



preserving history for the next generation

Volume 56 **NEWSLETTER** *Summer 2025*



Virginia City, Montana

Photo by Terry Halden

Virginia City in a snowstorm (2004)



MONTANA GHOST TOWN QUARTERLY

The **Montana Ghost Town Quarterly** is published four times a year by the Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society.



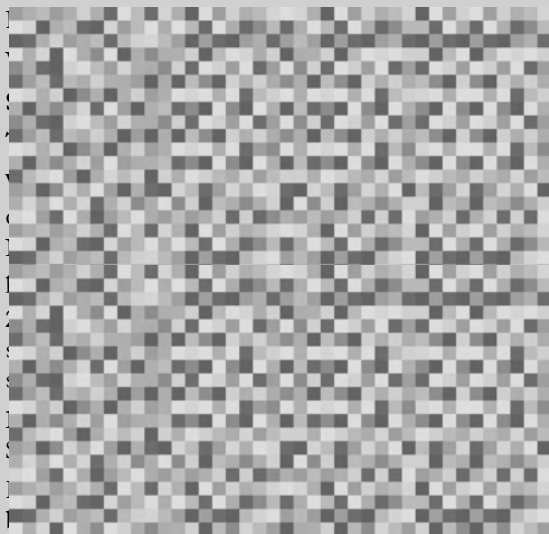
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Founded in 1970, the Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society is a 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to educating the public about the benefits of preserving the historic buildings, sites, and artifacts that make up the living history of Montana.

Opinions expressed in the bylined articles are the authors' and do not necessarily represent the views of the MGTPS.

SPRING 2025



The Prez Sez...

LINDA DUTCHER

On May 16th, the Montana Historical Society presented certificates for 25 properties in 18 counties listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2023 and 2024. One of these was for Ruffatto School in Richland County. Also presented was the *John N. DeHaas Memorial Award*, given from time to time since 2013 to “recognize individuals and organizations whose service and accomplishments go above and beyond and take us further along the historic preservation trail in Montana that John DeHaas began blazing more than 60 years ago.”

Both of these awards are linked to the Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society. Members Claude and Tammi Bidegaray, owners of the property, and Terry Halden were present to accept the Ruffatto School certificate. As featured in the Spring Newsletter, the MGTPS contributed \$5,000 towards the restoration of the roof. John DeHaas, co-founder of the MGTPS in 1971, is “widely recognized as the father of modern historic preservation in Montana, writing and speaking about Montana ghost towns and architecture; photographing and nominating many properties to the National Register.”

Consider participating in the tradition. Write an article for the Newsletter. Join the MGTPS Board. Involve yourself in a preservation project or tell us about one we need to know about.

Join us in Butte September 11th-13th!

Summer is in Full Swing

From the Editor's Chair

Hello there!

Welcome back to the MGTPS Newsletter. We missed you! We've got a jam-packed newsletter in store for you today; there's a lot going on! We start things off strong with an article written by past editor and current director, Terry Halden, talking about the history of **Bloody Dick Gulch**—it's “bloody” fascinating! Later we include the Minutes from our May 15th board meeting, as well as a story written by our secretary, Rita Reichman, reflecting back on our 2023 convention.

Huge thanks to Rita and Terry for continuing to contribute so much to MGTPS and its newsletter!

And speaking of conventions!! You'll find some **important information regarding this year's convention** in this newsletter, so be sure to read on and read carefully if you plan on attending (which we sincerely hope you do!).

As always, if you have any questions, comments, concerns, or pieces of history you'd like to share, please feel free to e-mail me (Paige) at paiger_15@yahoo.com.

Thank you so much, and I'll see y'all next time!

NEW MEMBERS

Unfortunately, no new members to report, but be sure to keep spreading the word about MGTPS and Montana ghost towns!

The History of BLOODY DICK GULCH and the Ghost Town of “MONUMENT”

by Terry Halden



“Monument” building (above)

Photo by Terry Halden

“Monument” building housing the hoisting equipment (2010)



How did a stream get the audacious name of Bloody Dick Gulch? According to folklore in the early 1870's, one of the first ranchers in the area was an Englishman whose main vocabulary consisted of the word “bloody.” It was “bloody this,” “bloody that,” “bloody stream,” and since his name was Richard, he became known as “Bloody Dick” and the gulch where he lived became “Bloody Dick.” For some reason the name has not been cleaned up in the last century and a half. In 1877, the Nez Perce Tribe—fleeing Gen. Howard—decided to rest a while on the Big Hole River in southwestern Beaverhead County. On August 9th, an army detachment from Fort Missoula attacked them. Although they were surprised, they fought back and the army retreated. The tribe decided to move as they feared army reinforcement might arrive.

Gathering up their dead, they fled southeast and buried their dead warriors, women, and children in Bloody Dick Gulch, before moving on southeast to what became Yellowstone National Park

Joseph C. Keppler was born in Germany on March 19th, 1844, and at age 14 he came to Galena, Illinois where he apprenticed as a jeweler, a trade he successfully followed his entire life. In 1864, he was in Bannack and built the first log cabin devoted to a jewelry enterprise. His specialty was manufacturing ornaments, earrings, rings, and watches made from the raw dust and nuggets he purchased from local miners.

In the 1870's, he moved his family and business to Glendale where, in 1877, he and some friends purchased the "Onieda" mine in the Bryant Mining District, which provided him with silver for his trade. Sometime in 1880, he either "grubstaked"¹ a prospector on Bloody Dick Gulch, or, as soon as the prospector located what appeared to be a worthwhile claim, he immediately purchased the property and secured a patent on the mine he named "Monument."

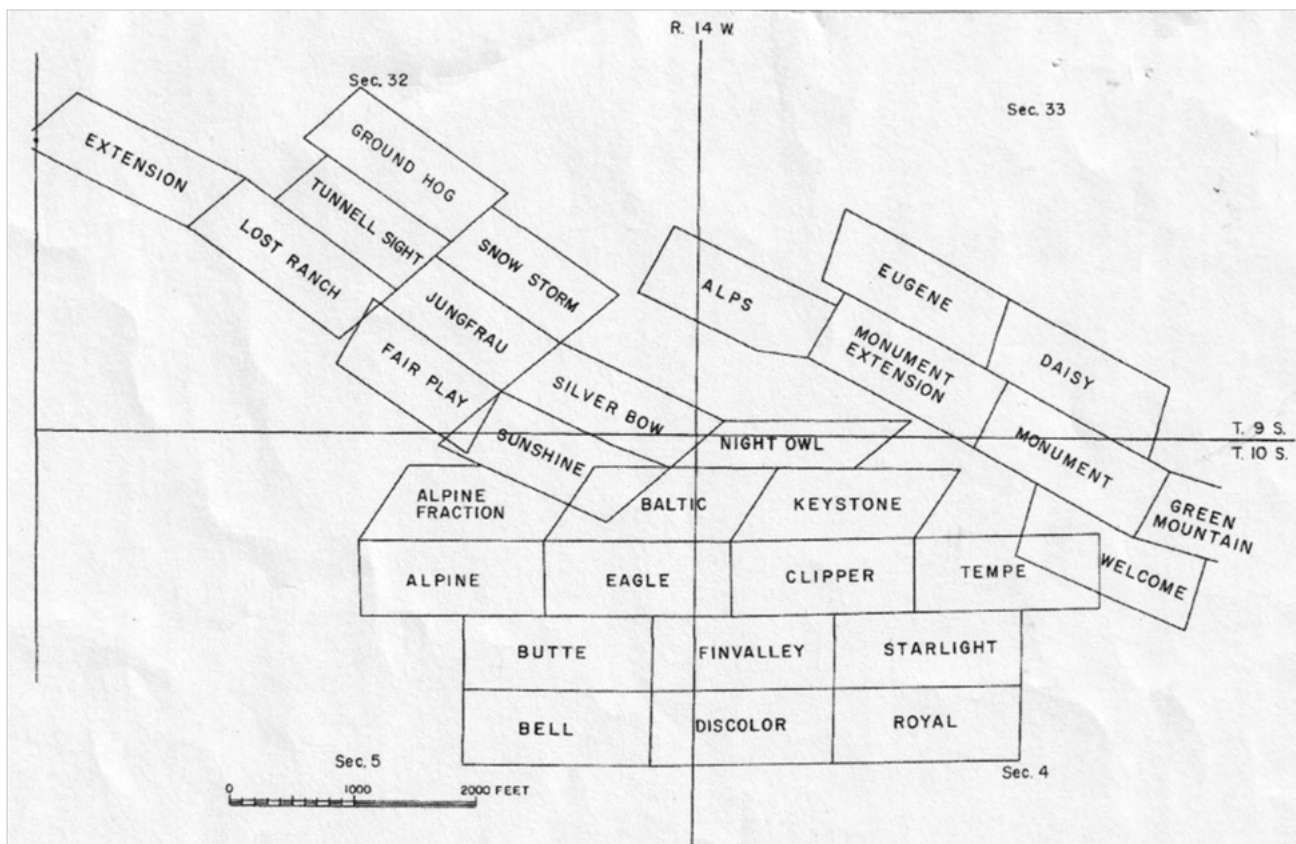
He did this as he was not a miner and by getting a patent on the property, he did not have to worry about the claim being "jumped" because \$100 worth of improvements were not done each year. With the copper in the "Monument" being of low grade, plus the remoteness of the mine, he did not pursue the development of the property.

In the following decade there was little interest in the area. Several ranches were established in the valley of Bloody Dick Gulch and to the south along Horse Prairie. There was some

excitement in September 1889 when a forest fire started in the timber above the gulch, and it spread to the valley below and damaged several of the ranches, totally destroying the ranch buildings and hay fields of Samuel Skelton.

The 1890s produced renewed interest in the mining possibilities of Bloody Dick Gulch. W. D. Humphry located a dozen placer claims in 1893; William Ashworth and H.F. Jackson located a copper mine which they bonded to Butte money men in 1895. In August 1896 it was reported that Harvey Sullivan brought into Dillon a 400-pound piece of ore composed of lead/silver/copper from his claim on Bloody Dick. Mines with the names of "Baltic," "Jung Frau," "Royal," "Starlight," and "Sunshine" came into being, all close to the "Monument" claim of Joseph Keppler.

With all this activity, plus a serviceable road constructed to the area, Keppler himself decided it was time to explore and develop his property.



Map of the claims in the Bloody Dick mining district (above)

Photo by Terry Halden

The seven patented claims of the "Monument" group on the extreme northeast

¹**Grubstake** is a noun and a verb. As a noun, it is defined (according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary) as: "supplies or funds that furnish a mining prospector on promise of a share in his discoveries," or, more generally, as "material assistance (such as a loan) provided for launching an enterprise or for a person in difficult circumstances." As a verb, and in this context, it means "to provide with a grubstake."


By 1902, he had organized a stock company—of which his son Eugene was superintendent—and employed a force of men who were digging a shaft through ore that assayed at \$6.00 in gold and 12% copper per ton.

Before going deeper, hoisting equipment was ordered and would be installed before October of that year. Besides all the neighboring claims, this development produced a new wave of latecomers that started digging potential claims further afield, upstream where gold was discovered. No doubt one of these prospectors, in digging down, unearthed the skull of a Nez Perce native, buried 25 years before. This led to the “windy” story that, in the 1880s, ranch cowboys were tired of peaceful Bannock Indians pilfering the odd steer. They decided to make an example by killing the next thief they caught and burying the unfortunate native, so that they would not be indicted for murdering a “friendly Indian.” This story may have some merit, although over the years it was expanded to involve the “Monument” hole in the ground which the unfortunate native was tossed. Meantime, about three miles from the “Monument,” William Spearan and Joseph Fitzen discovered some silver galena ore, which they mined themselves for four years and, in 1903, were able to ship some ore to smelters.

All this activity resulted in a small town being developed in the valley below the “Monument.” It was composed of a boarding house, a restaurant, a stable, and a store. Not exactly a “city,” although it did have a post office with Samuel B. Howard as postmaster from June 20th, 1907 to November 15th, 1910. Then, it disappeared almost as fast as it emerged. As to where it was exactly located, remains a mystery to this day.

The “Monument” and some of the other nearby mines produced ore until 1909 when they all shut down, as the value of copper decreased and costs increased. With the first World War, however, the need for copper escalated and the “Monument” and others were re-opened.

In 1917, 43 tons of ore were shipped from the “Monument,” which produced 3,208 pounds of copper and 76 ounces of silver. In 1920, the “Monument” shipped 27 tons of ore that produced 7,830 ounces of silver, 759 pounds of copper, and 8,300 pounds of lead.

These were the last production figures for the entire Bloody Dick Mining District because, on December 30th, 1920, Joseph C. Kepler passed away, throwing ownership and decision making of the “Monument” into disarray. Today, the property, consisting of seven patented mines, is still owned by the Monument Copper Mining Company, although the hoist frame has fallen into the shaft and the hoisting equipment in its shed hasn’t worked in over a century. 



“Monument” hoist fallen into the mine shaft (above right)

*Photo by Terry Halden
(2010)*



“Monument” hoisting wheel (above left)

*Photo by Terry Halden
(2010)*



“Monument” boilers (top right)

*Photo by Terry Halden
(2010)*





Elkhorn, MT (above)

Photo by Terry Halden

Gillian Hall, a saloon, (left) and Fraternity Hall (right) (2008)



Hughesville, MT (above)

Photo by Terry Halden

St. Joseph's mill (long since knocked down by BLM) near the ghost town of Hughesville on a foggy day (2006) and also part of our logo!



MONTANA GHOST TOWNS TODAY



Neihart, MT (below)

Photo by Terry Halden

The "Queen of the Hills" mill near the town of Neihart (2004)



Virginia City, MT (below)

Photo by Terry Halden

Virginia City in a snowstorm (2004)





A RIDE THROUGH HISTORY in SEDAN, MT

Story by Rita Reichman

and help from Sedan, MT history accounts

The MGTPS 2023 Convention took us to Sedan, MT. From the GranTree Inn Motel in Bozeman, MT, our Whitehall Trojan school bus took us east out of town down Bridger Canyon Drive, past Kelly Canyon Road, past Bridger Bowl Ski Hill and up and over Battle Ridge on Highway 86 to the little agricultural community of Sedan, MT. Settled in 1885-1886, at the base of the majestic Bridger Mountains, this little bedroom community is about ten miles west of Wilsall, MT. On our bus ride over the Battle Ridge mountain to Sedan, we had the pleasure of listening to Bill Palmer, a native of the Sedan area, (and brother to my husband, Ray Reichman). Bill told many a story about the taming of the old west community of Sedan and the people who ranched and farmed there. He articulated how thriving a little community like Sedan was with a church, school, General Store with groceries, one gas pump station, post office, cemetery, and the main business being the Cheese Factory. Many of the local farmers and ranchers all had dairy cows and sold their milk and cream to the Cheese Factory. In fact, I remember my dad telling me how in the 1920s, my grandfather (George Glueckert) used to haul milk and cream in those five-gallon cans from Bozeman in a horse drawn wagon, over Battle Ridge mountain to Sedan to the Cheese Factory, even in the winter!

Wonder where the name "Sedan" came from? I'm feeling a little nostalgic right now, since the name came to be from my husband and cousin's—Ray Reichman and Tammy Steindorf, respectively—ancestors. The name "Sedan" was suggested by one of the first settlers, Josie (Maddox) Woosley in 1891. After arriving here as homesteaders from Kansas in covered wagons, Josie and her family named the post office after the county seat the Woosleys and Maddoxes left behind. The Woosleys were instrumental in donating the land for the schoolhouse, along with providing the lumber for the building.

Many residents came to Sedan as bachelors or as one family with a household full of children, including ten girls and four boys! This was the Beebe family, whose third oldest daughter happens to be the mother of Bill Palmer and my husband, Ray Reichman. The Beebes milked cows, as they had many hands to do such a job. Most of their help came from the girls, as three of their boys were under five years old. The Beebes moving to Sedan was a highlight to the community, as those bachelors had quite the selection of future wives. Most of the older girls married local boys and stayed in the community for quite some time. It certainly made those Saturday night dances worthwhile to go to!

Bill described how the Cheese Factory was a two-story building, built by the community in 1914. Above the Cheese Factory, on the second story, was the lodge hall that served as the community center. Every Saturday night, the community held a dance in that lodge hall. Many people from Sedan played different instruments for the dances. Juanita Francis played the piano until Eleanor Amundson took over, Lyle Reichman



Sedan Cheese Factory, 1918 (above)

Sedan, MT

Photo from SedanMontana.net, from Adrian

*Inabnit Photo Collection**



(Ray Reichman's dad) played the guitar, Art Fastje played the saxophone, and drums were played by Swede Palmer, later played by Norm Amundson. I hear tell those dances were quite lively and the highlight of the week. People even brought all their children, and babies, too! Some children even fell asleep there before the night of dancing ended. Unfortunately, the Cheese Factory shut down in 1940. Eventually, it was torn down, along with the General Store, gas station, and post office.

The Sedan school survived; in fact, the existing Sedan Schoolhouse is the third one that has served this community. The first one in 1899, the second in 1906 (which became the teacherage in 1930), and the third schoolhouse in 1921, which operated until 1967, educating over 250 children throughout the years. This schoolhouse is now the Sedan Community Center. Bonnie Fastje, a local resident of Sedan, has been gracing the walls and old chalkboards with pictures and artifacts from Sedan history, creating ways to preserve the stories of the people who have enriched this fine community. Our group of convention goers were privileged to go inside and see all the historical memorabilia.

As a side note, the Woosley family, a well known family of the Sedan community, had a sawmill, which furnished most of the lumber for all the buildings in Sedan. The Woosley family still ranch in the Sedan community—five generations of them!

Bill Palmer was a great MC for our tour to Sedan. In fact, he even talked our bus driver into taking us over to the home place where he, his brother Ray, and his family lived. Now it is a run-down log cabin, but how interesting to see where someone lived back in the 1950s and 1960s.

Cont. on next page →

It still has a barn and granary standing, but the outhouse is long gone. It is used mainly for cow pasture now. And to think! Back then, Bill and his siblings rode their horses to school! The school even had a barn to put the horses in while the kids were in school. Today, they have a school bus that goes down to pick up the children and take them from Wilsall to school.

From Sedan, the Trojan bus whisked us off to Wilsall for lunch at the Bank Bar, then on to Livingston to see the museum and the block where the “ladies of the night” lived way back when, and another place of interest. It was back to Bozeman to the GranTree Inn for dinner. We had the pleasure of being entertained by one of the last performances by the Ringling Five Band. What a great convention full of great memories!👏

RECENT NEWS!

JOHN N. DEHAAS MEMORIAL AWARD OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION



KEVIN KOOISTRA | BILLINGS

Kevin Kooistra worked to document and celebrate Montana history for decades. A cultural anthropologist and historian, his contributions include archaeological excavations, documentaries, oral histories, ethnographies, cultural resource surveys, and more. His role as Western Heritage Center Director provided the opportunity for exhibits, tours, and presentations that informed and entertained people statewide. His genuine love for people, advocacy for preservation, and dedication to education continues to inspire us to honor Montana's historic places.

In 2023 & 2024, twenty structures and five Ranger Stations received recognition as Historic Places on the National Register of Historical Places in Washington, D.C. On May 16th, 2025 the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) presented award certificates to the owners of the individual properties at a ceremony held at the Myna Loy Center in Helena. As each property was mentioned, a background history was related by John Boughton, the National Register Coordinator, before the property owner received their certificate from Lieutenant Governor Kristen Juras. Included in the ceremony was the Ruffatto Schoolhouse, owned by Claude and Tammi Bidegaray, which we have contributed funds towards the replacement of the roof.

Our founder, **John N. DeHaas**, whose Memorial Award was given to **Kevin Kooistra**. (left)





RECENT NEWS CONTINUED...



MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR A NIGHT FILLED WITH MUSIC, LINE DANCING, AND, OF COURSE, DELICIOUS PIES!



Reese Creek Community Center Annual Fundraiser

Saturday, August 23rd, 5-9pm

**Help support the restoration of this historic
one-room schoolhouse in Northern Gallatin County!**

\$25 /Advance \$30/ Door \$15 / Kids 12 and under

Line Dancing Lesson: 5PM

Dinner: 5PM-7PM

Band: 6-7PM, 8-9PM

Pie Auction: 7PM



Tickets at resecreekcommunitycenter.org

*“Of all the memorable views the best have
been framed by Montana windows.”*

- WILLIAM HJORTSBERG,
American novelist and screenwriter



Calling All Members!

MGTPS members are surrounded by a rich history and ancestry, particularly (though not exclusively) **Montana history**. We are asking you to please take a little bit of time to think about subjects drawn from your experience or interest, possibly supplemented from the wealth of information available online these days and **share one with the rest of us in the Newsletter**.

Please don't allow the Newsletter to become like the philosophical donkey who starved, despite being surrounded by haystacks, because he couldn't decide where to begin! ☺

You can send photos and articles to the Newsletter Editor, Paige Ringelberg, at **paiger_15@yahoo.com** or via mail at the address listed above.

We look forward to reading the stories you have to share!

*Image on page 9 pulled from this website: <https://sedanmontana.net/the-cheese-factory>