

***Montana Heritage Commission***  
***Virginia City / Nevada City Properties***

**Education and Interpretation**

For the Period  
**April, 2008**

Bill Peterson, Curator of Interpretation  
John Ellingsen, Curator of History  
Dan Thyer, Living History / Volunteer Coordinator

❖ **Overview**

April was a busy month as the E and I department prepared for the Washington State University Public History Field School and begins preparation for the busy summer season. Living History Interpretation training took place this month as the McFarland Curatorial Center Open house, visits from University of Montana Western (UMW) students, High school students from Chester, and further preparation for the new format of History Camp.

❖ **Interpretation**

Bill Peterson spent time this month working on a PPL grant in conjunction with the VCPA for interpretive stations around Virginia City. The request will be funding to produce and install signage at significant locations in Virginia City to show visitors and residents what historic buildings that were once, and in some cases, still are evident on the site. These sites are a combination of public and private sites and include both commercial and private buildings.

Planned work in Nevada City for the summer and the interpreters was finalized and a list of projects was submitted to Paul Reichert.

❖ **Education**

Dr. Linda Reiten, Professor of Education at UMW visited the site with her students on April 24<sup>th</sup>. Students were shown how the various aspects of the site fit into their future as teachers and how so much history is illustrated through the buildings, collections, and archaeology of Virginia and Nevada Cities. On April 28<sup>th</sup> Montana Heritage Commissioner and High School history teacher from Chester, Montana visited the site with 17 students and stayed overnight in Bonanza Inn.

❖ **History**

Bill Peterson is working with Sarah Rooker and the Flow of History on a collaborative education/history project, which will include applying for a History Channel Save Our History Grant. High school students in both Montana and Vermont will participate in this program and it will involve the comparison and contrast of Vermont and Montana history. The purpose of this program is to have the students gain ideas regarding how people in Vermont prepared to come to Montana and what immigrants to Montana encountered when they arrived in the 1860s. This knowledge would be shared via a website if the program is selected for funding.

Bill Peterson, Dan Thyer, Linda Wruck, and others continue to plan for the 2008 History Camp. The format for history camp this year is different from years past due to the welcomed partnership with the Montana Historical Society and their education officer Linda Wruck.

❖ **Tours**

*John Ellingsen provided tour guide training to Living History Volunteers, on April 20<sup>th</sup>.*

❖ **Research and writing**

E and I continues to research the potential sites for interpretation. John Ellingsen continues to visit the Madison County Courthouse and Sheridan Newspaper reading group.

❖ **Living History/Volunteers** – *Dan Thyer conducted a two day Heritage Interpretation training workshop for volunteer living history interpreters on April 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. The training was based upon ALHFAM interpretive trainer techniques, that Dan received working in the living history trainer's workshop held in Colonial Williamsburg, Jamestown this past January, as well as Opening Doors to Great Guest Experiences and Nevada City specific training that was already in place. This two day workshop included an introduction to the Montana Heritage Commission Staff and Programs, The basics of living history, Advanced timelines and character development, Understanding Visitor Education, Engaging the Visitor, Foodways demonstration workshop, Lifeways demonstration workshops, Using Your Environment in Interpretation, Demonstrations & third person interpretation, Introduction to First person interpretation, Basic Interpretive Issues, the First Person Interpreters workshop, tour guide training, and the History of Alder Gulch. Additional staff that assisted with the training included Bill Peterson, Curator of Interpretation – Introduction to the Dept. of Education and Interpretation, Julie Johnson, Visitor Services Manager- Introduction to Visitor Services, Jana Norby, Curator of Collections- Introduction to Collections, and John Ellingsen, Curator of History- Tour guide training for volunteers. Volunteer staff trainers included; Brenda Thyer – Historic Foodways demonstrations, Sterling Schmidt – Effective Demonstration techniques, Duell Thyer – Impromptu exercises,*

*and Terry Drought- Character Development and Timelines. Forty two volunteers attended the interpretive training workshop. Additional training will be conducted for interpretive volunteers during the daily briefings held in Nevada City during the summer events. Dan had a speaking engagement during the first part of the month with the Red Lodge Montana Historical Society and the Carnegie Library friends group, in a partnership with the Montana Committee for the Humanities, Dan promoted the Montana Heritage Commission, Virginia City and Nevada City, Dept. of Education and Interpretation, and the Living History Program. Dan also worked with Linda Wruck of the Montana Historical Society to assist her with planning, and personnel involved in History Camp.*

❖ **Volunteers:** *Jacqueline Marotta arrived back on site and will be working as a volunteer with maintenance projects, cleanup projects and interpretive projects until the Nevada City opens for the season. Barbara Rudio is on site and will be working as a volunteer in the Curatorial center until mid-May. Shelly Theimer also worked on grounds keeping projects in Nevada City with her two boys Carson and Lander.*

❖ **Safety-** *Dan Thyer is in the process of certifying as an American Heart Association First Aid and CPR instructor. He will be able to certify staff and seasonal employees. During the past Chester High School program, Dan Thyer, and Maureen Wicks brother performed first aid on a student that had a cut on his wrist, resulting from an accident that occurred in the Bonanza Inn. The student was transported to the emergency room in Ennis, examined by medical staff and released.*

❖ **Music Machines**

❖ **Movies**

❖ **Miscellaneous**

Submitted by Bill Peterson, Curator of Interpretation  
Written by John Ellingsen, Dan Thyer, and Bill Peterson

Chester High School  
 Maureen Wicks  
 Alder Gulch Visit  
 April 28-29 2008  
 Montana Heritage Commission

	Monday	Tuesday
<b>Morning</b>		7-8:30 Breakfast? 8:30-9:15-Group A—Research - Primary and Secondary Sources Group B—Using Archaeology  9:15-10-Group A—Using Archaeology Group B—Research- Primary and Secondary Sources  10-12- Group A—Frontier cooking with Dan Thyer Group B—Frontier Cooking with Brenda Thyer
<b>Afternoon</b>	Lunch?? 1PM Arrive at VC 1:30-3PM Tour of VC with Janna Norby, Jeff MacDonald, Bill Peterson 3-4:30 PM Tour of NC with Cecile Gevock, Bill Peterson, Dan Thyer	12-12:30-Lunch at Sedman House Yard 12:30- 1:30-Scavenger Hunt in NC 1:30-2- Wrap-up  2PM Leave
<b>Evening</b>	Dinner?  8PM Ghost walk with  Stay the night at Bonanza Inn	