



MONTANA
GHOST TOWN
PRESERVATION SOCIETY

preserving history for the next generation

VOLUME 44

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2016



Our favorite ghost town.....CASTLE

Photo: DARIAN 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.

WINTER 2016

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Publicity: Sue Howe
Immediate Past President: John Ellingsen
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The Prez Sez

TERRY HALDEN

In this issue of the newsletter, you will find a great article about the Copper City Mining District by a new (to us) author, Patrick Finegan, along with Larry Hoffman's contribution about the history of the Alta Mine. The headframe from the Alta mine was saved by the BLM when they did the clean-up of the mine site, and has been in storage ever since, in Garnet and now Butte. Your Society is now involved in having it re-erected at the World Museum of Mining in Butte.

Recently the Gallatin Museum gave us a small folder holding six enlarged color photos taken by an early member of our Society, Ivan Ellerkamp. Three of which can be found on Page 11. Finally my contribution to this issue is a brief history of Swansea, Wales. Why a Welsh town, you ask. Well, in the latter part of the 19th century, as lode mining got underway in Montana, there was a notable absence of smelting facilities and a lot of miners shipped their ore across the Atlantic to Swansea, where the mills were acknowledged at the time as being on the cutting edge in smelting, and the best in the entire world. I just thought you might be interested in the history of Swansea, as it crops up often in talking about the early history of mining in Montana.

Now, for some really good news: Last year we received a generous donation of \$1,000 from the Louis L. Borick Foundation, which we put to use in the Fort Maginnis cemetery cleanup and the Three Forks railroad station renovation. This year the Foundation has sent us a check in the amount of \$5,000 to assist us in any projects that we may undertake this year. If you know of any worthwhile, historical endeavors that are desperately in need of funds, drop an e-mail to our projects chairman, Larry Hoffman at: hardrock4800@gmail.com and Larry will bring your request up at the next board meeting. Or you might want to e-mail me at terryhalden@hotmail.com.

Finally, plans for the 2016 convention in Missoula, are close to being firmed up, so keep the dates Friday September 9th to the 11th free. In the next issue of the newsletter we will have the final itinerary for you.

WILSON & ATWOOD.
BANK EXCHANGE SALOON.
Keep always on hand the best
WINES, LIQUORS AND CIGARS

Connected with the Saloon are Nicely Fur-
nished and Cozy
CLUB ROOMS,
Where ease, comfort and quietude, a social
glass and a social game may be
enjoyed.

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.**

Marci & Jerry Kraft, Bozeman, MT

Gary Speck, Moreno Valley, CA

Scott Wagner, Great Falls, MT

Genevieve Fix, Missoula, MT

Virginia City Preservation Alliance, Virginia City, MT

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

December 5, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 1:00PM by President Terry Halden. Board members present were Sally Griffin, Larry Hoffman, Kathryn Manning, Sue Howe, and Brad O’Grosky. Board members who were absent were Tom Lowe – unable to contact, Darian Halden - working, and Gordon Tracy, who lacked transportation because a tree fell on his Subaru.

Larry moved and Brad seconded a motion to approve the minutes from the July 11, 2015, meeting as they were printed in the newsletter. Motion passed.

Sally gave the Treasurer’s Report. For the fiscal year which started July 1, 2015 through December 1, 2015, Income was \$5,460.00, Expenses were \$8,271.49, resulting in a net loss of \$2,811.49. Brad moved and Larry seconded a motion that the Treasurers Report be accepted. Motion passed.

Correspondence: A letter was received from Stephen Metcalf inquiring about how to find the owner of the property on which Castle ghost town is located so he could get permission to go onto the property. The letter was referred to Terry, and he replied. Also, the newsletter from the Virginia City Preservation Alliance was received with a note that this was our last issue. Sally was asked to correspond with them to set up a reciprocal agreement whereby we simply exchange newsletters with no dues required. Then the Board reviewed the unpaid 2015 Agency membership dues and determined which ones to drop and which to continue to keep “gratis” if they still don’t pay.

Facebook: Kathryn asked for help from us in knowing what to print there. Larry volunteered to help her.

Website: We need to get PayPal working. Kathryn told us what documentation is needed. She was provided with a letter which showed that we are a non-profit organization. Sally will get bank account information to her. Then she will set it up.

Membership: Kathryn will update our membership brochure and email it to Terry, who will then get it to the printers. We will check on costs to see whether to print 500 or 1,000.

Projects: Sue asked to resign from being Projects Manager. Larry said he would take over the position. Sue will still be responsible for the PR work for the 2017 convention.

Larry then proposed a project to help financially with moving the old wooden head frame for the Alta Mine, which was south of Helena, from where it is presently stored in Butte to the World Museum of Mining in Butte. The cost

would probably be somewhat over \$500, but no more than \$1,000. The Board thought this sounded like a good, worthwhile project. Larry will let the BLM and Butte Historical Society know that we are interested in donating, providing that final cost figures would leave us not being expected to donate more than \$1,000. We would also want to get a recognition plaque.

2016 Convention: Terry and Nonda Beardsley are continuing to make plans. We will be going to Garnet and Coloma on Sunday. There was some discussion on which route would be best for people driving there. This will have to be checked on and made clear to the members planning to go.

Newsletter: The next issue is due to be mailed at the end of January. Terry could use more articles. There will be an article on Copper City, north of Three Forks. It is from a new contributor, Patrick Finnegan, who is a member of the Three Forks Area Historical Society.

Convention 2015: The final figures for the convention are in, and they were disappointing in that there was a loss of just under \$1,400. Contributing factors were that people Friday evening were eating the hors d’oeuvres as though they were a dinner and we had to order a lot of additional food. Also, entry fees to a number of museums on both Saturday and Sunday really added up. The Board voted on a suggestion from a member at the convention to donate to the project of rebuilding Fort Benton. Sue moved and Larry seconded that we donate \$500. Motion passed.

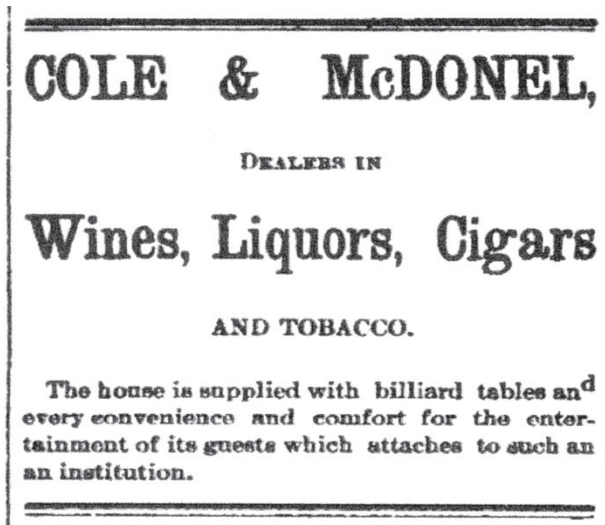
2017 Convention: Brad will assist Margie Kankrlik with the plans.

The domain name for our website has expired. Kathryn will renew it for 3 years.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Griffin

Secretary/Treasurer



Mining the Headwaters of the Missouri

by PATRICK FINNEGAN

When one thinks of the area around the headwaters of the Missouri River and its resources, it brings to mind agriculture. After all, many of the people that came to Montana during the gold rush era came not for gold but for land, settling in this area as farmers and ranchers.

But the headwaters area has also had its share of mining activity. The mining history of this area dates back to 1300 BC. Limestone formations dominate the immediate area around the headwaters of the Missouri and it is in those formations that evidence of the earliest known mining activity in the area is found. On the bluffs a few miles north of Three Forks, on the west side of the Missouri, the peoples of the Pelican Lake culture mined for chert. Chert is a category of quartz which includes flint, but is usually of lower quality than flint. On the opposite bank of the Missouri is the company town of Trident, where limestone is mined and used in the manufacture of cement.

But limestone and chert were not the only mineral resources sought in the area. Among the first settlers of Gallatin City were several men that knew an opportunity when they saw it. Dr. Ketchum, Judge Gallaher and Mr. Tate, all men with some mining experience, spotted the signs of color in some rock outcroppings just a few miles northwest of their homes in Gallatin City and staked a claim known as the Green Eagle. In 1864, there was not a lot that could be done about getting the copper out. There was no local demand and no easy means to transport or refine ore.

In the 1870's, another four Gallatin City men, James Alpin, Frank Akin, Samuel Seaman and John Emmerson revisited the outcroppings and found a boulder of copper quartz about six feet in height and about twenty feet in circumference. The men had samples of the boulder assayed and gold was found in the samples. Samuel Seaman was the only man with experience with quartz mining, but that was in Utah, and he was stymied by the different kind of formations here in Montana.

It wasn't until 1880, when J. O. Hopping became interested, that things began to heat up. Hopping had come to Montana with the gold rush and had had some success in Virginia City. He sold his stake, had moved to the headwaters area in 1864-1865, married a pioneer daughter and started raising stock.

Under his direction several mining shafts were sunk around the area where the boulder had been found. Most failed to find anything significant. Finally, the mining group decided to dig the area directly beneath the boulder. The 13 foot wide shaft yielded several mining car loads of high grade ore, which caused considerable interest in mining circles and in 1883 the area had several mining companies staking claims.

Hopping's mine was called the Stella, while the newcomers staked out the Electric, the Antelope, Butte, the Copper Star, the Iron Mine, the Silver Mine, and the Crystal Canon mine. Many of the folks working these mines were not professional miners and most were just local entrepreneurs.

Back at the Stella mine, the digging of the shaft continued down. At thirty five feet the ore was lost and a crosscut shaft yielding nothing, so the sinking was resumed down to eighty two feet. Encouraging signs of gray copper were encountered, but the miners hit what is known as a freshet, a vein of water if you will, and the shaft was flooded and eventually abandoned.



J. O. Hopping. Photo, courtesy AUTHOR

By 1887 only Hopping and Seaman remained active in work in what was now known as Copper City. The men decided to sink an incline shaft from their new Burlington mine to the original Green Eagle shaft. Pockets of fine copper were found, "just enough to keep the hope of striking the main body of ore only a few feet further on." Along the way they struck a streak of composed quartz. One of the miners carried a bag of this quartz to the Jefferson River and four hundred dollars in gold was washed out of the sample. Soon after Seaman and Hopping were offered a hundred thousand dollars for their mines, but they turned it down.

One wonders who made this offer, but whoever it was roused the interest of one of the leading capitalists of the era. In 1889, a flurry of purchases gave ownership of the land surrounding Three Forks to John R. Toole, one of several men close to Marcus Daly and his Anaconda Co. Early in 1889, there was speculation by some residents that not only would a smelter be built near Three Forks, but it would be chosen as the state capitol.

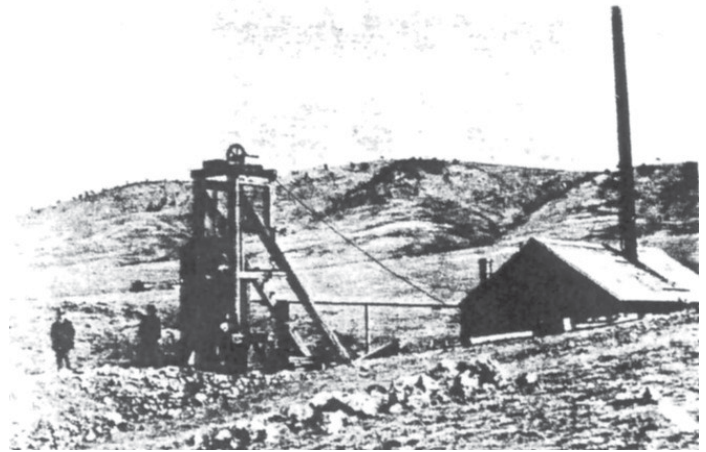
In 1892, Seaman, Hopping and the Thorne brothers consolidated five claims and formed the Three Forks Mining and Milling Company. The financial crisis of 1893 bankrupted the company. But rumors about the Anaconda Co. persisted and an article in a January 1896 issue of the Butte Miner speculated that the 4,000 acres owned by the company around Three Forks would not only be the site of a refinery but a horse ranch for Marcus Daly.

Work on the claims stopped and eventually lapsed and were re-located later by various interests. Samuel Seaman and Carl Hopping picked up the Green Eagle and Burlington claims and, in 1898, with backing from Thomas Dunn and Thomas Spivey began re-developing the claims. By the time Spivey's five thousand dollars was expended one shaft had been sunk to 150 feet, but with nothing to show for it, Spivey withdrew from the company.

In 1905 Herbert G. Dunbar, local farmer, rancher and entrepreneur bought into the enterprise and it was reorganized into the Three Forks Mining Company. There was a lot of activity in the area for the next five years, as the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad purchase land, built a railroad, and founded the new town of Three Forks. But as new town of Three Forks flourished, Copper City declined.

By late 1915 only two groups remained in the Copper City area, the Thorne brothers working the Stella mine and Dunbar – Seaman, working the Dunbar mine. The Dunbar mine was at 430 feet.

On Friday, December 31, 1915, framing in the Dunbar mine gave way, dropping Frank Dunbar and Frank Brown to the bottom of the shaft. When the men at the top discovered the mishap, one was sent to Three Forks for assistance while another was lowered down in a bucket to within 60 feet of the bottom. Frank Dunbar responded to the call, but Brown did not. Carl Hopping and others began tying off



The Dunbar mine. Photo courtesy THREE FORKS AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

loose timbers and when supplies and man power from Three Forks arrived, shoring continued until the shaft was reasonably safe to work in. It took an hour to get to the bottom of the shaft and three hours to get Dunbar back to the top safely. Dunbar had suffered a head injury, broken ribs, and a broken leg and ankle. Local physician Dr. Gaertner dressed his injuries on site and he was taken to Herbert Dunbar's home in Old Town Three Forks to recover.

Having not found Frank Brown, a call was made to Butte and foreman of the Garnian mine and four expert shaft men arrived at the scene. Within an hour the experts pulled the body of Frank Brown from under a mass of timbers. While Frank Dunbar returned to work the mine, nothing of significance was garnered from the mine.

Today the 86.56 acres of mining claims of Copper City in Broadwater County are owned by a single entity. This includes the Copper Queen, Copper King, Stella, Dunbar Georgette, the Pennsylvania Lode mines and the Pennsylvania Mill site. The claims are surrounded by Bureau of Land Management land and there is a road that travels through the Copper City area, appropriately called Copper City Road, which begins on Old Town Road and ends at Highway 287.

The scars of the mining operations are faded and all but two of the homes of Copper City are gone. Little marks the site of decades of speculative mining except for its mark on the history of the headwaters area.



The two remaining cabins at Copper City, photographed in 2012.

Photo courtesy; TERRY HALDEN

The Smelters of Swansea

by TERRY HALDEN

In the article, 'the history of the Alta mine' by board member Larry Hoffman on page 8 of this newsletter, he mentions that in the early 1870's, during the development of this mine, the silver ore was shipped by "wagon to Fort Benton, down the Missouri and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans and then to Swansea, South Wales for smelting". Several other early mining operations in Montana, because of a lack of smelting know-how sent their ore on the long journey across the Atlantic.

KNOWN ORE SHIPMENTS TO SWANSEA

<u>App. Date</u>	<u>Mining District</u>	<u>Mine</u>	<u>Product</u>
1862 - ?	Helena / Last Chance	Last Chance / Oro Fino	Gold
1865	Montana	Legal Tender (A. M. Esler)	Silver ore
1865	Blue Wing	Blue Wing (A. K. Eaton / M. J. Bartleston / H. J. Buckley)	Silver ore
1866 - 1867	Copperopolis	Copper Duke (E. J. Hall & ?. Hawkins)	Copper
1870's	Scratch Gravel	Lexington / Franklin	Silver/Lead
1872	Vipond	Grey Jockey / Quartz Hill	Silver/Quartz
1873	Bryant	Cleopatra (James Bryant, Jerry Grotevant & others)	Silver/Lead
1873	Elk Horn	Elk Horn (Mike Steele & F.W. Parrish)	Silver/Lead
1876?	Colorado	Alta (William Wickes & Samuel Hauser)	Silver/Lead
1879 – 1881	Barker	Barker / Grey Eagle (Pat Hughes / Elias Barker)	Silver/Lead
1882 - 1884	Summit	Anaconda (Marcus Daly)	Copper Ore
1885	Anaconda Smelters	(Marcus Daly)	Copper Matte
1890s	Lump City	Liverpool / Strawberry and probably others.	Silver

NB The first smelter, built by Samuel Hauser, went into operation in Montana in 1867 in the Montana mining district. Because of its success a second smelter was built by A.M.Esler and a third by Tootle Leach & Stapleton. By 1871, six blast and two cupelling furnaces were in operation in the Montana mining district. Throughout Montana mine owners put in ore crushers and smelters of various types, often with machinery imported from Swansea. However, lack of technology, often dictated that ore be shipped to the 'people that knew how to extract the metal' – Swansea smelters.

But why Swansea? The answer, in a nutshell, is the Swansea smelters had developed, over the years, a reputation as being on the cutting edge of the smelting industry.

Swansea was a port city, sitting on a natural harbor, in about the center of the massive South Wales coal field that extended behind the city for fifty miles, east to west and north into the Welsh Mountains. Even the Romans knew about the coal field, but it wasn't until the 17th century that the coal mining industry got underway, supplying local needs first and then moving it to other distant markets. As the coal industry expanded, a pottery industry sprang up in the Swansea region. At about the turn of the 19th century,

copper and other rich metallic ores were discovered in Cornwall, fifty miles across the Bristol Channel. Since, at that time, it required three tons of coal to smelt one ton of ore, it was more economical to build the smelters in Swansea, close to the source of coal. This enabled freighters to bring copper ore to Swansea and leave with loads of local coal for other destinations. From the start new smelters opened up, started to diversify, and specialize in other metal smelting.

By the mid-19th century, the 'Welsh method' of copper smelting which consisted of repeated roastings of copper ore in a succession of specially designed reverberatory furnaces was regarded as the best in the world. Other mills in the vicinity had experimented and mastered the art of smelting

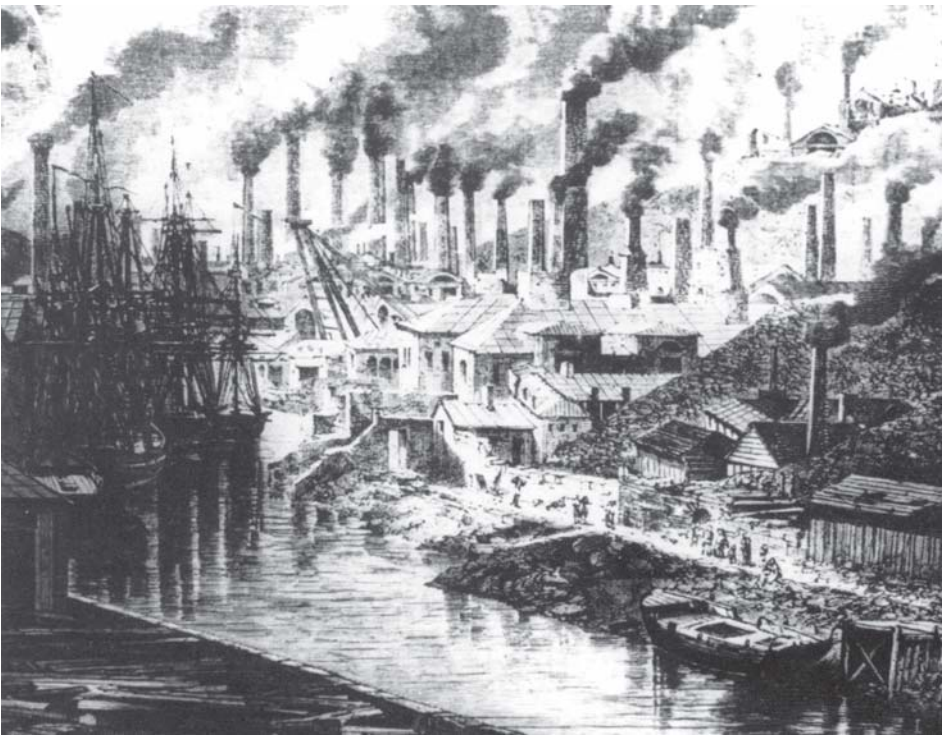
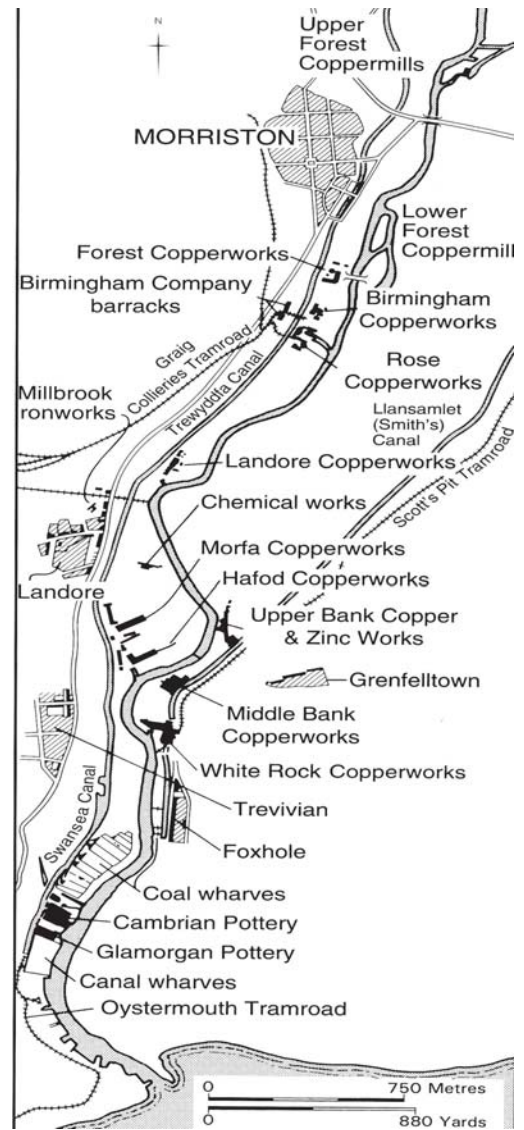
other metals and the reputation of the city grew. Freighters were bringing ore to the port of Swansea from all over the world and in the latter part of the century, the annual tonnage was in the several million. A system of locks and canals enabled ships to dock, unload, turn around, reload with coal and leave.

As a ship berthed agents from the various mill companies would bid on the cargo – one large smelter, the Hafod Copperworks had as many as ten agents, at one time, bidding on cargos. Smelters lined the water ways for almost four miles inland.

The Hafod Copperworks was founded in 1810 by John Vivian, mainly for the purpose of smelting Cornish copper ore. By mid-century, his three sons were in charge, one running a branch copper works in nearby Port Talbot, whilst the other two ran the main works in Swansea. Besides copper, in bars, ingots, and cathodes, the company turned out copper sheet, loco plates up to twelve feet in length, tubes, rods, bolts, and sulphate of copper, along with brass tubes, bolts, Naval Brass, lead ingots, silver and gold.

Eventually, the expert knowledge of smelting was copied around the world. Even Marcus Daly, when sending 30,000 tons of copper matte that he was having problems with in getting it pure, to Swansea in 1885, he sent with it one of his top men to learn the Welsh secrets of smelting. As the copper smelting business faded, the mills turned to steel production, with the result Swansea was a major target for German bombing during W.W. II. Unfortunately, in the process a lot of the historical records of the smelters were lost, although some did survive and are in the Library of Wales in Aberystwth, the Museum of Wales in Cardiff and University of Wales, Swansea.

Today, rebuilt Swansea is a modern university city with a lot of green parks, a large yacht basin, and some small industries. The heavy industries are a thing of the past.



ABOVE: Map showing the extent of the smelters and the water-ways & canals in Swansea.

LEFT: An artist's painting, 1860, looking up the river Tawe, with the huge Hafod Copperworks in the foreground. Makes Butte look like a Sunday afternoon bar-b-que!

The History of the Alta Mine

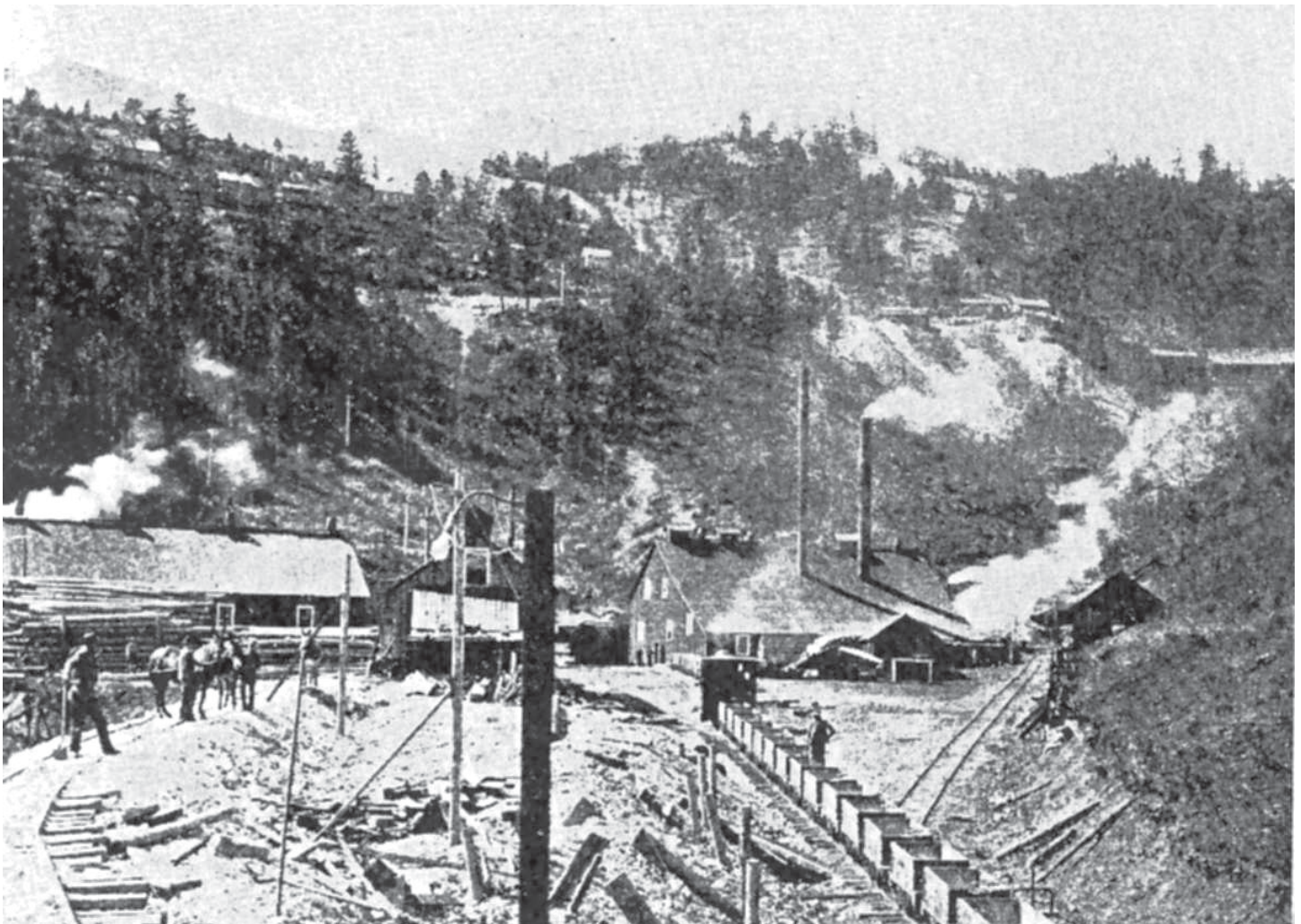
by LARRY HOFFMAN

The Alta mine, located about 15 miles south of Helena, in the Colorado-Wickes mining district, was one of the most productive silver mines in Montana. It was the foundation and major source of ore for the Wickes smelter, which was later moved to become American Smelting and Refining Company's East Helena Smelter.

The mine is of interest to the MGTPS because the headframe was salvaged by the BLM when the reclamation was done. It has been in storage ever since, first at Garnet, then in Butte. At some point, new timbers were cut to replace rotted sections, but agreement on a site to re-erect the structure has been elusive.

Now there is a cooperative agreement to place the headframe at the World Museum of Mining, which the MGTPS board has tentatively agreed to contribute to, pending further definition of costs. Other participants are the Bureau of Land Management, Butte-Silver Bow Historic Preservation Council, and Blue Range Engineering Co. of Butte, who will provide the equipment and experience to do the work.

The Alta lode mine of silver galena ore was discovered in 1869 by a prospector named Williams and purchased, along with its neighbors by the Montana Company in the early 1870's. The property was comprised of the Faith, Grandfather, Alta California, Custer, Somewhere, Keystone, Pandora and Clytie, Alta Ruby, and K & H claims. The company drove six adits into the mountain, from 500 to 1000 feet long. All of them intersected the vein except the lowest working. Rich ore was developed but required carefully sorting before shipping to a smelter. Like all the lead-silver mines of the time, development of the Alta, and other properties in the district was severely limited by the lack of railroads and a lack of smelting facilities. Small tonnages of high-grade ore were shipped by wagon to Fort Benton down the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans, and then to Swansea, Wales for smelting. The cost of handling, shipping, and custom smelting, as well as the long delay in payment (if any), rarely allowed any profit to be returned to the mine owners. The delay could be more than a year even if the ore made it through all the difficulties and the majority of it arrived in Swansea.



The Alta mine, 1896.

Photo courtesy AUTHOR

The Panic of 1873 hit the economy hard. The company overextended its finances and had to be reorganized as the Alta-Montana Mining Company with William Wickes as president and Samuel T. Hauser as director. The Panic also cut financing for getting railroads built into the mining districts of Montana.

The town of Wickes was established in 1877 and the company built a concentrating mill and smelter there. But it was also very difficult to get hard rock mining and processing machinery before the railroads arrived. Placer work had been easy, almost all of the necessary equipment could be made on-site or easily transported by pack animals. Hoists and stamp mills could not be broken down for shipment resulting in having to handle pieces weighing thousands of pounds.

The Northern Pacific completed track to Helena in the winter of 1882-83, with a branch to Wickes completed the next year. This was an indication of the importance of the mines in the district and enabled the full development of the formerly limited lead-silver mines.

Montana ranked second in the nation in the production of silver from 1883 to the mid-1890's, except for 1887 when it was first. Montana mines, including the Philipsburg and Hecla districts, along with the Butte mines, produced about one quarter of the nation's silver, plus large amounts of gold, lead, copper, zinc and other metals.

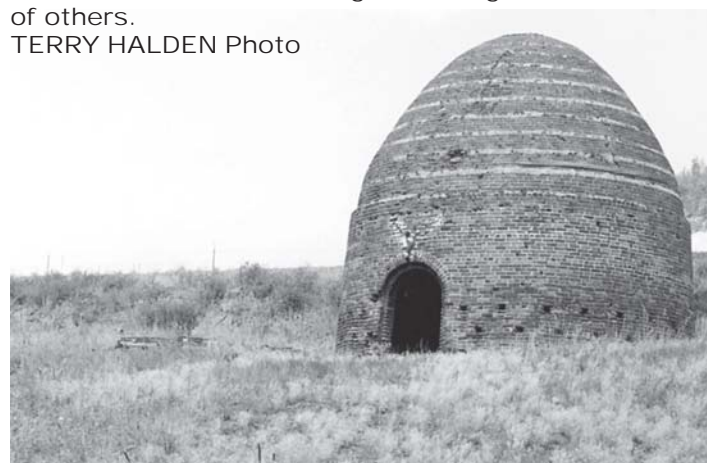
A fire destroyed the mill in 1882, just when all the other conditions were improving. Alta-Montana Mining Company was forced to sell in 1883 to Samuel Hauser, who operated the property through his Helena Mining and Reduction Company (HMRC), which included several other properties.

HMRC paid off the \$250,000 of debt incurred by the Alta Company and spent over \$90,000 rebuilding the burned mill, along with a new concentrator below the old mill to re-process the tailings at 100-125 tons per day. Just quoting the dollars from the contemporary reports is deceiving today, as it gives the impression of modest investment. Converted to current dollars, The HMRC investment would be well over thirteen and a half million dollars.

In 1884, with Alta once again producing high-grade ore and concentrates from the mill, the HMRC constructed a new smelter, probably the largest of its kind in Montana Territory. Just down the valley the company built six new charcoal kilns that could produce over 25,000 bushels of charcoal a month for use as smelter fuel. One of the kilns is still standing today and the remnants of others can still be seen in a line.



ABOVE: The Kilns at Wickes, 1896.
FRANK J.HAYNES Photo
BELOW: The last remaining kiln alongside the bases of others.
TERRY HALDEN Photo



RIGHT: The town of Wickes, 1885.
FRANK J.HAYNES Photo



Hauser was a very wealthy and influential Helena merchant and mine developer, and his desire for a railroad connection to the smelter was great incentive for the NP to get the line built that winter. Wickes blossomed to some 1500 citizens and the smelter treated ores from all over Montana and Idaho.

The Alta mine thrived with the new facilities. The lowest tunnel was driven another 3000 feet and was successful in intersecting bonanza ore. From 1884 until 1893 the mine produced 150-250 tons per day, totaling over 800,000 tons that yielded an estimated \$23,000,000, or fifteen times that value, \$345 million, at today's price of silver. At the conversion factors pointed out previously, that would \$920,000,000 based on inflation.

The mine was eventually deepened to 1600 feet below the surface, with an estimated thirty miles of underground workings from the shaft and three adits. A narrow gauge steam railroad hauled ore from the mine to the mill at Corbin.

1893 was a bad year for silver mining when the Sherman Silver Purchase Act was repealed, dropping the price of silver and closing many mines in the West. The same year, the Alta concentrator burned down and the Wickes smelter closed for lack of feed.

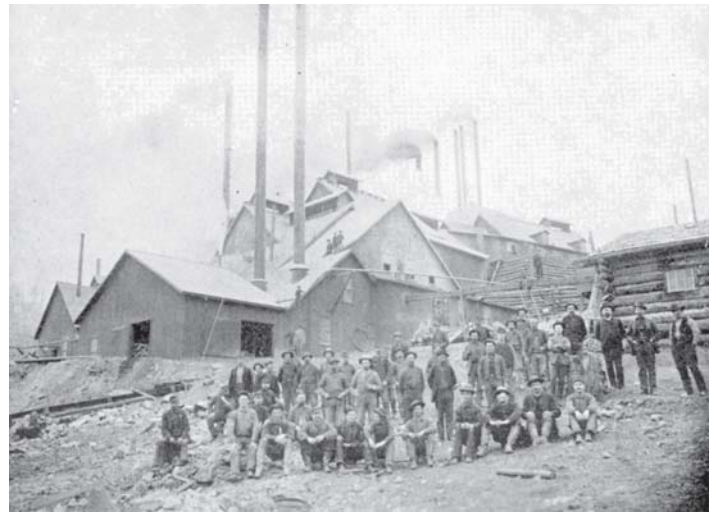
The mine struggled on for another two years, closing in 1895. It would see several reopening events up through the 1950's, but the glory days ended with the Silver Panic. Only about 10,000 tons of ore were mined after 1900. The Wickes smelter was moved to East Helena in 1893-94 and the Northern Pacific abandoned the branch in 1900.

The Colorado District was one of the most productive of the Montana mining areas and was reported to have produced over \$50,000,000 worth of silver and other metals prior to 1900. The Alta, Gregory, Mt. Washington and Mina mines alone were credited with a total production of over \$40,000,000 during this period



ABOVE: Downtown Wickes 1886.
Photo from the Internet

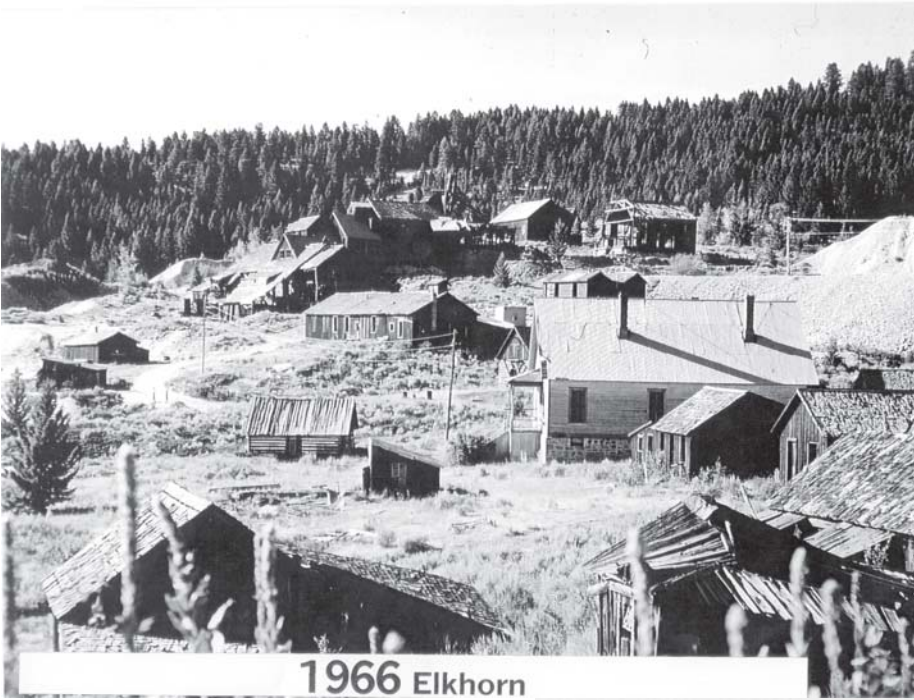
BELOW: Wickes smelter 1875
Photo, Unknown.



ABOVE: All that remains at the location of the Corbin mill.
Photo: TERRY HALDEN

LEFT: The Alta mine headframe, shortly before it was saved by the B.L.M.
Photo: AUTHOR

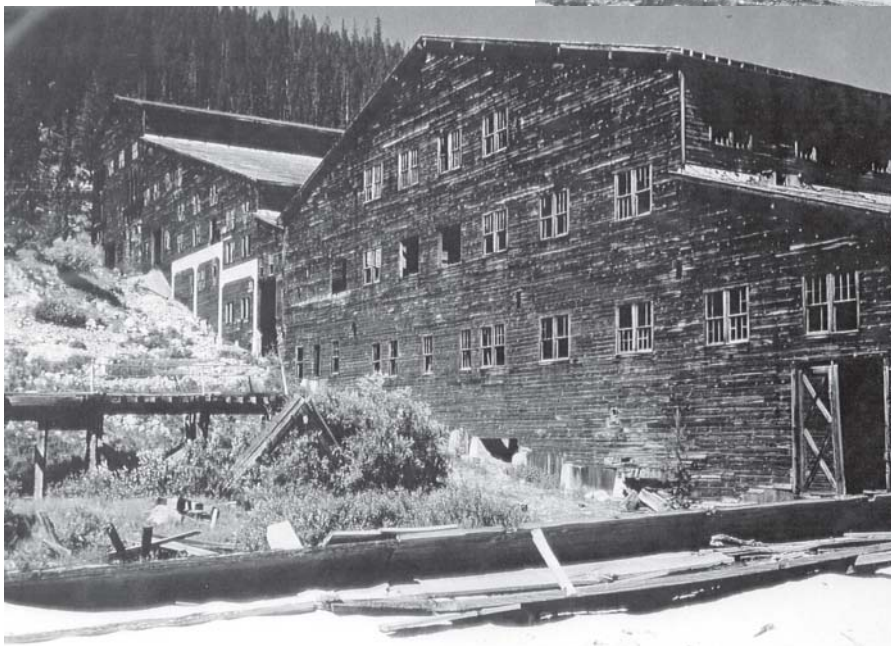




The Gallatin Historical Society recently gave us a small folder of enlarged color photos taken 50 years ago by an early day member of our Society,

IVAN ELLERKAMP

Three of them are presented here, unfortunately, in black and white.



ABOVE: A 1966 view of the mine and mill buildings at Hughesville, which were recently carted away, thanks to the efforts of the DEQ and BLM.

LEFT: The huge mill at Coolidge, which is also no longer with us.

1968 Coolidge Mill



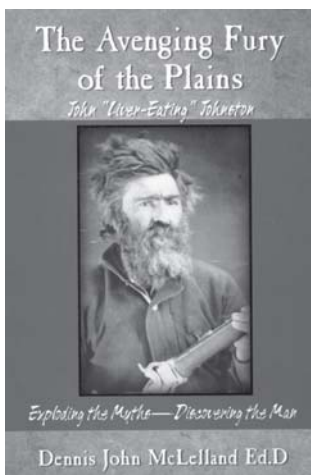
P.O. BOX 1861, BOZEMAN, MT, 59771-1861

REVIEW

THE AVENGING FURY OF THE PLAINS

John 'Liver Eating' Johnston

by Dennis John McLelland



The author claims, that after exhaustive research, this is the true story of “Jeremiah Johnson”, made famous in the movie starring Robert Redford. According to the author, Johnston was born in 1824, near Little York, New Jersey and his parents were Isaac and Eliza-Metlar Garrison and Johnston’s first name was William. As was custom in those days Johnston, at age sixteen, was a bond servant, working as a farm laborer, a role cast upon him by his father. He ran away and joined the navy. He fought in the Mexican War, and was in California during the gold rush, when he ‘jumped ship’ and decided to change his name to John Johnston. By 1861, Johnston was in Alder Gulch, Montana and other that a stint in the Civil War where he volunteered on the Union side, he would spend the rest of his life in and around the Big Horn Mountains and the Crow reservation. Opposite to the popular movie, the Crows were his friends and allies. He got his nickname when a trapping party he was with was attacked by Sioux warriors. The Sioux were repulsed, and after killing one with his rifle, Johnston dispatched another with his knife. Withdrawing his knife from the dead warrior, there was a piece of the man’s liver on the tip. Johnston is reported to have put it to his lips and offered some to his companions, as it “tastes

good”, although he claimed he never actually ate any. Johnston, for a long time was a sheriff in Coulson, MT and afterwards a longtime marshal at Red Lodge. He left Red Lodge in December 1899 for the Veteran’s Hospital in California, where he died on January 12, 1900 and was buried in the Veteran’s cemetery there. In 1974, after the release of the movie, a movement by nearby High school students was eventually successful in having the remains of the old trapper, exhumed and reburied in Old Town, near Cody Wyoming, in sight of his beloved Big Horn Mountains.

McLelland has an annoying habit, throughout his book, when periods of Johnston’s life could not be accurately determined, of ‘filling in’ the gap with other irreverent historical information, which leaves the impression that there is a substantial deficiency in the author’s local research. For instance, when he talks about the whiskey forts in ‘whoop-up’ country, Fort Macleod is NOT in future British Columbia and the photo of Fort Whoop-up in present day Lethbridge is the replica fort, not the original that was located ½ a mile away, half way up the escarpment. Skip this book and wait for the forthcoming biography of ‘Liver Eating’ that Dorman Nelson has been researching for the last several years, which should be out in the near future.

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