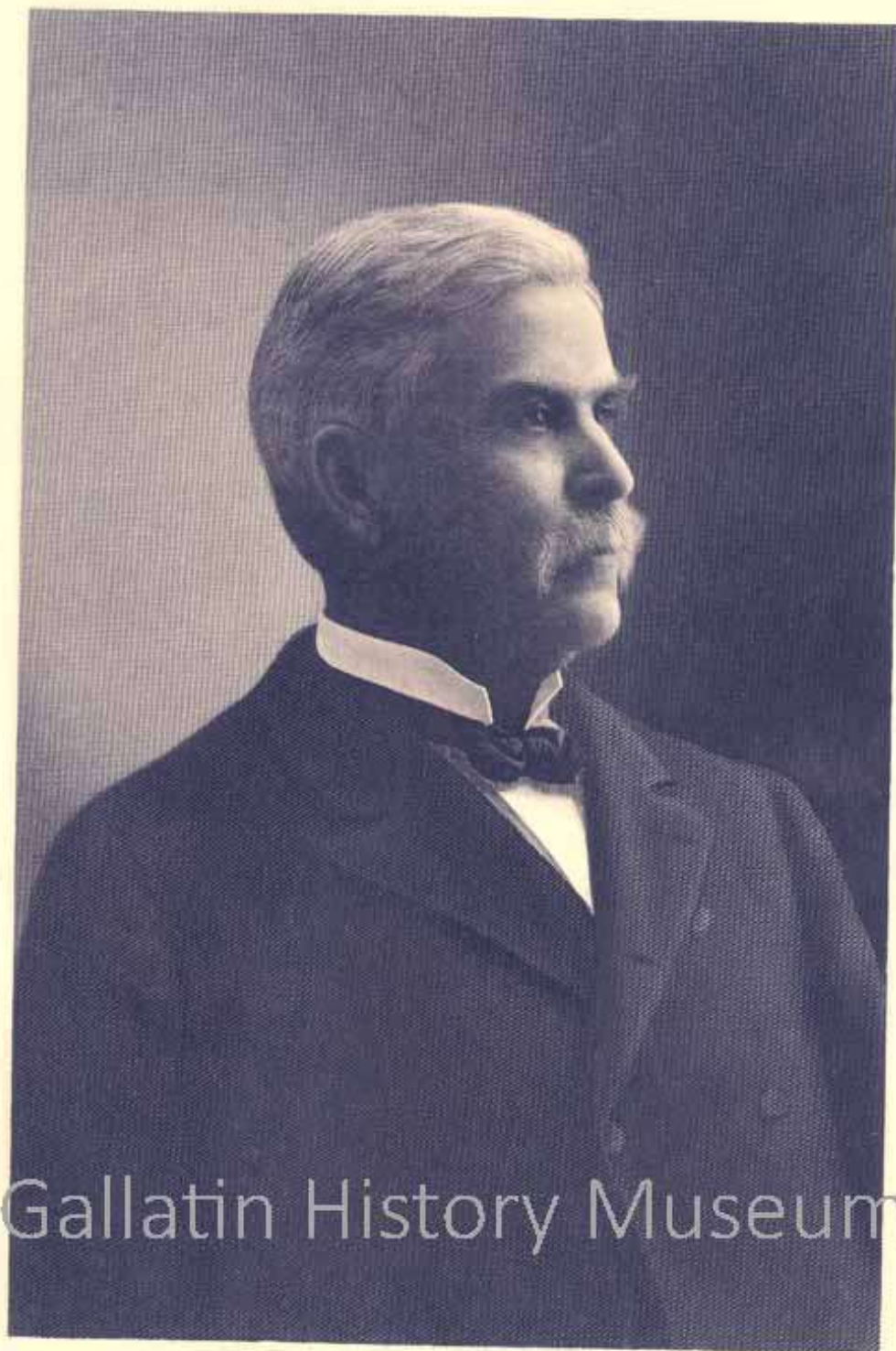
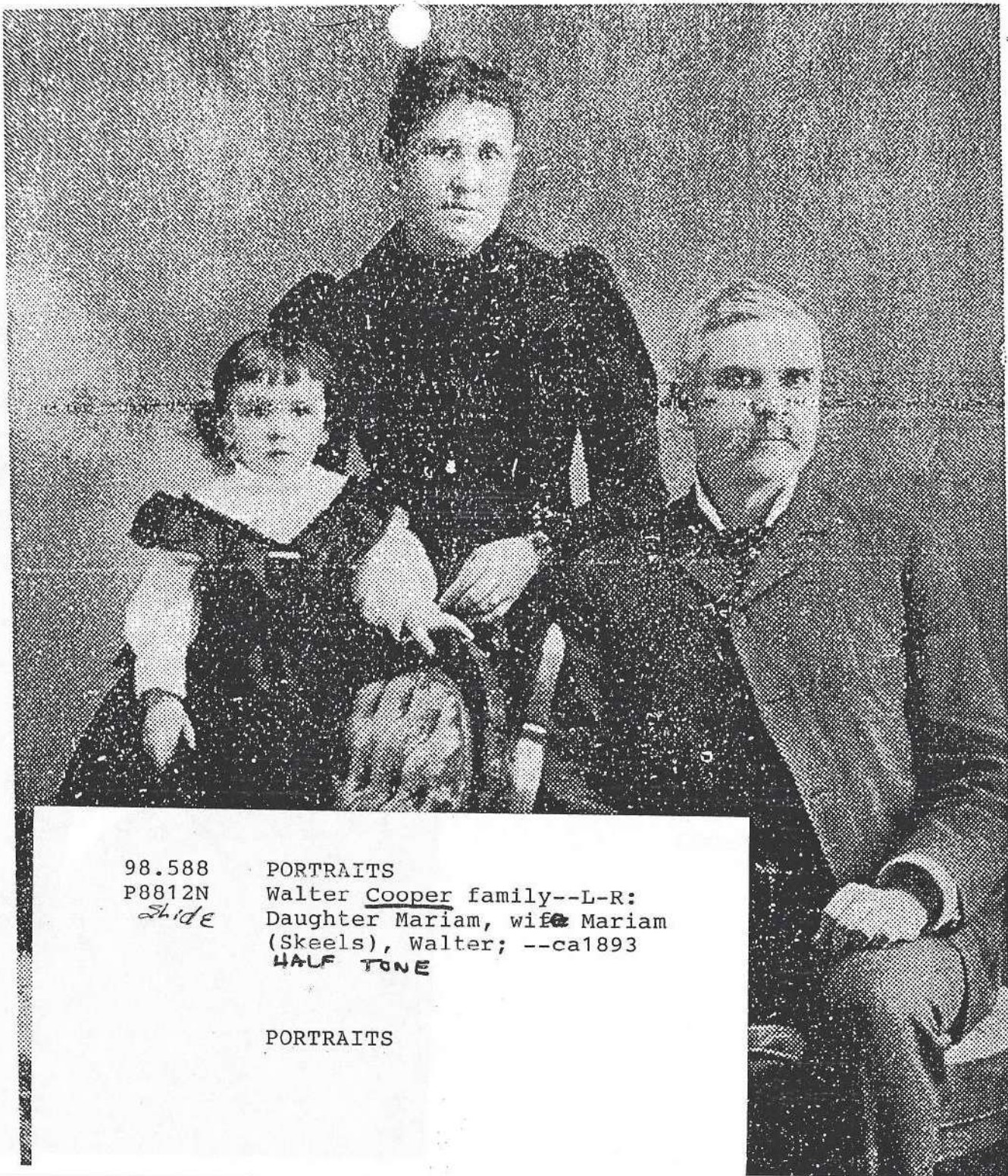


Walter Cooper



Gallatin History Museum

Walter Cooper.



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PORTRAITS
Walter Cooper family--L-R:
Daughter Mariam, wife Mariam
(Skeels), Walter; --ca1893
HALF TONE

PORTRAITS

From *Bozeman and the Gallatin
Valley: a history*
by Phyllis Smith

chapter



T W E N T Y -
T H R E E

Although Montana did not accord women the right to vote until 1914, a few Bozeman matrons had been voting along with the men since 1883. Women of property could vote in school elections throughout the valley, but were specifically denied the franchise during the tax assessment election in 1874. Somehow, that restriction was left out of the voting requirements for the incorporation election of March 1883. Word of this omission quietly circulated around town and, as the *Avant Courier* reported, "several prominent ladies of Bozeman, whose names appear on the assessment list, exercised the right of suffrage."¹ A few grumbling males called for annulment of the election or, at least, for the removal of the female votes. Since the final tally for incorporation numbered 123 to 18, the complainers realized that nothing would be accomplished by tracking down the few female voters.

Just as the Women's Christian Temperance Union members were interested in female suffrage in addition to closing down saloons and liquor stores, so did a new Bozeman women's group have a multiple purpose. Established in 1894 with the motto "Our Kingdom is Our Home," the Bozeman State Housekeeper's Society vowed to "encourage and stimulate interest in more scientific methods of housekeeping," as well as studying history, literature,

and modern methods of child care. The group of local businessmen's wives—Mariam Skeels Cooper, Ellen Trent Story, Mary Long Alderson, and Nellie Koch—also discussed national women's issues, such as "rational dress" to allow females greater freedom of movement. After all, said Mary Alderson, quoting national feminist leader Celia B. Whitehead, "until woman is allowed to have ankles, there is no hope for her brains."²

Bozeman women began to study local and state government, concentrating on voting rights and a new municipal concept—community zoning. They discussed setting aside land for public parks, improving local schools, and encouraging public health. In 1920, another women's group was established. The Women's Club of Bozeman would in a short time become a powerful force in municipal policy.

In 1865, the shape of Gallatin County was that of a large square block covering most of south-central Montana, one of the largest county units in the nation at that time. Its jurisdiction has been whittled down since then, to its present measures of one hundred and sixteen miles long and from twelve to forty-nine miles wide. The northern part of the county was sliced off to form Meagher County

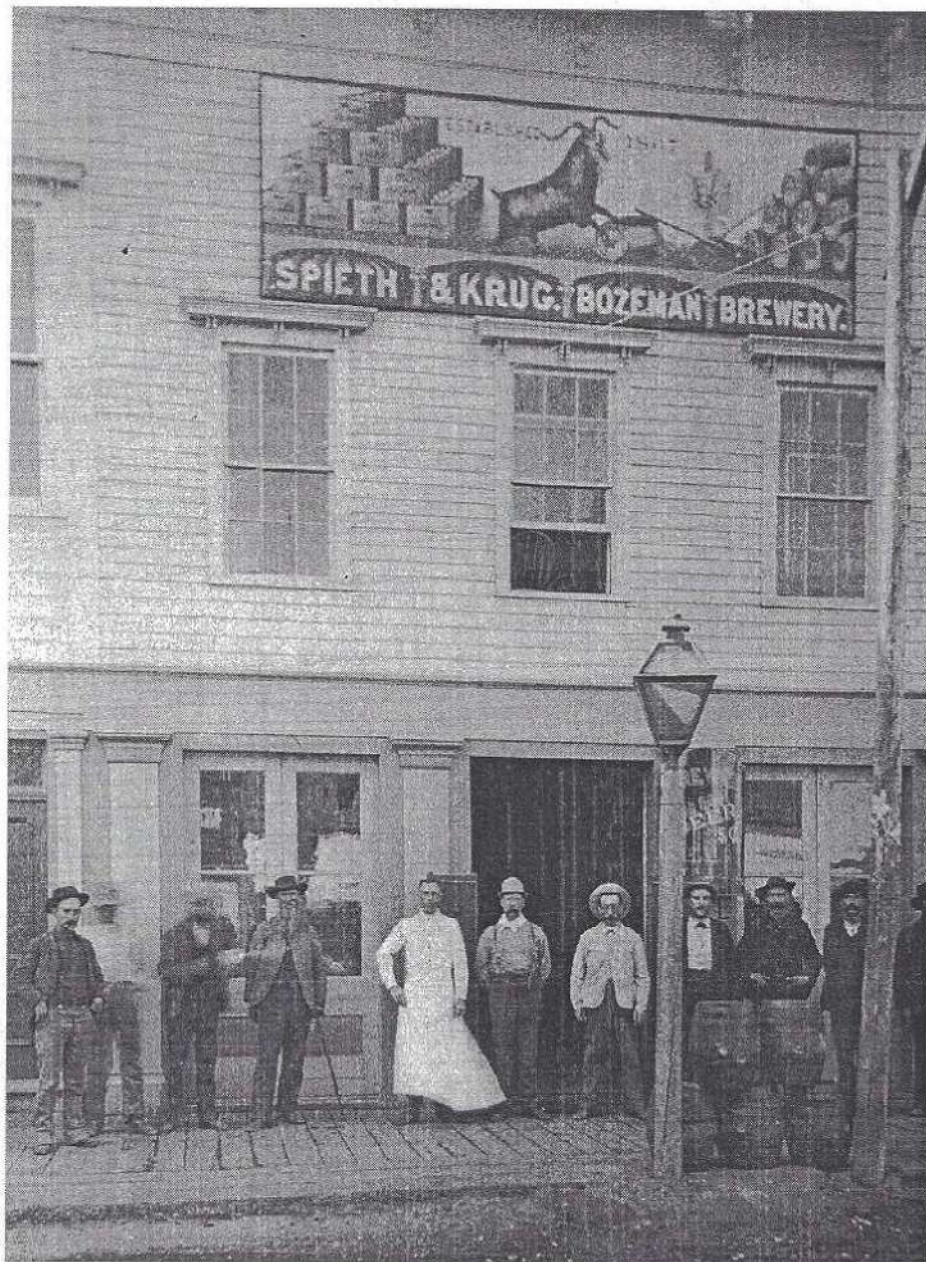
From *Bozeman and the Gallatin Valley: a history*
by Phyllis Smith

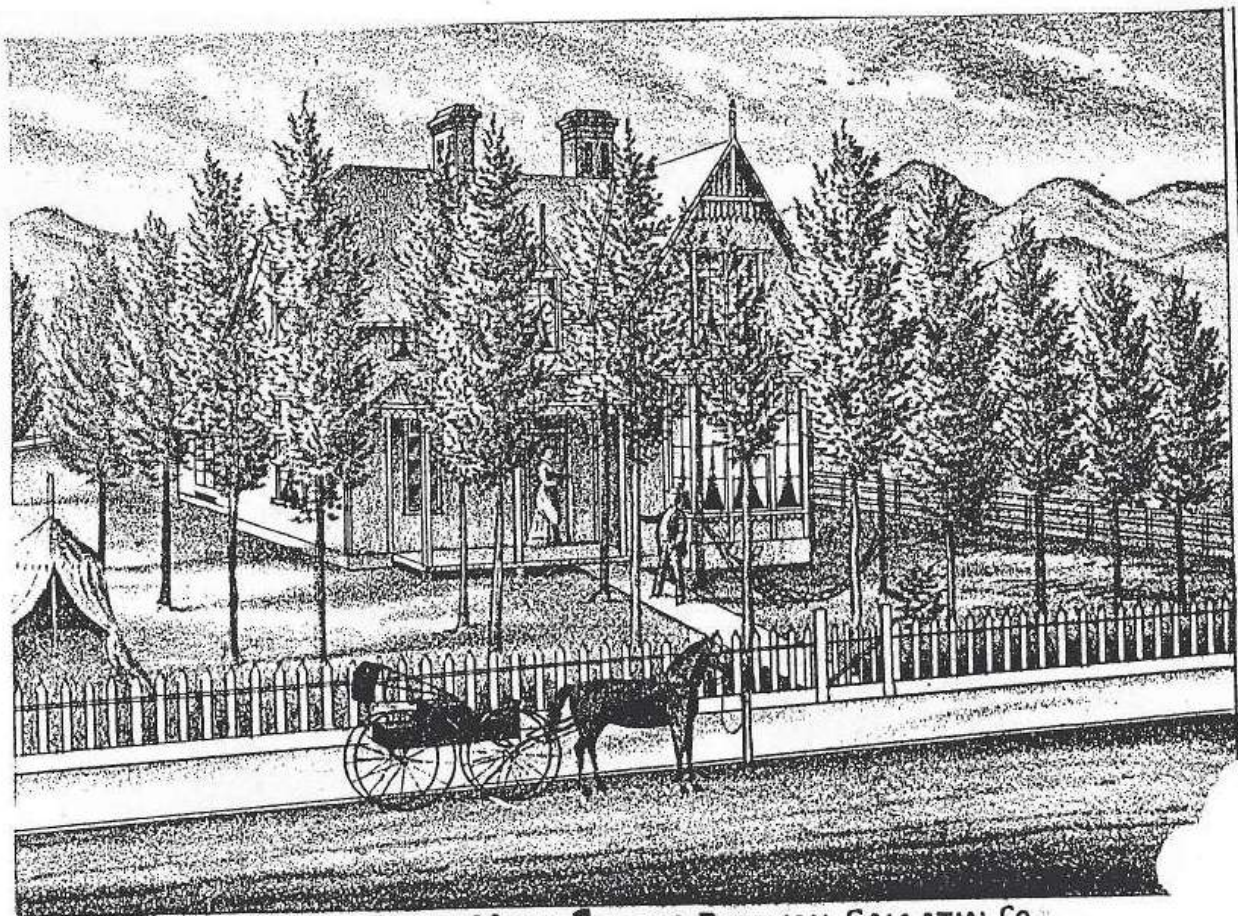
300 block, and the Willsons would move to their 504 South Willson Avenue home in 1886.)

Walter Cooper did not travel back to the States to fetch his bride; he brought Miriam Skeels in to Guy House from Jefferson County. Samuel Ruffner shyly told everyone he was going to Salt Lake City for supplies; he brought back Mrs. Ruffner as well. Eventually Leander M. Black bought Guy House, changing its name to the Northern Pacific Hotel, in anticipation of the railroad coming west.

Another hotel, the Metropolitan, one of the settlement's first brick structures, opened its doors in 1867 on the northeast corner of Bozeman Avenue and Main Street. Its second story opened on a balcony built over the wooden sidewalk; there residents passed the time, watching wagon and mule trains plod through Main Street mud. The Metropolitan was later called the Grand LaCledé, but it never enjoyed the social prestige of Guy House.

*Spieth & Krug Bozeman
Brewery. Left to right:
unidentified men and 3-Jim
Latta, Sr.; 4-Jim Latta, Jr.;
5-A. Pierstorff; 6-F. Roy;
7-Joe LaBrec; 10-Jim Gee.*

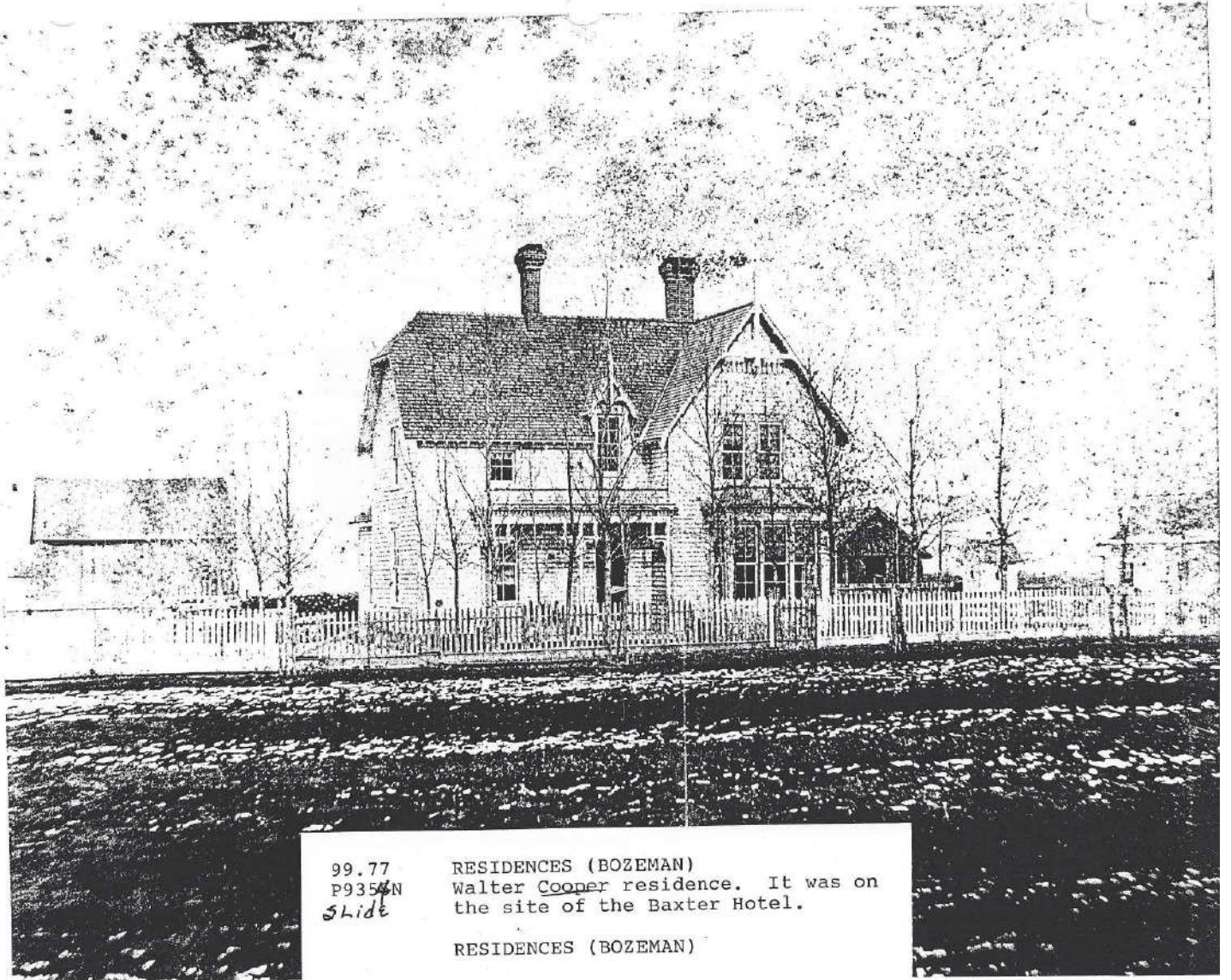




RES. OF WALTER COOPER, MAIN STREET, BOZEMAN, GALLATIN CO.

90.2026 RESIDENCES (BOZEMAN)
P1462 Residence of Walter Cooper, Main Str.
Bozeman. Etching.
From Leeson: History of Montana, 1885
notebook

RESIDENCES (BOZEMAN)



99.77
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Slide

RESIDENCES (BOZEMAN)
Walter Cooper residence. It was on
the site of the Baxter Hotel.

RESIDENCES (BOZEMAN)



Walter Cooper

born 1843 in New York
died 1905

Miriam Skeels Cooper

born 1852 in Illinois
died 1925

Cooper came to Montana in 1863 after first going to the Colorado goldfields. He mined in Alder Gulch and worked at freighting supplies and hunting until he settled in Bozeman in 1869. He married Miriam Skeels in 1870. Their first child to survive was Miriam, born 20 years after their marriage. Cooper worked as a coal miner, merchant, and miller, and was a delegate to Montana's Constitutional Convention. He finished the first brick business house on Main Street in 1872. This was Bozeman's first armory and gun manufacturing company. He invented and patented many improvements of firearms and at one time manufactured a popular long-range hunter's rifle, the 50 caliber buffalo gun. He worked energetically in the fur business. In 1864, he secured control of the coal fields at Rocky Fork and built a railway for their development.

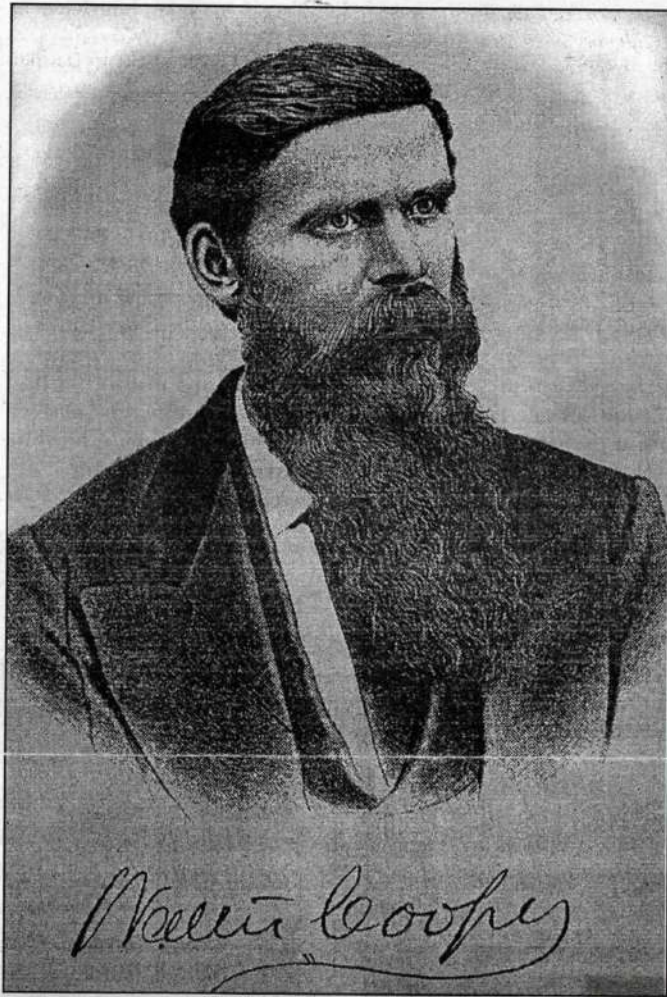
In 1902, he organized the Walter Cooper Company, a lumbering operation which manufactured over 2.5 million railroad ties and other timber products at what is now Gallatin Gateway. His logging roads opened up the Gallatin Canyon to travel. In 1899, he organized the Bozeman Waterworks Company and was instrumental in the construction of what has been called the most perfect system of waterworks in the Northwest. He operated one of the largest flour mills in the state, was an avid reader, and owned the townsite of Red Lodge. Cooper Park is named after this family.

WALTER COOPER: BOZEMAN'S EMPIRE BUILDER

Born on July 4, 1843 in Cayuga County, New York, to a farming family, Walter Cooper's earliest years were spent with his Scotch and Irish parents. When he was six, his parents moved to Shiawassee County, Michigan, where Cooper remained until October 1858, when he decided to move West. By December of that year fifteen-year-old Cooper had found employment as a teamster in Leavenworth, Kansas, where he worked until the Spring of the following year. He then followed the gold rush for Pike's Peak, Colorado.

Cooper pursued other gold rushes as far south as Mexico during the Civil War years before making his way up to Alder Gulch, Montana, in February of 1864. There Cooper initially engaged in mining activity, but soon his interests shifted to the more lucrative business of freighting goods between Fort Benton and the mining camps of southwestern Montana. Cooper continued hunting, ranching, and freighting goods in the area until the fall of 1869, when he moved to Bozeman, established a firearms and sporting goods house, and married Miriam Skeels, a native of Illinois.

Cooper's business quickly grew to become "the most extensive establishment of its kind in the West," and he profited hand-



Rocky Fork and Cooke City Railroad.

Cooper led a vigorous civic life as well. Between 1883 and 1885, he was President of the Bozeman Board of Trade and served as a member of Bozeman's first City Council. Upon Montana's admission to the Union in 1889, Cooper was elected to the state Constitutional Convention and played a significant role in that process as Chairman of the Committee on Appointments and Representation. That same year he developed Bozeman's municipal water system, which he later sold to the City of Bozeman at a considerable profit. Soon afterward, the governor appointed Cooper to the local executive board of the newly-established Montana State College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts.

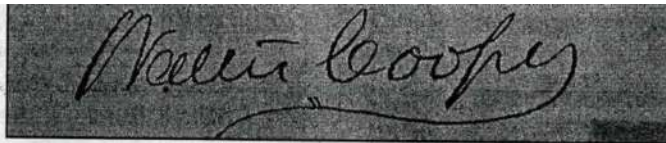
Shortly after the turn of the last century, Cooper established extensive lumbering operations on the Taylor's Fork and elsewhere to furnish the Northern Pacific and other railroad companies with needed supplies. During the Spring runoff, Cooper's workers floated railroad ties and saw logs down the Gallatin River from the Taylor's Fork to Central Park, where a large sawmill processed the harvest and prepared it for shipment by rail. Incredibly, Cooper produced some two and one-

ing goods house, and married Miriam Skeels, a native of Illinois.

Cooper's business quickly grew to become "the most extensive establishment of its kind in the West," and he profited handsomely. Cooper's thorough knowledge of the wants of trappers, hunters and mountain men led to his invention and introduction of many important improvements in firearms and traps, some of which were patented and passed into widespread use. Employing as many as twelve skilled gunsmiths, Cooper's highly-mechanized armory manufactured all sizes of weapons, including the 50-caliber Sharps Buffalo Gun, "the most famous long-range rifle ever used in the West."

Not surprising, Cooper became

Main Street Star - Winter 2000 Issue No. 3



one of the first and most extensive fur and buffalo hide traders in eastern Montana in 1872. Within three years Bozeman became second only to Fort Benton in importance in Montana Territory as a shipping point for furs, robes and hides. Purchasing furs and hides from trappers, hunters and Indians living along the Yellowstone River, Cooper shipped his sought after commodities to St. Louis and won recognition as one of the first to utilize steamboats for commercial purposes on the Yellowstone.

For nearly a decade Cooper did an immense business.

By the early 1880s, the buffalo herds of the northern plains had been decimated and Cooper invested his growing financial resources in real estate both locally and throughout the state of Montana. Recognizing the opportunities presented by the recent arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad, Cooper obtained control of the Rocky Fork coal fields in Carbon County, developed the Townsite of Red Lodge, and constructed the

down the Gallatin River from the Taylor's Fork to Central Park, where a large sawmill processed the harvest and prepared it for shipment by rail. Incredibly, Cooper produced some two and one-half million railroad ties prior to

1907, when a national depression interrupted his profitable undertaking.

Walter Cooper died in Bozeman in late April 1924 at the age of 80. His obituary in the *Bozeman Courier* noted that his passing ended "the career of one of the last surviving members of that race of hardy, honest, fearless and progressive Anglo Saxon empire builders who, through hardship and deprivation, paved the way for the modern day comforts and prosperity of the present generation."

Walter Cooper Gun Factory First To Produce Rifles With High Power and Speed

Louis Napoleon Bonaparte laid down his arms and surrendered to King William of Prussia, on the River Meuse, in 1870.

The rifles turned over to King William were manufactured with a smooth bore. The lead that spewed over those battlefields did not speed through the air, nor did the pellet have the hitting power of a present-day gun.

An inventor is merely a man who thinks. He is more or less a character that is not satisfied with the present way of doing things and does something about bringing about a change.

Walter Cooper, pioneer resident of Gallatin valley, also of the Territory of Montana, might possibly be classed as a pioneer inventor, along with his many other attributes. Mr. Cooper was not satisfied with just owning a gun, but desired to have a gun that would bring down game at great distances, and with bullets that would pierce the tough hide of a rhino.

To please his fancy Walter Cooper brought the means to the extremes and not only designed a gun to suit his fancy but entered into the process of making a gun having the "umph" and go-gettiveness of the modern weapon.

Up to 1870 a rifle knew nothing more than the smooth bore. Then came Walter Cooper with his gun shop in Bozeman. A gun shop in Montana Territory was a venture of an unheard of variety in 1870.

Nothing of its nature existed west of Massachussets. The procurement of a gun was a matter of long delay with much correspondence between the manufacturer in the east and the purchaser in the west.

In his first location on Main street Walter Cooper opened his first gunshop. He obtained the services of gunsmiths from the east.

Through the following years he employed as many as 12 gunsmiths, one of whom was a young man named Sam Crockett who followed the work on through the years in a shop of his own in Bozeman.

Walter Cooper was a man who constantly dealt in the future. He desired improvement and change. Not content with old methods, he sought easier and better ways to do the job. Then after careful thought and study he developed a rifling that changed the weapon to the modern gun of today. Instead of a bullet leaving the gun through a smooth chamber, with limited striking power, Walter Cooper, with his changed gun barrel caused the bullet to rotate as it met the air to give it the speed and hitting power of the present bullet.

Machines were designed and built by Mr. Cooper to manufacture his gun in larger quantities and orders came in from far and near.

In addition to rifling, the in-

ventor was the first gunsmith to use platinum on gun sights. Platinum was in those days an ore of limited use and at the time Mr. Cooper closed his business he still had on hand a large block of platinum which sold for many times an amount he paid for the ore.

Mr. Cooper's guns were extensively used by hunters of buffalo and platinum sights reflected rays of the sun which caused hunters to miss their mark. A change was brought about with a sight of bone replacing that of platinum and hunters sped their shots with true accuracy of the westerner.

The buffalo gun manufactured by Mr. Cooper was a 50 calibre. With rifling it had tremendous velocity and range. Ammunition for the gun was manufactured in the Cooper Gun shop.

The original patent on rifling, that was obtained by Walter Cooper, is now in use by many manufacturers. The government quickly seized this changed method of ejecting a bullet from the chamber of a gun and introduced rifling into their 12-inch guns, the first time it was used in larger firearms.

Mr. Cooper manufactured his guns in Bozeman until 1917 and at that time closed his shop to enter into other business enterprises. For his factory he bought the water rights of Lyman creek which he later sold to the city.

During 1912 he received a large order from seal hunters in Alaska for his particular gun which had been the standby of the buffalo hunters in the west.

Then one day came an order for two guns and 2,000 rounds of ammunition from Jim McGuire, living near Forsyth, Mont. Mr. Cooper made the guns and shipped the ammunition. Many years later Mr. Cooper accompanied by Gene Bunker visited at the ranch home of Jim McGuire.

When the two men met they looked each other over and then Walter Cooper stated, "Seems to me I shipped you two guns and some ammunition."

McGuire answered, "Yes, and it seems to me that I paid you for them."

Then both men smiled and Mr. Cooper said, "Yes, you did. I think this is our first meeting. Time have changed a lot. I had never heard of you when your order came in but we went right ahead on the guns. It was a nice order. Yes, times have changed."

Many of the guns manufactured by Walter Cooper were inscribed with his name and are today museum pieces. The guns were hand-wrought and built to the precision of the modern watch. When the trigger was pulled and a westerner

THE PIONEER SPIRIT



by **B. DEREK STRAHN**

The oldest surviving commercial building in Bozeman's Main Street Historic District is the Cooper/Black Building at 118 East Main St. Erected in 1872 — just eight years after the town's establishment — the structure is a tangible link to our community's ambitious beginnings and one of its most noteworthy pioneers, Walter Cooper.

When Bozeman witnessed the construction of the Cooper/Black building, it was little more than a frontier supply center for the still-thriving mining communities of Virginia City and Helena. Four years prior to Custer's defeat on the plains of eastern Montana, prosperity and permanence were anything but guaranteed. Consequently, this large masonry building was an expression of the optimistic hope that the Bozeman would remain a permanent settlement.

One of the most optimistic and influential of Bozeman's earliest entrepreneurs was Walter Cooper. Born on July 4, 1843, in Cayuga County, New York, Cooper migrated west in 1858. There he

worked as a teamster and followed several gold rushes before making his way up to Montana in February of 1864. At Alder Gulch he briefly engaged in mining activity, before turning to the more reliable and lucrative business of freighting goods between Fort Benton and the territory's bustling boom towns. In the fall of 1869, Cooper relocated to Bozeman, establishing one of the earliest sporting goods houses west of the Mississippi, and marrying Miriam Skeels, a native of Illinois.

In 1872, Cooper initiated construction of a large building on Main Street, confident that the establishment of Yellowstone National Park would spark further interest in his budding community. William Tracy, who had recently purchased a brick molding machine, provided materials for the area's first masonry structure.

Completed the following year during a severe national economic depression, Cooper's effort symbolized the determination of local residents in the face of almost insurmountable odds. By the close of 1873, the structure was occupied by L. M. Black's mercantile, a meat market, a drug store, and Cooper's very own Armory and Gun Manufactory, which sold Sharp's, Winchester and Remington rifles and Colt revolvers.

A thorough knowledge of the wants of trappers, hunters and mountain men led to Cooper's introduction of many important improvements in firearms and traps, some of which were patented and passed into widespread use. Employing as many as twelve skilled gunsmiths, Cooper's sophisticated operation repaired and manufactured numerous weapons, including the 50-caliber Sharps Buffalo Gun, the most famous long-range rifle ever used in the West.

By the mid-1870s, Cooper had become one of the most extensive fur and buffalo hide traders in

Montana. Thanks to his tireless efforts, Bozeman became the second largest shipping point in Montana for furs, robes and hides that Cooper purchased from area trappers, hunters and Indians. Determined to profit, the young capitalist transported the sought after commodities to St. Louis, winning recognition as one of the first to utilize steamboats for commercial purposes on the Yellowstone. For nearly a decade he did an immense business.

By the early 1880s, however, hunters decimated the buffalo herds and Cooper turned to other profitable enterprises. Recognizing the opportunities presented by the recent arrival of the Northern Pacific, he obtained control of the Rocky Fork coal fields in Carbon County, developed the townsite of Red Lodge, and constructed the Rocky Fork and Cooke City Railroad.

More than an industrious businessman, Cooper led a vigorous civic life as well. Between 1883 and 1885, he was president of the Bozeman Board of Trade and served as a member of Bozeman's first City Council. Following Montana's 1889 admission to the Union, Cooper served as a delegate to the state Constitutional Convention and a local executive for the newly established Montana State College of Agriculture and Mechanical

Arts. He also developed a municipal water system, which he later sold to the City of Bozeman at a considerable profit.

Shortly after the turn of the last century, Cooper established extensive lumbering operations on the Taylor's Fork. During the spring runoff, his employees floated railroad ties and saw logs down the Gallatin River to Central Park, where a large sawmill processed the harvest and prepared it for shipment by rail. Incredibly, Cooper's operations produced some two and one-half million railroad ties prior to 1907, when yet another *continued*

PRESERVATION

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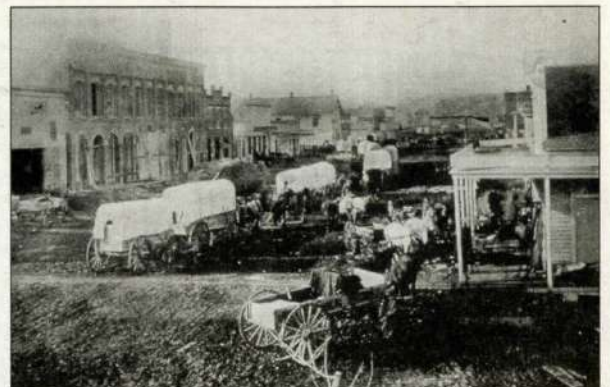
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Following the entrepreneur's death, Roecher's Drug operated in his building at 118 East Main St. In 1940, the new owner hired local architect Fred Willson to modernize the storefront with Carrara Glass and other amenities, some of which still remain today.

Originally 11 bays wide, the

Cooper/Black Building was reduced to only seven bays in 1972, when the bank immediately to the west, at 104 East Main, expanded. Nonetheless, the building retains its attractive brick corbeling and brick arched keystones over the remaining windows. Although modified from its original appearance, Main Street's oldest edifice remains an important reminder of Bozeman's early aspirations and Walter Cooper's historical significance in the American West.

B. Derek Strahn is a former historic preservation officer for the city of Bozeman and now teaches social studies at Bozeman High. He can be reached at DerekStrahn@msn.com.



Construction of the Cooper/Black building, shown in this 1872 photograph, demonstrated Cooper's resolve that Bozeman would prosper.

QUEEN IS NAMED

MISS MARIAM COOPER IS CHOSEN TO FILL THAT HIGH PLACE IN CARNIVAL.

← Mariam + Walter Cooper's daughter

BIG EVENT IS DRAWING NEAR

Final Preparations Are Being Made For the Grandest Sweet Pea Carnival Ever Held Anywhere—Street Decorations are Nearly Completed And Merchants are Decorating.

The Queen! The Queen! Miss Mariam Cooper will be Queen of the Carnival.

A Bozeman girl and that proves her a natural queen. Born and all her life spent in Bozeman, there could be no flowers too sweet and beautiful to crown her with. The committee chose well and the city will be proud of Queen Mariam of the Carnival.

The carnival committee met last evening and discussed what was to be done and by whom, in the few days that are left before the parade shall start, and they found there was an overwhelming amount of detail to attend to and that a big force has got to give all their time to these closing days. On Wednesday evening, the 15th, the queen will be crowned, at 8 p. m., this to take place in front of the court house. This will be a pretty ceremony and also a pretty queen.

On the 16th the parade will start at ten a. m. from the east end of the pavement on Main street and go west to Fourth avenue where it will turn south, around the block of the county high school and back to Main street. The parade will then go east on Main to Central, thence down Central to Chas. Hartman's

fel, a Republican-Courier reporter given the privilege of a visit to the gentleman's Shorthorn ranch just west of Bozeman last Thursday. It is needless to say that the reporter laid the necessary requisites for a stock judge but it doesn't take an expert to recognize the superior quality of Mr. Zweifel's cattle. Of a herd of some eighty head there is not a single second class animal but all are in good condition and all have prizes, except the yearlings and calves which have never been shown.

It is a well known fact that during the six years in which Mr. Zweifel has been breeding thoroughbred cattle in Montana that he has taken ninety per cent of the first prizes in the county and state fairs held in Montana and has also carried away prizes from the international stock show in Chicago.

At the present time the leader of the herd is Golden Prince, a magnificent animal recently purchased by Mr. Zweifel in Minnesota. Golden Prince has thus far been invincible and has taken the first prizes in countless stock shows, notwithstanding that he is only two years old. He supercedes Bapton Victor, one of the finest Shorthorn bulls ever brought to the west. Bapton Victor, now ten years old, has been a prize winner in his life, having won the grand prize at the St. Louis World's Fair when he was but a calf.

Mr. Zweifel is planning on exhibiting his young stock, including Golden Prince, at the Inter-State fair in Chicago next week. He scarcely expects to win any first prizes as his competitors are professional show animals from the finest herds in the United States. However, Mr. Zweifel is generous and will show his animals even if they are left out of the money entirely. He is left out of the money entirely but can to promote the fair.

McCALL-GOTTSCHALCK

One of the happiest social events of the season

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street. The parade will then go east on Main to Central, thence down Central to Chas. Hartman's where it will turn west on Alderson street, south on Grand one block and back to Central, north on the east side of Central to Main and then east on Main to the starting point.

This will be the line of the parade. Remember it. Cut this out and put it in your pocket and then line your friends up on Central where the beautiful foliage for a back ground will best show the beauties of the flower trimmed rigs. Get everyone out south so they will see the city—the Sweet Pea City—Bozeman the Beautiful.

And now what is this parade to consist of? Of your rigs, your floats, gotten up by you for your city. Have you a rig of some kind? The carnival committee finds they are short of rigs and they appeal to you to show your love for your town and valley by hustling a rig for the parade. It does not matter what the rig is, just so it is flower-trimmed. Dogs, goats led animals, men and women afoot, anything to add to the beauty or the humor of this, our carnival time.

The Queen's coronation stand goes up today and the Misses Buell will have charge of its decoration and work more than eight hours per day to decorate it, too. All the details will be taken care of these next few days but you may be called on to help out. Be ready to do your part.

The columns for Main street are all built and ready for the stucco, enough to run from the city hall to Grand avenue.

Don't forget we must decorate every building on Main street. Every front should be well trimmed and not a few rags either, this is our day to show the beauty of our town. Make your store front a creditable one and your store windows the best ever.

There will be a ball on the evening of the 15th in Elks hall; then there will be the Queen's ball on the evening of the 16th, in Elks hall and in the Knights of Columbus hall.

GAMBLERS CAUGHT

Chief of Police Werling and Patrolman Sheridan made a raid on one of the little shacks just west of the library building on Thursday evening

One of the happiest social events of the season took place at the home of Mr. and Mrs. August Gottschalk at 8 o'clock Wednesday evening when their daughter was united in marriage to Mr. Geo. A. McCall.

The ceremony was preformed by Rev. Milton H. H. Lee of the Christian church in the presence of a large company of friends.

The bride was gowned in a beautiful creation of lace over white while the groom wore the conventional black. Miss Amie Lovelace acted as bridesmaid and James Corbin as best man while the place of man of honor was filled by Mrs. E. Hocman a sister of the bride.

To the strains of the wedding march by Mendelssohn played by Miss A. Piedalue the bridal party entered the room where the beautiful and impressive wedding ceremony was preformed. About 100 guests were present. The following ladies assisted the hostess in entertaining: Mesdames St. Vollmer, Jump, and Nickolson. Misses Anna Krueger, Alice Piedalue, Edna Lewis and Ella Arnold.

The house was beautifully decorated for the occasion, the hall being bare in mountain ash, the dining room festooned with golden glow and the parlor made magnificent with Edman's favorite flower, the sweet

Mr. and Mrs. McCall left Thursday morning on No. 3 for Butte where they will take the Oregon Short Line for Salt Lake City and Denver. After a short wedding trip will return to their home in St. Louis, Mo.

Both bride and groom have long been among the most popular young people in Bozeman, where Mr. McCall held a responsible position with the Rose Drug company for some years past and the bride has been one of the city's fairest daughters. Many valuable presents of silverware, cut and cut glass were received as tokens of friendship, and the best wishes of the whole community will follow the young couple to their new home.

PATTEE-KEIFER

A very pretty wedding occurred in this city on Wednesday, August 12, when Paul D. Pattee and Miss Mabel Kiefer were united in marriage.

The marriage ceremony was solemnized with the Nuptial Mass at

Republican
Sept 7, 1909
Call
page 1

Brigade), First Division, First Army Corps, which opened the fight. After this memorable conflict he participated in the movement in following Lee's defeated army back into Virginia; fought the battle of Mine Run, and spent the winter of 1863 at Culpeper Court House, Va. May 3, 1864, the army crossed the Rapidan and started on Grant's great campaign against Richmond. Mr. Stuart was taken prisoner near Hanover Junction, and thereafter confined in Andersonville prison about seven months, enduring all the horrors of that infamous prison pen; also imprisoned about four months at Florence, S. C., whence he was taken to Goldsboro, N. C., exchanged and sent to Annapolis, where he entered the hospital, suffering from scurvy. He weighed at this time 127 pounds, his usual weight being 200 pounds. When sufficiently recuperated he proceeded to Indianapolis, where he was mustered out, March 17, 1865, having served six months over the period for which he enlisted.

In 1865 Mr. Stuart removed to Quincy, Ill., and chancing to meet some persons who had just returned from Montana he was advised to go there for the benefit of his health. Accordingly, in February, 1866, he started for Montana by way of the Missouri river to Fort Benton, from which point he drove an ox team to Helena for Col. Broadwater. He thereafter engaged in mining at Hogan, and later at Radersburg, where he remained fifteen years, his efforts being attended with fair success. He then removed to Meagher county (1882) and engaged in stockraising. In 1889 he was appointed postmaster at Townsend, resigning in 1892. He removed that year to Winston, and with James S. Smith engaged in general merchandising until failing health led him to return to his ranch. He has since continued farming and stock-growing, having his original ranch in Meagher county and another in Broadwater county, where he maintains his home, the place being located twenty-two miles southeast of Townsend, his postoffice address. Mr. Stuart still holds mining property at Winston, and is being worked at the present time.

In politics he has ever been a stalwart Republican; and in 1870 he was elected to the council of the territorial legislature as representative for Lewis and Clarke and Jefferson counties. Fraternally he is identified with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, having joined the order at Moore's Hill, Ind., in 1860. On November 17, 1880, Mr. Stuart was united in marriage to Miss

Carrie Maybell, who was born in Mineral Point, Wis., the daughter of Dr. Aaron Maybell. Mr. and Mrs. Stuart are the parents of five children: Robert W., Frank C., Jesse H., Nellie C. and Alex T.

WALTER COOPER was born in the town of Sterling, Cayuga county, state of New York, July 4, 1843, and was the third son of Andrew H. and Sarah E. Cooper. His paternal grandfather was of Irish descent, and his grandfather on the mother's side was of Scotch descent. Both father and mother were from the town of Argyle, Washington county, N. Y. Argyle was founded by Donald McGillvra, great-grandfather of Mr. Cooper, and was by him named for his birthplace, Argyle county, Isle of Mull, Scotland, where he was born in 1723, and whence he came to America, first to Canada, as a private soldier in the British army. He served with Gen. Wolfe during the latter's campaign against the French, and fought under Wolfe on the plains of Abraham, September 13, 1759. This sturdy Scotch soldier gained an enviable reputation for courage and stability, and was honorably discharged with the rank of lieutenant September 14, 1763. The original discharge is now in the possession of the family.

After his discharge Donald McGillvra went directly to New York city, where he remained three years, and then located at the town of Hebron, in Washington county, N. Y. There he remained a number of years. Having espoused the American cause, he joined the Continental army, and entered the Revolutionary struggle. In 1789 he again settled in Washington county and founded the town of Argyle, where he died in 1812, aged eighty-nine years. George Cooper, grandfather of Mr. Cooper on the father's side, and Daniel McGillvra, son of Donald McGillvra, grandfather on the mother's side, emigrated from Washington county, N. Y., to the town of Sterling, Cayuga county, N. Y., arriving April 27, 1827, and being among the early settlers in that section. George Cooper was of Irish parentage and served in the war of 1812, being stationed at Fort Oswego, where he was taken prisoner by the British squadron under Sir James Yoo, who captured the fortress in 1814.

Andrew H. Cooper, father of Walter Cooper, was born at Argyle, Washington county, N. Y., in 1813, and married Sarah E. McGillvra, daughter

of Daniel McGillyra, at the town of Sterling, Cuyuga county, N. Y., October 30, 1832.

Sarah E. McGillyra was born in Washington county, N. Y., November 29, 1814. Mr. Cooper lived in the near vicinity of Sterling until 1845, when he emigrated with his family, consisting of wife and four sons, to Shiawassee county, Mich., where he died June 24, 1851, leaving a wife and six sons.

Shortly after the death of his father, at the age of eight years Walter was sent to Lansing, Mich., to live with a maternal aunt, with whom he lived three years. Becoming dissatisfied, he ran away, and hence we find him at the early age of twelve, working as a farm hand in the summer and in the lumber camps in northern Michigan in winter, depending upon his own resources. Mrs. Cooper had in the meantime returned to New York, taking her second and three younger sons.

The fall of 1858 Walter started west, reaching Leavenworth, Kan., in the month of November, where he passed the winter, doing such work as he could find to do until February, 1859, when he crossed the plains to Pike's Peak. In the spring of 1860 he joined a prospecting expedition to the San Juan mountains. The party left Denver, Colo., early in May, and visited Old Mexico. Returning to Colorado in the winter of 1861, our subject spent the summer and fall of 1862 near Colorado Springs, acting at times as scout for the First Colorado Regiment. In November, 1863, he started for Montana (then Idaho), arriving at Virginia City in February, 1864, and engaging in mining in Alder gulch. In May he became interested in a freight train, with which he started for Fort Benton to meet the steamboats, expecting to return to Virginia City with freight. During 1864 the water was so low in the Missouri river that little freight reached Fort Benton, and he was forced to return with his teams empty. Arriving at Virginia City in August, he disposed of his train, fitted out a team with supplies for winter, and passed the winter of 1864-5 in the Missouri river valley, spending his time hunting. In the spring of 1865 he engaged in mining with varying success until the fall of 1869, when he settled in Bozeman, Gallatin county, Mont.

On the 19th of April, 1870, Mr. Cooper married Miss Mariam D. Skeels, only daughter of Nelson Skeels, of Boulder valley, Jefferson county, Mont. Nelson Skeels, father of Mrs. Cooper, was born at Columbus, Ohio, in 1822. His father, Reuben

Skeels, was born in the state of New York. Lanman Skeels, father of Reuben Skeels, a Revolutionary soldier, was born in the state of New York in 1753, and died near Columbus, Ohio, in 1804. The family has since resided at Bozeman. Mr. and Mrs. Cooper have had one son and two daughters born to them, the son and one daughter having died in infancy; they have one daughter, Mariam Cooper, living, aged eleven years.

In 1870 Mr. Cooper engaged in mercantile pursuits at Bozeman. He also engaged extensively in the fur business in 1872, giving this branch of business such energy and attention that, as a result of his efforts, Bozeman in three years became second in importance, in Montana, as a shipping point for fur robes and skins. Mr. Cooper invented and patented many improvements in fire-arms, and at one time manufactured the most famous long ranger hunting rifle ever used in the west. He was selected as one of the incorporators of the city of Bozeman in 1883 and was a member of the first city council; was nominated for mayor of the city of Bozeman in 1888, but declined for business reasons. On the organization of the board of trade of Bozeman, in 1883, Mr. Cooper became its first president, serving two years. In 1884 he was elected to the constitutional convention as delegate at large, and was made chairman of the committee on privileges and elections. He was again elected to the constitutional convention in 1889 on the admission of Montana to the Union, and was made chairman of the committee on appointment and representation. As chairman of this committee, Mr. Cooper reported and advocated the adoption of an article giving one senator to each county. The article was ratified by the convention, and became a part of the constitution, and is appreciated, being considered a safeguard against reckless legislation.

Mr. Cooper was selected as a delegate at large to the national Democratic convention held at Chicago in 1892, and served on the committee on credentials. Mr. Cooper was nominated as an elector on the Democratic ticket in 1892. He was elected president of the State Pioneer Society in 1892, serving two years, and was president of the pioneer society of Gallatin county in 1893. He served as a member of the legislature of 1895, and secured the passage of an act which made possible the erection and equipment of the buildings now occupied by the Montana State Col-

lege of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. He was appointed in 1892 as a member of the executive board of the Agricultural College, serving six years.

When, in 1889, the city of Bozeman wanted a supply of fresh water for fire protection and domestic use, Mr. Cooper organized the Bozeman Water Works Company, and caused the construction of the most perfect system of water works in the northwest. He became vice-president and one of the largest stockholders of the company. In 1884 he secured control of the coal fields on Rocky Fork, and, with his associates, brought about the building of the Rocky Fork & Cooke City Railway, and the development of this great coal field, with its limitless supply of coal. As an enterprise bearing upon the general welfare of the state it will doubtless rank among the most important achievements of the last three decades.

Mr. Cooper has, among other things, devoted some of his attention to mining. He organized, and is president, of the Bozeman Gold and Silver Mining Company. He was also instrumental in organizing the Bozeman Milling Company, operating one of the largest flouring mills in the state, and was its first president, as well as its largest stockholder.

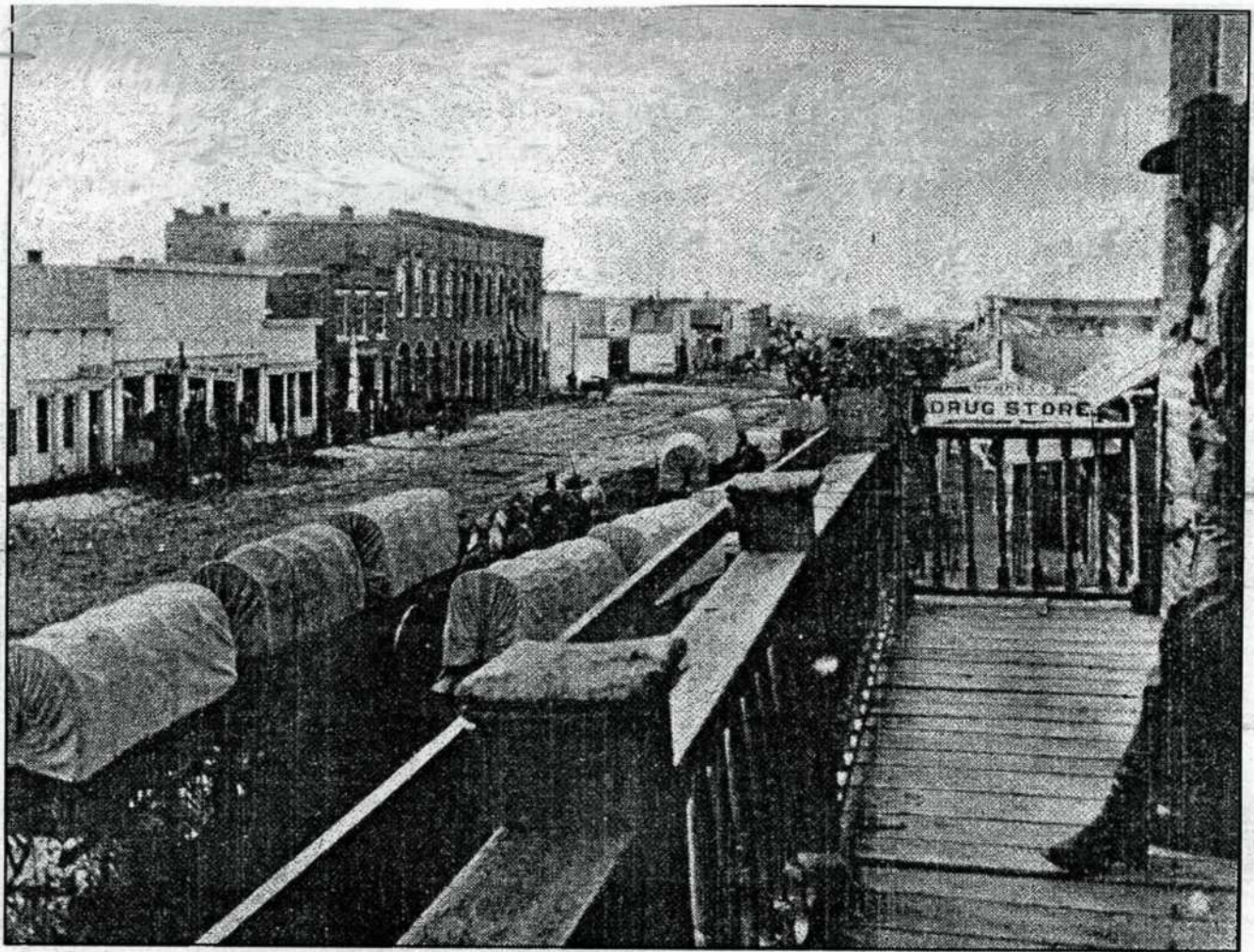
Mr. Cooper is identified with many other enterprises of a public and private nature. In politics he is a Democrat, and has taken a prominent part in the councils of his party since the formation of Montana as a territory. Mr. Cooper took an active part in the political affairs which agitated Montana in 1898 and 1900. He conducted the preliminary campaign which culminated in seating the regular Democratic delegates at the Kansas City convention, July 4, 1900. Later he successfully conducted the preliminary contest by which the regular Democratic party secured control of the state convention, and he was made its chairman. He was elected by the state convention chairman of the state central committee, and conducted the great campaign of 1900, which resulted in a complete victory for the regular Democratic national and state tickets, and the election of a large majority of the legislature, insuring the election of two Democratic United States senators.

THOMAS F. STEVENSON.—A scion of distinguished Irish ancestors who first settled in Washington county, Pa., about 1750 on land grant-

ed them by Lord Granville, and afterward moved to North Carolina, while some of the next generation emigrated to Kentucky, where he was born on May 26, 1846, Thomas Franklin Stevenson is well worthy of the high place he holds in the estimation of his neighbors and of the success he has achieved. His father, Samuel H. Stevenson, a native of Iredell county, N. C., was a Presbyterian clergyman and educator. He was reared on the plantation belonging to his father, attending the public schools and having private instruction at home until he was twenty-one years old, and then taking a course at Center College in Danville, Ky., where he was graduated in 1843. Soon thereafter he wedded Miss Minerva Franklin, a native of Oxford, Chenango county, N. Y., a daughter of Amos A. Franklin, whose father was a near relative of the distinguished Benjamin Franklin. He began active life for himself as an educator, teaching successfully for six years, then in 1854 relinquishing it and removing with his young family to Wisconsin. During that year and the next he attended the theological university at Danville, Ky., and was ordained a Presbyterian minister in 1855 and given the pastorate of two churches at Clinton, DeWitt county, Ill.

Thomas F. Stevenson, his oldest son, a second cousin of ex-Vice-President Adlai H. Stevenson, was taught in the public schools of Illinois as long as his health would permit, but that failed when he was only twelve years old. When he was eighteen, however, his health permitted him to attend Granville (Ill.) Academy, for a few terms, and after this he engaged in farming on account of his health until 1865. He then had two years' instruction in the State Normal University, then was a teacher for a year, after which he resided in Hayworth until 1870, going from there to Gilman, Ill., where he engaged in successful farming until 1886. In 1886 also he came to Montana, locating at Bozeman and taking a clerkship in a mercantile house, continuing in that capacity until 1900, when he purchased the White & Patterson ranches five miles south of the city. They contain 320 acres and are well irrigated. Here he has since made his home and is making many improvements preparatory to engaging in stockraising on a large scale. His buildings are of good quality and well located, and the entire place shows good husbandry and fine taste.

Mr. Stevenson is one of the leading men in the company which is building a dam at Mystic Lake



Main Street Bozeman with Cooper/Black Building. ca. 1873

MAIN STREET'S OLDEST EDIFICE

The oldest surviving commercial building in Bozeman's Main Street Historic District is the Cooper/Black Building at 118 East Main Street. Constructed in 1872—just eight years after Bozeman's founding—the Cooper/Black building is a tangible link to Bozeman's ambitious beginnings.

At the time of its construction, Bozeman was little more than a supply point for both western immigrants arriving from the east through Bozeman Pass and for still-thriving mining communities of Virginia City and Helena, Montana. While Bozeman's role was historically significant, its future

was anything but certain. The brick Cooper/Black building represents the optimism of Bozeman's earliest entrepreneurs that the

The Cooper/Black building is believed to be one of the first masonry structures in Bozeman.

town would remain a permanent settlement despite uncertainties about the Indian threat and the progress of the Northern Pacific

Railroad.

Although the Cooper/Black Building has undergone a substantial amount of alteration over the years, it nonetheless retains much of its original design. Originally eleven bays wide, the building was reduced in width to only seven bays in 1972, when First National Bank (104 East Main Street) expanded to the east. Nonetheless, the building retains its attractive brick corbeling and brick arched keystones over the remaining windows. Carrara glass—a remnant from a 1940 storefront remodel designed by architect Fred

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Willson—is another distinctive feature of this notable landmark.

Although several early residents collaborated in the construction of this early masonry business block, the principal driving forces behind the project were Leander M. Black and Walter Cooper. Black had arrived in Bozeman in 1869, after moderate success in the Pike's Peak gold rush a few years earlier, and established a general contracting and merchandise store.

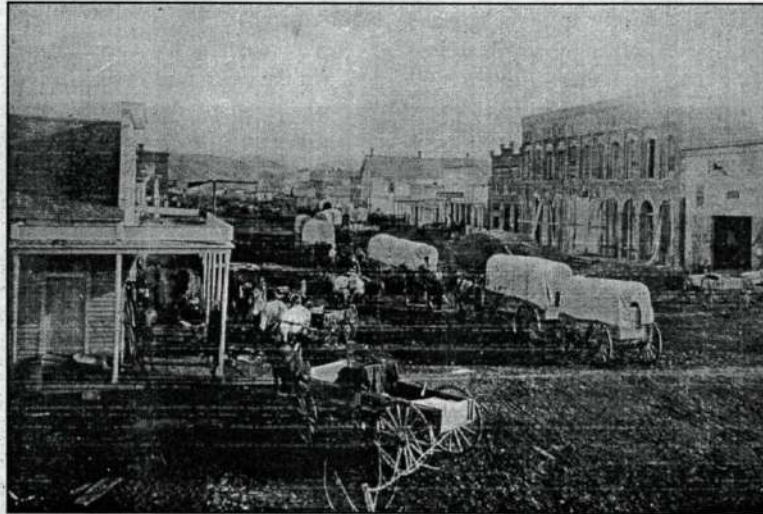
Cooper also arrived in Bozeman in 1869, establishing a firearms and sporting goods house, which quickly grew to be the most extensive in the West. Cooper soon expanded his business into Montana's only armory and gun manufacturing company, which sold Sharp's, Winchester, and Remington Rifles, Breech loading Shot Guns and Colt Revolvers. Cooper's business became a key player in the buffalo hide trade on the northern plains, and Cooper himself became a successful trader in the hides during the 1870s and early 1880s. Seeking to cash in on lucrative governmental contracts, Cooper's armory was also a major supplier of firearms and ammunition for Fort Ellis, some three miles east of Bozeman. Black and Cooper shared a frame business on the north side of Main Street between Black and Bozeman Streets, when

they solicited the assistance of other merchants in the construction of this enterprise.

Brick for the early masonry structure was supplied by William Tracy, who had purchased a brick molding machine in 1872, the year of construction. The Cooper/Black building is believed to be one of the first masonry structures in Bozeman.

Original occupants of the building were L. M. Black's mercantile business, Walter Cooper's Armory and Gun Manufactory, Ford and Patterson's Meat Market, W.W. Morris's Drug Store, and a family market run by W. L. Perkins. By the time of the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1883, Tate and Smith ran a meat market alongside Cooper's armory, while the building's upper floor was utilized as a society hall for the International Order of Odd-fellows and the Masonic Lodge #18. By the mid-1920s and through the early 1970s, Roecher's Drug operated in the building.

Although modified from its original appearance, the Cooper/Black remains an important reminder of Bozeman's early aspirations and historical significance in the American West.



Main Street looking east, ca. 1873

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Cooper's papers detail Bozeman's early years

By GAIL SCHONTZLER
Chronicle Staff Writer



PHOTO COURTESY OF MSU

An undated photograph of Walter Cooper, one of Bozeman's founding fathers.

"Times were very hard. There were many raids by the Sioux and Blackfeet."

— Walter Cooper, whose papers have been donated to MSU's Renne Library

In 1858, at age 15, Walter Cooper left Michigan to seek adventure in the West, and he succeeded beyond a boy's wildest dreams.

He traveled first to Colorado and then, at age 18 landed in Montana, first in the gold-mining boom town of Virginia City and later in the town of Bozeman, then barely 4 years old. Here, he did just about everything.

He started Cooper's Armory, a Sharps rifle and sporting goods business, in downtown's oldest surviving brick building (the present home of Place Architecture and Downtown Antiques).

He traded furs with the Indians, invested in logging and railroad businesses, was a Chamber of Commerce leader, helped incorporate the city in 1883, served on the first city council, represented Bozeman in the Legislature in 1895 as a Democrat, was a leader in bringing the Montana Agricultural College to Bozeman, and gave the city land for Cooper Park.

He also helped found the town of Red Lodge, where he had mining interests.

When Cooper died in his 80s in 1924, his obituary filled an entire newspaper page.

And though he never had any formal education, Cooper wrote all the time — handwritten diaries, business letters, letters to his family and even a manuscript of Montana history.

"His character was always at the right place at the right time," said Amy McKinney.

McKinney, 27, who earned her master's degree in history from Montana State University, the college Cooper helped found, recently finished cataloging thousands of pages of Cooper's papers, which were donated to MSU by his great-grandsons, Ed Barnett and Walter Cooper Barnett of California and Colorado.

The papers were appraised at \$70,000, said Kim Allen Scott, special collections director at the Renne Library. They fill in many holes in the knowledge of one of Bozeman's pioneers.

The journey from Bozeman to Montana was a "torturous ride even in one of the most improved stagecoaches of that period," Cooper wrote of a trip that included several ladies and a young Marcus Daly, one of Montana's infamous copper kings.

The two young men gallantly volunteered to bunk on top of the stagecoach. As it drove along at midnight, they slept, until the driver hit a rock.

The contact was tremendous. Both Daly and myself were dumped off the coach top, one on each side and the driver did not discover immediately that he had lost two passengers.

Elsewhere he describes what it was like in Bozeman after the Panic of 1870 and before the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

"Time were very hard. There were many raids by the Sioux and Blackfeet. ... 200 head of horses and mules were taken from Cemetery Hill, a few blocks from Main Street."

After the Custer massacre, he and friends were eager to find out details of the battle, especially about Sitting Bull, from a visiting Indian.

"Lyman and Hubbell got Rain-in-the-Face to come to our room," Cooper wrote. "He and I exchanged presents, I had left a robe, or what our New York house called an 'Indian Robe' which was a most wonderful wool garment. ... On seeing the robe, he seemed utterly entranced and overcome.

"I told him to put it on, that it was his. He seemed annoyed. He finally told Lyman ... I cannot take it because I have nothing to give him in exchange. ... Lyman answered, 'Give him that shirt you have on.' He instantly stripped off the shirt and handed it to me. It was really a work of art which I still possess.

"He told Lyman the robe was worth 10 horses. ... and we became friends."

The entire Cooper collection also includes his wife Mariam's 1875 diary of her visit to Yellowstone National Park, one of the first accounts by a white woman, and the papers of their son-in-law, Eugene Bunker, who served twice as Gallatin County attorney, in the 1920s and 1940s.

Walter Cooper wrote about blaze of Yellowstone Park in 1881

By Phyllis Smith

It had been a hot dry summer. Late in August 1881, Walter Cooper and friends Peter Koch and George Wakefield trekked into Gallatin Canyon to survey for a railroad. They were trying to interest Northern Pacific officials to build a line through the canyon. A potential bonanza, they hoped, to bring tourists to the west entrance of the nine-year-old Yellowstone National Park.

Gunsmith Walter Cooper was familiar with the geography of the canyon and would eventually float logs downstream to Central Park from his lumber camp above Taylor Fork.

On Friday, August 26, the hikers smelled smoke; Cooper wondered in his diary entry for that day if the survey party shouldn't turn back. The following day: "Smoke awful. Horses nervous. Birds with seared wings flying past us... See red glow ahead and very nervous... Traveled through hot ashes..."

Within a day or two, the men could not have returned on the same route if they had wanted to. "Flames jump canyon from one side to the other. Spectacular sight but an inferno. See small game with seared fur and bewildered elk and deer race by. We hardly halt for food. Hot ashes falling everywhere. Noise of fire deafening... Timber prac-

tically burned out.... some places the largest trees still standing. One wonders how they escaped."

Back in the valley, heavy acrid smoke poured out from the mouth of the canyon, leaving no doubt that fire was rampant

within. When the three weary men returned from their adventure, they soon learned that the Northern Pacific was looking elsewhere for a route to carry tourists to the park.

Phyllis Smith is photo archivist for the Gallatin County Historical Society. She has published three titles on western history and is currently working to complete a manuscript on the history of Gallatin Valley.



Walter Cooper etching from Michael Leeson, History of Montana, 1885