



MONTANA
GHOST TOWN
PRESERVATION SOCIETY

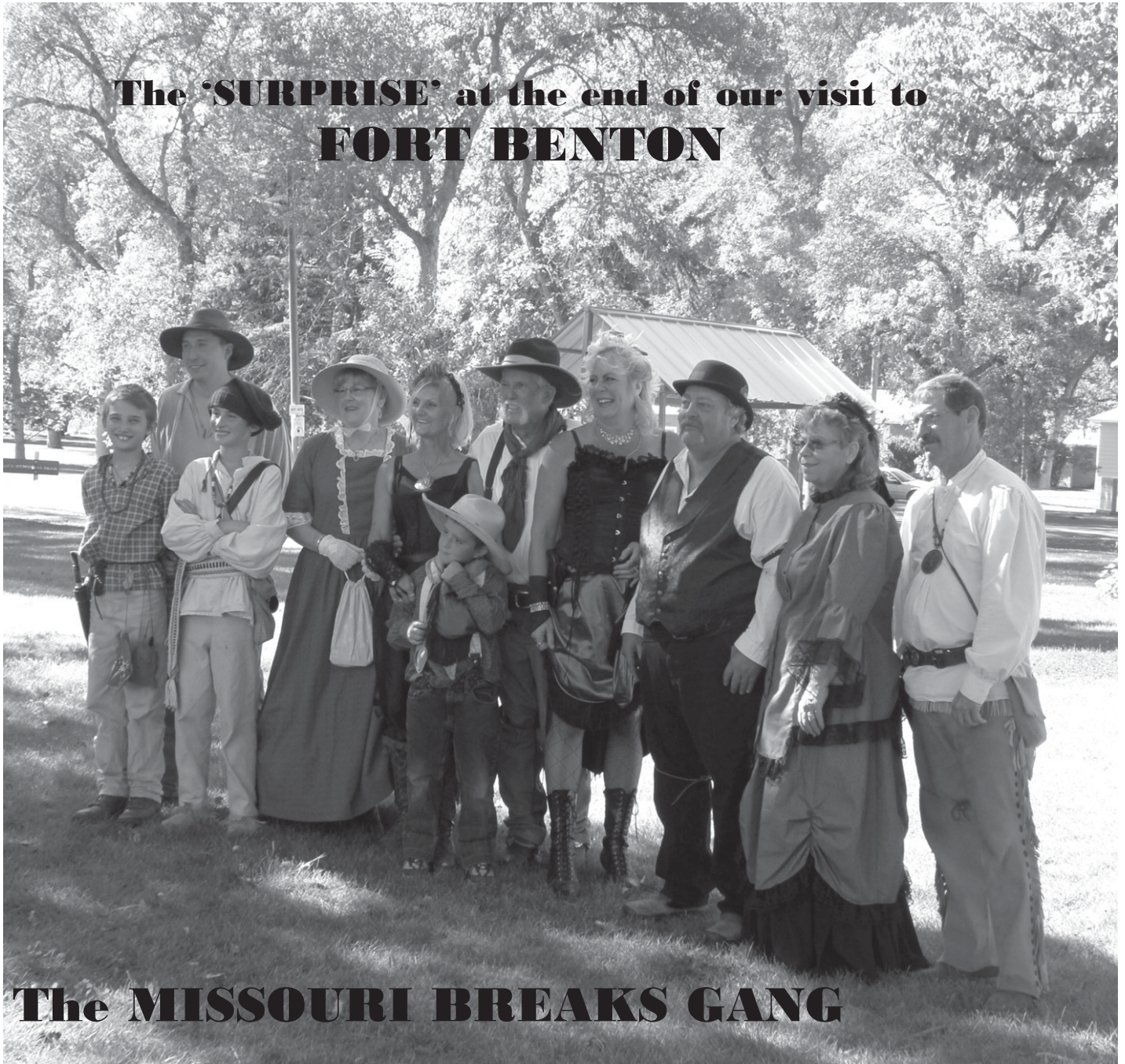
preserving history for the next generation

VOLUME 44

NEWSLETTER

FALL 2015

**The 'SURPRISE' at the end of our visit to
FORT BENTON**



The MISSOURI BREAKS GANG

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.

FALL 2015

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2016 Convention: Terry Halden & Nonda Beardsley
Immediate Past President: John Ellingsen
Directors: Tom Lowe, and Gordon Tracy.

The Prez Sez

TERRY HALDEN

From the comments we are getting back, everyone that attended the recent convention in Great Falls and Fort Benton had a great time. Next year we will be in Missoula and Nonda Beardsley, who our long term members will remember as our secretary/treasurer before Rosemary Lee, is helping us put it together. So far the Sunday trip to the ghost towns of Coloma and Garnet has been firmed up. Other plans we will let you know about, as they get set.

In this issue of the newsletter, I have to thank, Kay Strombo, the secretary of the Mineral County Historical Society who is responsible for producing a monthly newssheet that contained an interesting article, written by three local ladies that was originally published in the Superior newspaper in the 1960's. She graciously allowed me to reproduce the articles – I hope she approves of the illustrations I have added to the text. I must also thank Jerry Hanley for sending me an update of an article he sent me two years ago.

Finally, Best Wishes to board member, Tom Lowe, who has retired from his position with the Bannack State Park and is now living in Turah near Missoula. Hopefully Tom, we'll see you at next year's convention.

Until the next time.....

Terry

FORT MAGINNIS CEMETERY CLEAN-UP

Photos can be found on opposite page.

It started as a grandiose idea, to clean up the Fort Maginnis cemetery, rebuild the bridge over the Ford's Creek, grade a rough road from the Creek to the cemetery, then to produce brochures about the cemetery, who is buried there, how to get there, etc and distribute them to the local motels and museums. It is amazing what a zealous local government official can do to disrupt the best laid plans. Although it is accessible to the public, the cemetery is on State land and controlled by the Department of Natural Resources and Conversation, Northeastern Land Office in Lewistown. As such, to participate in a 'vegetation project', as it was called, one must get written permission, and provide liability insurance. And 'No mechanized equipment is to be used'.

On Saturday morning, August 1, having met the requirements, 94 year old Bertha Roberts, (Granville Stuart's Great Granddaughter) Martha Boyce, Karen Ludaman, Herb & Brian Ferguson, Nancy Watts, four members of the local Hiking Bushwackers Club, the DNRC rep, and yours truly met at the cemetery. Working in 85 degree heat, Mrs Roberts' daughter Martha Boyce, herself a senior citizen, sat for two hours, pruning a large lilac bush, stem by stem using hand clippers, when a chain-saw would have done the job in a matter of minutes – but no mechanized equipment was to be used. The Ferguson brothers brought wood to repair some of the wooden crosses and the stone Burnett family marker, that had fallen over was raised. When we left the cemetery had the look of a well kept rural cemetery. The bridge and graded road, we were advised were 'Out' as other local residents did not want any increased traffic disturbing the rural setting.

New Members

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

Doreen Chaky - Williston, ND

Jackie Gillan – Kalispell, MT

M.G.T.P.S.
Annual General Meeting
September 12, 2015

*The Clean-up at the
Fort Maginnis Cemetery*

The meeting was called to order at 7:35PM by President Terry Halden.

It was moved by Mel Howe and seconded by Gregg Holt that the minutes from last year's General Meeting held on Sept. 7, 2014, be approved as they were written in the Fall, 2014 Newsletter. Motion passed.

Then Sec/Treas Sally Griffin gave the Treasurer's Report. For the current fiscal year which started July 1, 2015, through Sept. 10, 2015, income was \$3,935.00 and Expenses were \$2,567.86 – resulting in a net income of \$1,367.14.

One of the members suggested that we should consider giving a donation toward the reconstruction of Fort Benton – an ongoing project we were told about earlier in the day. Terry said that since it is traditional to give a donation for a project where we hold the convention that year, the Board would discuss this at their next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

Terry announced that Don Black and Mike Byrnes have resigned from the Board of Directors. New Board members are Brad O'Grosky, Vice President; Larry Hoffman, Projects, to assist Sue and Darian; and Kathryn Manning, Website and Facebook.

The Fort Maginnis cemetery cleanup has been discontinued after the first day in early August. Government regulations make it impossible to use power equipment. Also, there will not be a road graded, nor will there be a new bridge constructed, in order to facilitate public access.

NEW BUSINESS:

The 2016 Convention will be in Missoula. Nonda Beardsley, former Sec/Treas, will be working on this. The 2017 Convention will be in Bozeman, with another former Sec/Treas, Margie Kankrik, in charge.

Three members who were attending their first convention stood and introduced themselves. They are Jackie Gillan, Kalispell; and Alan and Candace Recke from Great Falls. They were given a welcoming round of applause.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Griffin
Sec/Treas



The graves of:
Awbonnie Tookanka
Stuart,
first wife of
Granville Stuart
and
Ed Stuart,
Granville's younger
brother.

The graves of:
Mary Stuart
Abbott,
daughter of
Awbonnie &
Granville Stuart,
a family marker
and
Teddy 'Blue'
Abbott.



The grave of:
Reese Anderson,
lifetime friend of
Granville Stuart



A general view of the Stuart family section of the cemetery. Other graves include:
Kate Stuart, Mary's sister.
Elizabeth Stuart, another sister.
Marie Abbott, a daughter of Teddy 'Blue' and Mary Abbott
Ted B. Abbott, a son of Teddy 'Blue' and Mary Abbott
Edna Abbott, wife of Ted B. Abbott (?)

Story on page 2, opposite.

Authors note: A brief version of this story was published in the Fall 2013, Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society (MGTPS) newsletter. The author has expanded it to include references to MGTPS members and the 2014 convention and include descriptive historic photographs.

Bill Wilson Names His Mine Gilt Edge

By Jerry Hanley

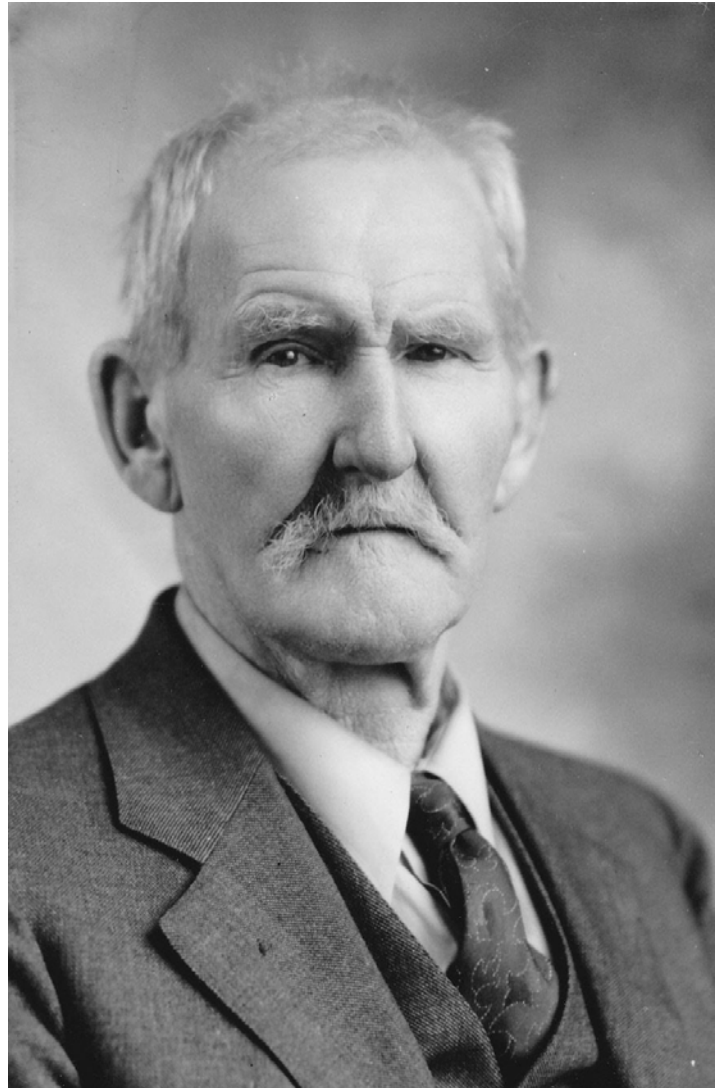
The story following this introduction is from an undated paper written by George H. Wiegler. George was a friend of Bill (Limestone) Wilson, and both were long time Maiden area residents and miners. The accompanying introduction, photographs and descriptions were compiled by Jerry Hanley, Wiegler's grandson.

Twenty-one year old William E. Wilson arrived on foot in Maiden, Montana Territory in April of 1882. In 1883 while prospecting on the east slopes of the Judith Mountains a little over two miles south of Maiden he discovered an outcrop and potential mine which he named Gilt Edge. Mind you, this was ten years before the town of Gilt Edge ever came to be. The ore was found on the edge of a limestone outcrop. He tirelessly worked to develop the mine during a period when few miners thought a decent ore body could be found solely in limestone. The major ore bodies in the Judith Mountains were located at the contact between intruded porphyry and limestone. Years later as the Gilt Edge mine was developed the ore body was in fact found to be controlled by a porphyry intrusion in contact with the limestone.

Bill was ridiculed for his persistence exploring only limestone and tagged with the nick name "Limerock" or "Limestone." He was referred to as Limestone Bill, Limestone Wilson, Limerock Bill or Limerock Wilson, a name he was proud of and apparently not too particular about which version was used. Eventually the Gilt Edge mine sold and Bill was \$32,000 to the better. Bill spent the remainder of his life, and money, driving tunnels mostly in limestone looking for another mine. The ridicule continued and many considered him to be eccentric.

Bill Wilson married in 1900 and lived in a nice home in Maiden. The home later burned and all of his books, papers, and pictures were lost. His wife died in 1912 and Limestone Bill moved to a cabin at the mouth of Maiden Canyon. One of his numerous tunnels can be found nearby. This 350 foot long tunnel is a good example of Limestone's excellent capabilities and skills as a miner. George Wiegler arrived in Maiden in 1895, also on foot, and undoubtedly befriended Wilson soon after. Years later George and Helen Wiegler often visited Bill and enjoyed produce from his splendid garden. George also ran assays for Bill at George's assay office in

Maiden. Helen told of Bill occasionally calling on the phone and then letting the phone hang free while he played his piano and sang to her. Apparently he was a talented piano player and had a good voice. Limestone Wilson died a broke man in Great Falls on July 17, 1938.



Bill (Limestone) Wilson. Reportedly a Culver photo taken in the 1930's. Courtesy the Lewistown Library.

Simply a great photograph of the ageing Wilson and while he, the Wiegler's, and the Coolidge's, were enjoying their friendship. Bill Wilson's fascinating history has been well documented by George Muller and others and can be found on file at the Lewistown Library and at other sources.



Gilt Edge Gold Reef Mill 1905. From the Culver/Brenner collection and courtesy of Jerry Hanley.

This is the second cyanide plant that treated gold ore mined by surface and underground methods from Bill Wilson's original discovery. The mill, built in 1899 by the Great Northern Mining and Development Company, was located at the mine mouth. It replaced the original 1892 smaller cyanide plant located a mile and a half from the mine and adjacent to where the town of Gilt Edge would make its debut in 1893. Reportedly, W. H. Culver took the photo in 1905 when the Gold Reef Mining Company was operating the property. By this time the mill had been enlarged to 280 ton per day capacity and included a roasting plant to oxidize the otherwise difficult to treat "black ore." The property shut down around 1912 and thereafter experienced a few spurts of exploration activity.

Around 1917, Hardrock Coolidge salvaged large leaching tanks out of the abandoned and burned mill ruins and moved them down the gulch to the outskirts of the then nearly vacant town of Gilt Edge – actually to the site of the original 1892 mill. Here he set up a cyanide plant to retreat old mill tailings. Some remnants of Hardrock's plant are visible behind the tailings pile that is so evident at Gilt Edge to this day.

Limerock Wilson's famous Gilt Edge was last mined from mid-1980 to early 1991. This operation was conducted by MGTPS Board Member, Larry Hoffman, and his Blue Range Mining Company. Ore was combined with other area mine's ore, transported, and treated in a flotation/cyanide mill constructed within the old Shoemaker gypsum mine processing plant located at Heath, Montana.

MGTPS member Gregg Holt's grandfather, E. B. (Hardrock) Coolidge, was also a close friend of Wilson – a friendship that probably began before 1910. Gregg's mother Destie spoke of the Coolidge family driving from the Spotted Horse, where they lived, to Wilson's home at the mouth of Maiden Canyon to visit and of the wonderful donuts he made. Interestingly, Hardrock went to visit his old friend in a Great Falls hospital the day before Bill died but was turned away because he was too far gone for company.

It is most often assumed that the name Gilt Edge was derived from the fact Wilson discovered the mine on a ledge, or "edge" of limestone and that "gilt" means something is covered with a coating of gold. This certainly seems reasonable but the writings below prove this not to be the case.

George and Helen Wiegler's grandson, Jerry Hanley, also a Maiden resident and miner, found the paper in the family archives. Wiegler sometimes wrote in slang and poetic manner to add character to a story. And as was usual for George it was written in pencil on an old envelope or scrap paper, only when he was satisfied did the "good paper" and ink come out! Jerry deciphered his Grandfather's faded pencil and slang to produce an easier read. George was not one to exaggerate – consequently, the story is considered to be factual and clearly explains the origin of the name Bill Wilson applied to his mine and eventually the nearby town adopted. Interestingly, numerous articles use Gilt Edge as the name of the mine and Giltedge for the town. Some old records show the Post Office as Gilt Edge, while others, Giltedge. In his last paragraph George also expounds on an incident involving the Maiden Post Office.

Continued on page 11



Convention opened with an interesting talk by Richard Thoroughman (above) about the history of Fort Shaw, followed by an illustrated history of the Great Falls Police Department by P.O. Scott Bambenek.



Saturday morning, our coach awaits for the hour long journey to Fort Benton.



The time passed quickly, for on board was 'trapper' Kirby Hoon (left) who was well familiar with the history of Fort Benton and able to partake of his knowledge. We visited the Upper Missouri Breaks National Monument Interpretive Centre first. And, NO, Gloria, you can't take the Kitty-Cat home to Texas!



The second visit was the Museum of the Northern Great Plains, where our host was Randal Morger, the Executive Director.





After an excellent fried chicken lunch at the VFW Club, we visited old Fort Benton.



In lieu fo the Galvanized Yankees, who were No Shows, we were entertained by 'trapper' Mike Nottingham (Upper right), assisted by his son.

**CONVENTION
2015**
All photos:
Terry Halden



The final, 'surprise' entertainment was a shoot-out performed by the Missouri Breaks Gang, assisted by two of our unwilling members.



Saturday evening guest speaker was Ken Robinson, who gave an interesting talk about the Mullan Road, and autographed some of his books.

The following three articles were published in a recent Mineral County Historical Society newsletter, having been published originally in a local newspaper in the 1960's. We reproduce them with the kind permission of:
KAY STROMBO

HOW IT WAS BEFORE ELECTRICITY

Hazel McDowell:

Waking up early on a winter morn – I could see my Dad's shadow (John Cusick) on the bedroom wall as he came from the barn, swinging the kerosene lantern and the milk pail. He had stoked up the coal heater and the Monarch range, so the house was getting warm while he did the chores.

We grabbed our clothes and ran downstairs to dress by the warm heater. A choice warm spot was to sit on the oven door.

Mama (Lena Cusick) was getting breakfast. You had to learn to keep the fire just right for different kinds of cooking and baking. The toast was made on a wire rack over the coals. Pancakes or Lefsa (Scandinavian bread) could be baked right on the top of the stove.

The range was very important. There was a reservoir attached to the side of the stove to warm water, also the big tea kettle was always full of hot water. On wash day the big copper boiler was put on the range to heat water and also to boil white clothes. The came out white!!

We had a washing machine that was run by "man" power – pushing a stick handle back and forth to turn the agitator and build biceps. Later a Maytag motor replaced it. It was a noisy thing.

Ironing was a good job – no permanent press then. The flat irons heated on the range were good irons. It took a little practice to keep the right temperature.

The cellar under the house was cool – lots of food was kept there, and in the ice cellar, which was colder. Cream and eggs were kept for market, as well as our own use. Churning in the cellar on a hot day beat picking beans. The barrel churn turned by hand. A handle made the barrel turn round. You could manage this with your foot if you had a good book that couldn't wait.

Many jars of canned meat were put up in the fall – some salt pork also, made in a big crockery jar. I remember the big orders of dried fruit that was so delicious from "Savage" Catalog Company.

Sear Roebuck had everything in one book. One man liked a model and wrote to the company for her. The order was filled, and the lady became his wife. (I wonder how Peggy, who ran the Sears store then, would have handled that one.) We had two good wells. One was soft water, a cistern filled with it and pumped into the kitchen with a small hand pump. The other well had a big wind mill, good drinking water for the cattle and irrigation.

Kerosene and gasoline lamps were cleaned and fill every morning to be ready for night. One day I filled the kerosene lamp with gas! My dad walked carefully out of the house with it, as it started to burn strange. I'm glad he made it. The lamps were replaced with a wind charger later.



The battery radio, too, was good to have when the snow was deep. The first "soap" I remember was "Ma Perkins."

I never thought of these things as hardships, although it was hard work.

So many fond memories.



Carrie Spence:

I can remember when we hardly knew what electricity was. The old coal lamps gave a red and sometimes smoky light. People went to bed earlier. Cities were lighted by gas, but in the country, oil filled lanterns were used when it was dark. Cooking, washing and ironing were taken care of by wood burning stoves. Heating was done by fireplaces or wood and coal stoves.

Slabs of ice, harvested in winter were packed in sawdust. Chunks of ice placed in compartments of ice boxes kept milk and cooked foods quite well. Some had cold boxes sunk in earth or lowered containers part way down wells. Apples and root vegetables were kept in cellars. Fruits and vegetables were canned. Meats either smoked, salted or pickled.

Wash day was a task, often done, on washboards. Clothing was generally heavier than it is now. Drying was done on outside lines. Sometimes difficult in winter. Swing type and gas motored machines came later. Ironing, a hot and heavy task. Irons heated on a glowing stove.

Sewing machines were run by foot treadles. Before that garments were sewn by hand.

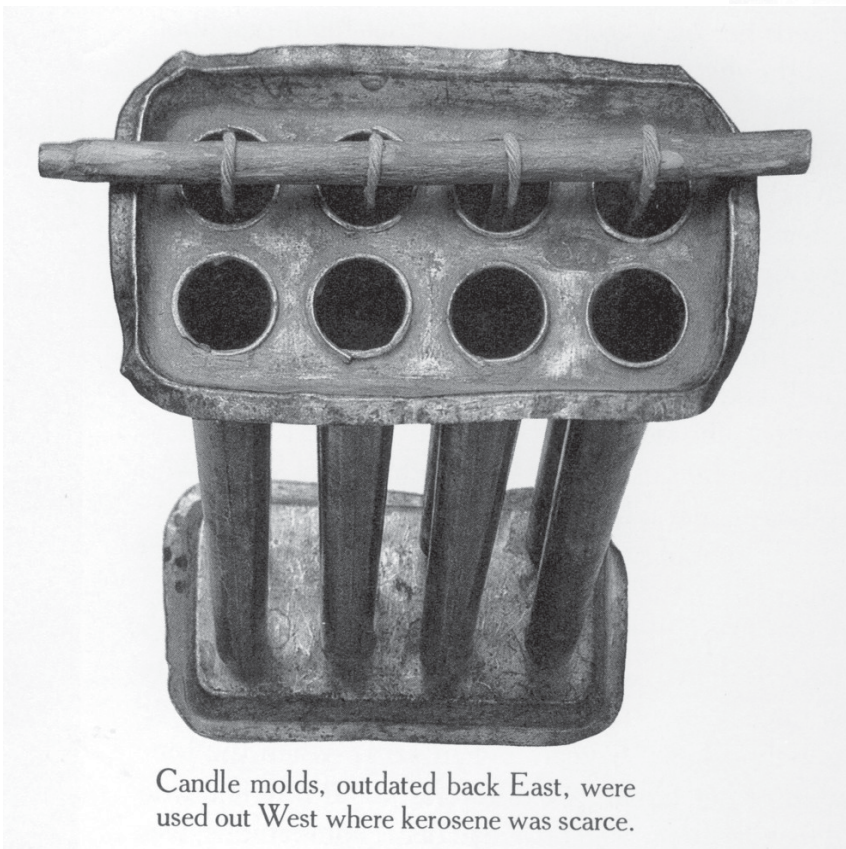
Shaving was accomplished by using a sharp, wicked looking blade which folded into the handle. Much foaming soap and a steady hand was needed to avoid nicks.

Bakery products were all mixed by hand. Corn was popped in a wire basket, jiggled over coals. Bread toasted in ovens or in a wire toaster.

However, we seemed to remain quite contented. We didn't know how underprivileged we were. We had no radio or TV to remind us. Thank goodness there were no electric guitars.



KEROSENE LAMPS



Candle molds, outdated back East, were used out West where kerosene was scarce.





Luella Schwenke:

First off the sun was our natural light. Then the open fire was the source of artificial light. Then the fire pit was succeeded by the torch, then by the lamp, then the candle and finally the electric light.

After we had the electric light figured out we went to all kinds of electric machines and appliances which was a God send to most women and then the men came into their share of the goodness and helpfulness of the electrical appliances.

To my knowledge the iron was the first big help of electricity. You didn't have to start a big fire in your wood stove to heat the flat irons, to iron the clothes or a gas iron where a little breeze would make the flame shoot out and burn your hands.

Then came the electric stove which everyone enjoyed because it was a steady heat and no more poking wood in the stove to keep the oven up to the right temperature. Dad and the boys got a break from cutting the wood in such small pieces.

Next was the refrigerator which replaced the old ice box the drippings of water off the cakes of ice into a pan that was always running over and getting all over the floor. The men didn't have to go out in the cold to put up the ice that they cut from the reservoir with the ice saw. They hauled it home and put it in a hole in the ground with straw or sawdust to insulate it so it wouldn't melt. Course you have to have a roof over this hole or sun, wind or rain would melt it in a hurry.

I guess we got a radio next which replaced the old battery one. What an improvement even if the howls and growls turned into snaps and pops - it sounded lots better and you got more stations from a lot further away, (maybe in another state).

Next the men came into the picture with electric drills, saws, sanders, shavers, furnaces, lawnmowers, motors on their cement mixers, feed grinders, milk separators, milking machines, welders, etc. A person could go on and on with all the appliances we have today for the men to use.

Oh, I forgot to mention the wash machines which I enjoy more than anything. Especially when it comes to sheets, blankets and overhauls or jeans. No more scrubbing on the board or getting blisters from sponging them between your hands. No more depending on wind to pump your water or still farther back lifting that old pump handle up and down to water your stock and for household use. TV I don't care for so won't say very much about it. Although it is a good source for home entertainment. Hurrah for electricity we couldn't live without it now. (That is for very long.)

I could go on and on with how they used to do it in the old days but time is short and the judges can't spend too much time on reading all the letters they'll get. I suggest you go in the Mineral County Library building and see for yourself how a few years back as they have some really good and authentic specimen on display.

P.S. This could have been typed on an electric typewriter, but I don't have one - maybe will have access to one next year also a better typist.



BILL WILSON Names his mine the GILT EDGE

Continued from page 5

Wieglenda's verbatim version reads as follows:

Ol' man Culpepper air rite – Gilt' Edge is named fer the famous mine of the name what brung the Cyanide Process fer treetins ores into this cuntree n wuz the makins of other fameus mines like Kendall, Barnes King – Ruby over to Zortman n – Little Ben near Landusky. Cumberland hear at Maiden, also helped the Spotted Horse n Maginiss Mines hear what already had a repitasion.

Mr. Wm. E. (Limestone Bill) Wilson moaren onct told me how he cum to naime the mine aster a famus brand o' tools, what had the name o' "Gilt"-Edge which was A – 1 – in kwality and he knowed his mine was evry bit as good er bettur – He uster get all burnt up two wen peepul wood say Giltedge. Sorta runhin it altogether ziff twus all one word stead of 2 sed it shoed lack of respect fer them that wuz developing the country n naming places ware they could live n work n have a Poast Office ware male cud cum witch wuz all to their benefif.

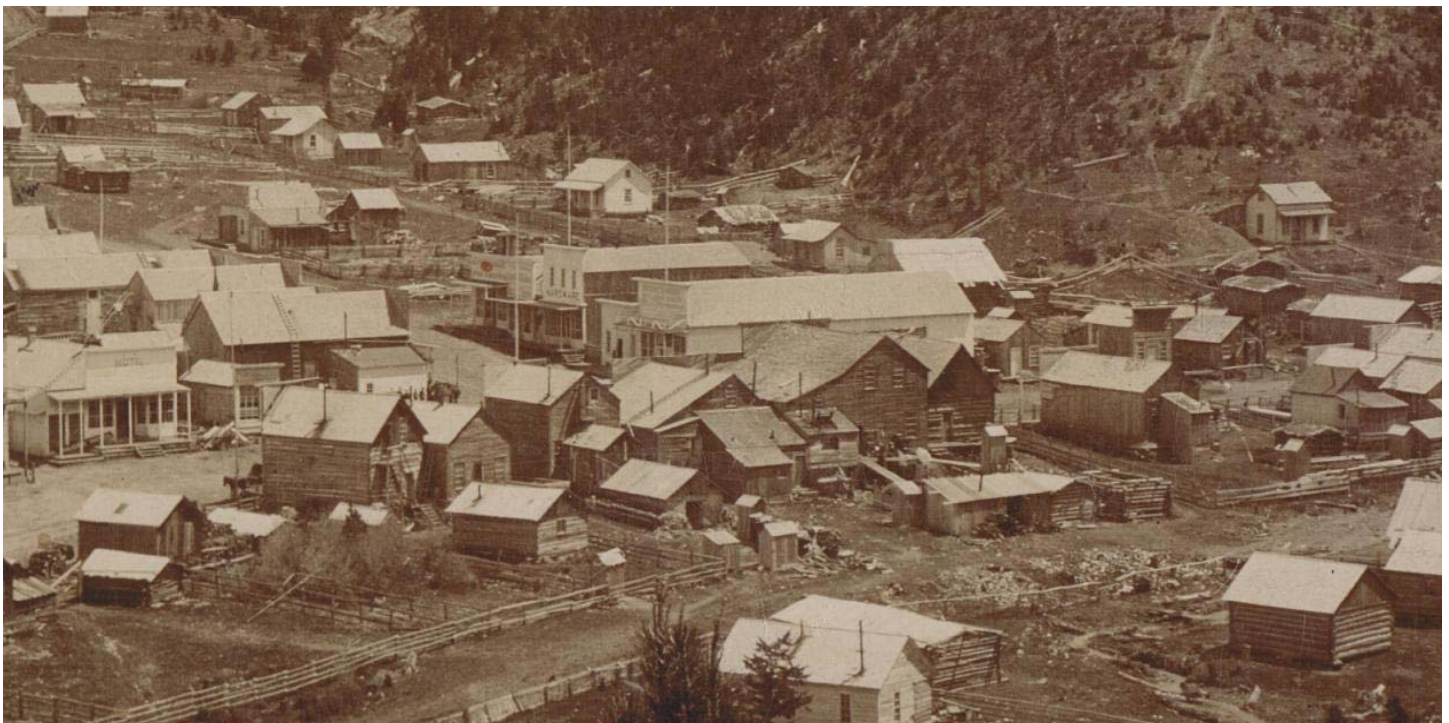
Reminds me of the time back in 1900 were we lost our Post Office here n them Government guys wusn't goin to give it back lessn we changed the name n Frank White sent in the nam Prospect – boy you shuda herd Bill – prospect – Prospect, who wantsta live in a plase called Prospect stead o' fair naim like Maiden – upshot was Bill writ up a petishun witch we uns all sined n sent them guvrment guys bak to Washington n twant long til Maiden was back on thair maps again n furze we air.

The author deciphers his grandfather's slang:

Old man Culpepper is right – The town of Gilt Edge is named for the famous Gilt Edge mine that was the first mine in the area to use cyanide process to treat ore. The process also helped in the development of other mines like Kendall and Barnes King, and the Ruby at Zortman, and Little Ben at Landusky. The process was also used at the Cumberland at Maiden. The Spotted Horse and Maginnis, already had good reputations and the cyanide process only enhanced them.

Bill Wilson (Limestone Bill) more than once told his friend, George Wieglenda, that he named the mine after a famous brand of tools called Gilt Edge. These tools were high quality in Bill's opinion and he knew his mine was also of high quality. It upset Bill when people would say or write Giltedge by just running the two separate words together. He felt it showed a lack of respect by those who lived and worked in the country and could enjoy getting mail at the post office, all of which was to their benefit.

All of this reminded Wieglenda of a time in 1900 when the Maiden post office closed and the government wanted the name changed before reopening it. Frank White (another long time Maiden resident and who may have had something to do with the post office), submitted the name of Prospect. Bill was upset at the suggestion and said why you would want to live in a place called Prospect when you already have the fair name of Maiden. Bill started a petition that residents of Maiden signed. The government guys went back to Washington. Not long after Maiden was back on the map and forever it is.

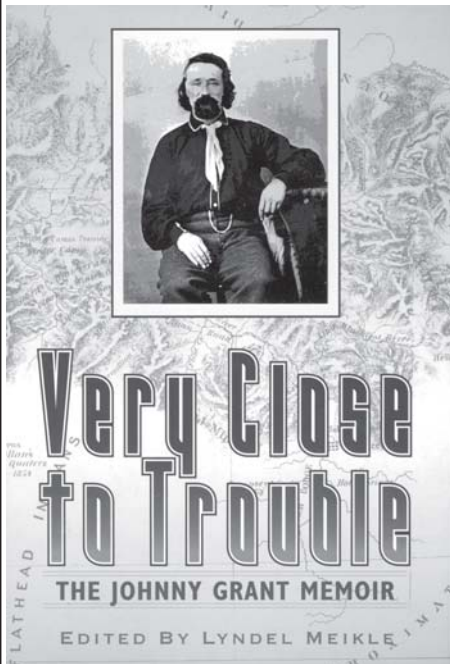


Downtown Maiden from the west taken after 1887 by W. H. Culver.



P.O. BOX 1861, BOZEMAN, MT, 59771-1861

REVIEW



Johnny Grant was illiterate, so unlike Granville Stuart, he did not keep a diary, but dictated the story of his life to his second wife Clothild Bruneau Grant in 1907. However his recollections of his participation in the early history of what was to become Montana, with a few minor year flaws, is a valuable addition to frontier history.

The son of a Hudson Bay Company trader, Richard Grant, and Marie Ann de Breland Grant, John Francis Grant was born in Fort des Pairie, near present day Edmonton, Alberta in 1831. At age 1 ½ Grant's mother died and he was sent back east to Quebec to be raised by relatives, but at age sixteen he returned west to join his father who was then in charge of the HBC 's Fort Hall, near modern day Pocatello. Unfortunately, his father had remarried and favored his new family and Grant found himself, literally, on his own having to fend for himself. Having picked up enough information from his association with the HBC, he started trading quite successfully, for himself. He married a Shoshoni Indian, who was a descendent of Sacagawea and the daughter of Chief Tendoy. By trading one healthy ox for two worn out oxen with travelers on the Oregon Trail, he soon built a substantial herd that he kept on property he owned near present day Deer Lodge. He lived through and had personal experiences with the Montana road agents. But by 1867 he was disillusioned with life in Montana – he could no longer do business on a handshake and was often taken advantage of when he unwittingly signed a document that he couldn't read. He sold his ranch and cattle to Conrad Kohrs (He got taken in this transaction also, by his 'friend') and moved his family to the Metis settlements in Manitoba, where he felt more at home.

Lyndel Meikel, a ranger, historian and blacksmith for the National Park Service at the Grant-Kohrs Ranch at Deer Lodge has edited Grant's memoirs as they pertain to his life in Montana, adding extensive notes after each chapter. The result is a readable and highly interesting book about a true Montana pioneer.

Terry Halden