

Finding Color



Fall/Winter
2005

"News from the Montana Heritage Preservation & Development Commission"

visit our website at www.montanaheritagecommission.com

FRIENDS OF HISTORY

Season's Greetings!

Another summer has past and I hope you had the chance to visit Montana's treasures in Alder Gulch. As you will see in this edition of Finding Color, there were lots of activities and special events in 2005. A similar slate of fun is planned for 2006. Please think of us as you plan for your vacations next year. Before the year ends, Virginia City will host a great line up of Christmas activities suitable for the whole family. I hope you will consider visiting the towns to see what is in store. The detailed schedule of activities is on the back of this newsletter.

If you are looking for an unusual gift I hope you will consider a gift certificate for Virginia City and Nevada City. The certificates come in various amounts and may be used for attending the theaters, riding the stage coach, fire truck or train, visiting Nevada City, or just plain shopping. If you want cold cash in hand consider ordering a few Alder Gulch tokens as a gift. These real coins come in \$5 denominations and are decorated with artwork by our famous artist John Ellingsen. Information on ordering either gift follows.

Thank you for your continued support of the Commission's activities.

Jeffrey Tiberi, Executive Director

ALDER GULCH GOLD TOKENS

A specially minted edition brass-gold token depicting steam locomotive No. 12 on one side, with a gold

prospector on the other. Tokens are valued at \$5 and can be redeemed for merchandise and services at many participating businesses in Virginia City and Nevada City, Montana..



Alder Gulch Gold Certificates Available in \$10, \$25, \$50 and \$100.

To order, call 406-843-5247
Shipping & handling charges apply

The Virginia City Institute

2006 Schedule Announced

Preserving Log Structures	May 15-19, 2006
Archaeology & Historic Preservation	June 5-9, 2006
The Blacksmith's Forge	June 12-16, 2006
Introduction to Living History	June 14-18, 2006
Techniques of Historic Masonry	June 19-23, 2006
Documenting Historic Structures	July 10-14, 2006
Preserving Log Structure Roof Systems	August 7-11, 2006

For complete course information and applications, go to www.virginiacityinstitute.com



SILVER GHOSTS "HAUNT" VIRGINIA CITY

On July 3, 2005, about 30 beautiful Rolls Royce Silver Ghosts, ranging in date from about 1911 through the late 1920's, visited Virginia City. They parked in the grassy area near the VC Depot. As our 1910 Baldwin steam locomotive pulled into town in the background, what a sight they were to see! Gold plated headlights, polished mahogany dashboards and shiny brass gauges glistened in the sun. Engines resplendent with brass parts gleamed with show-room beauty. Some were shipped to nearby towns like Bozeman inside van trucks, but a surprising number were driven here under their own power from their owners' hometowns, as far away as Ontario, Canada, Texas, and even Florida! The wonderfully generous owners allowed visitors to inspect their machines and gave rides. Most of the fabulous cars were in the 4th of July parade in Ennis the next day. Thanks to Commissioner Mary Oliver for arranging this spectacular event!

John Ellingsen, Curator of History



Preservation Crew members honored were (from left) Jeff Cleverley, Don Steeley, Cecile Gevock, Jeff MacDonald, and Jack Frost (not pictured).

PRESERVATION CREW AWARD

The MHC Preservation Team was honored at the September 14, 2005 Commission meeting for their nomination to the Governor's Award for Excellence. Betsy Baumgart, representative for the Dept. of Commerce, presented award certificates to Jeff MacDonald, Jeff Cleverley, Cecile Gevock, Don Steeley, and Jack Frost.

The nomination highlighted the team's recent accomplishments in the completion of a landmark restoration of the Content's Corner building in Virginia City. The team used creative ways to maintain "windows" to the past showing the unique architecture and layers of the building's history. Teamwork involved archaeology, all aspects of restoring the building interior to historic standards, and specialized efforts to match existing stucco patterns as well as mortar recipes for exterior masonry surfaces. The team was nominated for their "can-do" attitudes and special attention to detail on this showcase for Montana.

The team was also recognized for reviving the Virginia City Institute (VCI). The revitalized program offered five courses this summer in various historic preservation techniques. The 2006 season promises to be even better.

Congratulations and keep up the good work!

NEW COMMISSIONERS

Governor Brian Schweitzer appointed four new Commissioners to the Montana Heritage Commission in June 2005. Anne Cossitt of Park City replaces Dale Mahlum as community planner; Vicki Hucke of Helena replaces Maureen Averill as our Tourism Advisory Council representative; Leslie Schmidt of Bozeman, replaces Jeanette McKee with historic preservation expertise; and Maureen Wicks of Ledger replaces Brian Cockhill in the history field. Also new on the Commission is Sen. Bob Hawks of Bozeman and Betsy Baumgart representing the Dept. of Commerce director.

We would like to sincerely thank our outgoing Commissioners for many years of dedicated service. Your knowledge and expertise will be greatly missed on the Commission. We would also like to extend a hearty welcome to incoming Commissioners. We look forward to working with you.

Virginia City, Montana "Prospecting the Past" Monte Dolack © 2005

Prints are hot off the press of Monte Dolack's newly commissioned work of Virginia City--
"Prospecting the Past."

Poster Size: 33 x 22

Unsigned	\$ 40
Signed	\$ 150
Publisher Proofs	\$ 200
(limited number available, \$50 tax credit for Pub. Prfs)	

To order, phone
406-843-5247
Credit cards accepted.



\$10 shipping for up to 10 posters in a very sturdy mailing tube.

The Montana Heritage Commission would like to thank our donors for your help and support this past year. For all you have given, great things have happened in Alder Gulch and Reeder's Alley since the State of Montana purchased the Virginia City properties eight years ago. Much has been accomplished, but there remains much to do.

We appreciate your continued support.

To all of you, we say Thank You.



VOLUNTEERS RECEIVE PRESIDENTIAL SERVICE AWARDS

The Summer of 2005 marked the first year that Presidential Service Volunteer Awards were given to MHC volunteers. The Heritage Commission, as a certifying organization for this nationally acclaimed award, gave 36 awards for outstanding achievement and dedication. The four award categories were Lifetime Service 4,000 hours, Gold 500 hours, Silver 250 hours, and Bronze 100 hours.

The Lifetime Service Award was presented to Barbara (Bobbie) Dirks of Maui, Hawaii, who returns to Virginia City each spring and volunteers through the fall. Bobbi has provided service in a number of areas and has given hundreds of hours to the Alder Gulch Short Line Railroad in maintenance and operation. We commend and appreciate Bobbie for her dedication and time to this project.



Barbara (Bobbie) Dirks
Maui, Hawaii

In addition, two gold awards, several silver, and many bronze awards went out to volunteers. Awards are earned on an annual basis, and many volunteers will be eligible for honors next year.

The 2005 volunteer program in Virginia City, Nevada City, and Reeders Alley included 284 volunteers, with projects ranging from living history, railroad, maintenance, book reviews, curatorial, archaeology, preservation and other tasks. From the Montana Heritage Commission we offer a big **THANK YOU!**

To volunteer contact Dan Thyer at 406-843-5247.
Dan Thyer, Volunteer Coordinator



Volunteers were honored at an appreciation dinner in August 2005. Many attended dressed in their living history character and some even arrived on horseback.



SIM FERGUSON CABIN REBORN

A stack of charred logs sat dormant on West Cover Street for more than 30 years before Jeff MacDonald, Jeff Cleverley, Don Steeley, and the rest of the Virginia City Historic Preservation team had the opportunity to bring the potential of the logs to light. In May of 2005 the Virginia City Institute hosted a log training session to teach period correct process and method to replace hand-hewn logs, including the replacement of a spandrel and upper log course along the north wall. Upon completion of the class the preservation crew continued to do what they do best - turn something that could be considered a stack of burnt logs into a work of art. The team addressed obvious concerns, from roofing upgrades and positive drainage to the installation of a floating floor. Then they re-chinked the inside of the cabin with split logs and re-daubed the outside with lime mortar. One log was also replaced on the north wall that was irreparable. The Historic Preservation Team examined historic photographs to determine door and window configurations, as well as the finish materials to be used for completing the project. Every window was custom built and sized to fit, acknowledging the fact there was not a square opening in the whole building. Material was salvaged wherever possible and missing log sections were hand crafted to fill gaps in the gable ends. Once again, there is only a single resident in the completed cabin--a period correct working wood stove--but the cabin stands ready now for almost anything.

*Don Steeley, Preservation Specialist
& MHC Safety Officer*

For address changes, or to add someone to our mailing list, contact
Karlee Smith, 406-449-6522, karlees@mt.gov



Beth Pfaff and Erik Hammerstrom confer as they examine casks in the Chinese Temple.



VIRGINIA CITY STAFF CHANGES

We had to say goodbye to two long-time staff members this season. Randy Kleindorfer, Maintenance Chief, resigned in the spring to pursue other opportunities. Meg Radl, Office Assistant, moved in September to Monarch where she recently purchased land. Both of these positions will be filled in the coming months.

Congratulations to Janna Hermanson, our new Curator of Collections. Janna has been with us for several years as Asst. Curator of Collections, and fills the position previously held by Pat Roath. Janna comes to us with a BS in Social Sciences and History, and a MA in American History and Museum Studies. Janna has worked as a Collections Specialist for Blandwood Mansion in Greensboro, North Carolina, and as a Park Ranger-Interpreter for the National Park Service at Petersburg National Battlefield Park in Petersburg, Virginia. Janna is currently working on several chapters for a book by Dr. Rosemary Gido (Indiana University in Indiana, Pennsylvania), titled *Criminal Women: Prosecutions of Females in Mining Communities, 1865-1925*.

We would also like to welcome Dr. Bill Peterson, our new Curator of Interpretation. Bill has an MA in Museum Studies and a Ph.D. in American Culture Studies. He has worked in Museums since 1991, and was the Executive Director of the Northwest Montana Historical Society in Kalispell from 2000 to 2004. Prior to joining the Montana Heritage Commission Bill operated a historical research and museum consulting business based in Kalispell where he served as co-chairman of the David Thompson Bicentennials Partnership, and worked as the first statewide coordinator for the Museums Association of Montana. Bill has taught Montana History for Flathead Valley Community College and is the author of one book and numerous articles. He and his wife Susan now live in Sheridan. Bill has a family connection to Virginia City, as this is the place that his great grandfather first came to in Montana before settling in Butte where he worked for many years as a hoisting engineer.

Thanks to Randy & Meg. Welcome Janna and Bill!

CHINESE INFLUENCE REVIVED IN NEVADA CITY

The McFarland Curatorial staff had the pleasure of working with researchers from the Mai Wah Society of Butte this summer. Janet Sperry, former registrar for the MHS and a Mai Wah member, organized a research trip on August 16-18, bringing four others. The group included Christopher Chan of New Jersey, great-grandson of Albert Chinn, who owned and operated the Mai Wah Noodle Parlor and the Wah Chong Tai Mercantile in Butte, and Erik Hammerstrom, a doctoral student in Asian Studies and fluent in Chinese. Erik shared his expertise and gave valuable English translations of many Chinese labeled items. A local history teacher, Beth Pfaff, was also with the group to gather information for a "Teach America History" grant project she is conducting with her Bozeman students. The dual goal of discovery was initiated--for us, new information about our Chinese collections, and for the members of the Mai Wah, how their history relates to our collections. Continued cooperative efforts between the MHC and the Mai Wah will result in better understanding and interpretation of the Chinese artifacts in Nevada City.



This nameplate, which says, "Wah Chong Tai," meaning "beautiful old China," will be on loan to the Mai Wah Society in Butte for their summer seasons.

Many of the items we have on display in Nevada City's Chinatown were originally from the Wah Chong Tai Mercantile and the Mai Wah Noodle Parlor in Butte. Charlie Bovey purchased the Chinese artifacts from Howard Chinn in 1948, at a time when many Chinese were leaving Butte. When the Chinese population departed, much of Butte's Chinatown was quickly destroyed.

The Wah Chong Tai Mercantile and Mai Wah Noodle Parlor are the only two buildings that escaped destruction. The Mai Wah Society was formed about a decade ago to continue preservation of this remarkable remainder of the once-extensive Butte Chinese community.

Charlie Bovey and John Ellingsen put the Nevada City Chinatown exhibit together in 1972-73 as a memorial to the Chinese culture, which was a major part of the mining camp life in Virginia City and throughout the West.

*Marge Antolik, Asst. Curator of Collections
& John Ellingsen, Curator of History*

2006 LIVING HISTORY

At Nevada City, Montana

The Gold Discovery	May 26-29
Gold Rush Town	June 24
Assassination of Deputy Dillingham	June 9-11
The George Ives Trial	June 16-18
Montana Vigilantes	June 23-25
Old Fashioned 4th of July	July 1-3
Life in the Gold Camps	July 7-9
Road Agents Ride	July 14-16
The Pursuit of the Road Agents	July 21-23
1860's Montana	July 28-30
Frontier Celebration	Aug. 4-6
Social life in Victorian Montana	Aug. 11-13
Alder Gulch Legends	Aug. 18-20
Mining the Miners	Aug. 25-27
The End of the Innocents	Sept. 1-4



Living historians Richard Hoppe on horseback, holding up Tom Sargent during the Reenactment of the Road Agents Ride



ELDERHOSTEL DIGS IN

Virginia City staff hosted a group of twenty Elderhostel service workers in September. MHC Archaeologist Cecile Gevock and volunteer John Roeder directed the group in their pre-historic and historic archaeology full "dig." The participants loved their search for underground treasures and allowed staff to explore an area that had not been investigated in depth. Elderhostel is planning a repeat archaeology service group in Virginia City next year. The group will continue their search in the same area.



GOLD RUSH DINOSAURS ?

"Impossible Productions" and Teresa Zambre, director, were in town on June 29, 2005 to shoot a science-fiction movie about "T-Rex." Dan Thyer, living history volunteer Dave Duesterbeck, and John Ellingsen worked on filming of the "docu-drama." Filming started at 8 am with most of the shoot taking place in front of the Nevada City Hotel and along the highway. With traffic on the highway stopped and cameras rolled from the top of the movie's rented van truck, Dan and Dave attempted to kill a "digital" monster (added later by computer-enhanced green screen) "looming" over the Hotel. They also filmed in front of the big Gavioli in the Music Hall. Ranks Drug furnished some of the costumes for the movie. We will look forward to seeing the results this fall.



John Ellingsen, Curator of History



YOUTH LEARN HISTORY--HANDS ON

History Camp was the headline event of August, 2005. Nine students from throughout Montana attended classes and hands-on workshops. A variety of activities relating to Alder Gulch history were organized by Dan Thyer, History Camp Director. Tours of Virginia and Nevada cities and the Frontier Houses were given by John Ellingsen. Donna MacNamara of Wolf Point taught the students in Dimsdale's schoolhouse, the oldest school building in Montana. Gold panning and mining was taught by "Diamondback" Dave Sweet, of Henderson, Nevada. He and his popular pack burros also take part in the living history program. The placer mining adventure yielded an impressive amount of "pay dirt" and memorable experiences for the students. A number of other living history re-enactors took part in History Camp as well. At closing ceremonies, the students presented short papers and spoke on their history camp experiences. Watch for next year's camp to be held July 31 to August 5.

John Ellingsen, Curator of History



7th Annual -- Virginia City Christmas Socials

Enjoy Virginia City and Nevada City for an Old-Fashioned Christmas

For a complete schedule of events, locations and costs visit www.montanaheritagecommission.com, *What's New*, Friday, Saturday, Sunday between Thanksgiving & Christmas - Shops open 10 to dusk or later

ONE-TIME EVENTS

- **1st weekend - November 19-20**
 - ☀ Decorate the town, meet at VC Community Center (gym)
- **2nd weekend - November 25-27**
 - ☀ Craft Projects, All Ages Welcome - Victorian Sisters
 - ☀ Santa's arrival & Kid's Christmas Party - Community Ctr
 - ☀ Christmas Memories by Truman Capote - Elling House
- **3rd weekend - December 2-4**
 - ☀ Decorations & Folk Art Sale – Home of Debbie Rogers
 - ☀ Stonehouse Inn Gourmet Feast (reservations required)
 - ☀ Gingerbread House Bed & Breakfast Open House
 - ☀ Santa Photos – Victorian Sisters
 - ☀ Chili Contest - Pioneer Bar
 - ☀ St. Nicholas Day Party, Advent Lessons & Carols – St. Paul's Episcopal Church
- **4th weekend - December 9-11**
 - ☀ VCPA Annual Meeting & Potluck - Community Ctr
 - ☀ Country Dance - Community Center
 - ☀ Cookie Decorating, All Ages - Victorian Sisters
 - ☀ Holiday Art Show - Metropolitan Market
 - ☀ "Growling Old Men"(bluegrass music) - Elling House
 - ☀ Children's Ornament Making Party – Metropolitan Market
- **5th weekend - December 17-19**
 - ☀ Gingerbread House Contest – Metropolitan Market
 - ☀ Ornament Contest - Variety Store

SPECIAL INVITATION

The Montana Heritage Commission will host the
7th Annual Community Potluck
 Wednesday, December 14 – 5:30 p.m., Elk's Lodge, VC
 Bring the kids for a chance to burst the piñata.
 MHC will furnish meat, beverages, plates & utensils.
 Please bring a side dish to share.

5th weekend (cont)

- ☀ "A Musical Evening" - Elks Lodge
- ☀ Children's Story Time/Activities - Thompson Hickman Library
- ☀ Madison County Courthouse Stroll
- ☀ Holiday Concert - Metropolitan Market
- ☀ 4th Advent, Potluck & Greening – St. Paul's Church
- **December 22** - Joyful Noise Bell Choir - St. Paul's Church
- ☀ Hot Toddy Hour - 1st American Title Co.
- **December 24** - Festal Eucharist, Candlelight Service St. Paul's Episcopal Church

OTHER WEEKEND HIGHLIGHTS

- ☀ Champagne brunch at the Bennett House Country Inn with author & historian, John Ellingsen – every Sunday at 11 am.
- ☀ Shops open every weekend. Open House events at Adobetown Schoolhouse, Victorian Sisters, Variety Store, Rank's Mercantile, Metropolitan Market

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Seasons Greetings from the
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 and staff at
 Virginia City, Nevada City and Reeder's Alley



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