



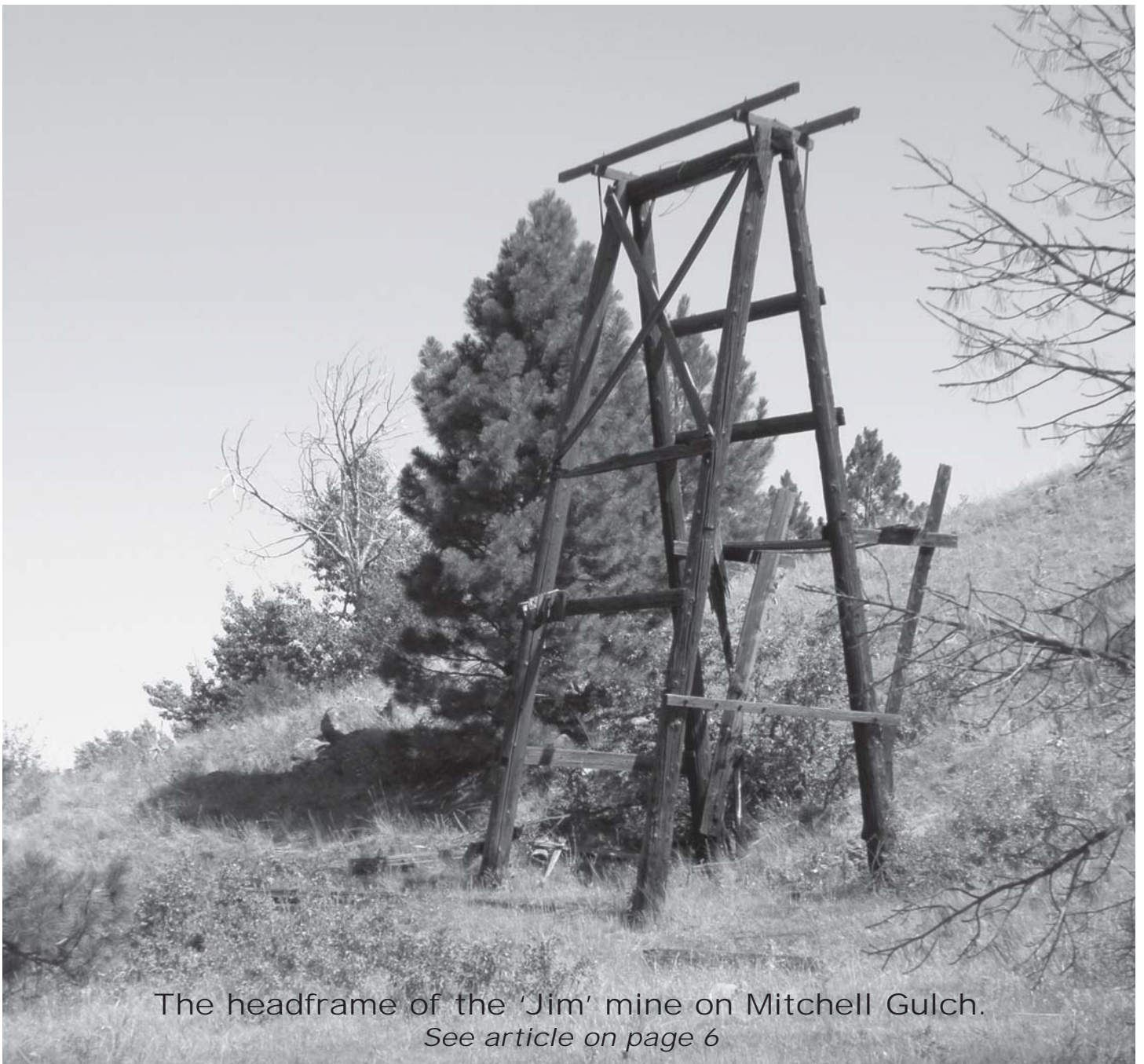
MONTANA
GHOST TOWN
PRESERVATION SOCIETY

preserving history for the next generation

VOLUME 43

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2015



The headframe of the 'Jim' mine on Mitchell Gulch.
See article on page 6

Photo: TERRY HALDEN

Montana Ghost Town Quarterly

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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.

SPRING 2015

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Newsletter Editor: Terry Halden
2015 Convention: Darian & Terry Halden
Immediate Past President: John Ellingsen
Directors: Larry Hoffman, Tom Lowe, Brad Ogrosky and Gordon Tracy.

The Prez Sez

TERRY HALDEN

I'd like to introduce to you, two new members on your board: Larry Hoffman, who now resides in Butte, has been in the mining business, virtually all his life. Members will recall Larry at the last convention in Lewistown helping Jerry Hanley with his talk on the Friday night and at Maiden the following afternoon. Brad O'Grosky, lives in Bozeman and is a newcomer to the west, but is an avid devotee of history and a member of the Gallatin County Museum board. Welcome to both of these gentleman.

The plans for the upcoming convention in Great Falls are coming along splendidly.

We have two solid speakers lined up for the Friday, who will give us illustrated talks about the history of Fort Shaw (Built in 1867 and abandoned in 1891) and the history of policing the frontier, in particular, Great Falls and Cascade County. Added to our tour of the old fort at Fort Benton on the Saturday afternoon will be a camp of a few dozen 'Galvanized Yankees', in Confederate Army uniforms. For those of you that are not familiar with the term, Confederate army personnel who were captured in the Civil War were given a choice of going to a concentration camp, joining the Union Army and going out west to fight native Indians, or going to 'Siberia' (Montana Territory). Many took the alternative to a prison life and hence became known as 'Galvanized Yankees'. The group are willing to have you mix with them and will be able to answer any questions you may have. We have also arranged a surprise for you before you re-board the bus for the return to Great Falls. The guest speaker at our banquet is Ken Robison, who is the historian at the Overholser Historical Research Center in Fort Benton, Historian for the Great Falls / Cascade County Historical Preservation Commission, the writer of monthly historical columns for two newspapers, and the author of several historical books. Ken will give an illustrated talk about the Mullan road.

The proposed Sunday excursion to Fort Shaw had to be terminated after a visit to the site revealed there is little there to see. The Fort Shaw Indian School is still there (the Fort Shaw Indian School girls' basketball team were the world champs in 1904) along with a monument acknowledging their past accomplishment. And that, together with a large building that has one end occupied by the Sun River Valley Historical Society, is about it. In replacement the Charlie Russell Museum is concluding its exhibition 'The Nameless Hunter' on Saturday, September 12, but has agreed to keep it going for one more day, open early at 9 a.m. and provide us with guided tours of the exhibit, their other displays and, of course, Charlie Russell's original studio. We are also arranging one other tour for the Sunday morning to the Mehmke Steam Museum near Great Falls.. Despite the increase in the cost of food, we've managed to keep the cost of the convention to \$75.00 per head.

In this issue of the newsletter you will find repeat articles by Larry Hoffman and Jerry Hanley (Thanks Guys), and a reprint article from 1912 about ghost towns of Fergus County. My contribution this month is the history and photos of the ghost town of Mitchell.

Until the next time.....

Terry

New Members

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

Clint & Cathy Montgomery, Albuquerque, NM

Gayle Blair, Tucson, AZ

Nancy O'Donnell, Three Forks, MT

Tim & Amy Sanders, Billings, MT

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

March 21, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 1:05PM by President Terry Halden. Board members present were Sally Griffin, Gordon Tracy, Sue Howe, and Kathryn Manning. Guests present were Larry Hoffman, Brad O'Grosky, and Mel Howe. Guests Larry Hoffman and Brad O'Grosky were introduced and they said a few words about themselves.

Gordon Tracy moved that the minutes of the October 25, 2014 be approved as they were printed in the Winter 2015 newsletter. Sally seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Sally gave the Treasurer's Report. Gord moved and Sue seconded that the report be accepted. The motion was passed.

Sally then reported on correspondence. We received a letter from the Louis L. Borick Foundation, which accompanied their check for \$1,000, saying they appreciated the work we are doing and wish us continued success. We also received a letter from member Don Thorson giving us information on several ghost towns in Ravalli County which are not on our map.

Sally reported that we have 248 memberships, and since 50 of these are family memberships, we have 300 or more actual members.

Terry reported that Facebook is being turned over to Kathryn.

Webmaster Kathryn reported that our website is now ready to have Paypal set up so people can pay for memberships online. Sally and Kathryn will get together to get this done.

For Projects, Terry reported on the progress for the cleanup day at the Fort Maginnis Cemetery, which is scheduled for the first weekend in August. Darian Halden is waiting to hear from Clive Rooney of Montana State Lands to find out whether the county is going to put in the new bridge that was planned in order to give good access to the area. Larry Hoffman knows people in that area involved with this and he will contact them so we can get the project moving. Projects Chairman Sue Howe suggested that this could be handled as a two-part project. This first part would be cleaning the cemetery and headstones. The second part would be long-term after the bridge gets put in. Terry said that Darian is working to possibly get a group of Boy and/or Girl Scouts to provide the physical labor for the cleanup.

Newsletter Editor Terry said that he still needs a couple articles to complete the next newsletter. Larry Hoffman will try to provide some.

Old Business: Regarding the 2015 Convention, Chairman Terry has signed with the Holiday Inn in Great Falls and plans are set for Friday and Saturday, Sept 11 & 12. He is still working on several options for Sunday.

There have been a number of recent resignations from the Board. Gordon moved and Kathryn seconded that Larry Hoffman and Brad O'Grosky be put on the Board. They agreed, and the motion was passed unanimously. We do not have a Vice President at this time.

Sue Howe said that regarding future projects, we need to decide whether our emphasis will be on monetary grants or whether, in view of the average age of the group, we should still try to undertake physical work.

The Gallatin Historical Society wrote to us asking that we increase our membership category, and therefore the dollar amount of our dues, so that they can undertake more projects. Sue moved, and Larry seconded, that we increase our membership to \$150 but do not pay a room donation for our meetings. The motion passed. If we can get a business membership, a link to our website would appear on their website. Sally will call them to see if this is possible.

Larry will talk to the Granite County Historical Society to see about a mutual exchange of memberships and information.

Our printed membership brochures need to be updated. Kathryn will see about doing this for us.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:15PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Griffin
Secretary/Treasurer

CORRECTION

In the last newsletter, the dates of this year's convention were incorrectly published.

The correct dates are:

Friday, SEPT. 11th ~ Sunday, SEPT. 13th

The host hotel is:

HOLIDAY INN, (406) 727-7200 / (866-3925)

Sorry for the inconvenience - Editor

What You Probably Don't See in Underground Photographs

by Larry C. Hoffman, P.E.

All of us have seen old pictures of miners working underground, like the one on the right.

They are usually so remarkable in their clarity the modern-day viewer really has no appreciation for either the miner's working conditions or the photographer's dedication and skill.

To begin with, very few people have experienced the absolute, total blackness of underground mining. A dark basement in the middle of the night is positively bright by comparison, partly because some light seeps in, that is a relatively familiar surrounding, and partly because of the reassuring sounds, however faint, that are eventually heard.

It's completely different underground for the non-miner. The blackness is absolutely total, and the only thing you may hear is your own breathing and heartbeat. After an hour or so, most people lose all sense of direction and even begin to doubt up and down.

Until the invention of the carbide lamp after 1900, miners worked their way thousands of feet underground with only candles or oil lamps for light. Adding to that already-dim light, poor ventilation did little to cut the smoke, dust, and fog of the tunnels and stopes (openings made by the removal of ore).

The familiar miner's candlestick and three or four candles per shift (one at a time) were all those men had to see with. Put yourself in the picture and imagine what it would be like to be where those men are the instant before the photographers flash powder goes off. In that area, the size of a large room, with dark, irregular walls, and an open abyss below, there are only three candles for light.

They have worked their way up the vein, the same way they are mining it in the picture, drilling into the rock by hammering on pieces of drill steel with a 5-pound hammer. By the light of one candle each. No gloves or hardhat. No eye or hearing protection. This stope started out from a drift or tunnel, at least with secure footing underneath. As they drill and blast their way upward, that floor gets farther and farther away in the dark outside the candle's glow.

To work their way up, every five or six feet they wedge pole stulls in place between the rock walls, then lay a few poles across those to make a minimal working platform like those shown. The candle light doesn't really reveal what's above or beside them for loose rock. If one falls, those felt hats weren't much comfort.

In the picture, there is no sign of the floor below them. It is at least dozens of feet out of sight and perhaps a hundred or more. There are no more timbers under the men than absolutely necessary, because every one of those had to be

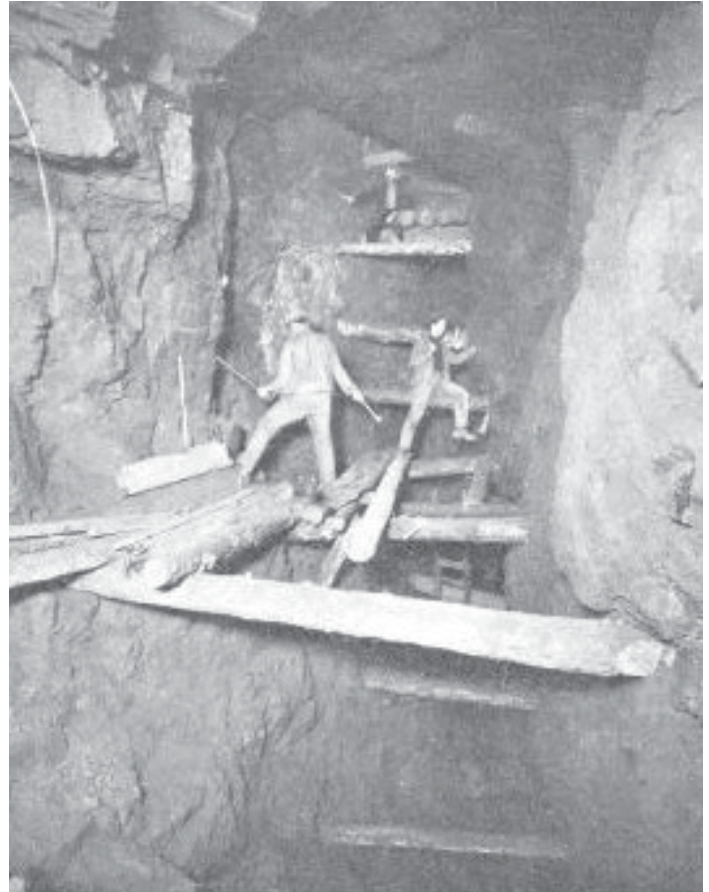


Photo Courtesy author

dragged up there by hand, one man to another. By candlelight. Notice there is only one crude ladder. Another luxury.

Above them, the upper walls and "back" or ceiling are only dimly visible at best, so loose rocks could be anywhere. To add to the mystery, how many of those miners were nearsighted and too much to wear glasses?

Swing that hammer all day long, perhaps three or four 10 or 12 hour shifts in a row, to get enough holes to fill with explosives and blast a "round" of ore down. At the end of every day, carry your dull drill steel down to the level and out of the mine. Carry sharp steel back up every morning. Don't let yourself get too tired, or you might lose your footing or balance for an instant.

When the rock was blasted loose, it fell down on those flimsy timbers, often knocking them loose or, worse yet, not quite knocking them loose, leaving the final straw to be the miner grabbing hold to pull himself up

Each of these pictures was a major undertaking for both the photographer and the miners. No digital cameras, most all of these photos were taken with big heavy box

cameras, using wet emulsion glass plates that had to be carefully prepared and transported into the mine and up into the working place within a short period of time.

Magnesium powder was used for the flash, located in several places around the scene to light up that much irregular, dark rock, with an assistant to ignite each one on the photographers signal. The miners would have been choreographed to be in working positions but holding absolutely still.

Removing his lens cap (no shutter involved), the signal would be given and the pans of flash powder ignited. They didn't all have to go off at the same time, but within a couple of seconds of each other. The lens cap would be popped back on.

In the stope, no one would be able to see, they just had to wait. The three candles would be almost invisible in the darkness and huge choking cloud of white smoke from the burning magnesium. Little ventilation to carry it away and flash blindness for all involved except maybe the photographer, who knew when and why to squeeze his eyes tightly shut.



Photo courtesy Author

Most of these old pictures are of relatively small areas. Imagine what it took to take this picture of a Missouri lead-zinc stope. Yes, those little tiny dots (with electric lights!) are miners on boards, close to one hundred feet off the floor.

CONVENTION 2015 Fri Sept 11 ~ Sun Sept 13

Great Falls ~ Fort Benton

Host Hotel: Holiday Inn, 400 10th Avenue South, Great Falls. (406) 727-7200 / (866) 363-3925

Schedule (subject to last minute changes):

Friday: 5:00p.m. ~~~ Registration in Aronson room, Holiday Inn. 6:00p.m.: Hors d'oevres, Aronson room.

7:00: Guest Speaker, Richard Thoroughman, who will talk about the history of Fort Shaw

8:00: Guest Speaker, Great Falls, Police Officer, Scott Bambenek who will talk about the history of policing in the area.

Saturday:

9:00a.m.: Bus leaves Holiday Inn for Fort Benton

Guided tours of Museum of the Missouri Breaks; Museum of North Great Plains; Homestead Village; Hornaday Smithsonian Buffalo & Western Art Gallery.

Lunch, Visit to restored Old Fort Benton with its replica trading post; the camp of the Galvanized Yankees whose two dozen men and women (in period costume) will answer any questions you may have.

A surprise ending to the tour before heading for the coach to return to Great Falls.

6:00p.m.: Aronson room, n./h bar; dinner; A.G.M., and Guest Speaker, Ken Robison who will talk about the Mullan Road.

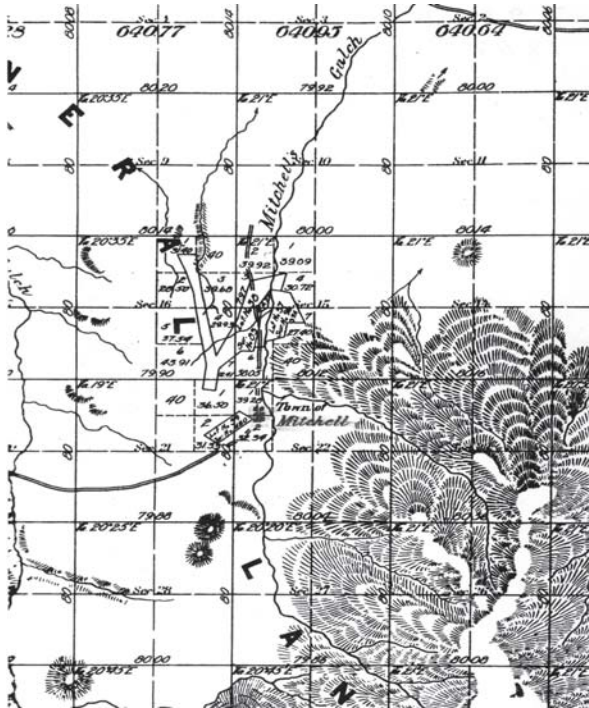
Sunday:

9:00a.m.: Guided tour of C.M. Russell museum & its exhibit, "The Nameless Hunter" & trip to the Mehmke Steam Museum

The Ghost Town of MITCHELL

by *TERRY HALDEN*

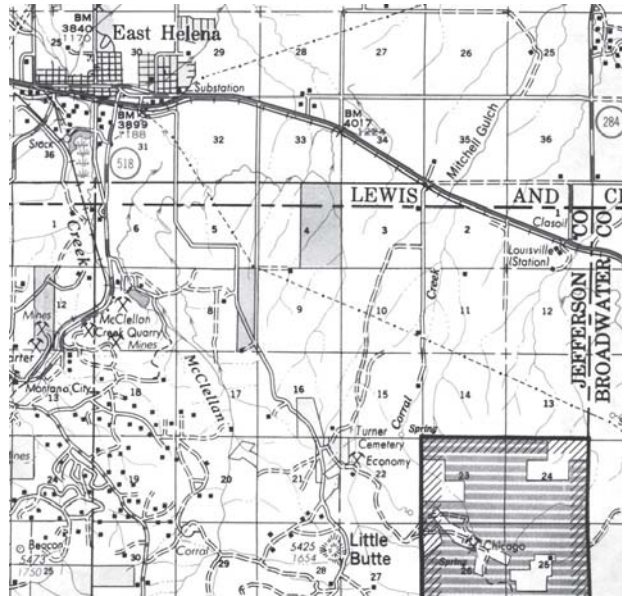
It started when I was visiting with John Stoner, the Dean of Broadwater County history, and he asked me if I had been to the ghost town of Mitchell. He proceeded to show me an 1868 map of the area southeast of present day East Helena, and there on Mitchell Gulch was the town of Mitchell. An 1892 Missouri River Commission map also showed Mitchell and on the exact same spot, a 1994 Helena National Forest map depicted the Economy mine. Having got my interest whetted I contacted the owners of the property and secured their permission to go through two locked gates and view the ghost town.



The 1868 map showing the site of the original town of Mitchell.
Map courtesy JOHN STONER

The area first attracted placer miners in the decade of the 1860s but since other parts of the future state of Montana were more lucrative the crowd moved on, leaving Martin A. Mitchell to establish a small village, and, no doubt, to lend his name to the gulch (he might also have been the original prospector that discovered some gold in the stream). In 1888 a post office was applied for in the name of Mitchell's, but it was only in operation for a few months. As the euphoria of placer mining died down, nothing of interest happened in the area until the turn of the 20th century.

The February 17, 1906 edition of the Mining World informed its readers that 'From Mitchell Gulch Anton Smith has just shipped to East Helena smelter 40 tons of high grade ore from his Lost Hope mine. For some years this mine has been owned and worked by Mr. Smith, who has run a 200 foot cross-cut tunnel, tapping the ore, then sunk a winze 100 feet in the ore. He has also sunk an incline shaft 100 feet deep in ore, blocking out, as he says, a considerable tonnage of ore, which he now intends to take down and ship'. Not bad for a one man effort. Smith continued to ship paying ore (gold silver and lead) in the years 1911 and 1915.



A 1994 map showing the Economy mine in the exact same place as the town of Mitchell.

This attracted other efforts such as the Haystack mine which opened up in 1912 together with the Dobler and Kehern mines in 1914. They were followed by two mines, the John claim and the nearby smaller Jim claim that year. The latter two were soon combined to form the John and Jim group and were bought out by the Economy Gold Mining Company which produced ore, on and off over the years right up to the ban on gold mining at the start of W.W.II. To facilitate accommodations for the miners, cabins were built, some by the miners themselves, and it is these cabins that are still in evidence today.



The collapsed head frame and tipple of the Economy Mining Company's 'John' mine on Mitchell Gulch.
Photo: TERRY HALDEN



ABOVE: The remains of the ghost town of Mitchell.

LEFT & RIGHT: The Economy Mining Co. building.

All photos: TERRY HALDEN



Celebrating the 4th of July 1913 in Maiden, Montana

By Jerry Hanley

July 4, 1913 was an ordinary celebration in Maiden, but made special by Edwin B. "Hardrock" Coolidge who took several photographs that day. Coolidge took many photographs around the area during this period and usually had post cards made of them. He was not a photographer per say but rather a mining engineer and later a pioneer in oil development around Montana. One of his photographs was a group photograph of all the patrons of the Bullion Saloon.

The original Bullion Saloon, located on the corner of Main and Montana Streets in Maiden, Montana, held its grand opening in 1883. It burned along with most of the other business in town in August 1905. The fire was reportedly started when a man walking his gal home after a dance flipped a cigarette butt into the alley behind Mike Hall's Bullion Saloon. This infers that Hall acquired the Bullion from its original owner. After the fire the saloon was rebuilt, possibly by Hall, at the same location but as a smaller building. Pete Rosso and Charles LeNoire (also spelled Lenoire) were owners in 1913 and called it the Silver Bullion Saloon although it was still most commonly referred to as the "Bullion." After the Silver Bullion closed in the late teens Rosso and his wife Susie lived in the building possibly until the early 30's. The building was torn down by 1940. Faint remains of the stone foundation can still be seen.

A false front appears beyond the Bullion, and two doors beyond that is Tom Kerr's saloon, also open for business that day.

Things were looking relatively prosperous in Maiden at the time. The Maginnis, Spotted Horse, and Cumberland mines were working; not like their hay-days some 25 years earlier, nevertheless, optimism and good times prevailed. Just a year before a bonanza strike had been made in the Maginnis. Over 12,000 ounces of gold were produced from a mere 300 tons of ore. Such a strike was the talk of the country. The Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific railroad was expanding its reach in central Montana allowing more economical shipments of high grade ores to the smelters and, just as important, receive freight or catch a passenger train to reach all parts of the country. Lower grade rock was treated in the Cumberland and Maginnis cyanide mills. Of course Maiden's big boom was over and Gilt Edge and Kendall were the big players now. However, miners could easily rustle the numerous mines for jobs.

What was left of the town, once boasting a population of 1,000 or more, was scanty yet busy. Mrs. Belanger, along with her general stores in Gilt Edge and Kendall, continued running her Maiden store. The burned out ruins of Belanger's impressive stone store with its elegant upper story residence sat directly across Montana Street from her humble new log and frame store. Memories of her two sons' were present as they lay in their graves on the knoll just behind the ruins. Tom McGee's Billiard Hall, facing Montana Street, was directly across Main Street from the Bullion. McGee's two story building included a dance hall that doubled as a roller skating rink. The Post Office was located up Main Street and the school house, with its 60 foot flag pole, sat at the head of the



street looking down on what was left of the town. A restaurant was located across Montana Street from Kerr's saloon. Across Warm Spring Creek and further east on Montana Street was Mrs. White's smart looking hotel and boarding house – appropriately named the "White House."

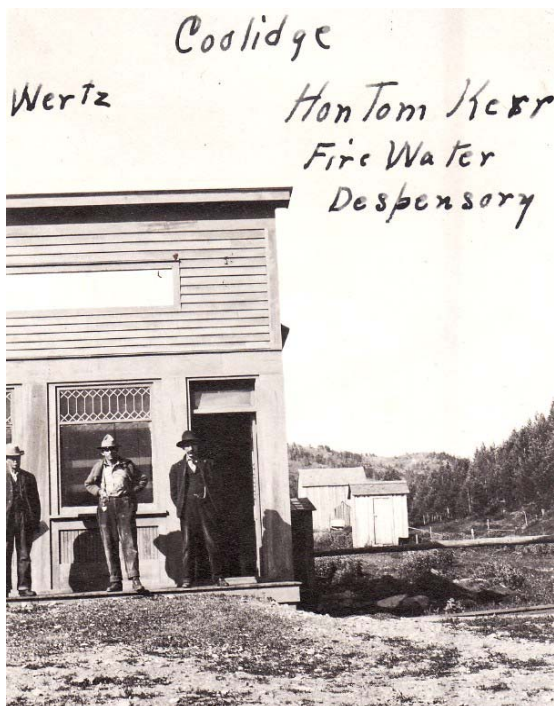
I do not know for certain what other businesses there were but assume a stable, blacksmith shop, grocery store, maybe another small general store, John Mellor may have still been operating his assay office, a lawyer's office, a place to purchase gas, oil, and coal, Norman Poland's Hardware store, the next business up Main Street from the Bullion, might have still been open (along with his Gilt Edge store), and there were possibly others. Numerous residences dotted the townsite and outskirts. The population in the town proper at the time, I would venture a guess of 100 souls with others living in outlying areas or boarding at the mines. Busy, yes, but certainly not like the previous 10 to 30 years.



Belanger's stone store, (next to their original store) that was thought to be fire-proof until the blaze of 1905 that totally destroyed it. See Coolidge's photo, taken in 1913 on next page.

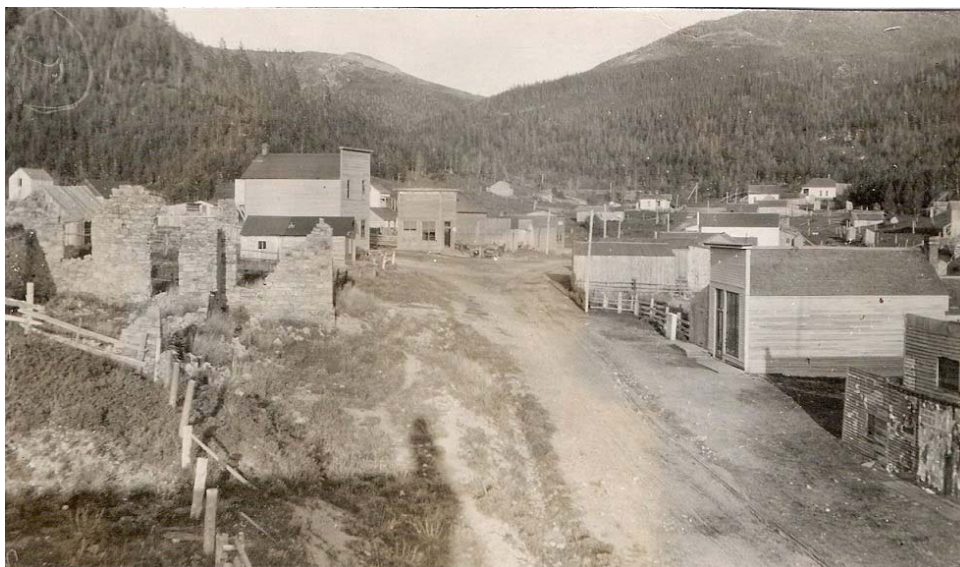
Traffic consisted of horses, buggies, stage, freight wagons, sleighs during the winter, and an occasional automobile. Stage service connected with Gilt Edge, Hilger, Kendall, and Lewistown. A stage was still dispatched out of Maiden because a year later my great grandfather, Egbert Grant moved to Maiden, and he drove stage to Hilger and Kendall. The telephone line ran through town on its way on over the hill to Gilt Edge, but there was no electricity yet.

It would not do justice to leave Hardrock out of this occasion. He can be seen in the second photo (below) taken on the porch of Tom Kerr's saloon with Johnny Werts to his right and Tom Kerr on his left. Hardrock labeled the picture with a bit of flair regarding Kerr's occupation. As you can see, whoever Hardrock entrusted his camera to for this shot was not much of a picture taker or had a bit too much celebrating. I often wonder who else might have been posing to the side of Johnny Werts and was cut out!



Coolidge's last shot of the day taken in the evening, is of interest and begs to be included in this story. The picture was taken from the roof of the sizeable livery and blacksmith shop (which escaped the 1905 fire) located near the north west end of Montana Street and provides an overview of the center and eastern portion of town. In the left foreground stands the ruins of Belanger's stone department store. Directly across Montana Street is Mrs. Belanger's replacement store (remains of both still stand). Beyond the stone ruins is Tom McGee's Billiard Hall, tall and dominating the scene. Beyond and across the intersection of Montana and Main Street is Rosso's Silver Bullion Saloon where our story began. Four or five men sit on the steps enjoying the summer evening and probably a cool drink. A horse and buggy are tied to the hitching rail. The dog and other celebrants have dispersed into Rosso and Kerr's saloons or possibly called it a day and went home. After all, just a month earlier, June 13, they celebrated Miners Union day – a celebration usually exceeding 4th of July doings. Tom Kerr's saloon is visible 3 doors up the street. Opposite Kerr's the top of Mrs. White's hotel can be seen (the white building). The cafe's roof line (now Jerry Hanley's home) is just this side of the White House (hotel). At the upper end of Montana Street to the far right is Woodson Badger's home. Badger, one of the principals involved with the Maginnis mine, had the house built in 1911 or 12 for his new bride. The story goes that the Maginnis high-grade petered out as did the marriage. Badger's place eventually became the home of George and Helen Wieglanda where they raised three daughters, Selma W. Hanley, Marjorie W. King, and Montana W. Hyde. It stands proud and dominates Maiden to this day. In 1913, George Wieglanda's log home was out of view behind Badger's place. The teenage Helen Grant, future Mrs. Helen Wieglanda, would not arrive in Maiden for another year.

One more item of interest stands out on the skyline directly above Tom McGee's Billiard Hall. The large flat limestone outcrop marks the top of the Maginnis Mine ore body which was mined to a depth of 450 feet. It was here in 1880 Skookum Joe Anderson, realizing the placer deposits in the Warm Spring Mining District would not be profitable, discovered and located one of his first lode locations.



All photos:
AUTHOR

FORGOTTEN TOWNS of FERGUS COUNTY

by JOHNNY RITCH

The history of a country, unless it is duly recorded, soon passes from the memory of those who lived there during its most eventful days. Nearly every section of our state has a treasure of historical interest that has been preserved by record, but with the exception of a few isolated instances, a great part of the story has been permitted to pass into the uncertain statements that come with repeated hearsay. Fergus County has its full share of those, now unremembered spots that in the year's a gone teemed with life and interest, and for a time were the commercial centers of this great region.

Few there are living today who remember, or even have heard, that in the late 1860's a government fort existed at the confluence of the Musselshell and Missouri rivers, and that this was the trading place, and the point of refuge when pressed by their savage foes, for the intrepid spirits who found a living in that wild region. Numerous sanguinary conflicts with Indians occurred at and near this post and the graves of many of its courageous defenders dotted the hillside near its site. Not one trace of Fort Phil Sheridan remains today and save for the records of the War Department, the fact that it ever existed would soon be forgotten. The turbid currents of the Missouri have long since undermined and washed away the site and the channel of the big river now flows where once stood the sturdy fort.

Another historical spot of more recent date was Fort Carroll, which was located on the south bank of the Missouri about five miles east of Rocky Point and on the extreme north line of what is now Fergus county. This post was built in 1873 by Matt Carroll and his associates of the old Diamond R Freighting outfit, and was for a time the busy head of navigation of the great river trade. A freight road was laid out from Helena to Carroll and long bull trains unloaded freight from the levees at Carroll and hauled it three hundred and fifty miles to the miners of Last Chance. These bull outfits wound their way across the bad lands of northern Fergus country into the good grass country, the Judith Basin, passing Camp Lewis, now known as Lewistown, on out through Judith Gap and up the Musselshell valley to Martinsdale, following the North Fork of the Musselshell and crossing the divide of the Castle Mountains to White Sulphur Springs. and again crossing the divide of the Belts and Diamonds, down White's Gulch to ford the Missouri river, more than three hundred miles from where they had first left it, and on into Helena. At Carroll every type of the westerner of that day might be seen. Bullwhackers predominated, but there were hunters, trappers, miners, gamblers, adventurers of every class. Clerks and employees of the company, stranded roustabouts from the boats, half-breeds, Indians, soldiers, tenderfeet, and every other kind of man that might be found within our borders at that day, all were in Carroll. It was a busy place, with the arrival of the big bull outfits from Helena

and the loading of freight from the boats to the endless line of wagons that made up the outfits. Every kind of business prospered, too; the saloon and the gambling joints doing more than all of the others combined, for the old-time bullwhacker was not a saving person. Carroll was the supply point for a vast territory as it was the head of navigation it was the same busy place, for the steamboats could come up the river late in the fall and the freight outfits could haul their cargoes as long as the boats could deliver them. But, along about '75 the obstructions in the river channel had been cleared so that the boats could go up river as far as Benton. Then Carroll died as quickly as it came into existence. The buildings were deserted; the population moved away the Diamond R took its great bull trains to the Benton-Helena road; and the Missouri river, seeing no further use for a Fort Carroll, began to change its channel. The writer passed the site of Carroll about twenty years ago and at that time the last of its buildings were about ready to drop over the bank. Since then the river has completed its work and now not one vestige of the erstwhile commercial and business center of Fergus county remains.

Reedsfort [Reed and Bowles trading post] the abiding place of the cheerful horse thief and the maudlin half-breed, had its beginning in 1874 at what is now, the county farm, and later on the Frank Day Ranch on the south side of this city. Probably more of our residents know of Reedsfort than of any of the old places of the county, for our own city of Lewistown is the offspring of that unpromising beginning.

Few of our oldest residents can tell of Nelsonville, yet this mushroom town flourished only thirty-one years ago, and was only fifteen miles from Lewistown. The first gold discovered in the Judith Mountains was found in Virgin Gulch near Gilt Edge. As a result a flourishing tent town soon sprung up on what is now called the Allen ranch, at the mouth of Whiskey Gulch a short way southeast of Gilt Edge, Nelsonville was all tents, but promised to have houses and become a real permanent town until Skookum Joe and Bill Pott and Davy Jones found more gold in Maiden Gulch near the present site of the Spotted Horse mine and that fixed the fate of Nelsonville. Everybody struck his tent and moved over to what is now Maiden. One cannot be blamed for not knowing of Nelsonville, for it didn't live long enough to become known only to those who lived there. It was born in 1881 and died in the morning.

Rustle is the name of another forgotten town that once nestled in the heart of the most picturesque part of the Judith mountains. Our old friends "Skookum Joe," Bill Pott and Davy Jones went up to the head of Maiden Gulch and began to build a town right after Nelsonville was deserted, but Maiden was the more pleasing prospect and the people

went there to build. However, as long as the Collar mine was working Rustle had a saloon and several quite substantial buildings for that time and was well known to the residents of the locality while it lasted. Today its houses are empty and no sign of life greets the occasional visitor, unless the presence of numerous chipmunks around the deserted houses could be called signs of life.

One of the contemplated towns that never grew was Steamerville. This town site was laid out on what is now the Hosea Fisher ranch on Wolf Creek in the year 1882. It anticipated the arrival of the Northern Pacific railroad through that section, and its promoters evidently expected to reap a golden harvest by corralling the place with the best water supply and the best natural advantages for a town. The Northern Pacific got wind of this shrewd move and changed its survey so that its line ran up the Yellowstone river, all of which did much to defeat the plans of the Steamerville syndicate.

Gardenland was the best named of all the forgotten towns, the name has since been changed to Utica, for Gardenland occupied nearly the same location as does the present town of Utica. It came to us in 1879 and the late Jack Murphy, a genuine type of the old frontiersman, was sponsor for it.

A lot of unsentimental New Yorkers wandered into the country, became homesick and changed the name to Utica. But I still maintain that Gardenland was the best. Who has visited the glorious valley of the Judith river near Utica and has not marveled at its gentle scenic beauties? No more entrancing spot is known in the pastoral life of our county; just a thought of that restful, dreamy place is enough to set the heart a thrill, and why it should not have retained its first name, Gardenland, has been to me for many years. Utica signifies nothing, unless it might bring to mind the ancient Roman soldiers in northern Africa, or a right dead town in up-state New York.

Alpine and Andersonville both flourished in the prosperous days of Maiden, and were short lived. However,

they had their drinking fountains and offered food and lodging to the wayfarer while they lasted. Alpine was located at the mouth of the gulch of the same name a few miles below Maiden on Warm Spring creek, and Andersonville was on the Tom Merryfield ranch further down the same stream. A few old shacks attest the existence of Alpine, but Andersonville has passed to the memories.

Ubet, once famous in the good old stage days as the place where you could get the best meal west of St. Paul, is just a ranch home now. There were days when it was the Mecca of the unfortunate on his long stage journey from Benton to Billings; it was here that he would be fed and housed as becomes human being. Here too, the joyous shepherd and the exuberant stage driver met convivially and fraternized, each yielding with the other as to whom should be the first morning customer and the last evening visitor at the little log thirst parlor, now degraded to the uses of a chicken-house.

Yogo is almost a memory, but the indomitable spirit of the prospector may save it yet. The year 1879 saw the center of population of central Montana at Yogo; now not one person lives in the old town. But the hills around still hold their goodly promise of wealth, men enough to keep interest alive and we make bold to predict that the day is not far distant when Yogo will become a factor in the affairs of Fergus rather than a kindIN, memory to its older settlers.

Another spot that is fast passing to the legends is old Fort Maginnis. Nothing remains now of that fine old post, save the rock foundations of a few of the buildings and the ranchers are hauling these away as fast as their needs call for them. Fortunately, the War Department will preserve its story, but the site should be by the state before it is lost.

The early history of every section of our state is an eloquent record of adventure and interest. Much of it is being lost and much of it has been forgotten because it was not placed on record. White men were never able to preserve their history save by means of the record; the American Indian preserved his by oral transmission from the elder tribal historians to their younger successors. The story of the beginning here should not be forgotten.

Having visited the site of Fort Maginnis last convention, our members can attest to the fact that there is nothing left there, not even foundations. I thought you might be interested in seeing what the fort looked like at its zenith.

Photo from the Internet.





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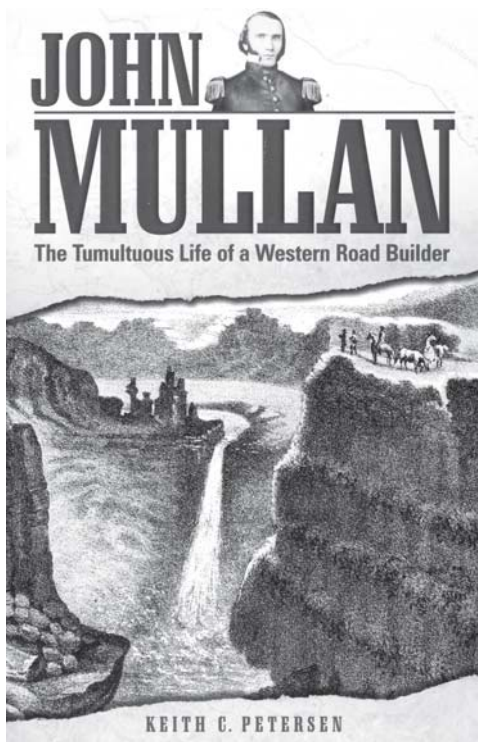
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REVIEW

JOHN MULLAN

The Tumultuous Life of a Western Road Builder

by Keith C. Petersen



Keith Petersen, the Idaho State Historian, has written what may well turn out to be the ultimate history of Lieutenant John Mullan and his famous 625 mile road from Fort Walla Walla to Fort Benton, connecting the Columbia and Missouri rivers. As Petersen relates in this well researched book, Mullan was far more than just a dashing young army officer who came west, built a wagon road in the early 1860's and then disappeared into the mists of history. The political tug of war with emphasis on expenses is brought to the front. Why was Mullan chosen over other competent road builders and who championed him is disclosed. The incredible task of building a road over the backbone of the country is detailed and Mullan's eventual fall from grace is presented in lively, readable prose.

An excellent read, to further enjoy the guest speaker at our upcoming convention in Great Falls, Ken Robison who will be giving an illustrated talk about Mullan.

The book is available at you favorite book store and at the Mineral County Museum, (where a considerable amount of original Mullan artifacts are located) gift shop in Superior.

Terry Halden.