

# Finding Color

"News from the Montana Heritage Preservation & Development Commission"

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Spring  
2005

## CONNECTIONS

The 2005 season is upon us! Unbelievable at it may seem, we are entering the 9th summer season since Ford Bovey sold his family properties to the State of Montana.

Change is the norm, and you will see a few new faces this year. On May 27 the Brewery Follies open for the season at a new time - 8:00 pm. New for 2005 are The Daily Follies, with matinees Monday through Friday, plus Monday and Tuesday nights at 8:00 pm. The Daily Follies will be geared towards children with lots of zaniness that only Mike Verdon can imagine.

The Opera House will open in late May, the earliest in decades, under the direction of Stacey Gordon and Greg Johnson. The Opera House show will also be at an earlier time, 7 p.m. Everyone is



invited to the champagne gala on May 28 for opening night. The first show will be Sweeney Todd, The Demon Barber of Fleet Street. Spend an evening with the original Sweeney Todd. Before the musical, the demon barber of Fleet Street was shaving too close and making tasty pies with Mrs. Lovett in this classic Victorian melodrama chock full of suspense, drama and hair raising adventure. See what drove this humble barber to the edge of sanity in the dark streets of London. Directed by Mr. Gregory Johnson. Sounds like lots of fun. Please see websites [virginiacityplayers.com](http://virginiacityplayers.com) and [breweryfollies.com](http://breweryfollies.com) for details. For details about Montana Heritage Commission activities please see [montanaheritagecommission.com](http://montanaheritagecommission.com).

We are excited about the year and the events and activities planned for you by the community. I hope to see you in the towns this season!

*Jeffrey Tiberi, Executive Director*

## HARVARD RETURNS TO ALDER GULCH

One hundred years ago a group of Harvard University students and a Professor spent much of the summer in Madison County. The year was 1905 and the class was an introductory geology class. Perhaps the most amazing aspect of the trip, at least based on the research to date, was that the class walked 400 miles that summer! The class traveled by train to Bozeman and began their journey. Additional research will hopefully tell us more about the group.

Move forward 100 years, almost to the date, and another Harvard class visited Montana. This time they flew to Bozeman and rented a vehicle to commence their travels. The class was led by Professor Peter Rogers, the Gordon McKay Professor of Environmental Engineering and Professor of City Planning. Six students, whose homes range from as far away as Sudbury, Ontario, Paris, France, Trinidad and Tobago, accompanied Professor Rogers. The Harvard Team moved into the Bonanza Inn and spent five days exploring our mining heritage. The visit allowed the Team to see first hand how mining is being carried out in the West. Days included trips to local mines, including Ruby Garnet and Zane Pasma's operation in Brown's Gulch. A side trip to view the Berkley Pit in Butte allowed the Team to see mining at a much larger scale. On the Team's last working day, Professor Tim Ford led a group from Montana State University that joined the Team to discuss mining issues. The Harvard students included Robert Kallin, Pierre de Raismes, Alexander Paddington, Claire Provost, David Chiles, and Jonas Budris.

We hope to establish a closer relationship with Harvard University and not allow another 100 years to pass between visits. *Jeffrey Tiberi, Executive Director*



THE HISTORY CHANNEL

Watch for Virginia City in  
"Gold West Ghost Towns"  
tentatively scheduled

to air on  
June 3, 2005.

## A COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE

As a prominent anchor in an unquestionably historic downtown, the Solomon Content Building has weathered many changes since construction was begun in 1864. A standing testament to the days of fledgling territorial government in Virginia City, well tailored design met rural construction methodology in creating one of the finer examples of gothic influenced architecture in the western states.

Recent efforts have centered on identifying, preserving and interpreting features of the building's evolution, which in addition to extensive seismic considerations, include stabilizing the original masonry walls that form east, west, and south facades.



Demolition of modern features reveals historic treatments to walls and ceilings.

housed residents in the upper story, while Bob's Place, a local favorite and community landmark occupied the ground floor - A moniker that continues to attract locals and tourists alike to the corner of Jackson and Wallace Streets.

With the transition to state ownership, the Montana Heritage Commission selected the upper portion of the structure to serve as offices for state operations in Virginia City. In fulfilling a stated mission of preservation, interpretation, and education, the environment has evolved over the course of many months from re-configured living space to one proudly displaying original building materials, restored finishes, and historic ambiance. Visitors will notice exposed details, highlighting historic features and items of interest. Period lighting fixtures compliment a restored original ceiling finish, which provides a basis for the historic palette employed throughout the space.

As with many historic resources, preservation work is often never truly done. Many applications require periodic monitoring and maintenance, due to the nature of historic media and its relationship with time. By way of this process preservation takes on a dynamic role, interpreting layers of history that may reveal a complex story beneath a well-kept façade.

*Jeff MacDonald, Lead Preservation Specialist*



Content's Corner - Restored conference room displaying period light fixtures along side a historically inspired palette.

The north face, also originally of local stone inset with gothic lancet window and door systems, now displays a façade of brick, steel and glass. Reflective of an earlier restoration, it is believed to have occurred as a result of major earthquake damage, introducing a period of transformation that would develop throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Under the direction of Bovey Restorations, Content's Corner, as it came to be known,

## AGE-OLD PROBLEM!

Visitors to Virginia City last summer noticed that it was a busy season for archaeology. The testing produced nearly 32,000 artifacts and some interesting facts about the people who once lived here.

One feature in particular, an outhouse used from the 1890's to 1940's, caught my attention because of its unusual quantity of toys. Some of the toys recovered from the outhouse included ceramic dolls, tea set pieces. I could not help but wonder why undamaged toys ended-up in the outhouse. Then I remembered one day when I caught my two year-old throwing her collection of bath fish toys in the toilet. It took me awhile to figure out why, but she explained that she was returning them to the ocean. Thanks to a movie with a clown fish, I explained to my daughter that "all drains (do not) lead to the ocean" while unplugging the toilet. So, I guess this has been an age-old problem for parents!

*Cecile Gevock, Archaeologist*



One of the many outhouse "treasure chests" in the towns.



Jeff Safford, past Montana Heritage Commission member.

## ALDER GULCH VESTIGE RETURNS HOME

Jeff Safford's new book, *The Mechanics of Optimism*, is a must read for those interested in learning more about mining in Madison County, about mining in general, or about the business world of early Montana. Jeff has completed a well researched text, easy to

read, full of interesting information, and woven together with a storyteller's finesse. Jeff quotes Otis Young's observations about what makes a good prospector, "his eyes, teeth, nose, saliva, and sense of 'heft' alone could force the rocks to give up much information. [A] bit of metallic-yellow mineral placed between the teeth gritted noisily if it was anything but native gold. Saliva dabbed upon a specimen enabled one to 'peer' into it...so as to detect the yellow speck of gold." The passage continues on by describing the use of other senses in the search for the elusive mineral.

Mining was big business in Montana. Jeff tells the story of a company that put together an outfit of 324 oxen, 38 wagons, and 45 men to bring a mill from Kansas to Montana. That must have been quite a sight moving across the great plains and navigating the mountains! Jeff makes it easy to think that you were watching the actual event happen.

The vigilante-road agent story has captured much of the attention focused on this part of Montana. Jeff's book helps to open up and explain another important part of our history. This book is highly recommended reading. Contact us if you want to buy a copy of Jeff's book.

*Jeffrey Tiberi, Executive Director*

## WANTED

### Volunteer Book Reviewer for books about Alder Gulch

Numerous interesting and informative books have been written about Virginia City and the surrounding area. We would like to publish a review in each edition of *Finding Color*. We are looking for a volunteer who likes to read and would send us a periodic short review concerning a book about Alder Gulch.

Give us a call if you are interested.

406-449-6522

## BUILDING THE WORLD OF FIBER ARTS IN VIRGINIA CITY

It's an exciting third year for Aunt Julia's in Virginia City Montana. This little fiber art store displays works by Montana and regional artists, but also offers retreats dealing in the fiber realm. In 2004, a five-day retreat entitled *Color Techniques and Application* was held the first part of September. What made this retreat special was the instructor. Judith MacKenzie McCuin, an internationally known fiber artist, agreed to come and spend her time sharing her lifelong knowledge with students from all over the West. The retreat was designed to deal with color from a fabric point of view, and students studied how various dyeing techniques are affected by different structures, such as spinning, knitting, weaving and felting.



Latch hook rug workshop at Aunt Julia's

Two such retreats will be scheduled for the summer of 2005, both offering world-renowned fiber art instructors. Pat Spark, author, lecturer and instructor will teach a four-day retreat on *Color and Imagery in Feltmaking*. Known for her ability to combine color within her feltmaking, producing stunning works of art, she will share her knowledge with registered participants. In addition to Pat, we are currently working with Judie Overbeek, a second celebrated instructor, to offer a late-summer retreat focusing on creating designer yarns and applying those yarns within wearable art pieces. For more information on how you can attend these fiber art retreats, please contact Aunt Julia's at 406-843-5515 or visit us on the web at [www.auntjulias.com](http://www.auntjulias.com)

*Kim Miller, Red Weaver Fibers*



MHC would like to welcome our newest concessionaire--Ruby Chang's--operated by Tim and Stacey Gordon. Ruby's will be located between Bob's Place and the Variety Store. The store will feature vintage and reproduction jewelry, costume jewelry, silver jewelry and accessories plus original art, photos, vintage lithographs, reproduction lithographs and fine art of the west.

## LEARNING HISTORY--FIRST HAND

The second annual Hands-On History Camp is in the works! Youth ages 11 to 15 are invited to a week-long experience participating in a variety of events--all connected to the history of Alder Gulch and Montana. Workshops will include outdoor cooking on an open fire, historic presentations, blacksmithing skills, gold panning, spinning and weaving, frontier family daily living skills, archaeology, historic preservation and architecture and tours of historic Virginia City and Nevada City. History campers will also have the chance to ride the train through historic Alder Gulch, attend a play by the Illustrious Virginia City Players, and experience Virginia City and Nevada City first hand.

The \$295 fee for the week includes lodging at the historic Bonanza Inn in Virginia City, meals, snacks, all activities, supplies, instruction, plus a ride on the Alder Gulch Shortline Railroad. Students will also be treated to a performance by the Illustrious Virginia City Players at the Opera House and a back-stage tour.



For more information or to register, contact Dan Thyer, History Camp Director, 406-843-5221, DThyer@mt.gov or click on History Camp on our website at [www.virginiacitymt.com](http://www.virginiacitymt.com). Scholarships are available. See you at camp!

### “Moonlight & Steam Special” August 19, 2005



Steam Locomotive No. 12  
will fire up for a special moonlight  
train ride under the August Full Moon.

Leave Nevada City at 10:30—  
boarding begins at 10. Tickets \$15  
Reservations call 406-843-5247



For more  
information  
click on  
Alder Gulch  
Shortline at  
[virginiacitymt.com](http://virginiacitymt.com)



Donna McNamara, History Camp Counselor  
& Living History 1863 School Teacher

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAM UP & RUNNING FOR 2005

The Volunteer Program is off to a good start for the spring of 2005. We have enlisted 11 new volunteers for the program in March. New Volunteers include John Barrows (Dillon), Steve O'Dwyer (Belgrade), Al Rineart (Yellowstone, Wyoming), Rick and Carol Keats (Gardiner), Scott & Cindy Westbrook (Plain City, Utah), Bill Smith (San Francisco), Leonard Bates (Great Falls), and Peter and Jay Pocius (Helena). Volunteer job interests are primarily working with the Alder Gulch Railroad, historic tours, and living history.

Awards for our outstanding volunteers, participating in the Presidential Volunteer Service Program will be held in August. Many of our volunteers have achieved the Gold Status donating over 400 hours per person to our ongoing projects. Last year our 100 volunteers donated 17,000 hours valued at \$285,000 in saved labor costs. We will again host Americorp groups starting in mid April and Youth Challenge in May.

If you are interested in volunteering give us a call—Virginia City/Nevada City (843-5221), or Reeder's Alley (449-6688). *Dan Thyer, Volunteer Coordinator*



Living History volunteers, Dale and Koby Johnson,  
demonstrating washboard and washtub laundry.

## VIRGINIA CITY INSTITUTE REVIVED

Thanks to the initiative of Jeff MacDonald (MHC Lead Preservation Specialist) and his staff, the Virginia City Institute is offering four excellent preservation workshops this summer.



May 16-20 features “Log Structure Preservation Techniques” which will explore aspects of round and hewn log structure restoration, presenting proper techniques of stabilization in addition to identifying sources of deterioration and mitigation measures. Bernie Weisgerber, retired US Forest Service Preservation Specialist will lead this session.

June 6-10 will be “Techniques of Historic Masonry” with Jeff Cleverly, MHC Masonry Preservation Specialist. This workshop will examine several masonry structures within Virginia City, identifying constituents of mortar mixes and uses of local rubble and quarried

stone. Field study will demonstrate approaches to stabilization, and applications of natural hydraulic lime in mortar mix. Including proper tooling and mixing methodology, in addition to re-pointing procedures respecting historic tint and texture. Analysis will also be conducted on earlier use of high-content Portland cement mortar, lending to considerations for proper removal and replacement with historic in-kind material.



### “Data Recovery and Disturbed Ground:

Exploring the Relationship of Archaeology & Historic Preservation” will be the topic of the July 11-15 session. Cecile Gevock, MHC Archaeologist will lead the group to provide hands-on experience of basic field techniques, recording methods, artifact tracking and approaches to the challenges of an archaeological site. The excavation location will identify and recover any pre-historic and historic artifacts, in addition to completing a mandatory assessment of a proposed work site prior to preservation treatment. All processes are performed in compliance with an existing programmatic agreement between the Montana Heritage Preservation & Development Commission, The Montana State Historic Preservation Office, and The National Park Service.



The final session for 2005 will be August 8-19, titled “Preserving the Rural Vernacular.” This two-week seminar presented by MHC preservation staff will

identify and resolve challenges relating to a late 19th-century, single-room log cabin. The complete restoration will approach jacking and cribbing the structure, and installing a stone pier foundation, in addition to addressing concerns with roofing and flooring systems. The entire structure will also receive chinking and daubing treatments, as well as reconstructed door and window systems to render it useable for future interpretation of pioneer influence in



The Montana Heritage Commission will soon be recruiting for three key staff positions:

- Curator of Collections
- Curator of Interpretation
- Maintenance Supervisor

To view Job Announcements, go to [www.virginiacitymt.com](http://www.virginiacitymt.com), click on What’s New

If you know someone who would like to receive our newsletter by mail, contact Karlee Smith, 406-449-6522, [karlees@state.mt.us](mailto:karlees@state.mt.us)



Living History events in Nevada City are based upon the happenings that occurred in Alder Gulch area from 1863-1875. Reenactments will include such events as the Assassination of Deputy Dillingham, the Trial and Hanging of George Ives, the formation of the Vigilantes and many more fun, historical events. We will also feature craftsmen, accurately demonstrating tasks such as wheelwright, blacksmith, tinsmith, cooper, carpenters, and prospectors.

Our interpreters travel to Nevada City from all over the West. They have dedicated their lives to research and correct interpretation of the era. Many of these volunteers have been recruited for their specialized knowledge and 19<sup>th</sup> Century skills for the Living History program. We hope you will join us as we bring Montana's Alder Gulch history to life this Summer.

*Dan Thyer, Living History Coordinator*

# Living History at Nevada City

Enjoy hands on living history demonstrators gathering from around the West  
Every weekend Summer 2005

For more information visit [www.virginiacitymt.com](http://www.virginiacitymt.com) or call Dan Thyer (406) 843-5221

CLIP & SAVE

## 2005 Living History Events

Old West Days 1860s-70s	May 27-30
Gold Rush Town 1860s	June 18-20
Montana Vigilantes	June 10-12
Murder of Deputy Dillingham	June 17-19
George Ives Trial & Hanging	June 24-26
Old Fashioned 4th of July	July 1-4
Live in the Gold Camps	July 8-10
Road Agents Ride	July 12-17
Road Agents & Vigilantes	July 22-24
1860s Montana	July 29-31
Frontier Celebration	Aug 5-7
Daily Life in Nevada City	Aug 12-14
The Life of Victorian Ladies	Aug 19-21
Alder Gulch Legends	Aug 26-28
Labor Day Celebration	Sept 2-4

CLIP & SAVE



PO Box 201204 Helena, MT 59620-1204  
PO Box 338, Virginia City MT 59755

Visit us this Summer  
at Virginia City, Nevada City or  
Reeder's Alley in Helena.

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