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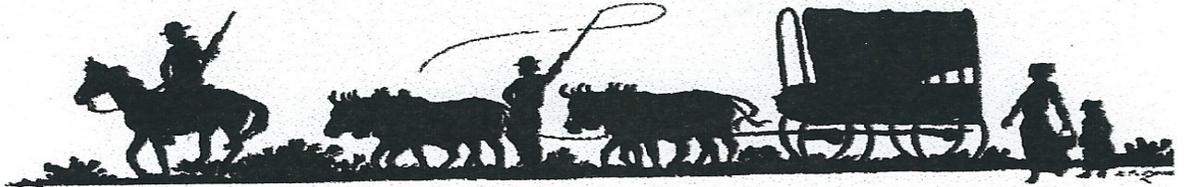
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# The Pick and Shovel

Official Newsletter of the Sons and Daughters of Montana Pioneers

**Spring 2019 "Chartered by the State Their Parents Founded"**

### Little Known Facts about our great state, Montana

It is technically still illegal for unmarried women to fish alone.

In Fort Benton, a cowboy once insisted on riding his horse to his room in the Grand Union Hotel. The manager objected, so the two exchanged gunfire. The Horseman was killed and, later, fourteen .44 slugs were found in his body.

Travelers Rest in [Lolo](#) was a stopping point on the Lewis and Clark Expedition. It's the only site on the Lewis and Clark Trail that has physical proof of the explorers' presence.

In 1888, more millionaires per capita were living in Helena than any other city in the world. Most made their fortunes off of gold.

Montana has the largest grizzly bear population of all the lower 48 states .

The town of Ekalaka was named after the daughter of famous Sioux chief, Sitting Bull.

### ARTICLES FOR THE NEWSLETTER AND SCRAPBOOKS

Some of the treasures we have include scrapbooks that hold newspaper articles about historic events, places, and people in Montana. We want to continue that tradition. You can help directly by cutting out articles you see about your Montana hometowns and mailing those to me. What type of articles? Those that provide photos and/or information about people, places, or events that are important to your hometown.

In addition, if you have newspaper or magazine articles, books, or other printed material about your ancestors that you believe is important to keep for posterity, please consider sendin\*g those along as well.

Those can be directly mailed to me Newsletter Editor 2998 Rocky Pine Dr., Helena, MT 50601 or to SDMP Newsletter at PO Box 8964, Missoula, MT 59807.

Please feel free to contact me by email, mail or phone (406 439-0390) if you have ideas or suggestions about the Editor's role and what we could be doing more (or less) of for SDMP. SDMP exists because of your membership and interest. Anything we can do to provide value for you and for SDMP is worth looking at.

*Yearly Dues are due. This is just a reminder that in order for us to continue supporting this great organization, we need your support also. Dues can be mailed in to:*

*SDMP Secretary  
PO Box 8964  
Missoula, MT 59807*

*Dues payments are \$25.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children under 18. You can also make your dues payments online through our website if you have a Pay Pal account.. go to our website [www.sonsanddaughtersmontanapioneers.com](http://www.sonsanddaughtersmontanapioneers.com) scroll down to the dues link and click on the Pay Pal account payment.*

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### *Those that have passed*

*As we have members living all over the 50 states it is hard for us to keep updated with those that have passed on and are no longer with us. Therefore, if you have a loved one or know of a member that has gone on to be with our Lord, could you please send us a message to the address below or send us an email to the email listed below along with an Obituary (if possible) to our Secretary.*

*SDMP, PO Box 8964, Missoula, MT 59807 or email at [sdmpsecretary@sonsanddaughtersmontanapionners.com](mailto:sdmpsecretary@sonsanddaughtersmontanapionners.com)*

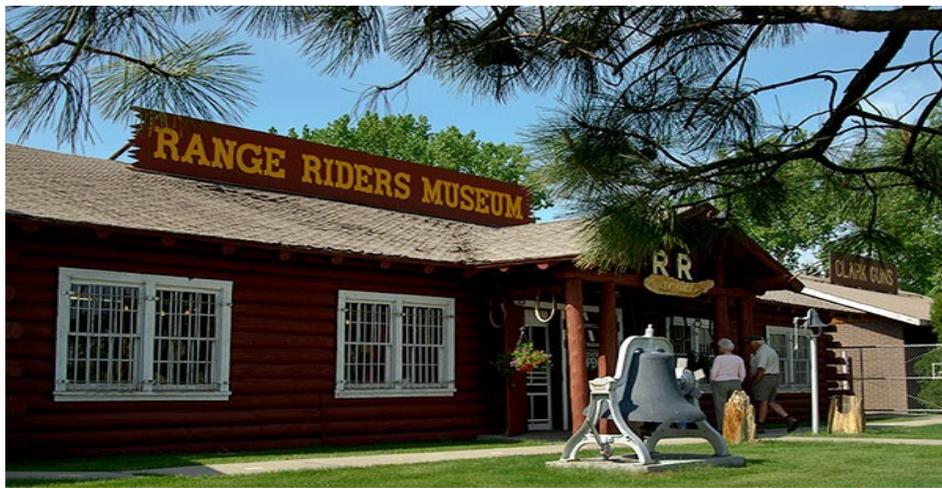
*Thanks, Tim Sowa President*

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*If you would like to receive the newsletter via email instead of regular US Postage mail please send me an email to*

*SDMP EMAIL, PO BOX 8964, MISSOULA MT 59807*

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#### RANGE RIDER MUSEUM

*We have a large Museum just jam-packed with exhibits ranging from the age of the dinosaurs to the 21st century! Exhibits include: many from the Native Americans of the area; from the pioneers of the range country of the Great Plains; from soldiers, including General Custer (for whom the county is named) as well as from General Miles (for whom the town is named).*

*Please enjoy our website — and come to see us "in person" whenever you can. The Range Riders Museum is open from April 1 to October 31, depending a little bit on the weather in this part of the country. We are also open by appointment and on special occasions. Wanna see why you need to come and visit us? Check out our [gallery](#) - it shows a very nice sampling of the exhibits.*

*As one of our events for this years conference we are planning guided tours or on your own tours at the Range Rider Museum. That is planned for Friday afternoon immediately following our conference business meeting. Lunch will be served after the business meeting at the Sleep Inn and beginning after lunch members and guests can go over to the Range Rider to visit the Museum. The fee for guided tour or a tour on you own is \$4.00. Then that evening we are planning to have our conference BBQ at the Range Rider also, with the BBQ being catered. Menu is still undecided and will be published in the nest Pick and Shovel in June.*

*There will be a lot of time to meet and greet each other during the trip to the Museum and later that evening (5pm) during the BBQ. We hope to see you all there and we look forward to having a very historical and exciting conference this year in Miles City, August 9-10, 2019. More information coming up in June....*



## Montana's First Politician

Intrigue and Election Fraud From the Get Go

BY GARY R. FORNEY

*It was October 24, 1864, and the sweet scent of democracy was in the crisp autumn air of Virginia City. Of course, it may have been a bit overpowered by the aroma of thousands of unwashed miners and thousands of horses, mules, and oxen. This was the day that men were gathering at polling sites for the first general election of the new Montana Territory. As we similarly gathered this November of 2010, it seems an appropriate time to look back at the excitement generated by the first election and the man most responsible for creating that excitement.*

*Sidney Edgerton was forty-seven years old when he arrived at Bannack in September of 1863, although, with his full white beard and head of white hair, he could have been easily mistaken for a much older man. Commonly dressed in a black top hat and overcoat and wearing a grim expression, one could be excused for thinking him to be an undertaker. In fact, he was an attorney by profession, a Radical Republican in his political philosophy, and had served two terms in the House of Representatives from the state of Ohio. In the spring of 1863, President Lincoln appointed Edgerton to serve as a federal justice for the Idaho Territory. Instead of traveling to the territorial capital in Lewiston, however, Edgerton halted his westward journey at Bannack.*

*Rather than assume his duties as judge, Edgerton appears to have occupied himself with a small cabal of influential residents who had big plans. Although the ink was barely dry upon the Act that had created the Idaho Territory, there was already an active movement to divide that territory. Despite the brutally cold weather in mid-January of 1864, Edgerton volunteered to travel to Washington, D.C., to call upon some of his former colleagues. In preparation for the journey, Edgerton was provided with a unique form of insulation sewn into his overcoat—gold nuggets valued at more than \$2,000 (a present-day equivalent of \$145,000). Whether the gold was intended to pay for his travel expenses or to grease some wheels in Washington isn't certain, but in May, following some interesting machinations, Congress ingeniously carved the Idaho Territory to establish the Montana Territory. Edgerton would later admit that during the debates on creating the territory he would casually place a badly misshapen bar of Alder Gulch gold on the desk he was permitted to use on the floor of the House, and did nothing to dissuade the open rumors that it was a gold nugget. Perhaps to no one's surprise, Sidney Edgerton was appointed to serve as Governor for the new territory.*

*This information was taken from "The Montana Pioneer" there is much more to this story and if you are interested in finding out more about early Montana please visit*

*<https://montanapioneer.com/montanas-first-politician/>*

*There are many more stories published by The Montana Pioneer. I thought many of you would enjoy reading from that publication if you have not already been there. Enjoy*

*Michael Russell  
Editor*

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## Don't Mess with Ennis, MT!

*John Edmonson, one of the horse thieves, asked Mr. Ennis, "What were you fellows following us for, anyway? Did you think we had some of YOUR horses?"*

*Mr. Ennis, his face set in hard lines, replied, "If you are horse thieves you would steal horses from me as quick as you would from anyone else." Thus was exhibited the pioneer spirit of our ancestors which made Montana a great state!*

*In 1884, or close to that time, Walter and Tim Switzer were riding for cattle close to the old Sawtell place near Henry's Lake, Idaho. Suddenly they met five men armed to the teeth with rifles and six-shooters, and driving about twenty five head of horses.*

*The leader of the men engaged the Switzers in conversation and inquired about food and accommodations. Both Switzers engaged in conversation and noticed a well-marked horse in the bunch, belonging to Harry Thompson of the Madison Valley. The Switzers wisely didn't say anything as they recognized the leader of the men was Con Murphy, famous horse thief, badman and crack shot. Recognition of a stolen horse could have brought instant death.*

*About two days later, a posse from Ennis came through on the trail of the outlaws. After meeting the Switzers, they went on in hot pursuit. Information was exchanged and the posse proceeded south to Rexburg, ID, where the gang was spending the night at the house of Brigham Ricks, under the guise of law-abiding citizens.*

*The posse had managed to contact Ricks the night before and developed a plan whereby he would tell the gang that breakfast would be served in his brother's house across the street.*

*The posse men were stationed at strategic points providing a view between the houses. Con Murphy and his crew started for breakfast and were commanded to throw up their hands. They went for their guns instead and a firefight began. The posse was unscathed but George Munn, a member of the gang, suffered a fatal wound. (He is buried in the Rexburg cemetery.) Con Murphy and the rest of the gang surrendered and were returned to Helena to face trial.*

*Witnesses at the trial of Con Murphy and John and Harry Edmonson from the posse were: William Ennis, George Thexton, Theodore Wilkins, John Brice, George Thorpe and Ben Burns. Later other witnesses from the Madison were called; Richard Coad, William Wagner, Charles Anceny and George Hadzor.*

*Con Murphy escaped from the Helena jail and was believed to have committed other crimes. He was eventually hung by the Vigilantes in the East Helena area.*

*Summarized from chapters 2 & 3 of "Seventy Years a Cowboy" by Philip S. Long, Cypress Books, Billings, MT; Copyright 1976.*

**Sons and Daughters of Montana Pioneers**

**PO Box 8964**

**Missoula, MT 59807**

**Return Service Requested**

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