

MONTANA'S HILLS FULL of GHOST TOWNS

Over the summer months, I have been busy re-doing the People, Places and event files at the Pioneer Museum. One file that I have worked and re-worked, is of Towns and Historic Mines. A great deal of this information in this report came from the Advertising Office, Montana Highway Commission, Helena and this information was donated to the museum.

I will not cover all of them in this article but just a few and if you are interested in others, they are in the file under Ghost Towns.

ALDER- On State Highway 34 at the lower end of a fabulous gulch. Two of Plummer's gang of Road Agents, Red Yager and G.W. Brown were hanged at Laurin near here on January 4, 1864. Here begin tailings left by dredges which Harvard University once operated to obtain several million in gold.

ALTA MINE- Located near the ghost camp of Wickes and Corbin between Butte and Helena.

Atlantic Cabel Mine- Near Georgetown Lake (U.S. 10A) Mill machinery was imported from Swansea, Wales and freighted in from Corinne, Utah to operate this mine.

Bannack- Montana's first gold strike on Grasshopper Creek in July 1862, resulted in this wild and roaring camp which became Montana's territorial capital.

Buffalo Gulch- Now Centerville, a suburb of Butte. In the middle '60's this was an off-shoot of the placer diggings along nearby Silver Bow Creek.

Beartown- This ghost town yielded a cool million in gold and silver in 1866, housed the notorious "Beartown Roughts", sought to be the State Capital, then died. Here there is a steep cliff where they say, a Chinaman buried a fortune in a five-pound baking powder can. Hundreds, they say, have sought it, but it's never been found.

Castle- This silver camp was once the residence of Calamity Jane and her buddies, but after the panic of 1893, it quieted down. Several buildings still stand.

Cable- Near Georgetown Lake. The ground here was so rich that a cigar box of samples assayed \$1,000. Here was found the world's largest nugget, bought by W.A. Clark for \$19,000 and here is the site of the old Atlantic Cable Mine.

Clancy- This village is on U.S. 91 south of Helena. Ore here once was so rich that it was shipped to England to be smelted at a profit.

East Helena- Gold, silverlead, zinc and other metals from Montana and Idaho are shipped to reduction furnaces here. One of Montana's three major operating smelters.

Elkhorn- On U.S. 91 this camp still has a lot to see. It started in 1872. The townsite is more than a mile high. Nearby Elkhorn Peak with its glistening white marble cliffs stretches 9500 feet up into the air.

Garnet- (East of Missoula) Almost 6,000 feet up in the air. Never had a bonanza strike.

Granite- Near Philipsburgh. One of the best of all ghost camps. This was the richest silver mine on earth and it might never have been discovered if a telegram from the East hadn't been delayed. The miner's backers thought the venture hopeless, and ordered an end to operations, but the last blast on the last shift uncovered a bonanza which yielded \$40,000,000.

Jardine- (near Gardiner) Jardine was a company town enjoying periodic booms and suffering through the intervening busts. Each bust however, was but a pause, awaiting a new strike or a new set of investors. The first excitement was in 1865. In 1864 a small stamp mill was built to replace the crude mule-drawn arrastra, but the rich vein ran out in 1886. In 1890 operation resumed and went through 1899. Little activity going on now.

Karst's Camp- Between Bozeman and Yellowstone Park, is one of Montana's unusual mining ventures, an asbestos mine.

Maiden- First camp in the Judith and Mocassin fields which made fortunes for miners drifting out of Alder Gulch.

Marysville- This town is not quite deserted, but it's nothing like the rip-roaring period when Irishman Tommy Cruse's magnificent Drumlummon Mine poured out \$50,000,000.

Philipsburg- Settled in 1866, this is famous silver country. Here was the Hope Mill, first silver mill in Montana, which doubled as a fort when Indians went on the warpath.

Pony- Pony's history is full of strange stories. Gold was first located by a gent known maily by his short stature and his nickname "Pony". The original town about two miles upstream was called "Strawberry".

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