



# MONTANA GHOST TOWN PRESERVATION SOCIETY

preserving history for the next generation

VOLUME 43

## NEWSLETTER

FALL 2014



ABOVE: FRED LARK  
"Hi De Ho" Welcome



DARLA BLACK  
Civil War Quilts



TONY TUSS  
Coal mining in area



ABOVE, TOP:  
CLARK WHITEHEAD  
Reed & Bowles trading post

ABOVE: MARCIE ALGREN  
Bear Canyon pictographs

BELOW: JOHN FOSTER  
Fort Maginnis history

BELOW: LEE WOODWARD  
Yogo Sapphires

JERRY HANLEY  
Maiden History

BARRY SMITH  
Gilt Edge history



LEFT: DON KRAFTENBERG  
Water witching



*The Guest  
Speakers at  
Convention*



# 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](mailto: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.

## FALL 2014

**President:** Terry Halden  
**Vice President:** Mike Byrnes  
**Secretary / Treasurer:** Sally Griffin  
**Website Administrator:** Kathryn Manning  
**Facebook Administrator:** Darian Halden  
**Recruitment:** Don Black  
**Projects:** Sue Howe  
**Membership:** Darian Halden  
**Newsletter Editor:** Terry Halden  
**2015 Convention:** Darian & Terry Halden  
**Immediate Past President:** John Ellingsen  
**Directors:** Loretta Chapman, Tom Lowe, and Gordon Tracy.

# The Prez Sez

TERRY HALDEN

First the good news: As you can see by the photos on page one and the photo collage in the center of this newsletter it was one heck of a successful convention, this year in Lewistown. Congratulations to Don Black and his numerous helpers for putting on a convention to remember. Not only were the guest speakers knowledgeable, but entertaining and our attendance, for the first time exceeded the hundred mark, including several new members attending for their first time.

In this newsletter I'm pleased to publish an article written by Linda Dutcher giving a detailed history of mining in Stillwater County from the original prospecting in the 1860's right up to the massive mining and milling going on there today. It is so detailed and full of facts that I had to break it into two articles, the conclusion of which will be published in the next issue.

Now for the bad news: With the wrath of resignations from the board recently, your Society is in grave danger of folding – not from lack of members (which was the problem a few years ago, and which has been rectified) but from the fact that there is a need for people interested in working to help run this Society. The situation is critical. So anyone out there that can spare a few hours, four times a year to attend a board meeting in Bozeman and help run this Society, please contact me at: [terryhalden@hotmail.com](mailto:terryhalden@hotmail.com) or [mtghosttown@yahoo.com](mailto:mtghosttown@yahoo.com) or call me at (403) 381-4587. (Canada is long distance, but is still a cheap call).

We need you now.

Until the next time.....

Terry

M.G.T.P.S. A.G.M. minutes cont'd

Terry also received a gift of a piece of Welch marble with a dragon on it in recognition of his homeland. Past President John Ellingsen was recognized for having been in MGTPS the longest – 42 years! Other awards were presented to people for their service to MGTPS and their work on the Convention.

Terry then asked for people with convention photos to email them to him to put in the newsletter. He would like people to write a comment to go with the photos if possible.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55PM.

Respectfully submitted, Sally Griffin  
Secretary/Treasurer

## HELP WANTED

Anyone with a keen interest in preserving history, and can spare an hour or two, four times a year to attend meetings in Bozeman, is asked to contact Terry Halden at [terryhalden@hotmail.com](mailto:terryhalden@hotmail.com) or [mtghosttown@yahoo.com](mailto:mtghosttown@yahoo.com) to apply for the job.

Remuneration is the satisfaction of helping to run this Society.

## New Members

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

Sharon Riggs - Missoula, MT    Nancy Watts - Lewistown, MT    Tony & Dixie Tuss - Lewistown, MT

Connie Griffin & Mark Edgerley - Bozeman, MT    Carla & Stephen Toth - Billings, MT

Brian R. Lewis - Lewistown, MT    Dan & Diane Thomas - Billings, MT    Terry & Terri Selph - Lewistown, MT

Tammi & Claude Bidegaray - Brockton, MT    Central Montana Historical Museum - Lewistown, MT

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

August 18, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 1:05PM by President Terry Halden. A guest, Kathryn Manning was introduced. She is developing our new logo and is updating our website. In addition to Terry, Board Members present were Mike Byrnes, Sally Griffin, Dick Lee, and Don Black. Mel Howe also attended as a substitute for his wife, Board Member Sue Howe.

Sally Griffin gave the Treasurer's Reports. Dick Lee moved that we accept the Treasurer's Reports and Mel Howe seconded for Sue. Motion passed.

Sally then gave the Secretary's Report. We received a notice of the Montana Historical Society Conference Sept. 18-20. As President, Terry will go, he will get an honorarium of \$300 toward expenses. We also received several newsletters and two Pioneer Museum Magazines. One newsletter was from the Virginia City Preservation Alliance. We are not currently a member of this organization so it was decided to renew our membership at the Individual rate.

Membership and Facebook Chairman Darian Halden was not able to attend, but she sent a report that we now have 215 members. She sent out 23 reminder cards to people that had not paid their dues. She is in need of help with posting to Facebook. Kathryn Manning will help.

Recruitment Chairman Don Black wanted to wait to report until we discuss the convention in Lewistown, since that is his major recruitment project.

Webmaster Dick Lee is retiring, effective this meeting, so Kathryn will be taking this over. We made an advance to her for her time and expenses. Sally asked if we should re-print our stationery now, using the new logo. We will not do that until we run out of our present supply.

Projects Chairman Sue Howe could not attend, so Mike Byrnes reported for her. We cannot go forward with the project we were thinking about in Garnet because the lady who was leading the effort has resigned so now we have no contact. Don Black said that there were a number of things in the Lewistown area, and we could talk to the leaders and speakers at the convention to see what is needed.

Newsletter Chairman Terry said he needs some material for the next newsletter. He wants to know what we could contribute.

## OLD BUSINESS:

Don is finalizing the arrangements for the convention in Lewistown next month. The only thing he might need is members to help be in charge at the various locations since he has to work behind the scenes and cannot be in two places at once. Mel Howe will help one of the speakers, John Foster, who may need some physical assistance.

Terry reminded us that the 2015 convention is at Great Falls/Fort Benton and in 2016, Missoula.

## NEW BUSINESS:

Board Members Jan and Maria O'Brien and Dick and Rosemary Lee are resigning effective immediately. Kathryn Manning will be on the Board.

Terry talked about a change to four of our Articles of Incorporation which was filed with the Secretary of State February 4, 1999. There was no supporting documentation in our old minutes and it appears they were changed solely by the president at the time. We do not want these changes, so we need to get this situation corrected. We will discuss how to go about this at the next meeting.

We then discussed the problem of what to do about Board Members who either do not or are not able to attend as many meetings as the By-Laws state they should. There are several Board Members who have not attended for some time, and this makes it difficult to have a quorum and conduct business. Terry will talk to these Board Members about the problem.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Griffin  
Secretary/Treasurer

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M.G.T.P.S. A.G. MEETING  
September 7, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 8:25PM by President Terry Halden.

It was moved and seconded that we approve the minutes of the Sept. 7, 2013, Annual General Meeting as printed in the Quarterly Newsletter. The motion passed.

Secretary/Treasurer Sally Griffin gave the Treasurer's Report for the fiscal year July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014. Motion to accept was carried.

Terry announced that Jan & Maria O'Brien and Dick & Rosemary Lee have resigned from the Board of Directors. He asked if anyone would be interested in serving on the Board.

Ideas for projects we could consider working on are Fort Maginnis, and the cemetery which we would see Sunday morning, and some assistance for the Blaine County Museum in Chinook.

Terry then called for a moment of silence in honor of the members who has passed away this past year.

Under New Business, our 2015 Convention will be in Great Falls with a day trip to Fort Benton. The 2016 Convention will be in Missoula.

Members attending their first Convention were asked to stand in introduce themselves. We then gave a hearty round of applause to them. Don and Darla Black for their tremendous work in putting on this Convention were also given a standing round of applause.

Vice President Mike Byrnes presented a photo of 1902 Lewistown to Shirley Barrick. A photograph of Maiden was presented to Terry.

Continued on page 2, opposite

# THE STILLWATER MINING DISTRICT

a detailed history by

**LINDA DUTCHER**

A century and a half has passed since prospectors first came upon partially hidden, mineralized rocks 2.75 billion year-old in the upper Stillwater region. They were lured by the colorful outcrops scattered in cliffs above Verdigris Creek. The outcrop, nearly 30 miles long, is now known as the "Stillwater Igneous Complex" and over the years was found to contain bands of concentrated metals. Among the included metal is an estimated 90 percent of the known chrome reserves in the Western Hemisphere, also, one of the largest known copper-nickel sulfide deposits.

## FIRST PROSPECTORS

Gold was thought to be discovered in the upper Yellowstone River region in the 1860's. Many notable characters came in search of the elusive metal. Entering the Stillwater region in 1868, was "Big Dutch Pete", who scouted for Nelson Story, and who is rumored to have searched the Stillwater Basin. Lee Lute, a Chinese immigrant arrived in Columbus about 1877, and became "a leading pioneer in the search for precious ore in the Stillwater watershed." Other early prospecting exploits were made by a trio of mining characters "Skookum Joe" Anderson, Ansel S. Hubble and "Uncle Billy" Hamilton. Hamilton stated in 1884, "that the Stillwater mines were discovered and worked more than 20 years ago by Mr. Hubble and others" and around 1870, by Anderson and himself. Anderson was a motivated and methodical prospector and "astute enough to acquire grubstakes to finance his prospecting, and knew enough geology to recognize a potentially good mineral site."

He chose to search alone, particularly for gold, although his diaries mention claims involving silver, manganese, iron, copper, lime, marble, platinum, asbestos, tin, coal and oil. He is quoted as repeatedly saying, "Gold is my own money" and he carried plenty of it, "paying for his grub with gold."

## NYE & HEDGES BROTHERS' DISCOVERY

Jack V. Nye reminiscing in 1884 stated he had prospected in the mountains beginning in 1867. Nye's cousins, James, Ephrain and Jonas Hedges, joined the search in the summer of 1883. At that time they staked the original claims, including the "Ohio" placer claim, which later became the site of Nye City. James Hedges subsequently stated they had been on their claims only a few days when five Indian police sent by Crow Agent Henry J. Armstrong maintained they were trespassing on reservation land and escorted them off. Also, learning of the mining potential, "Skookum Joe" Anderson and Ansel Hubble soon moved into the area.

Excitement centered around Nye and Hedges discovery of a 400 to 530 foot copper lead that traced for ten or fifteen miles in the area now known as Mountain View, Initial Creek and Benbow. An exposed vein caused by a landslide led to the initial discovery and the submission by the founders of over 200 claims covering 30 square miles. The ore was assayed 40 to 50 percent copper, and also contained "pockets of rich silver ore in the quartz". Nye was certain a great portion of his discovery was outside the Crow Reservation, but not wanting to "interfere

A 1895 photo of the ghost town of Nye.

Photo courtesy of the  
MUSEUM of the  
BEARTOOTH -  
ANNIN collection



with Indian rights” would wait until the question of reservation boundaries was settled before working his mine.

Nye, however traveled to Minneapolis relaying to friends and relatives his discovery. This resulted in the incorporation of the original Stillwater Mining Company during the summer of 1884. Enough capital was given for a mining development project in 1885. In September and October, 1885, Nye sold claims from the Initial and Verdigris Creeks, Stillwater Valley and the Benbow area, as well as the right to 5,000 inches of water to the Stillwater Mining Company. A few weeks into October, the Stillwater Mining Company sold the claims to the Minneapolis Mining and Smelting Company (MMSC) which went forward with high Nye City began to go up almost immediately and construction continued through 1887. A wagon road suitable for hauling heavy machinery from the railroad in Columbus was established and is essentially today’s paved Hwy 419 to Nye. Mining developments included 8,000 feet of tunneling through faulted rock, veined with copper-nickel minerals and some gold and silver. An assay office and smelter, as well as a mess hall and living quarters for company men was constructed. A modern smelter was also installed for reducing ore on the site.

Work came to an immediate end in November of 1889 when the Secretary of Interior sent word that the mining properties and Nye City were six miles inside the boundary on the Crow Reservation. A deadline for evacuation was set. Appeals were futile. As James Hedges later recalled, a fire was never built in the new smelter. Machinery was removed and sold to other mining interests. Stillwater Mining Company could not recover their \$200,000 in expenditures and went into bankruptcy along with prospectors who had put their faith in the new “Little Butte”. The final Nye document was recorded March 28, 1889. It awarded a judgment deed for \$12,255 to Stanley R. Kitchell. Kitchell held the property until 1892 when mining and claim staking became legal after the Crow ceded the western part of their reservation, which included this vicinity.

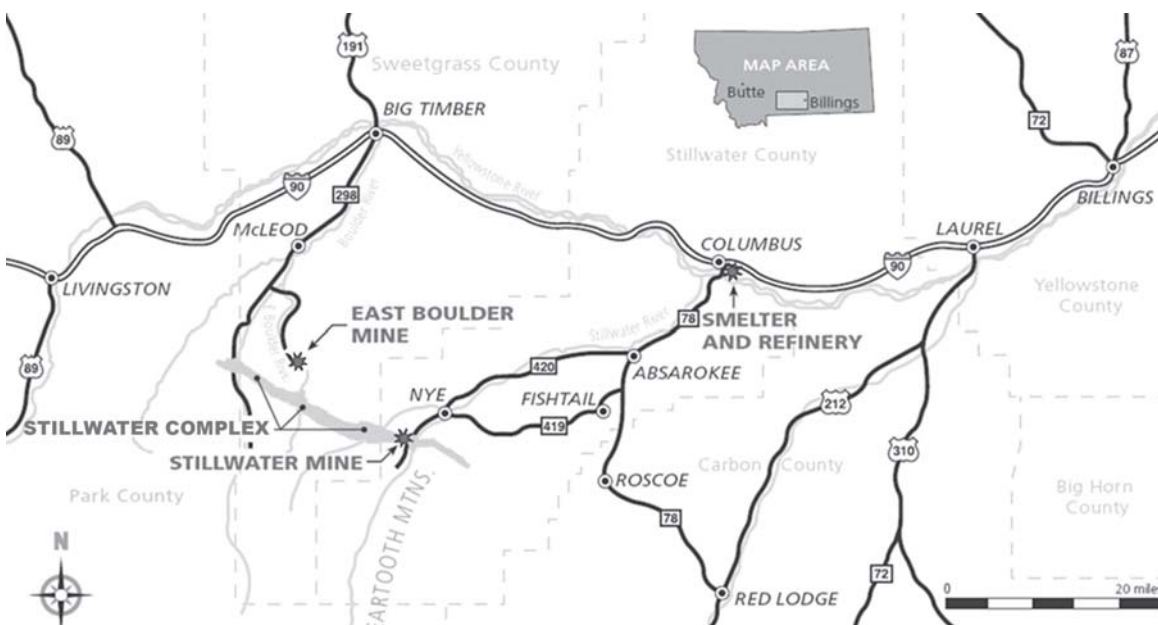
## 1893 The ‘NEW FIND’

With the Nye vicinity now public domain, several prospectors, including some from the 1880’s such as the Hedges, Lee Lute and “Uncle Billy” Hamilton, were still determined to work the old claims as well as stake new claims. On March 14, 1894, J. M. Ramsey editor of the *Stillwater Bulletin*, reported John Willis had discovered a “new find” of a copper-nickel “chimney” in Nye City on November, 1893. This information was leaked but the discovery caused great excitement. Willis estimated the find to be 300 feet wide and 12 miles long, and “a fortune for 20 men”. Word of it reached Montana’s copper king, Marcus Daly who sent the mining expert W.D. Hamilton to look over the deposits. Prospectors, including Skookum Joe Anderson were more skeptical of the find and rightfully so as no eastern capital came forth for backing. Even the Minneapolis Mining and Smelting Company, which had received patents following the order to evacuate in 1889, did not return. Most claim owners followed suit, relocating and abandoning their property. However, there were those who faithfully continued, such as Lee Lute who in 1904 sent a six-ton sample of ore to Omaha. The results came back showing the ore was too low-grade to warrant production.

## CHROMITE CREATES THE NEXT CHAPTER

A story circulated by geologists relates that a mapping party of the U.S. Geological Survey recognized chromite (the most important ore of chromium) in the Beartooth Mountains about 1890. One of the party, a former hunter returned during WW I and located claims that later consolidated as the Shelby J. Gish property. The Nye Corporation also encountered chromite adjacent to their copper-nickel mine above Nye in 1885. The Mouat family, of Denver no stranger to the mining world, acquired this property consisting of 50 patented and 20 unpatented claims. They were inherited in 1914 by Malcolm William “Bill” Mouat whose uncle had been president of Minneapolis Mining and Smelting Company.

Continued on Page 8



Map of the Stillwater mining complex in Stillwater and Sweet Grass counties

Map courtesy Author



*Convention*  
*2014*  
Photos by:  
Linda Dutcher  
Darian Halden  
Gloria Hardin  
&  
Terry Halden



ABOVE: Friday night registration.

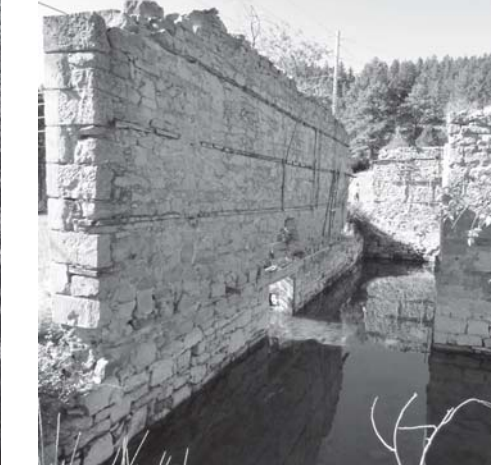
ABOVE: Part of the group at Kendall

RIGHT: Reed & Bowles Trading Post



BELOW: Darian gets some extra photography tips from Lee Silliman

BELOW: Enter, if you dare!



ABOVE: The worst case of a leaky basement, we've seen.

RIGHT: Convention Chairman, Don Black  
BELOW: Back at the Yogo Inn for a Bar-B-Q hamburger lunch.





ABOVE: Jerry Handley gives the history of the Maginnis Mine

BELOW: Some of our guests at the banquet



ABOVE: The saloon in Maiden.

LEFT: 'Follow me' a resident of Maiden offers to show us some of the sites not on Jerry Handley's intinery.

BELOW: Sunday morning breakfast at the Central Montana Museum



LEFT: A well at Fort Maginnis

ABOVE: The deplorable condition of the cemetery.

RIGHT: The grave marker of Teddy 'Blue' Abbott



BELOW: A Gilt Edge relic.



LEFT: And everywhere we went, a Port-a-potty was sure to follow.

## Chalk Benbow Area

The first area to be developed for chromite was named in recognition of Thomas C. "Chalk" Benbow. Chalk, a struggling rancher, sacrificed his homestead on the Stillwater River in 1901 to build a flying machine called the, "Montana Meteor." In 1905, Benbow began searching for a source of income after financial losses incurred with his ill-fated flying machine at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. About 1907, Benbow discovered chromite while prospecting at Little Rocky Creek. Benbow took on partners, Walter J. "Chick" Chitwood of Absarokee who sold his interest in 1932 and Clarence Rich who ranched at Dean. Not until 1918, did Benbow, along with John C. Barker of Great Falls exploit the chromite deposit. They had been prompted by a country in search for a source of the "master alloy" critical to World War 1. Only about 536 long tons of chromite ore was mined in 1918 by the various entities, Benbow, Mouat, and the Boulder Reeves Chrome Company, but no shipments were made because of transportation problems to the railroad. The end of WW1 resulted in a return to higher-grade, foreign sources.

## At the Benbow Mine

After 1918, financing for Benbow's development now was supplemented by A.W. Kingsbury and J. C. Barker who owned 27% of the Butte-Columbus Chrome Company, Benbow and his associates owned 73%. In 1920, Benbow built a wagon road from Dean and also searched for higher-grade leads. Two or three firms showed interest in the claims, particularly in 1922 through 1924 when the Columbus-Cooke City railroad was being promoted. A major deal was struck in February, 1929, when a partnership headed by Chrysler Corporation, The Chromium Corporation, signed a contract for Benbow's claims. Benbow, Barker and Kingsbury along with Benbow's other associates including his sons; Chalkey and Ceborn, Judge B. E. Berg of Livingston, Louise Dunbar of St. Paul, Mrs. Rich and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Line of Missoula, plus a group of local men who each invested \$100 received a portion of \$300,000 in cash and future production royalties. The Chromium Corporation made improvements and advanced the Majestic and the previously opened Eclipse adits. In October 1929, 500 tons of ore was sent to Butte. The resulting concentrate was to be sent to the Chromium Corporation's plant in Newark, N. J. for trial manufacture into chrome products. However, the stock market crash of late 1929 ended this transaction. Following Chalk Benbow's death in Columbus, December 17, 1931 the government issued patents for seven of his claims November 24, 1933. They were acquired in 1934 by Chromium Products Corporation of Livingston, who by 1939, proved up about a million tons of chromite ore. The American Chrome Products Corporation of New York City was formed to develop the property, but nothing came of the project. In 1940, Canadian interests drove a new adit but suspended development in June 1941 when the U. S. Government intervened.

## The Mouat Mine

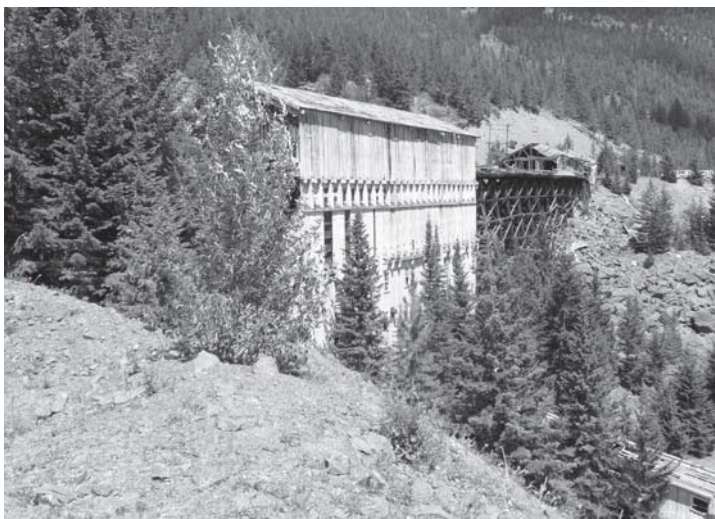
At the Mouat mining claims, developments in the 1920s and 30s consisted of several pits and an adit, a few hundred feet long. Vincent D. Perry, who later became president of the Anaconda Minerals Company reported favorably on the deposit in 1925. Drilling by the company in 1937 however, did not produce satisfactory results. During this period, Bill Mouat, aside from gathering needed capital, persuaded geologists from Princeton University to study the area. This led to the discovery of the chromite seams in the Mountain View area above the present-day Stillwater Mining Company operations. By 1939, Edward Sampson of Princeton, New Jersey and subsequently Mouat staked claims. The property was incorporated in 1941 as Mouat Nickel Mines, but there was no mining as the property was tied up in a legal battle until the Government interceded because of World War II.



ABOVE: The adit to the No. 5 level of the Mouat mine.

BELOW: The edge of the Mouat mine yard by the ore crusher plant with the conveyor system to the ore bins in the lower right corner of the photo.

Both photos courtesy AUTHOR





## WORLD WAR II AND GOVERNMENT FUNDS BRING MAJOR DEVELOPMENT

In early 1940, chromium was among the first materials listed strategic for WW II efforts even though the United States had not yet entered the war. The United States was a major consumer of chromium ore but had little domestic production. Supplies came from Turkish, New Caledonian, Rhodesian and Philippine sources; but the trade routes had become endangered and even blocked by German U-boats and the Japanese. However, prior to the war, efforts were made to determine the extent of the Stillwater deposits. Aware of the report, the Defense Plant Corporation in January 1941 contracted, the Anaconda Copper Mining Company for a site evaluation. Six months later, approval was given and mining activity in the Stillwater mining district began. The day after the attack at Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941 Washington wired, "put on more speed." Access roads became a top priority as chromite ore was stacked before mills were completed or roads for transporting. This led to the construction of Highway Routes 419 and 420, and a double-bridge across the Yellowstone.

Speed was of the essence, the vital chrome was needed for ball-bearing plants, shipyards, torpedo plants and plane factories. The mining camps as witnessed in 1942 were "27/7" as thousands of men were swarming in places

that only eagles had known, tunneling through the peaks, laying electric railroads through the tunnels, sinking air shafts, building whole villages to house the miners, tossing up huge mills to refine the ore, cutting roads out of rock, swinging ore trams down the mountain, and living in a sweating, excited, lonely world of their own. However, at last, the Benbow gravity mill turned out the first product March 1, 1942, thanks due in part to requisitioning needed supplies like trucks and bridge parts from ranchers and floodlights from the Billings softball park. The first load was trucked in May to the railroad in Columbus by future governor Hugo Aronson.

When chromite ore was once again allowed sea passage due to Allied victories in North Africa and Sicily, the Benbow Mine and Mill were shut down in June 1943. Over 35,000 feet of workings had been driven in the mine to produce 200,625 tons of ore resulting in 64,791 tons of concentrate. The Mouat complex, which cost almost 8.5 million dollars, never operated at full capacity. In October, 1943 the Metals Reserve Company announced the entire project was to be closed down because of "lack of need for the Montana chrome". The closing drew national attention, particularly in the December 6, 1943 edition of Time Magazine which referred to Mouat Mine as, "The handsomest ghost town of World War II". 163,571 tons of ore had been mined and milled to produce 29,373 tons of concentrate. Five million tons of reserves had been identified.

Continued next issue with the post World War II years and the modern mining of platinum, palladium, rhodium and the re-birth of the Stillwater Mining Company.



ABOVE LEFT: The Mouat mining buildings, with the Lake Camp site in background.

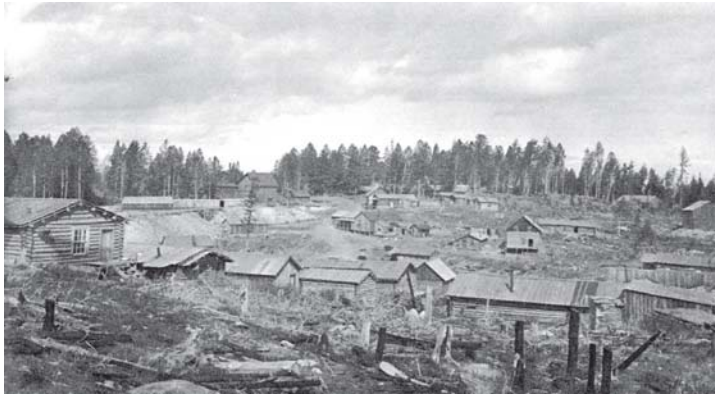
ABOVE: Remaining buildings from the W.W.II Lake Camp site.

LEFT: The dormitory Housing and Community buildings at the government built Lake Camp site

All photos, 2012, by AUTHOR

# The Ghost Town of **COLOMA**

by **TERRY HALDEN**



Coloma Ca 1900 Photo, KENNETH BROWN collection

Situated four miles northwest of Garnet, Coloma is often referred to as the poorer sister town. With respect to the amount of wealth mined, yes the phrase is true, but with respect to the standard of life in the two mining towns, no – it was a lot better in Coloma. Whilst Garnet had fourteen saloons, twenty-two prostitutes and no library, in 1895, with a population approaching two hundred, Coloma had two saloons, two prostitutes, a school under construction, a library holding four hundred books and a reading room filled with the latest magazines, newspapers and board games (strict rules – no gambling on the games!).

The first prospector to visit the area on the north-west side of the Garnet Mountains was a party led by J. E. Van Gundy in 1868. They sank a shaft eighteen to twenty feet deep, that they named the Mammoth, in what was later to become Coloma, but finding a negligible amount of placer gold and with a poor water supply, they moved on to more favorable diggings. However Van Gundy retained ownership of the Mammoth by doing assessment work over the years. In the early 1880's interest in the area started in earnest with the nearby Cato mine being established, and when the owners built a small stamp mill in 1885, it became the first mill in the Garnets. O.C. Warner's Huntington Mill, a scant ¼ mile from the future Coloma began operation in 1892. Van Gundy started mining at the Mammoth the following year, having secured enough eastern capital to form the Mammoth Gold Mining Company, and it too built a ten-stamp mill in 1895. With all this activity, many miles from populated areas it was necessary to house the miners and mill workers. In 1894 the fledgling town of Coloma was started and by 1895 it sported three general stores, a meat market, two blacksmith shops, a 'first class' restaurant, a boarding house, and, of course, two saloons. It also had its own post office.

Despite ore being shipped to smelters in East Helena of Butte averaged a low of \$90 a ton to a high of \$135 a ton, the mill at the Mammoth was losing money as a lot of gold was going to the tailings. The Boston owners of the company sent out an expert mining engineer, Arthur B. Browne, to assess the situation. Although he introduced a cyanide method that recovered 95% of the ore, it was too late for three months after the new method was installed, in August 1898, a suite

was brought against the company, by its biggest debt holder for \$23,000 resulting in the sheriff marching in and closing down the operation. The following January, the assets of the company were sold off and as the biggest employer of the town was silent, the town started to die, even losing its post office for a month.

But the Mammoth, under new ownership, re-opened and by 1907 the shaft had reached a depth of 350 ft. However the euphoria was short lived and by the turn of the century, the town was on the decline for the last time. One by one the mines closed and when the Mammoth finally closed for good in 1908, along with the post office, Coloma was on the way to becoming a ghost town.



COLOMA, 2014. Photos, DARIAN & TERRY HALDEN



## The (Almost) Ghost Town of **MOCCASIN**

Although the 100 or so current residents of the town of Moccasin might object to the title, nevertheless Moccasin is a ghost town in the true meaning of the word. Located four miles north-west of the hamlet of Hobson, on Hwy. 3, in Judith Basin County, Moccasin came into being in the early 1890's as a stage stop on the Great Falls to Lewistown road and on May 15, 1896 it had its own post office, although it only lasted until February 15 the following year. With the advent of the Homestead Act there was a large influx of settlers into the area, and in 1908 M.S.U created the Central Agriculture Research Center, three miles west of Moccasin to teach the newcomers dry land farming techniques. This resulted in the re-establishment of the post office in November 1909, which is still in operation today. Massive range fires in 1916, 1919 and again in 1922, along with draughts, grasshoppers and other natural calamities, homesteading was a failure. Most of the population moved on, and in the 1960's the 'hippie' movement moved in establishing a colony and occupying the empty buildings. Today, they too have moved on, and although the nearby C.A.R.C. is still in operation, developing new crops and machinery, most of the buildings in the town are deserted and empty.



All photos, 2014, courtesy TERRY HALDEN





# Montana Ghost Town Quarterly

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

## REVIEW

### 'MONTANA 1864'

by KEN EGAN Jr.



*Indians, Emigrants, and Gold  
in the Territorial Year*

KEN EGAN JR.

Writer and historian Dr. Ken Egan Jr. uses a unique method to present the many different and fascinating things that occurred in Montana in 1864, the year it was created as a territory. In twelve chapters, one for each month, he relates several interesting stories that either came to a climax, or started in that month each with their pre-history or subsequent history. He covers Indians, traders, gold miners, trail blazers, fortune seekers, settlers, vigilantes and outlaws – and not just the famous ones, but often ordinary people that were kind enough to leave letters or diaries. The stories range from those that formed the territory and those that opposed.

This verbal snapshot of a most important year in the history of Montana is an interesting concept.

The text and style of writing is very readable and the book comes with notes, a bibliography, and index.

Terry Halden