAR

Gold was discovered in Confederate Gulch in 1864. It soon became the focal point of gold seekers pouring into the Territory, and the name of Diamond City became a household word, with an estimated population of 10,000 at its peak.

The Gulch went through the usual mining techniques from simple panning to hydraulicing, but it wasn't until 1908 that a dredge appeared on the scene. On January 31st of that year the Townsend Star reported that: "Mr. E.B. Lathrop arrived from the east this week and continued on his way to Diamond City, where he will immediately begin to arrange for the construction of a huge placer mining dredge. It seems that some eastern company has secured ground and privileges to a dredge at the old historic camp. The machine is to be built on a large scale and worked in accordance therewith. Mr. Lathrop informed us that there would be 500 tons of freight to haul to the place of action. A contract has been let to the Union Iron Works for the machine, which company will have charge of the construction. This means lively times for the old town and if successful, it also means that many other similar machines will be operated in this vicinity before many years."

The "Union Iron Works" from which the dredge was to be obtained was located in San Francisco. A sub-division of the Union Iron Works was the Risdon Iron & Locomotive Company, which produced some of the most successful gold dredges of the time.

On August 1st 1908, the Star noted that "Bill Jenkins of the McCormick's Stables made a trip to Diamond Tuesday, and brought back with him Messrs Northrup, Barnes and Beam, the main men of the Dredge Co. here at present" and in the following week's issue the Star gossip column reported: The heavy machinery still keeps moving to Diamond. It is said that the building of the dredge makes Diamond deem like old times."

The moving of all this equipment was done by McCormick's Stables of Townsend. In addition to providing the public with horse and buggy transportation they also offered as a specialty "Heavy Teaming."

It was noted on September 19th paper that "*Mr. G. B.* Barnes of the Diamond Dredge Co. took quite an extended trip last week. He went to Seattle, San Francisco, and Sacramento and returned via Ogden and Butte. He went in the interest of his dredge business."

The Star, on November 14th 1908, recorded: "We are informed that G. F. Ramspeck will remain in Diamond during the winter to watch the Dredge Company's property and keep water under the boat."

When dredging operations got under way in 1909 or 1910, they were apparently not profitable. A July 29th 1911 article, in the Star, said: "*The Diamond City dredge is a thing of the past, having been moved to Stark, Montana. Mr. C. E. Hoffort, who was here for several weeks looking after the shipment of the same departed this week for Stark to look after its safe delivery.*"

A recent Department of Environmental Quality historical context report on the Confederate Mining District stated that a company worked the gravels in the lower end of the gulch using a Risdon dredge but it shut down operations after three months when it found no values in the gravels. With the departure of the Diamond Dredge Company in 1911, gold mining by the use of dredges in Confederate gulch went unchallenged for 27 years until 1938.

On December 1st of 1938, The Townsend Star came out with a huge headline that read: "Large Gold Dredge to Work Confederate is Being Unloaded Here-Will Set Up Machinery at Mouth of Confederate Gulch." The article went on to say: "A large gold dredge is being unloaded at the Townsend station this week for the Fairplay Placer Company and is being hauled to the mouth of Confederate Gulch where it will be reset to start operations as soon as it is in running order. H. H. Reiber is in charge of the company's work and is superintending the unloading and transporting the enormous truckloads of machinery that are being taken from the Northern Pacific cars by means of a steam shovel and crane. Five car loads have already arrived here from San Francisco, the freight alone reaching almost \$3,000 mark. The machinery is new and it looks as if Broadwater County would be the scene of one of the largest dredging outfits in the state. Large acreages have been leased in the vicinity of Confederate Gulch, where millions of dollars' worth of gold was taken out in the early days of the Diamond City strike. It is thought that rich washes and deposits will be uncovered by the new process and much more wealth taken from the locality."

The following week the Star noted that "The Fairplay Mining Company in Confederate Gulch is temporarily suspended due to a dispute over working hours."

Apparently the dispute over working hours was settled over Christmas because on February 2nd 1939, under the Star's headline of *"Big Dredge Outfit Set, Ready to Dig,"* it reported: *"Machinery for the Fairplay Gold Mining Company's dredge has been assembled and set in operation. The large dredge is located at the base of Confederate Gulch and managers intend to start active operations as soon as the ground is ready in the spring. The machinery was recently shipped from San Francisco new from the factories. Now that it is assembled and found to be in working order, it is expected the famous old gold diggings will see some renewed activity in the spring. Tests before the dredge was installed and after have proved successful."* The dredge, a Northwest Model 95 dregline, serial #4663, was purchased from the Bodinson Manufacturing Company of San Francisco for \$39,000, according to records in the Broadwater County courthouse. It came complete with a 60' B. Type boom with 10' & 20' extensions, powered by a Northwest Twin City high-altitude 4 cylinders 8 x 9 gas engine, a Model E Kohler light plant with lights, a two and one-half yard heavy Esco dragline bucket, and all necessary accessories.

On June 1st the Star reported that the "*Reybel brothers* are working with a large floating washing plant and dragline equipment on lower Confederate gulch near Townsend. They are reported to have cleaned up 104 ounces of gold in eight days of operation." The article also noted that "Charles Sheridan and associates are operating on Boulder Bar at the head of Confederate Gulch, with shovel and washer, with good results."

In the July 27th 1939 issue, the Star informed its readers "The dredging work going forward in Confederate Gulch by the Fairplay Placers, Inc. is creating a great deal of interest to Broadwater County people who travel the somewhat rough road up to the famous old gulch to watch operations which have been going on since last February. H. H. Reiber, the superintendent of this large mining concern, is in Colorado at present during which time his assistant, Curley Poore, is in charge of the three shifts of men, a total payroll of 18 men being engaged in the dredging operations. The gold being cleaned up at the present, reported Herman Bergstrand who is part owner, is of a flat flakey consistency and shows that it has been washed a long way. The dredge was set in the bottom of the gulch about two miles from Jimmie's Gulch and dredging for gold is going on taking the dirt 20 feet to bedrock and washing it as the floating dredge pushes up the gulch. Cleanups have proven satisfactory said Mr. Bergstrand, who refrained from giving out the exact amount of gold cleaned up at any one time, but ventured to say the eight-day cleanup on the Fourth of July was the best since they started. The custom is to make a cleanup every ten days, and the gold taken is getting coarser the farther up the gulch they go.



Dredge on Eldorado Bar of Confederate Gulch, 1930's

Photo, courtesy AUTHOR

"Nuggets as large as the nail of the little finger have been taken, but for the most part the gold if fine. It is sent directly to the Denver mint and the company is paid approximately \$29.25 per ounce. From a fairly reliable source it was learned that as high as 202 ounces had been taken in one cleanup and that one of the last ones was 187 ounces. The company plans to work the ground to Jimmie's Gulch and although they have leases on the land farther up they do not know to what extent they will go, as in to commence operations above that point it would be necessary to dismantle their machinery and convey it up the canyon a ways which would take two years to do."

The following year, 1940, was a busy one for dredging operations around the county. The Star, on February 29th said it was expected that "Four large outfits will be set up in a short time to work ground in the Confederate District, as well as Indian Creek, the Missouri River bottom, and island lands. Testing is being done at the present time on Eldorado Bar near old Diamond City by Peter Lametti and Company of St. Paul with the idea of installing a drag line in that vicinity. The Fairplay Mining Company, who have been operating in the bottom of Confederate Gulch will be starting spring operations again soon after having been closed all winter."

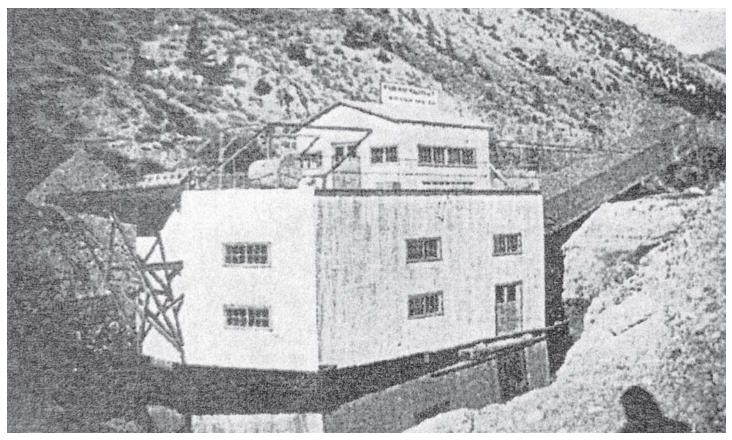
Later on, in the March 29th issue the Star reported that "It is expected there will be eight or ten outfits working around Broadwater County this spring and summer, to make a last cleanup on what they say is ground that was only scratched by the early day miners. At present the Fairplay Mining Company is set in the famous old Confederate Gulch where in the 1860's millions of dollars of gold was taken out and which has yielded up fair sized pockets ever since. Another outfit under the same management of the Lametti Construction Company is working on Boulder Bar, in the Confederate country."

The local Townsend newspaper only mentioned gold dredging once in 1941, and that on the 1st of May when it reported that "Gold dredging has been successfully carried on under the famous old Montana Bar and on the bar in the vicinity of Diamond City for two summers by the Fairplay Company and others and it is expected operations will commence again."

By 1942 all gold dredging operations had been suspended by order from the government for the duration of the war. This was apparently the end of gold dredging in Confederate Gulch because the dredges never returned.

The piles of rock tailings discharged from the dredge's stacker remain visible today to anyone driving up Confederate Gulch, and the path of the dredge as it clawed its way up the gulch is easily followed.

In recent years the gulch above Diamond City has seen active surface mining operations with modern machinery, but the days of gold dredges is long gone.



The Fairplay Placers Inc., dragline dredge in Confederation Gulch, 1939. Photo, courtesy BODINSON MANUFACTURING Co., San Francisco

MONTANA GHOST TOWN PRESERVATION SOCIETY CONVENTION 2014

Friday, Saturday, & Sunday September 5, 6, 7

HEADQUARTERS: YOGO INN, LEWISTOWN, MONTANA Here are tentative plans – Speakers and Presenters have been confirmed

FRIDAY

Registration–Yogo Inn Lobby Sandwich Buffet – Sapphire Rooms, Yogo Inn WELCOME: Fred Lark – KXLO Radio Lewistown FEATURED SPEAKER: Barbara Fifer - Montana Ghost Towns - Helena, Montana Five Mini Clinics and Presentations, each 30 minutes. 1. Yogo Sapphires - Marie Ridgeway - Lewistown, Montana 2. Water Witching / Dousing Francis Zahler - Lewistown, Montana 3. Civil War and Frontier Quilts – Darla Black – Great Falls, Montana 4. Bear Canyon Pictographs - Maci Ahlgren – Grass Range, Montana 5. Kendall and Maiden Information and Pictures - Jerry Hanley – Lewistown, Montana

SATURDAY

Morning Field Trip: Reed and Bowles Trading Post on Carroll Trail Kendall Town and R C Kendall Mine – John Foster and Jerry Hanley guides Lunch back at Yogo Inn: Hamburger outdoor buffet at Yogo Inn Afternoon Field Trip; Maiden Town and Maginnis Mine -Mill - Jerry Hanley host Evening Events: No Host Social Hour at the Yogo Inn Banquet in Sapphire Rooms, Yogo Inn FEATURED SPEAKER: John R. Foster – History of Fort Maginnis – Lewistown, Montana

MGTPS Annual Meeting

SUNDAY

Central Montana Museum Visit – Lewistown Morning Field Trip: Fort Maginnis State Park Gilt Edge Ghost Town Lunch – Cheadle Hall (Request being sent to Cheadle Board of Directors)

> Optional Sunday afternoon events – Are on your own "What The Hay Festival " – Hobson to Utica "Bear Gulch Pictographs Tour"

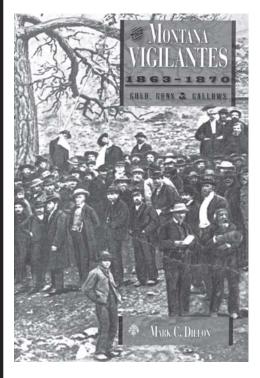
All meals listed above are part of the MGTPS Convention Fees – Breakfasts are on your own.



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

REVIEW:

MONTANA VIGILANTES, 1863 - 1870 Gold, Guns & Gallows



by Mark C. Dillon

Using newspaper articles, diaries, letters, biographies, invoices and books (mainly Dimsdale's 'The Vigilantes of Montana' and Langford's 'Vigilante Days and Ways') that speak to the compelling history of Montana's vigilantism in the 1860s, Mark C. Dillon examines the conduct of the vigilantes in the context of the due process norms of the times. He implicates the influence of lawyers and judges who like their non-legal counterparts, shaped history during the gold rush.

Dillon's perspective, as a state Supreme Court Judge and legal historian uniquely qualifies him to examine, through the prism of legal history, the basic need of citizenry for social order, considering the state of criminal justice, trial procedures, gubernatorial politics, legislative enactments and constitutional law of the period. Dillon deals with the original vigilantes in Bannack / Virginia City but also the subsequent rash in Helena and concludes with much information about 'Stuarts Stranglers'. Each chapter comes with heavy notes (located at the end of each chapter) and there is an index and a bibliography. By far the best book to come out on the subject in decades.

Terry Halden