



MONTANA  
**GHOST TOWN**  
PRESERVATION SOCIETY

---

preserving history for the next generation

VOLUME 48

**NEWSLETTER**

WINTER 2019



Built on a ledge overlooking the placer claims activity below, the short lived settlement of Louisville, Mineral County, after gold was discovered on Cedar Creek by Louis Barrette in 1869. For complete story, see page 8.

Photo, courtesy MINERAL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## 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 2019

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## The Prez Sez

BRAD O'GROSKY

A very Happy New Year to everyone and may 2019 be even better than 2018. I recently received a copy of the "Reflections of the Past" from the Gallatin History Museum and found it very interesting. It covers MGTPS newsletter articles from 1970 to 1983 and I'm sure many of you remember them and even wrote some of them. Dee and I moved to Bozeman 7 ½ years ago from Madison, WI, leaving behind high taxes, sales tax and mosquitos. But there weren't any ghost towns there, so we were excited to find them in Montana. As we toured around, we visited Granite (WI didn't have roads like this) and found the Miners Union Hall, but, what a change. I had a book from 1974 with a picture of the hall and what a disappointment. The beautiful facade was nearly gone. As we learned, and many of you know, the ghost towns are slowly falling into ruin. And of course that is why we were organized....to try to preserve them.

Terry does a wonderful job with the newsletter, so maybe some of you have stories and pictures of the change in some of the ghost towns. Not only would it be interesting, but it may serve to encourage more people to help preserve and protect our vanishing history. For once it's gone, it's gone forever. If anyone has an idea to help preserve a particular ghost town or some other idea, please let your board members know. Brad

### AS I SEE IT

from the Ramrod's chair

My appeal for articles in the last issue of the newsletter was obviously heard and I want to thank those fine authors that responded with excellent articles that you will read over the next few edition of the newsletter.

First off, member Alan Patera, who researches, writes and publishes stories about ghost towns in southwestern Nevada/southeastern California, was able to tie in a news story from his bailiwick with a piece of history from Montana. His article, about the death of W.W. Morris, the founder and president of the Morris Bank in Pony is on page four. Rachel Phillips, who readers will be familiar with, and is the research coordinator at the Gallatin History Museum in Bozeman, sent me the history of cowboy/cowgirl – let's get this politically correct – cownperson, Sammy Williams. His/her story authored by Rachel is on page six.

If you are ever in Superior in Mineral County, stop in at the museum there and talk to the curator Kay Strombo. She is the most knowledgeable person on the history of the county and can give you a tour of the museum that contains a huge amount of original articles and documents about the Mullen Road (Built in 1858-1860 from Walla Walla to Fort Benton) that followed the Clark Fork River through today's Mineral County. I leaned heavily on Kay's knowledge and resources to write my article about Louis Barrette, that you will find on page eight.

In future newsletters you will read articles about Maiden's school houses by Jerry Hanley (Because of its length, I may have to split it over two issues); The rivalry between Bear Creek and Red Lodge (where we will be next convention) by Linda Dutcher, and many more features. So if you haven't renewed your membership now, I urge you to do so, so you won't miss this fine reading. Terry

M.G.T.P.S. Board Meeting  
November 17, 2018

President Brad O’Grosky opened the meeting at 1:02 P.M. Board Members attending were Terry Halden, Darian Halden, Cindy Shearer, and Connie Griffin.

Connie read the Treasurer’s Report. From the Fiscal Year of July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019 as of November 13, 2018, MGTPS had an Income of \$7,205.00, Expenses of \$7,749.17 for a Net Loss of \$544.17. On September 4, 2018 \$3,000.00 was transferred from Savings to Checking. The Cash Balances are Petty Cash \$60.20, Checking Account has \$8,271.15, and Savings Account has \$10,422.78.

Terry motioned to accept the Treasurer’s Report, Cindy seconded, the motion passed.

Darian motioned to accept the Minutes of the Board meeting of the August 18, 2018 as printed in the Fall 2018 Newsletter, Terry seconded the motion and the motion passed.

MGTPS received a Thank You note from The Pride of the Judith for the donation to preserve the Hobson Grain Elevators.

Connie reported that we have 15 new members.

Darian is looking into Squarespace and GoDaddy to see which will work the best for MGTPS’s website.

Terry said that MGTPS was mentioned in an issue of Wild West magazine. He has also received several articles for future newsletters.

**Projects:**

Cindy is looking to collaborate on correcting and replacing county historic landmark signs. She is checking into prices from the Highway Department. If MGTPS contributes, Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society will appear on the signs.

Terry is interested in preserving the Pioneer Creek Dredge, but it would cost a lot to move and there is no place to store it.

There are no updates on the windows for Morris Bank in Pony.

We are waiting for more information on what may be needed to preserve the IM General Store in Pony, MT.

**Old Business:**

Don Black is looking into speakers for the 2019 Convention in Red Lodge.

The Nixon Bridge fate is still in Limbo. The City of Manhattan has not decided if they are going to purchase the bridge and time is running out.

**New Business:**

The Steindorfs are interested in running the 2020 Kalispell Convention. Diane Williams is looking into some locations and possible speakers in the area.

Terry motioned to allow the Steindorfs 6 months to look into the 2020 Convention in Kalispell. Darian seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Cindy motioned to adjourn the meeting, Darian seconded and the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Connie Griffin

Secretary/Treasurer

**REMINDER**

If you have not yet paid your 2019 dues, you are in grave danger of this edition of the newsletter being the last issue of this fine magazine you will receive.

So, we would suggest, you get your checkbook out, write a check for \$15 or \$20, payable to M.G.T.P.S. and mail it to:  
M.G.T.P.S.

P.O. Box 1861,  
Bozeman, MT.  
59771

We thank you for your continued support



Editor's note: In the Summer 2018 issue of the Newsletter there was an article about the history of the Pony bank, in which we stated that following the bank's creation by William W. Morris, he was installed as the President and "Morris passed away in October 1904"(Incorrect date of death). At the time the cause or location of his death was unknown. However, our member Alan Patera, who is familiar with the mining history of the S.W. Nevada / S.E. California area was able to fill us in with the missing bit of history.....

## THE DEATH OF W.W. MORRIS, THE FOUNDER OF THE MORRIS BANK IN PONY

by ALAN PATERA

The **August 27, 1904** edition of the Tonopah Miner (Nevada) had the following headline:

*"Death of W.W. Morris.*

*The deplorable and untimely death of W.W. Morris, which occurred at Reveille last Sunday while he was inspecting the Last Chance mine with a party of friends, is a great loss to this district"*

W.W. Morris was a leading citizen of Pony, Montana at the beginning of the 20th century. He was born near Kansas City at Liberty, Mo. on April 17, 1841. He tried being a druggist in Kansas City and St. Louis; then in 1864 he packed up a stock of drugs and headed to Virginia City, Montana. He made successful mining investments throughout Montana, and as he became prominent was elected to the position of Treasurer of Madison County. Then he was elected for two terms in the Montana Legislature. In 1901 he organized the Morris State Bank of Pony, Montana, with W.W. Morris as both President and chief stockholder.

He married and had two sons and at least one daughter. One son was named Charles, who also took an interest in mining ventures. Charles headed off to

Nevada with the news of the new strikes at Tonopah, where he bought into the Montana-Tonopah Mining Company and became a director of the company. His father also became a large investor in the company, which turned out to be one of Tonopah's best silver mines.

In 1904 an opportunity to buy the Last Chance mine at Reveille, Nevada presented itself. Reveille was then and is now about the most isolated place imaginable. It is about 60 miles east of Tonopah. The nearest grocery store, the closest gas station, the closest anyplace where you can buy anything is in Tonopah, or 90 miles away in Ely if you're going east. Mining at Reveille began in 1868, but by 1900 most of the mining was conducted by Herman Reischke. In May 1904 he made an ore shipment from the Last Chance mine. Herman, his wife Alvena and their two daughters were about the only residents of Reveille at the time, so the prospect of having moneyed interests operating the mine was exciting, giving hope for a revival for the whole district.



The hamlet of Reveille, Nevada, Ca 1902.

AUTHOR'S PHOTO

The Reveille post office had lingered on from the early days, but was closed on April 30, 1902. With the possibility of new activity, application for a new post office was sent in, and in attempt to flatter W.W. Morris, the name selected was Morrystown. The office was established on August 29, 1904 with C.P. Luper as postmaster. But fate interceded.

Prior to making the investment, W.W. Morris wanted to inspect the mine, so in August 1904 he made the journey to Tonopah by train. Then with his son and a small party they headed to Reveille. In an account published 26 years later, it is said they entered the mine and into a chamber of a natural cave the workmen had just broken into, Morris took a look around, said, "Boys, it is immense!" — and then he fell over dead, apparently of a heart attack. He was 63 years old.

His body was taken to Tonopah by wagon, where the Elks held formal services in his honor. A special train was waiting to take the cortege to Reno, and the body was returned to Pony for burial.

RIGHT: William W. Morris, in the 1890's, shortly before his death.

Photo: M.H.S.

BELOW: Reveille today. Photo: Author

With his death, the mining deal was off. With no investment from the Morris family, they didn't need to flatter the name, so on June 13, 1905 the name of the Morrystown post office was changed back to the traditional Reveille and survived until 1911. The Morris State bank continued in operation with new management.





# He WAS A She

By RACHEL PHILLIPS

Among the graves at Meadowview Cemetery, just south of Manhattan, Montana, sits a rather curious tombstone. The inscription reads: “A female whose real name is unknown but who has been for many years known as Sammy Williams. Died Dec. 10, 1908. Age about 68 yrs.” Curious as this epitaph may be, the life behind the words is even more intriguing.

The story begins not in Montana, but across the world in Hallingdal, Norway, perhaps in the 1830s, although no one is certain. Childhood friends Ingeborge Wekan and Sven Norem grew up together. As time passed, these school chums fell in love and were soon engaged to be married. It was at this time that Ingeborge’s parents decided to create a new life for themselves in America. The Wekans immigrated and settled in Allamakee County, Iowa, along with their daughter Ingeborge and her fiancé. Happy and anticipating her future life, Ingeborge began to sew her wedding clothes. Unfortunately, the happiness did not last. Sven’s mother, Mrs. Norem, broke off the engagement, claiming that Ingeborge and her family were not ranked high enough in society to become so closely connected with her son. Stricken with grief and a broken heart, Ingeborge Wekan disappeared.

Billy Williams was a small, delicate-looking man (maybe 5 feet tall), with jet-black hair, a feminine voice, and a slight hunchback. He appeared in Eau Claire, Wisconsin during the late 1850s or early 1860s, and quickly made many friends. Billy frequently went out with the lumberjacks, where he never hesitated to dance with the girls and spend his money. While he loved to drink and have a good time with his buddies, he was always careful never to become intoxicated. Word quickly spread about Billy’s talent as a cook, and nearby logging camps hired him without delay. As evidenced by his nickname, “Billy Cook” was considered at the top of his profession in Eau Claire, and consequently made quite a bit of money.

Over the course of thirty years, Billy was able to purchase several buildings and lots in the city, a rare feat for most people of his class. He was a smart man, and in addition to speaking Norwegian, English, and German fluently, Billy quickly picked up Indian languages

during his time in the woods. But most of all, he was known for his generous nature. As reported later in Eau Claire’s *Daily Telegram* (reprinted in the *Manhattan Record*), “He was also of a very charitable turn of mind and there are those...who remember the kindly aids of a stranger who used to visit their homes and seeing indications of poverty, would leave five, ten and even fifteen dollars behind him without letting his identity be known.” Even after leaving Eau Claire sometime in the 1880s, Billy Williams sent gifts of money back to his friends who still resided there. The sick were never neglected when Billy was around – he made it a point to visit them and often stayed to nurse them through the night.

Given his rather feminine appearance, rumors began to circulate about Billy Williams’ true gender. Matters worsened when a Norwegian family, one that was familiar with Ingeborge’s parents back in Iowa, moved to Eau Claire and noticed Billy’s resemblance to Mrs. Wekan. Word reached her family, and Ingeborge’s brother was sent to Eau Claire to persuade “Billy” to return home. Her brother, of course, failed in his task. Independent though she was, Ingeborge must have missed her family. It is rumored that during her stay in Eau Claire, she made one last trip back to Iowa to observe her parents and to catch a glimpse of her former fiancé and his wife. Of course Ingeborge was dressed as a tramp and took care that none recognized her. After the encounter with her brother, however, Ingeborge decided it was time to leave Eau Claire. She sold her property and headed west to North Dakota, where she spent several years cooking for the Dalrymple farms

Sometime later, Manhattan area horse and cattle rancher Henry Heeb found he was in need of a cook. His current help was getting on in years and wished to return home to China. One day in the early 1890s, Heeb stopped by the local saloon and struck up a conversation with a little man who had just jumped off a freight car. “Sammy” Williams (alias Ingeborge) was washing a few drinks down his travel-weary throat

when he mentioned to Henry “I cook good’.Williams was hired and spent the next 18 years in and around Manhattan, Montana, cooking for various ranch outfits, including the Heeb Ranch, the Meadowbrook Ranch, he Number One Ranch and the Manhattan Company.

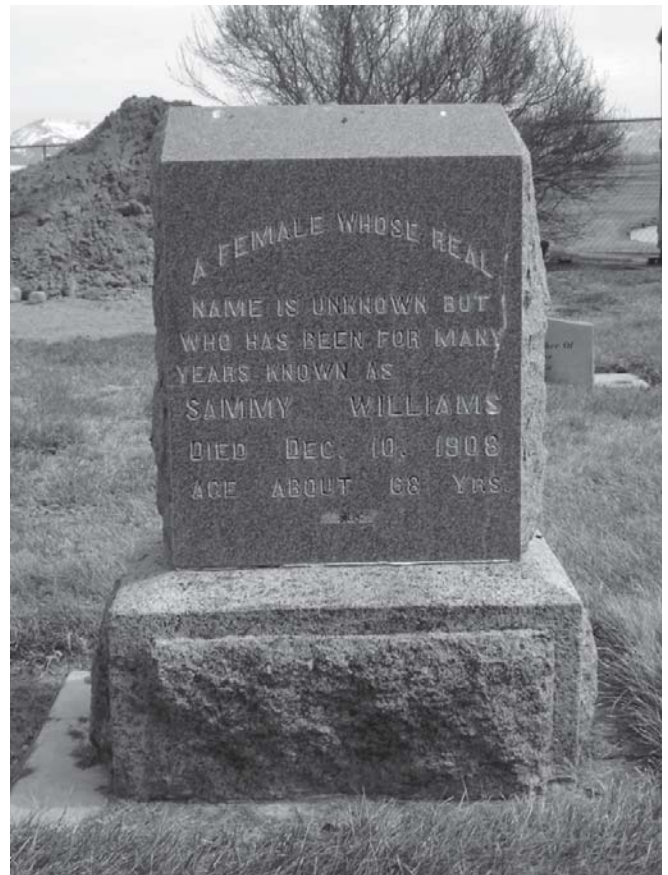
Sammy got along as well with the Montana cow hands as he did with the Wisconsin lumberjacks. He chewed tobacco and slept in the bunkhouse with the hired hands. It must have been hard for Sammy to hide his true identity while rooming with the men. One source claims he was the first to get up in the morning and the last to climb up to bed at night, changing his clothes in the dark while the others slept. Whatever lengths Ingeborge Wekan took to hide her sex are unknown, but her disguise must have been quite successful during her stay in Manhattan. There are no reports in the area of anyone thinking she was anything other than a man.

By the end of 1908, Sammy Williams’ health had begun to decline. Friends advised him to see a doctor after he expressed that he did not feel well. Of course, Sammy always brushed off this suggestion. There are several different reports of what happened next. One says that Sammy was stricken with a sudden heart attack one Thursday evening as he worked in the kitchen, and died a short while later. Another suggests hungry cowboys found him dead in his bunk after he failed to prepare their breakfast one morning. Others claimed that at the time of his death, Sammy was recovering from a drinking binge. However it happened, Undertaker George R. Safely was quite taken aback when he began to prepare Sammy Williams’ body for burial. As one can imagine, the fact that a woman would masquerade as a man caused quite a stir in town, and an inquest was conducted to determine the just reason for the charade. A local jeweler by the name of C. J. O’Dell believed that it was possible he had seen Williams many years before in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. He sent a letter of inquiry to Eau Claire’s police chief and later was able to learn all that was known about Sammy Williams’ life, as well as her real name.

Sammy Williams’ funeral was short and simple. The local Presbyterian minister, Rev. James Wallace MacGowan, spoke briefly, after which Billy/Sammy/ Ingeborge was buried in the local cemetery. Sammy’s many friends all chipped in to purchase a headstone for her, though they were uncertain of her real name.

At the time of her death, Ingeborge Wekan owned 320 acres of land outside of Manhattan. According to the *Daily Telegram*, Sammy was scheduled to sign a deed to this land on the day she died. Consequently, many believed that Sammy was finally planning to return home to Iowa to spend her remaining days with her relatives, but was too late.

Though not many of the details of Ingeborge Wekan’s life are known, what is certain is that, despite her hardships, she was a kind, caring person. She managed to make a vast number of friends in several states, who never forgot her kindness. As Eau Claire’s *Daily Telegram* stated: “And such is the sad life story of Ingeborge Wekan.” But, given the many friends she left behind, maybe her life did not end up to be such a sad story after all, just a different one.



‘Sammy’ William’s grave. AUTHOR’S PHOTO

*Rachel Phillips is the Research Coordinator at the Gallatin History Museum in Bozeman. Visit the Gallatin History Museum at 317 W Main Street in Bozeman, [www.gallatinhistorymuseum.org](http://www.gallatinhistorymuseum.org), or on Facebook.*

The Story of

# LOUIS BARRETTE

Pioneer Prospector

by TERRY HALDEN, Researched by KAY STROMBO

French Canadian, Louis Barrette, a name well known in mining circles in north-west Montana, around Frenchtown and Superior for discovering gold in two locations that resulted in the establishment of two mining districts, but relatively unknown in the rest of state, is a fact that should be rectified.

Louis A. Barrette was born in Sainte Martine, a small town near Montreal, Quebec, Canada, in January (exact date is unknown) 1835. His parents were Baptiste and Josephite Barrette and he had a younger

brother Eustache, an older sister Hermine and three younger sisters, Julie, Marie and Marie Aley. His early years can only be guessed at but it is assumed he had a traditional French Canadian Catholic upbringing and received the usual education, no doubt administered by a church run school.

In 1853, at age 18, he left home and joined the Argonauts flocking to the new found wealth of California. Like the majority of gold seekers, other than gaining experience, he was not successful in gaining any wealth. Moving northward, following the progression of 'new bonanza strikes', in 1868, he found himself in the Coeur d'Alene gold mining area of Idaho and as winter was approaching he decided to move eastward and spend the winter with other French speaking people in Frenchtown, Montana territory, just west of Missoula. Travelling up the Clark Fork river, near where Superior is today, he noted a tributary



Louis Barrette, taken later in life.  
Photo Courtesy:  
FRENCHTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(Cedar Creek) that to his experienced eye looked promising. But winter was upon him and he continued on to Frenchtown.

He did not get an opportunity to return to Cedar Creek until the fall of the 1869, which he did with fellow French Canadian, Basil Lanthier. They passed the ranch of Adolf Lozeau, and travelling up Cedar Creek, they started testing the ground for placer gold. At a point seven miles up, where Cayuse Creek enters the main river, they were successful and found a little 'color'.

This was on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1869. Checking further up Cedar Creek, they discovered that the more they advanced the better the pan results became. On a bar they named Louisville Bar they really hit pay dirt. Here the bedrock was only four feet from surface and the gold content was ample. In total they gleaned out an estimated \$350 (1869 dollars) and as winter was again setting in, and they needed supplies they returned to Lozeau's ranch. They convinced him to go to Frenchtown and purchase supplies as they assumed that if they tried to buy supplies with strange gold (gold from different areas varies in color) they would have a stampede on their hands). Unfortunately, when Lozeau got to Frenchtown he got into the liqueur and as a result, his tongue got loose and in no time men were dropping what they were doing and taking off on foot, on horseback and in buggy, all heading for Cedar Creek that night. Sweeping up Barrette and Lanthier the mob continued to the new diggings



Despite the urgency, on December 1, 1869, the twenty-three prospectors present took time to organize the 'Barrette Mining District', with W. Dubreul as President, J.E. Marion as Recorder, and R. McGregor Baird as Secretary. The original document, signed by the prospectors was discovered in 1895 indicated that every miner in the district be entitled to one Creek claim, one bar claim, one Hill claim and one gulch claim, each claim to be 200 feet in width. The two discoverers, in addition to their allotment were allowed one addition claim. With each claim 200 feet in length X 25 miners, would indicate close to a mile of the Creek was taken up in mining before winter set in closing down all activity.

The real stampede of miners followed along and before the end of the year the first cabins were being built to survive the winter. The following spring some merchants arrived and a town began to form, which everyone agreed should be named Louisville after the original discoverer. Where Barrette had made the first major discovery, there was a little spring creek flowing into Cedar from the southeast, creating a small shelf and it was on this shelf, above the main diggings, Louisville was established. Meantime, further downstream, where Oregon Gulch entered the main Cedar, a second town was coming into existence that the locals named Junction City. Both towns secured a post office in 1870. However neither lasted long, for by the following spring, 1871, main activity had moved further upstream and a new town, named Forest City came into existence. Both Louisville and Junction City

post offices were rescinded in 1871, in favor of the new town, which retained a post office until 1908, with a name change in 1895 when the word City was dropped.

Barrette, who did not make a fortune from his discoveries, became disillusioned with the massive influx of prospectors, and when the majority moved upstream to the area where Forest City was established, he quietly left the area, exact date unknown, and retired back to Frenchtown. But he was not through with prospecting.

In October 1874, he and his brother Eustache were prospecting the upper reaches of Nine Mile Creek, a stream that flows southeast to enter the Clark Fork a little to the west of Frenchtown. This waterway had been previously used by prospectors traveling between Montana and the gold fields of British Columbia, and was used as a thoroughfare with virtually no actual prospecting being done. On one of the streams that come together to form Nine Mile that they named Eustache they found a little gold. A little further downstream, where another feeder stream, that they named St. Louis enters the Nine Mile they discovered more gold deposits.

Again the discoveries sparked a minor stampede, again, primarily French speaking prospectors from Frenchtown and by December, 107 claims had been registered on Eustache Gulch and 106 on St. Louis Gulch. Cabins were already being erected by the men and by June the following year a small town began to emerge at the junction of St. Louis and Nine Mile that was christened Montreal. It immediately had a general store, two butcher shops, one blacksmith, and it is suspected a saloon.

Forest City, 1870's  
Photo: MINERAL COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The furor of development was tempered somewhat on July 6, when a Henry Laravile, was felling timber to erect his restaurant and the tree landed on him and crushed him. He died within a few hours of the accident. Mining a few miles downstream, where Martina Creek ran into Nine Mile caused a second settlement to come into being that the miners named Martina. Within a short time it had two saloons, stores, butcher shops, blacksmiths and in 1875, a post office. Montreal never did secure a post office and as a result, slowly, businesses closed and moved to the more populous town of Martina. Today, nothing remains of either settlement, although, Montreal, now referred to as Old Town is still on the map of Montana. As soon as the gold started to peter out in the upper reaches of Nine Mile and miners arrived in the hundreds, Barrette sold his interests and left.

However he still had faith in his old properties on Cedar Creek, and in 1884, in partnership with George Conford, he quietly started buying up old claims on the Creek not far from where old Forest City was located, that had been abandoned as 'worked out'. When they had enough, they installed a hydraulic giant and commenced washing away the overlay down to the bedrock. That same year three LaCasse brothers, Alphonse, J.T., and Dumase came west and Alphonse was in Frenchtown looking for work when Barrette was

looking for help running his hydraulic mining equipment. By the following year he had J.T. also employed. Eventually the two LaCasse brothers bought into the partnership and later bought out Conford's interest. In 1892, the three partners, patented the ground they were working and formed the Cedar Creek Consolidated Mining Company to continue their efforts. As Barrette aged, he took less and less interest in running the day to day operations but retained his third interest in the company.

On April 21, 1901, at age 66, Barrette married the widow Malvina Bergeron Hamel, aged 46. inheriting three stepdaughters and one stepson. Mrs. Hamel's deceased husband had been one of the original stampedeers to Cedar Creek December 1869. Barrette now retired was a social giant in Frenchtown, throwing New Year's Eve parties to all who wanted to come, organizing a branch of the St. John the Baptist Society in Missoula (there were three branches in Montana at the time, in Butte, Anaconda and Frenchtown) and, of course, the weddings of his step daughters.

Finally in December 1914, he came down with pneumonia and was rushed to St. Patrick's hospital in Missoula, where he succumbed on December 9. His wife, Malvina passed away in November 3 1919. Both are buried in Frenchtown cemetery..



Hydraulic mining in Cedar Creek 1887. Louis Barrette is standing in the center of the three people on the right. The other two are the LaCasse brothers.

Photo from the front page of the Mineral Independent.

Courtesy of Mineral County Historical Society

# NEXT MAN UP

Editor's note: In the NFL there is a saying, whenever a player gets injured "Next man up", and the rookie gets his chance to shine as the star player is carted off the field on a stretcher. I believe the saying originated in the mining industry, when a miner was killed on the job. To prove my point, I refer you to the Montana Inspector of Mines report for 1892. These two accidents occurring over a four day period in the Granite Mountain Mine.....

On the 14th of January, 1892, Samuel Lavin, a miner employed by the Granite Mountain Mining Company, in the Granite Mountain mine, at Granite, was instantly killed, and William A. Butler received some flesh wounds that were very painful.

They were working in a crosscut that was being driven north from the east drift on the 1300-foot level, and had drilled nine holes during the day. These they loaded with five others that had been blasted by the other shift, but did not break, making fourteen in all. Mr. Butler says that Lavin proceeded to spit the holes, and he was counting them, starting at the bottom hole and going up. When he got through with the last one Butler, who was standing on the right, stepped to the left and told Lavin he had spit but thirteen holes. They both looked for the fuse that was not spit. Lavin found it and spit it. They then started out but had just turned around when one hole exploded. Butler was knocked over a pile of dirt. He claims to have crawled out about 90 feet before any of the other holes exploded. Lavin's body was found about 15 feet from the face of the crosscut. Butler said he did not think it was over one-half a minute from the time the first fuse was spit until the explosion of the hole that caused Lavin's death. The fuse used was triple tape, and if it were all right the fire would go through it at the rate of two feet per minute. This would give them three minutes from the time of spitting until the holes would go off if the fuse was of the required length—six feet. There is a man employed at this mine who cuts the fuse and puts the caps on them. He said the fuse he gave them was six feet. Butler stated that Lavin cut about 18 inches off the first fuse and shorter pieces from some of the others so as to make sure that certain holes would explode first to give a chance to some of the others to break, but with 4 feet of fuse there would be more than one-half a minute from the time of spitting the holes and the explosion. Fourteen holes are too many for one man to spit, as the time occupied in firing them is apt to be much longer than those engaged in the work think, and there might possibly be a faulty place in the fuse so that the fire would go through it very quick. A battery could be used or

pieces of candle could be placed against the fuse, so that the tape or wrappings around it would ignite. In either case men would not be subject to such accidents, and by this similar ones would be prevented.

On the 18th day of January, 1892, Hank Shifler and Maurice Cahill, employed by the Granite Mountain Mining Company in the Granite Mountain Mine, met with a very serious accident resulting in the death of Hank Shifler and on the same day at four p. m. Maurice Cahill had his right hand injured so that it had to be amputated below the elbow, and he also received other injuries about the shoulders. These men were at work driving a cross-cut north from the shaft on the seventeen hundred foot level. It was their first shift in this place. After picking down some ground and shoveling back some dirt, Shifler took the scraper and put it into the hole that was drilled down about five inches and said to Cahill they had just as well drill this hole down. Cahill took a drill and put it in the hole and Shifler commenced striking. He struck the drill six or eight times when the hole exploded, driving the drill through Shifler's head, and both were struck by the flying debris. Cahill says that the hole was round and that the ground around it showed no signs that would lead them to think it had been blasted. He also said the explosion was something terrific, and broke considerable ground. He thought there was quite a charge of powder in it.

This accident occurred on Monday, and the last work done in this place was done on Saturday. The two men that worked there on Saturday said they loaded and fired the two holes they drilled and that both of them exploded, as they heard the reports before leaving the station. While it seems reasonable that a miner could tell whether a hole had been blasted or not, and that the rock around it would show some sign, I am of the opinion that the hole was blasted, but that all the powder did not burn, just enough to break the collar of the hole and blow the tamping out. It seems strange that Shifler did not find this out when he put the scraper in the hole, or that Cahill could not tell that the drill he was turning was not in solid ground. He told me he thought they were drilling in solid rock.



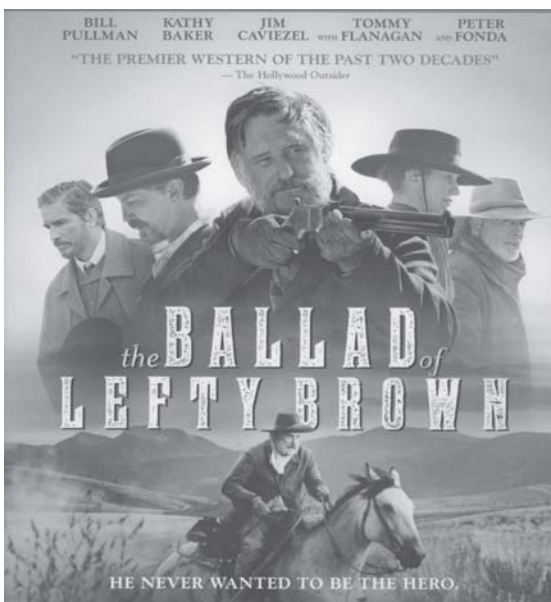


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REVIEW:

## The **BALLAD of LEFTY BROWN**

BLU-RAY



Okay! I know, the contents of this newsletter have to be non-fiction. So what is a review of a western Blu-Ray movie doing in the pages? Bear with me to the final paragraph of this review, and find out why. This movie is NOT your today's western with explosions and train wrecks all over the place and neither does the hero, armed with only a six gun, blow away eight bad guys in a gun fight ala Spaghetti western. It has an old western plot and believable characters in the story. The protagonist is a senior, similar to the role 'Gabby' Hayes used to play to John Wayne in many of their early movies. When his side kick gets murdered, and the oldster gets blamed for it, he vows to find the murderer and clear his name. The movie is filmed in Montana, and set when vigilantism was giving way to law and order.

The 'bad guys' hide-out is the mill at Bannack (the one with the big vats, which many of you will remember visiting a few years back) whilst Virginia City is featured, along with the wide open range land of Montana. The climax of the movie takes place in Bannack, in Skinner's saloon (along with a few tables and chairs added) and in front of and inside the Mead Hotel, after which the crowd lynch the murderer on the gallows Plummer, himself made. If you like old fashioned western movies, this one is a must see.

TERRY HALDEN