



MONTANA  
**GHOST TOWN**  
PRESERVATION SOCIETY

preserving history for the next generation

**VOLUME 51**

**NEWSLETTER**

**SPRING 2021**



**Demersville, Ca 1890's. At it's peak the town had 73 saloons. We will visit the relics of this ghost town, during our upcoming convention in Kalispell.**

**Photo courtesy of the MUSEUM of CENTRAL SCHOOL**

## Montana Ghost Town Quarterly

The **Montana Ghost Town Quarterly** is published four times a year by the Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society, P.O. Box 1861, Bozeman, Montana 59771. e-mail: mtghosttown@yahoo.com www.mgtps.org Copyright © 2021 all rights reserved.

Founded in 1970, the Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society is a 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to educating the public to the benefits of preserving the historic buildings, sites, and artifacts that make up the living history of Montana.

Opinions expressed in the bylined articles are the authors' and do not necessarily represent the views of the M. G. T. P. S.

### SPRING 2021

**President:** Brad O'Grosky  
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**Newsletter Editor:** Terry Halden  
**2021 Convention: Steindorf Family**  
**Directors:** Dan Hill, David Steindorf and Tammy Steindorf  
**Immediate Past President:** Terry Halden

## The Prez Sez

**BRAD O'GROSKY**

Greetings from Bozeman. Its been a year since the start of the lock down and I hope this finds all of you well. Your board has been ZOOMing which has worked very well, especially since Darian and Terry can't get across the border. We officially have three new board members, David and Tammy Steindorf and Dan Hill. The free one-year membership that members can give has over 30 new members so far. It's a great way to get more people interested in MGTPS and preservation. So, if you have someone that might be interested please send us the information. The more interest in preservation the better. And speaking of preservation, Terry has been working with Mineral County on a number of interpretive signs near Superior. Also, we responded to the Army Corp of Engineers request for comments on the Meridian Bridge across the Jefferson River near Willow Creek. We supported the preservation of this historic and unique steel truss bridge instead of having it destroyed. If you hear of any projects for preservation that need support, whether financial or just support please let us know. Remember we are Montana Preservation and whether it's a ghost town, grain elevator, bridge, train station or log cabin, they all need support, so they don't get destroyed.

There are still copies of Reflections I and II available, but they are going. Make sure you get your copies as they are filled with wonderful information on ghost towns and Montana history. And like the free membership, they make great gifts as well.

**BRAD**

## AS I SEE IT

## from the RAMROD'S CHAIR

In today's issue, we conclude the interesting true story of Liver Eating Johnston and the series of photographs and articles of Fort Maginnis. My thanks to Linda Dutcher and Jerry Hanley for the work you both did in producing these interesting articles. Also included is an article from our President Brad O'Grosky about his experiences looking for an Anasazi 'ghost town' in southern Utah. You may ask 'What has this to do with Montana Ghost Towns?' It is the idea of looking for an ancient site and the thrill of discovering it. Something we can all experience in Montana.

Finally, sometime next month the June issue of Wild West magazine will be on the stands and it contains Yours Truly's ghost town article of Mitchell (Spring 2015, Newsletter) and a greatly expanded article on Sioux war chief Gall at Poplar River, (Winter 2018 Newsletter). I hope you will look for it and enjoy the many articles in the magazine.

Stay safe.

**TERRY**

### New Members

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

**Diane Wright**, Cincinnati, OH

**James Cyr**, Superior, MT

**Martha Lauterbach**, Alberton, MT

**Susan McLees**, Superior, MT

## **M.G.T.P.S. Board Meeting**

March 27th 2021

President Brad O'Grosky called the meeting to order at 10:10 am. Board Members attending via ZOOM were Terry Halden, Darian Halden, Tamara Steindorf, David Steindorf, Connie Griffin, Dan Hill, and Mark Hufstetler.

Darian motioned to accept the January 23, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes, Terry seconded the motion, the motion passed.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

For the Fiscal Year of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, as of March 27, 2021, M.G.T.P.S. had an Income of \$11,426.92 and Expenses of \$9,551.79 for a Net Income of \$1,875.13. The Cash Balances are Petty Cash \$60.20; Checking Account \$19,388.66; and Savings Account \$10,427.66.

Terry motioned to accept the Treasurer's Report, Tamara Steindorf seconded the motion, the motion passed.

### **Membership:**

Connie reported that M.G.T.P.S. currently has 221 members plus 31 gift memberships.

### **Correspondence:**

M.G.T.P.S. received several newsletters from other organizations.

### **Old Business:**

Darian mentioned that on the website, there were more requests to donate than there were to encourage people to enroll. She also noted that there was no link on the website to M.G.T.P.S.'s Facebook page.

The Mineral County Historical Society has set up a committee in charge of their sign project. Unfortunately, they were not able to receive the grant they were hoping for, but are going ahead with the signs. They are now planning on 10 signs and have a quote for \$19,000 plus \$2,000 for graphics per sign, for a total of \$39,000. Terry recommended a quote from another company and hopefully they are able to find a lower quote. M.G.T.P.S. is reserving \$5,000 for the project. The signs will be inserted into stands that are on posts driven into rock. The signs will be removed for the winter seasons.

Brad is working with the owners of the IM Store in Pony, MT to fill out M.G.T.P.S.'s grant application. He has not heard back from them.

The M.G.T.P.S. sign for the Morris State Bank has not been installed yet.

### **New Business:**

The Steindorf's are emailing Terry a small article for the Spring Newsletter. The article will have a general plan for the 2021 Kalispell convention. They will have an itinerary ready for the Summer newsletter. The Friday night of the convention will have a talk about Demersville. The meeting room for the talk has a bar that was removed from a bar/saloon in Demersville. It is one of a few surviving items from the town. Tamara is considering a silent auction. Members can donate their old historical books they no longer want for the auction. David mentioned a possible stop on Sunday for convention attendees that are on their way home through the Mission Valley. M.G.T.P.S. has donated money to help preserve Fort Connah buildings. It would be interesting to see the results of the donation.

Dan Hill, Tamara & David Steindorf have agreed to join the M.G.T.P.S. board. Darian motioned to accept the new board members, Terry seconded the motion, the motion passed.

Lee Whitsel is looking into the White Sulphur Springs area for the 2022 Annual Convention.

David Mirisch approached the board about setting up fundraising events. It is more than the board wants to take on at this time.

Darian motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:57 am, the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted

**Connie Griffin**

**Secretary/Treasurer**



# DESTINED FOR NOTORIETY JOHN "LIVER-EATING" JOHNSTON

## Part 2

by **LINDA DUTCHER**

Johnston's career in law enforcement began in late 1881 when the Custer Co. Commissioners appointed him justice of the peace. Johnston was elected to the position of Custer Co. Deputy Sheriff November 11, 1882, six weeks after Deputy H. M "Muggins" Taylor was killed at Coulson while arresting an abusive husband. It is widely recounted that Johnston's peace keeping was unorthodox. He did not rely on guns and did not send prisoners to Miles City, the county seat. In justifying that to his boss he is reported to have said, "Well you see Tom [Irvine], the boys get into a scrap once in a while, but I just take two of them and bump their heads together, and that settles it. There ain't no use arrestin' 'em." He was not re-elected in 1884.

At 60 he became a bit of a public figure when he joined Hardwick's short-lived *Great Rocky Mountain Show* featuring Curly, Custer's Crow Scout, and Calamity Jane. As a result, Johnston's name becoming quite well known. According to the Livingston paper of August 16, 1884, the show folded in Chicago after appearances in Wisconsin and Minnesota and circus members "were forced to sell their ponies in order to get back to Montana."

UNION BASE-BALL PARK,  
Thirty-ninth and State-sts.  
Friday, July 18, 19, and 20,  
**GREAT ROCKY MOUNTAIN SHOW,**  
Afternoon and Evening, except Saturday Evening.  
Performance rain or shine.  
**CURLY,**  
The Survivor of the Custer Massacre,  
HARDWICK, THE GREAT INDIAN FIGHTER,  
BUFFALOS AND BUCKING HORSES.  
30 Noted Cowboys and Scouts. The most realistic  
performance on earth.  
Lassoing and Riding Wild Steers and Elks.  
25 { **ADMISSION** } 50  
CENTS { GATES OPEN 1 AND 7 P. M. } CENTS

**An ad for the final performances of the Great Rocky Mountain Show from the Chicago Tribune, July 17, 1884. Whilst Buffalo Bill was promoting Sitting Bull and the Lakotas, Hardwick had Curly and a cast of Crow Indians. Of course Hardwick was not as well known as Cody, and when he got to Chicago, his cowboys (and more than likely Calamity Jane and Liver Eating as well) went on a 'Shoot em up drinking spree' got arrested, heavily fined and were then told by Hardwick that there was not enough money to pay them so they all quit. EDITOR**

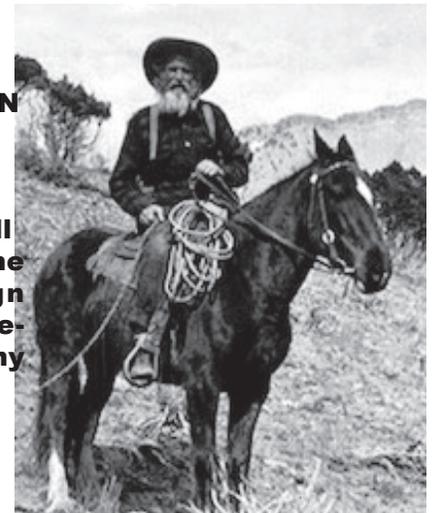
Johnston collected a military pension of \$4 per month beginning in 1884 which increased gradually to \$12 by petitioning in 1889, 1890, and 1895. He was increasingly dealing with pain from rheumatism and leg and shoulder wounds but remained active.

In 1885 he gave his proposal to the *Billings Gazette* to stop Piegan thefts saying, "Really the only way to make a Piegan quit horse stealing is the kill him. That's my plan." That fall he was to accompany Vic Smith on a Wyoming hunting trip for Marquis and Madam de More, but "mountain fever" made that impossible. No longer a resident of Billings, he came to town with famous Indian sign reader Uncle Billy Hamilton in 1887 when there was a threat of renegade Crow raids on the community.

**WILLIAM T. HAMILTON  
1822 - 1908**

**Came to Montana in 1848 with trapper Bill Williams. He became an expert in sign language and therefore could talk to any and all Indian Tribes.**

**Photo: INTERNET**



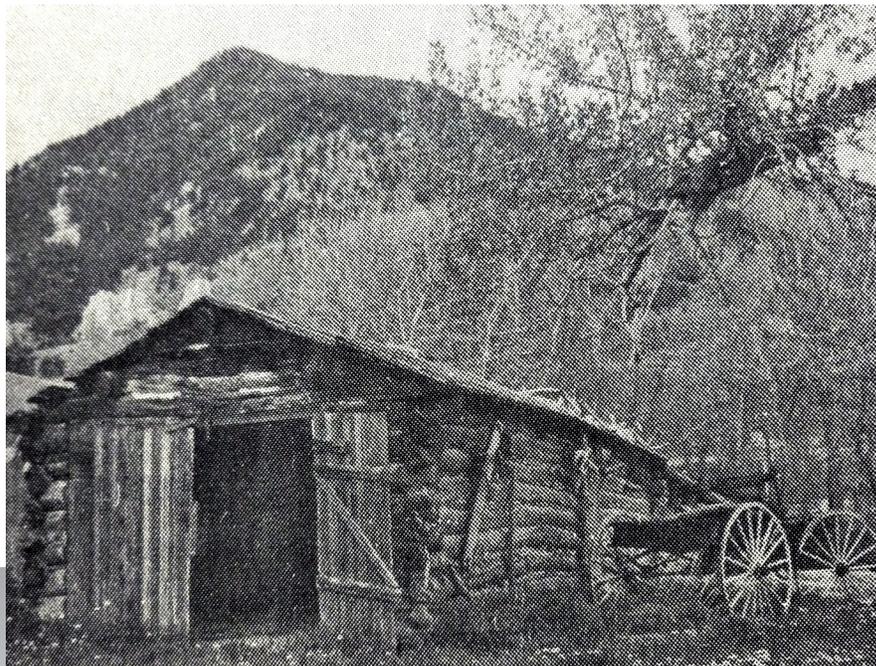
Afterwards, he was living on an island in the Yellowstone where he tried raising cabbages. Realizing a disappointing return of three cents a pound he declared, "I'll go build me a cabin in the mountains where I can kill all I want to eat, and I'll never work again," and he headed south to the Beartooth Mountains.

His cabin still exists despite having been moved twice and being restored in 2003. Its original site was on 160 acres he homesteaded 3 miles south of Red Lodge along Rock Creek. Exactly when he built his cabin is not known, but recollections compiled by local historian Harry J. Owens while writing "*Red Lodge Saga of a Western Area*", and public records of Park County/Carbon County provide clues. One pioneer suggested Johnston was residing somewhere in the

area in 1887. He recalled, "Our only neighbor, Liver-Eating Johnston, was a recluse and avoided close association with his neighbors." Friends who had visited swore in affidavits that the cabin site was well-developed in 1894 with a garden, potato patch, and hay and water for stock. Winter 1896, he was living in town and offered his cabin to a newly arrived family from Council Bluffs, where the mother and aunt of the narrator were born. Johnston received the patent in 1897. He sold the property to Mary Savage May 1899 for \$300.

**RIGHT: Johnston's cabin at original location**

**BELOW: As it is today Author's photos**



Affectionately called "Dad", Johnston anecdotes are repeated to this day. He gave nickels away to the youngsters saying, "Kid, don't spend that for anything but licorice." Although some parents threatened boys with their livers being cut out and eaten by Johnston if they did not behave

In the late 1890's, his health deteriorated further, now including partial loss of hearing. In 1897, the county commissioners agreed to provide a ticket and other expenses to the soldier's home in Columbia Falls, but nothing came of the plan. With his last pension request in 1899, a physician diagnosed, "Increasing disability from said wound [from Civil War] which produces soreness of the bone and breaking out [inflamed skin lesions on his head]....and withering away of said arm disabling him for performance of manual labor. A progressive spinal scoliosis causes loss of power in limbs to the extent. that he is unable to arise or lie down and requires the aid of attendant day and night. Also, arterial-sclerosis and disease of the heart and swelling of extremities." The commissioners in "caring for Dad Johnston", approved the withdrawal of \$250 from the county poor fund. Friends sent him tearfully off by train with an attendant to the National Soldiers Home in Los Angeles December 9, 1899. He died a month later, January 21, 1900. Although the *Democrat* declared he wanted to be buried at Red Lodge, he remained in the Veterans National Cemetery in west Los Angeles.

He was a logical choice of law enforcement for the new and growing coal town of Red Lodge. He was appointed the first constable in 1888 and appears on several court dockets for the next seven years. He continued his unique style of policing, having been seen slapping a "Finlander for bothering a sporting woman near a Chinese laundry" and banging the heads together of "two little old Scotch coal miners, drunk and fighting on the floor." A local paper referred to him in 1893 as "the efficient constable", reporting that he was at the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone serving official documents. He saved a murderer from lynching by hurrying him out of town for the night before taking him away to the county seat in Livingston. One day he greeted Buffalo Bill Cody stepping from the stagecoach in fancy dress. "Liver-Eating" reportedly said, "Buffalo Bill, the famous Indian fighter. The only Indian you ever put your hands on was a squaw!" Cody then offered to buy him a drink and the two headed to the nearest watering hole. Johnston's career ended with the appointment of a sheriff in 1895 when Carbon County was established. He celebrated his retirement at age 71 with a trip to Tombstone, Arizona.

John “Liver-Eating” Johnston is now practically a household name, but real celebrity status did not begin until almost 6 decades later with the 1958 “historical fiction” by Raymond Thorp and Robert Bunker. ‘*Crow Killer the Saga of Liver-Eating Johnson*’ became a basis of the 1970’s box-office hit, ‘*Jeremiah Johnson*’, starring Robert Redford. Director Sidney Pollack was quoted as saying, “We wanted him to be an allegorical character, a symbol of all mountain men.” The public would have been further confused about the true facts if the movie had included the technically difficult liver-eating sequence written into the original script.

The movie refreshed the interest of 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher Tri Robinson whose master’s thesis topic had been Johnston and his role in opening the west. After a week of study spring of 1973, 25 students at Park View School in Lancaster, California were inspired to form the *Committee for Reburial of Liver-Eating Johnson*. They begin a letter writing campaign aimed at digging up Johnston’s bones from the noisy cemetery along the San Diego Freeway and sending them back to somewhere in the land he had once roamed. An offer came from *Old Trail Town* at Cody, Wyoming, a collection of historic buildings from the Bighorn Basin moved there by Bob Edgar that can be explored for an entrance fee. More challenging than raising \$1,000 to cover the exhumation and transportation costs was getting the approval of the Veterans Administration. Government internments are normally considered final unless a next of kin authorizes removal. None came forward. In an unprecedented decision, the *Committee* was declared next of kin, giving them legal authority. No one found descendants of Johnston’s last sister, Mrs. Matilda Tillman who died in Rochester, N.Y. 1923. Edgar then pledged the necessary financial support.

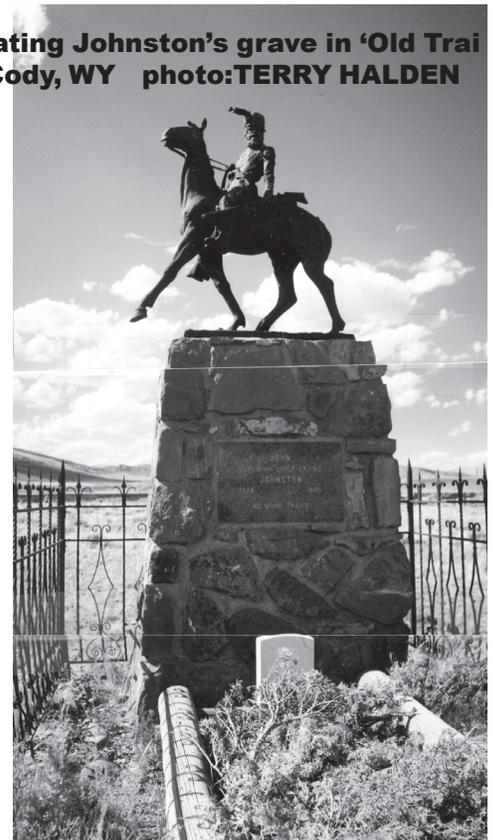
In anticipation of a media circus, the cemetery had erected a canopy over the grave. There must have been some disappointment with the remains: “small pieces of the Liver-Eaters coffin, a thighbone (some reports state that there were two thighbones), a few of Johnston’s teeth, a few metal buttons and rusted casket handles.” Robinson arranged for a convoy to the L. A. airport and Western Airlines which had offered to transport the new pine coffin to Casper

At the reburial ceremony June 8, 1974 in *Trail Town*, newspapers estimated the crowd numbered 1,200. Emotional atmospherics were created by U. S. Cavalry reenactors, an American Legion Honor Guard, mountain men reenactors who fired a salute with their antique arms, and a bugler playing the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* and *Taps*. Robert Redford was the chief pallbearer and eulogist. He has been credited for heaping praise on the Park View students, having “emphatically, informed the Warner Brothers’ publicity agent” that the focus belonged on them and not his appearance. Warner Brothers claimed it was a coincidence that they were still heavily promoting the movie after its debut late December 1972 while the students were making their plans, and that the reburial notoriety was simply a “fluky publicity break.” In 1974/75 the reissue of *Jeremiah Johnson* made 14 million dollars,

5.6 million more than its first year through 1973. Its total gross so far is estimated at 70 million

Red Lodge citizens had made no attempt to secure their former constable. In fact, in March 1974 a local newspaper reporter wrote, “the entire project borders on making a hero out of someone who was just an Indian fighter, and apparently the idea hasn’t been that well received in Red Lodge. There’s no doubt he was a colorful figure in American history, but I think there are still mixed feelings here where so many Indians still live.” Congressional Representative John Melcher felt differently and asked the Director of National Cemeteries to stop the exhumation. He failed to convince them and the exhumation went ahead as scheduled. One week after the reburial, a Red Lodge organization named *Montana Friends of John J. Johnston* filed a petition against the Veterans Administration seeking removal of the remains to Red Lodge. Six months later the Judge ruled the case was “without merit” and ordered dismissal. The committee was philosophical expressing, “there are still many opportunities for increasing historical awareness in the Red Lodge area.” Just like William Cody’s grave near Denver, Johnston’s was sealed with cement poured over the coffin to prevent body snatching. “Liver-Eating” Johnston, who had an aversion in life to “Buffalo Bill”, has ended up in eternity in the town that personifies a man he thought an imposter.

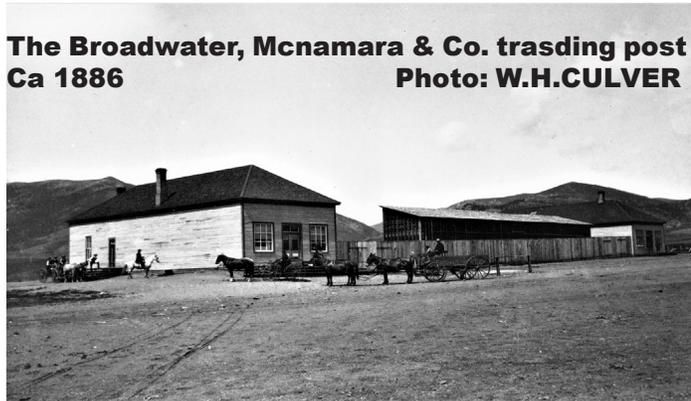
**Liver-eating Johnston’s grave in ‘Old Trail Town’ Cody, WY photo:TERRY HALDEN**



# FORT MAGINNIS

(Continued from last newsletter)

by **JERRY HANLEY**



**The Broadwater, McNamara & Co. trading post  
Ca 1886  
Photo: W.H.CULVER**

The view above looks southwest with Collar Peak appearing on the right and Crystal (aka Florence) Peak hidden behind the roof peak left of center. Collar Gulch is the low point seen behind the buildings in center.

The sutler's, or trader's post, was located at the northwest end of the grounds and near the junctions of the Rocky Point, Junction City, and Maiden-Lewistown-Ft Benton roads. The original store burned in 1883 and was rebuilt that same year. The facilities consisted of a main store 30 X 85 feet; warehouse 25 X 85 feet; granary 16 X 100 feet; and, a private residence. The trader also provided a house used as a club room for officers. A restaurant was located a few hundred feet opposite of this scene.

The placing of this photo at the end of my story seems appropriate – caring and grooming before putting the article to rest.

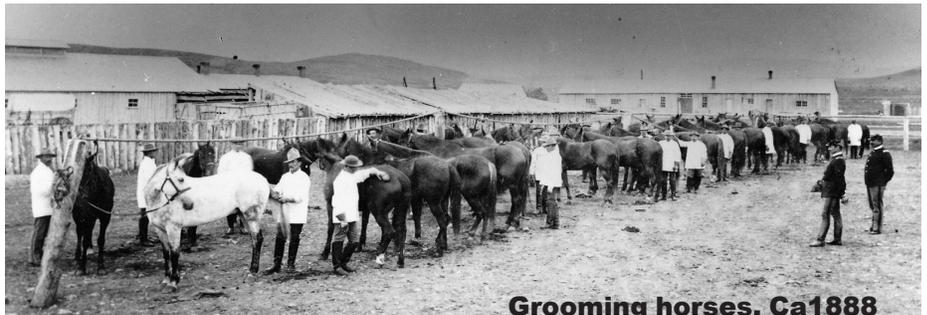
The photo most certainly seems to have been taken within the U-shaped building appearing near the southeast end of the map, as number 3 (Quartermasters' stables).

It appears there are 40 to 50 horses tethered in a face-to-face manner. It also appears that each trooper, in his white smock, is tasked with grooming multiple horses. Two officers are observing the activity. It is obvious that horses and their human counterpart played a big role in everyday life at the post. Fort Maginnis, along with nearby Maginnis Mountain, and the Maginnis Mine at Maiden (now owned by your writer) were named to honor Martin Maginnis. Additionally, what would soon become Fords Creek and Collar Creek (see map) were originally named Maginnis Creek and its forks.

The Fort Maginnis site was designated a Montana state monument nearly 90 years. Sadly, it has never enjoyed any benefits from such an honorary position. Over the past 50 or so years, various groups and individuals have tried to see the site recognized and maintained in a manner deserving of its role in shaping Montana history. Unfortunately, years of bureaucratic complications and missteps negated most of those efforts. The site is managed by the Lewistown area Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

Besides serving the fort, the store offered area settlers a large variety of goods including furniture, stoves, wagons and farm machinery. Four to five clerks were kept busy in the store. The traders also managed horse trading and horse breeding at the fort and supplied hay under contract. At one point, the hay contract called for over 1,000 tons of hay at \$8.47 per ton (about \$225 per ton in 2019 dollars). Broadwater also had the tradership at Forts Assiniboine, Keogh, and Custer and summer camps on the Missouri River at Coal Banks and just upriver from Rocky Point.

Fort Maginnis closed in 1890, and Broadwater & McNamara relocated their stock to the small settlement of Canyon (aka Spotted Horse) in Maiden Canyon, one mile southeast of Maiden and just below the Spotted Horse Mine. Here, they rented a building and operated for a few years. When David Hilger, acting for the state (the military reservation and its contents were transferred to state), held the final auction at Fort Maginnis in 1898 the Broadwater & McNamara facilities were not included as they were leased to Ernest Kies. This writer does not know when or what became of those buildings.



**Grooming horses, Ca1888  
Photo: W. H.Culver**

Maginnis, a major in the Civil War, came to Montana Territory in 1866 and engaged in mining and other businesses. In 1872 he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and served from 1873 to 1885 as Delegate representing Montana Territory. In this position Maginnis was instrumental in locating Fort Maginnis right where his longtime friends and associates wanted it – adjacent to their large DHS open range cattle spread headed by Granville Stuart. Maginnis died in California in 1919 and is buried in Helena, Montana.

**END**

# In Search of a 12<sup>th</sup> Century Ghost Town

*by Brad O’Grosky*

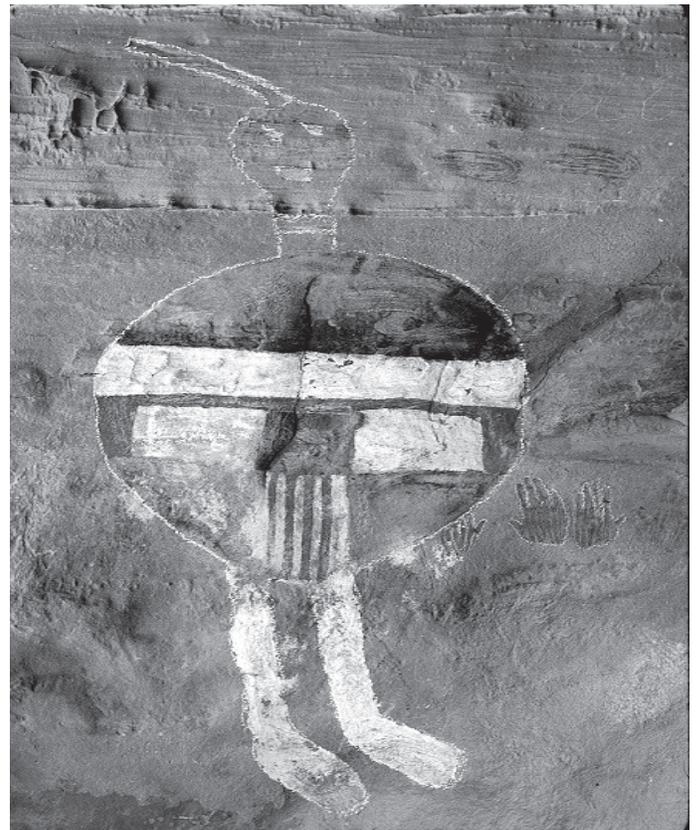
I didn’t know it at the time, but my quest for a 12<sup>th</sup> century ghost town began when I was about 10 years old, and my parents took me to see Mesa Verde in Colorado. The spectacular cliff dwellings were a fascination to me and created a desire to learn and see more of them. But time passed and my childhood dreams were put on hold until I retired 45 years later. Then I learned of volunteer service projects that involved archaeology in the Southwest. Participating on these projects, including trail maintenance, and recording archaeological sites, only increased my thirst. After going on two projects, Dee said she would like to participate as well, so we started our volunteer career. We became volunteer rangers for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) at Grand Gulch Primitive Area in southeast Utah, which is now in the Bears Ears National Monument. These were great opportunities to explore the many canyons that were rich in cliff dwellings, rock art, and other sites as well. The job also included closing wood cutting roads, picking up trash, issuing permits, cleaning toilets and visiting remote sites.

On one of our days off, we were having lunch in the small town of Bluff, Utah when we met the archaeologist from Canyon de Chelly (pron. “shay”), a National Monument in Arizona on the Navajo reservation. He said he needed volunteers to help record over a thousand sites. This was an exciting prospect and 6 months later we spent 7 weeks camped in Canyon del Muerto, which is the north branch of de Chelly. We returned 6 or more times recording Anasazi rock art and structures. This was the opportunity of a lifetime as Anglos were not allowed to enter the sites or camp in the canyons because it was on reservation land.

Between Grand Gulch, Canyon del Muerto and other projects in the Santa Fe National Forest, we were busy finding new sites and having a great time. During this time while at Grand Gulch, the BLM built a new office for the river rangers on the San Juan River near Bluff but didn’t want to leave it unoccupied during the winter. Here was our chance for having a winter home where it was much warmer and sunnier than our Madison, Wisconsin home!

When we were in our new winter home, we asked the BLM archaeologist if there were any projects we could help with. His excited response was that he wanted to have the Butler Wash area considered as a National Historic District but needed documentation to justify it. He asked us to explore and identify all the sites we could find in an 18-mile stretch along the east side of Comb Ridge, where there are about 55 “finger” canyons and many smaller side canyons. (A finger canyon is a small canyon, usually with no water or seasonal water; these are only ½ to ¾ of a mile long.) We thought this was a great opportunity and so accepted the challenge.

Comb Ridge is a 100-mile-long uplift with 800-foot vertical cliffs on the west and finger canyons sloping down on the east. It got its name because it resembles the comb of a rooster, with sharp ups and downs. There are many different sites in this area including pictographs, petroglyphs, lithic scatters, cliff dwellings, pit houses and terrace structures. Pictographs are paintings and handprints on solid surfaces, often in white, but sometimes in several different colors. Petroglyphs are pecked, often on patinated surfaces. Also known as desert varnish, patination comes from long exposure to the elements, resulting in a dark, sometimes very dark, surface, like a blackboard. Both types of rock art have a wide variety of subjects ranging from handprints, spirals, zoomorphism (animals), anthropomorphs (humans), and other fantastical features that could only be identified by their creators. The style of the anthropomorph



**Example of a PICTOGRAPH**

**All Photos:AUTHOR**

So began our 5-month long adventure (split over 2 years) documenting evidence of the Anasazi in Butler Wash. The Anasazi people (also known as Ancestral Puebloans) are predecessors of the Hopi and other modern pueblo Indians. There were two distinct sub-groups within the Anasazi culture. Basket Makers (BM) lived from about 200 A.D. to about 750 A.D., and the Pueblos (P) from 750 A.D. to about 1300 A.D.



### **An example of a PETROGLYPH.**

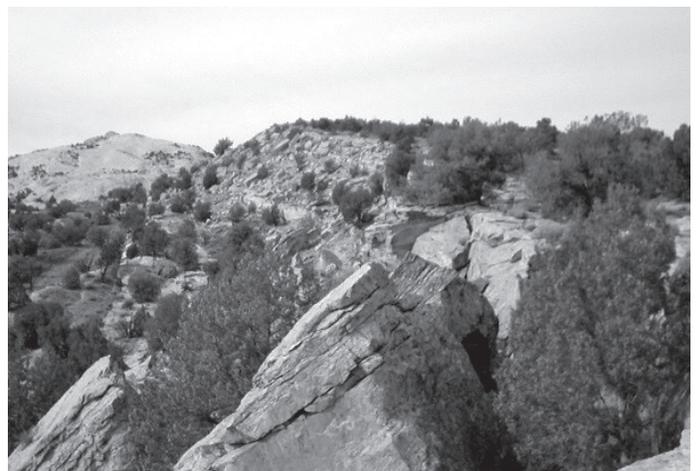
The BMs lived in pit houses using a depression in the ground with wood and mud for walls and roofs, and sometimes occupied north facing caves. The later Ps used stones, either rough or shaped to construct their homes like the cliff dwellings one is used to seeing, and always used south facing caves.

Obviously, the north facing caves were cold in the winter and hot in the summer, while the south facing ones were warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Earlier P's built small homes on the flat terraces, often in a semi-circular design with the housing on the north and a plaza and/or kiva on the south.

The BMs had rounded skulls like we do, but the Ps had the back of their skulls flattened from being strapped onto cradle boards which removed the roundness. The BMs used an atlatl for hunting or defense which was a long stick that threw a dart as an extension of the arm. These darts (or points) were fairly large whereas the Ps used bow and arrows with smaller points. The BMs had woven baskets and sandals which were works of art. Some of the baskets were so tightly woven they could be used to carry water. The Ps developed pottery which was better for carrying water as well as cooking. Shards of their beautiful pottery can still be found littering the ground. The rock art of the BMs often featured a human figure with a trapezoidal body and sometimes an alien appearing head or a duck head. The Ps used more of stick figure design with rectangular body which is another way of determining age. Kivas, below ground circular structures for ceremonial purposes were developed by the Ps. Later Ps developed great houses which were large circular stone structures built in the open instead of in caves. These were likely either built by or influenced by the Chacoan culture from Chaco Canyon in northwest New Mexico. This division between the two Anasazi cultures helped us to determine and document what we were finding.

During the 5 months we found and documented about 250 sites ranging from lithic scatters to rock art to structures and even villages. But in these, one find stood out due to its size and number of features. This site was located on the rim of a small canyon with part of it continuing down the face of a cliff onto a terrace. Starting at the top of the canyon was a stone tower. There are other towers in the area, but this was unusual since it was associated with housing structures. Moving down the rim of the canyon were another 6 stone living structures in a line below the tower. Moving down the cliff face were more structures as well as a kiva. Near the kiva on the cliff face was rock art. Going up the cliff face were carved hand and toe holds, known as Moki steps. Growing in this area was a scrubby looking thorn bush named Wolfberry which, in Butler Wash, usually grows in areas of human occupation. Finally, there was a midden, which was the trash dump for ash, broken pots, lithic debris and corpses. (Thankfully, no corpses at this site.) Many times the bodies were buried with significant pieces unique to the person. These may be blankets made of rabbit fur and turkey feathers, pottery, points, or baskets, none of which were present here. At this midden we also found a very old shovel, not Anasazi, left by a present-day pot hunter. A midden is a place where treasures can be found, although pothunting is illegal on Federal land. But it was only 30 miles from Blanding, Utah, the pothunting capital of the United States.

At last, here was our 12<sup>th</sup> century ghost town! It was unique due to its size, but also because it was previously unknown to both the BLM archaeologist and a prominent local archaeologist. It was felt to be particularly important due to its location. Just 2 miles on the west side of Comb Ridge was a Chacoan Great House with a Chacoan road pointing right for this site. Although they were never able to find evidence of the road near the site, they believed one had existed. These roads were about 20 to 30 feet wide and used for human traffic without horses, mules or wheeled carts, and were sometimes considered ceremonial. They were just straight roads leading from one Great House to another. In the end, because we found this site it was officially named the O'Grosky site by the archaeologists.



**The type of country Brad & Dee were in**



**ABOVE: O'Grosky tower**



Although the Anasazi left no written language or records, the archaeologists believe the site was built and occupied from about 1150 to 1275. But like a town that becomes a ghost town when the gold or silver runs out and the mine closes, there was a 25-year drought from 1250 to 1275 which drove the Anasazi to abandon the entire area. Some think the Chacoan culture may have also contributed to this migration as well, but without records we will never be certain. Either way, it has survived for nearly 800 years. One can only wish that the Montana ghost towns will last that long!

We have had many adventures in this area of southeast Utah, but there was one more that didn't involve archaeology. We were just climbing out of a canyon to finish a backpacking trip when we discovered we were in the midst of the largest manhunt in the West up to that time. Three men had killed a deputy sheriff near Cortez, Colorado and were cornered near Bluff. About 150 law enforcement from all branches of the government had converged in an attempt to capture the criminals. That day, one died of a gunshot, but the other two escaped. If you want to know the rest of the story, read [Dead Run](#) by Dan Schultz.



**Three photos ABOVE: 'O'Groskyville'**

# CONVENTION '21, KALISPELL, SEPTEMBER 10-12, 2021

A message from our hosts, Tammy and David Steindorf

## Greetings to MGTPS members:

Tam and I are starting to reconnect with all the people that we had lined up to help put on the annual convention in Kalispell last year. Of course we had to cancel last year because of Covid-19. So we hit pause on all the arrangements made by this time last year. What that means is that we as members are going to be expecting a fantastic convention to make up for last year, right? So, here is a short preview.

It's my understanding that last years annual meeting would have been MGTPS's 50th, so that now moves to this year. Kalispell is the last large population area for our group to ever have visited. The area is also one of the last frontiers of Montana to be settled. Maybe this is The Last Best Place in Montana. We will have the opportunity to find out during this years annual convention September 10 thru the 12th.

Friday the 10th we will have the ability to meet at the finest museum in Northwestern Montana. The museum is housed in the old 3 story Central School(1894). It has conference rooms on the 3rd floor (yes, it has an elevator) where we will meet after touring the museum. We plan on a taco bar, drinks and a talk on the history of Demersville and some of the other small ghost towns in the area by Paul Strong, author of "Before Kalispell". Demersville was a steamboat port "city" on the Flathead River north of Flathead Lake."

On Saturday morning we will tour the Conrad Mansion and yet to be determined sites. After lunch we will board a bus to visit the old Demersville town site and cemetery. From there visiting other historical sites in the area before returning to our motel for the evening activities. This will include the annual meeting, a short historical talk, a wonderful catered meal by the Hilton hotel staff, and a musical presentation to top off the evening.

On Sunday we have the opportunity to revisit Fort Connah. In 2010 the MGTPS met in Polson for it's annual convention. One of the places we visited was Fort Connah, an old Hudson's Bay Trading Post(1847-1871). On site is one of the original buildings built in 1847, making it the oldest wooden building still standing in Montana. The Fort Connah Restoration Society has been working to add three more buildings to the site to replicate what would have been there in the 1850's. The MGTPS donated \$2,500 to this cause in 2010. The board members decided revisiting this site to see the improvements and for a lunch stop would be a great travel break for those heading home going south on Sunday.

Looking forward to seeing you all in September. David and Tam Steindorf

## **HOST HOTEL:**

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**KALISPELL MT 59901**

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30 Rooms have been set aside at the following daily rate:

Standard King, Double Queen,.....\$79.00 (+tax)

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**We suggest you book your accommodation as early as possible.**



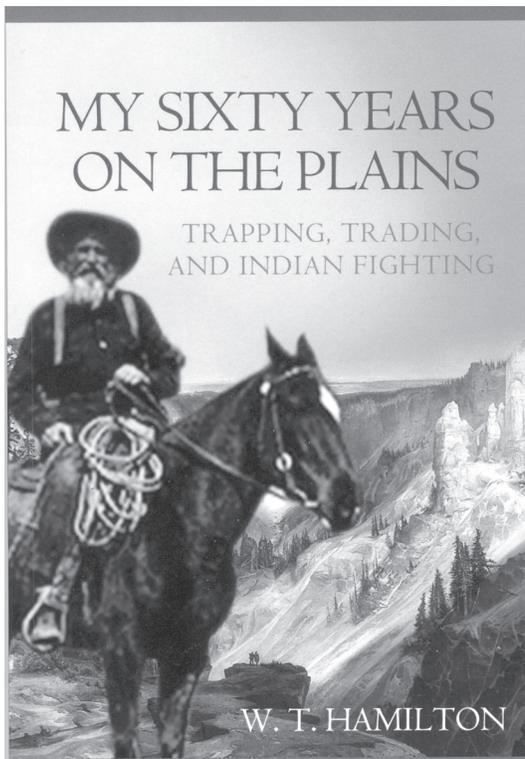
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## REVIEW:

### ‘MY SIXTY YEARS on the PLAINS’

by Willam T. Hamilton



A forgotten pioneer of Montana, ‘Uncle Billy’ Hamilton, died in 1908, but luckily in 1905 with the help of editor E.T Sieber, he published his early exploits in a book, illustrated by an unknown artist, Charlie Russell. In 2019 the book minus the illustrations because of copywrite restrictions, was reprinted by Amazon.

Born in Scotland in 1822, at age 2 he came to the States and his parents eventually settled in St. Louis. He received five years education and at age 20, as he put it ‘quite sickly’ his father bankrolled half a trapping outfit, organized by mountain man Bill Williams, on the condition they take his son, who needed a change of climate. Hamilton took to the new occupation with a vengeance, quickly earning the older trapper’s acceptance as he learned Indian sign language, becoming more adapt at it than they.

The book details the everyday routine of trapping, trading, mingling with friendly Indian tribes, and fighting those, not so friendly. He travelled to the west coast and back, and after 20 years became a guide for the U.S. cavalry in the Sioux Indian wars, settling down afterwards in Montana. Unfortunately, his eventual living in Montana is only mentioned in the final chapter of the book, so other than what local newspapers reported, little is known of the last thirty odd years of his life, spent in the Yellowstone River area.

An excellent book on early day trapper life.

**Terry Halden**