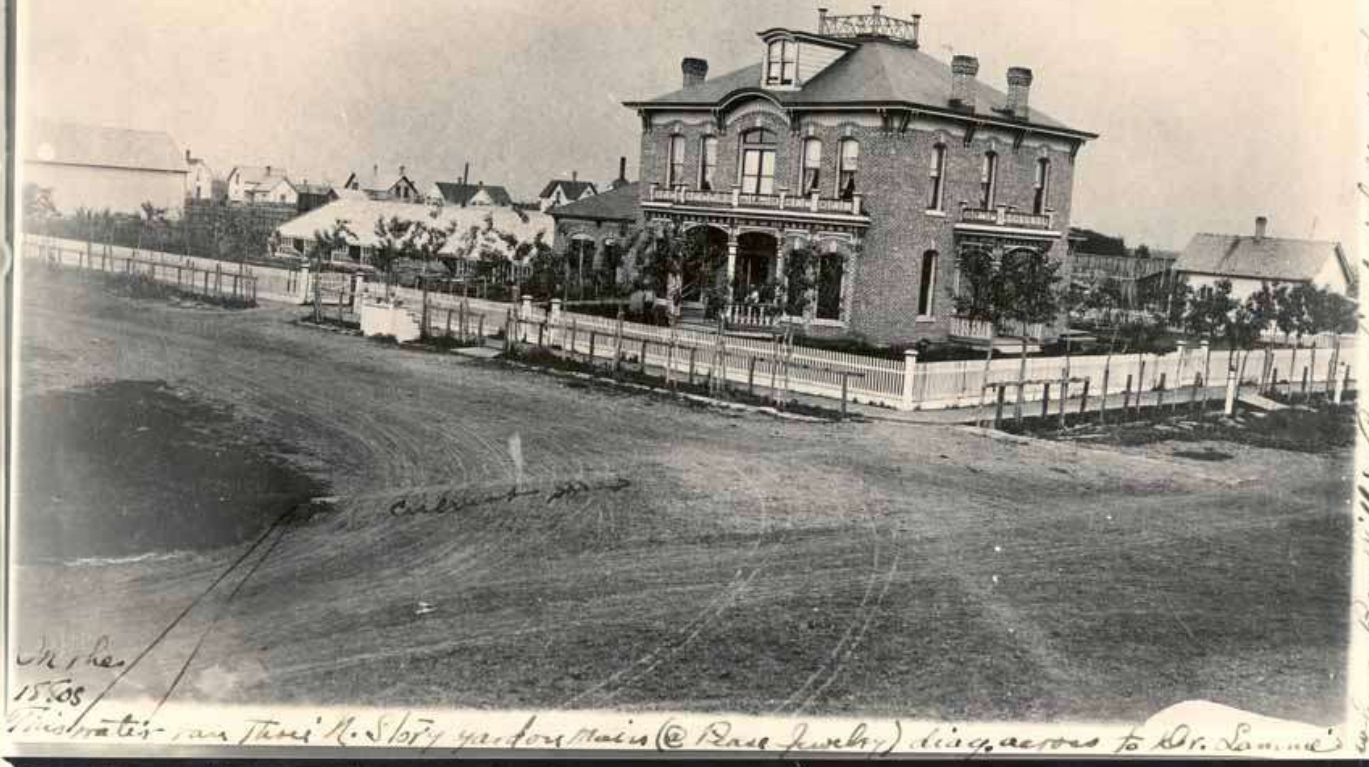


William Tracy



W. H. Tracy

Gallatin History Museum



Tracy home, northwest corner of Tracy Avenue and Mendenhall Street.

THE TRACYS

William H. Tracy was born in Ithaca, New York in 1838. He left home at age 19, for the West, and in Denver he served in federal Union military contingents during the first year of the Civil War. He came to Gallatin City in 1863, spent the winter of 1863-1864 in Virginia City, and in August 1864 was a founding member of the City of Bozeman. He took up a 40-acre land claim covering approximately the numbers 9 - 17 Main Street. He took additional land claims, and later platted three additions to the town.

He engaged in farming, in real estate sales, established an early brick yard, built a freighting business, and developed a large feed and seed store, first in Belgrade, then in Bozeman.

Sarah Jane Bessey was born in Pecatonica, Illinois, and was married to William H. Tracy, 14 years her senior, April 5, 1869. Her diary tells of the river trip to Montana, and her first six months in Bozeman. She describes moving into their first home at about 17 East Main, the location for many years of the Rea and the Modern Grocery. In 1882 the Tracys built one of the impressive homes of the town at the northwest corner of Tracy and Mendenhall. Four of the six Tracy children survived to adulthood: Elmer, Albert, Frank S., and Edna B. Mr Tracy died in 1908 resulting from an accident.

William M. Tracy
born 1838 in New York
died 1908



Sarah Jane Bessey Tracy
born 1851 in Illinois
died 1916

William joined the goldrush to Alder Gulch in 1863. In 1864, he came to what is now Bozeman. After five years he went back East and married nineteen-year -old Sarah Jane. On the day of her arrival in Bozeman they had dinner at the Guy House, a hotel. The dining room was packed with men. Sarah Jane, Mrs. Guy, and Ellen Story were the only three ladies present.

William ranched 120 acres and raised stock. He also manufactured bricks, ran a general store, had a freighting operation, and ran a greenhouse.



Historically Speaking



Lyle K. Williams

William H. Tracy

By Kathleen Roadarmel

[From Leeson's History of Montana
—Chicago 1885]

William H. Tracy, wholesale dealer in liquors, grain and feed, agricultural implements, etc., Bozeman.

The pioneers of Montana, almost without exception, passed a life similar in many respects to that of their hardy ancestors in the mountains of Virginia, Pennsylvania and other eastern and southeastern states. The desire to rapidly accumulate wealth led most of them into the mines of this region, and in connection with their experience as miners they met with hardships and danger from many sources.

William H. Tracy, of whom this sketch is written, is a representative pioneer of the region now his home. He was born in Tompkins, Co., New York, May 3, 1838, and is the son of Daniel Tracy, an early settler of that country, where he raised a family of one son and two daughters. Daniel Tracy was by occupation a harness and saddle maker. William, at the age eighteen years, located at Elmira, New York and acquired the machinist's trade. Removing to Rockford, Illinois, he resided there until 1860. The stories related of the wonderful success of gold-seekers in the far west induced him to turn his footsteps toward the land of the occident and for two years he sought fickle fortune in the mines of Colorado.

Thinking to meet with better success in other fields, he joined a party going to Montana, and arriving in the since famed Gallatin Valley,

established a town. This he soon abandoned and took up land, a portion of which is now included in the city of Bozeman. Upon this property he began farming in 1865, and since then his time has been actively occupied in grain dealing, freighting, merchandising, etc. In the days of freighting, before the puff of the locomotive, and the rumble of heavy trains of cars echoed through the mountain passes, he transported goods into the territory from Corinne and other shipping points. Bozeman has been his place of residence since 1864.

At Gallatin City, in the spring of 1863, Mr. Tracy suffered an attack from the Indians, who carried off all his effects; but while the savages were holding council, he escaped under cover of the timber.

At another time he lost his entire possessions while mining at Bevins Gulch.

He has since greatly prospered, however, and is the possessor of a large amount of real estate in Bozeman, besides a 360 acre ranch a mile and a half below town, on which he burns brick. The product of his kilns in 1882 was three hundred and fifty thousand, and a round million in 1883. He also owns a 150 acre ranch above the city.

Mr. Tracy has seen Bozeman emerge, in no means slow degrees, from a savage wilderness to its present condition of prominence, influence, and beauty, and his original log cabin has been replaced by the elegant residence, built in 1882, which is at the corner of Mendenhall and Tracy streets.

Civil

Name Tracy, William H. Serial No. _____
Home Address Bozeman, Montana
Next of Kin Frank Tracy Address Bozeman
Born 1839 Althaca, New York
Date of Death 4-15-1908 Cause Traumatism of spine-thrown
from buggy
Buried 4-16-1908 19 At Sunset Hills Cemetery
City Bozeman County Gallatin
Grave No. _____ Lot No. 18 Block A Section Old Masonic
War Record 1st Colorado Inf.
Branch of Service Infantry Rank Private
Enlisted 10-1861 Discharged Apr. 1862
Information Given By county, cemetery, and G.A.R. records
Remarks _____
Care Assigned to Post No. 14, American Legion
Govt. Headstone Desired _____ Legion Marker Placed _____

Mail this form immediately following burial of every World War Veteran to American Legion Dept. Headquarters

Wm Tracy

BOZEMAN DAILY CHRONICLE Sunday, April 2, 1972 11

Going Way Back When



By SKIPPY REESE
Chronicle Women's Editor
April, 1908, in the Bozeman
Chronicle:

"The life of William H. Tracy
came to an end at ten minutes
before one on Wednesday. The
news of his death came as a shock
to the whole community.

"The circumstances of his
death were particularly sad as
it was through accident and not
natural cause that his life work
came to an end. Last Monday
afternoon Mr. Tracy was sitting
in his buggy, near the Northern
Pacific passenger depot, watch-
ing the loading of a car of hay
when a ten-cent delivery wag-
on came along at a rapid gait
and collided with the light bug-
gy, overturning it and inflict-
ing serious injuries to Mr.
Tracy. The driver of the wagon
stopped at once and rendered
what assistance he could, until
other help arrived. Mr. Tracy
was taken to his home and it
was found that injury to the spine
had been sustained which caused
partial paralysis. In spite of
everything, that good nursing
and medical care could do, the
paralysis increased and he grew
weaker as the hours went by,
although his mind was clear up
to the last.

"He came to the Gallatin Val-
ley in 1863 and aided in laying
out the town of Gallatin City.
When the discovery of gold was
made in Alder Gulch, now Vir-
ginia City, Mr. Tracy joined
the stampede for that place and
for a time engaged in mining.
In 1864 he returned to Gallatin
Valley and since that time had
made his home here. He was one
of the very first to realize the
value of Gallatin land for ag-
ricultural purposes and took up
several tracts, including a large
portion of what is now the town-

site of Bozeman. In the seven-
ties, he engaged in the manu-
facture of brick and for three
years was engaged in freighting,
while for more than twelve years
he conducted a general mer-
chandise store in Bozeman. In
1869 he returned to Freeport,
Ill., and was there united in
marriage to Sarah Bessey. Six
children were born, three of
whom survive their father. They
are Albert, Frank S. and Ed-
na B., all of whom reside at
the family home.

"As a mark of the great re-
spect and esteem for this won-
derful man the mayor has re-
quested all business houses in
the city to close from one o'clock
to four this afternoon."



EXCHANGE — R. C. Wetherell, vice president of Empire Savings and Loan Association and manager of the firm's Bozeman office, and Mrs. Edna Tracy White make official the transfer of the White property at Tracy and Mendenhall to the loan association in an exchange of deed for a check. The property will be the site an Empire Savings building.

Savings Firm Buys Pioneer Home for Office

Empire Savings and Loan Association has purchased the Edna Tracy White residence at the corner of Mendenhall and Tracy as the site for an office building now in the planning stage by the financial concern.

In announcing the purchase, R. C. Wetherell, vice president and Bozeman office manager for Empire Savings and Loan, said, "Plans are being formulated for the early development of the new building." No time schedule was announced.

The home on the 224 by 148 foot parcel of land was built by Mrs. White's father, W. H. Tracy in 1882 and is one of the city's residential landmarks. It was once a center of the town's social activities and a showplace

of the community. The Tracys were pioneer residents of Bozeman and one of the early business families.

Wetherell said no details of the planned structure are yet available, but according to terms of the acquisition every effort will be made to retain trees and landscaping on the property.

Consideration of the transaction was not announced.

The Bozeman office of Empire Savings and Loan has been in the Kenyon building at Mendenhall and Black since 1959. At that time Pioneer Building and Loan Association of Bozeman was merged into Empire Savings and Loan. The Bozeman firm was the second oldest savings and loan association west of the Mis-

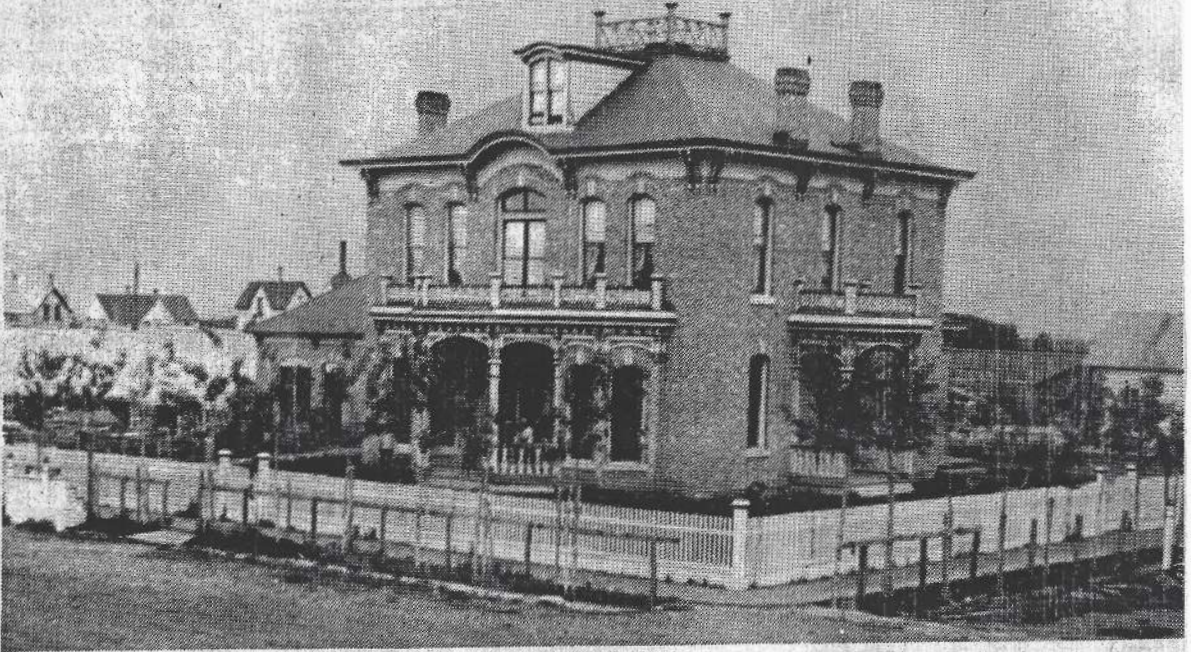
issippi River. It was founded in 1889, shortly after a similar business was organized in Helena.

Tracy was one of the city's founders and businessmen. He came to the Gallatin Valley in 1864 and is said to have raised the first garden produce. He received a government grant of 113.4 acres of land, the title to which was signed in June, 1872, by President Ulyssess S. Grant.

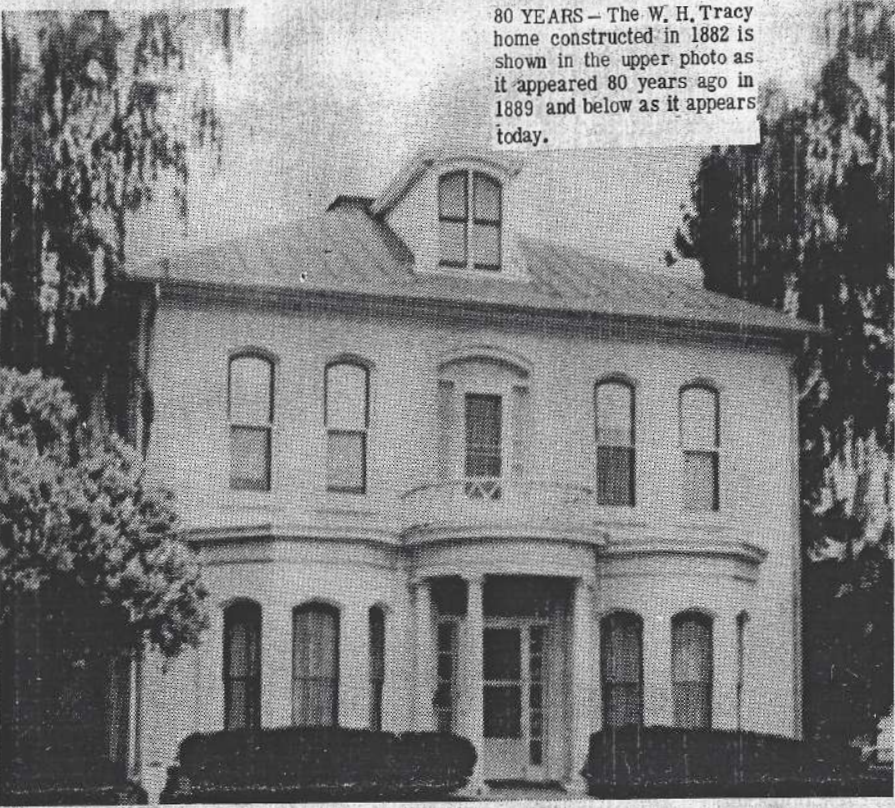
The property which Empire Savings acquired is a part of the original grant. Until the sale was made Friday, the land and the house had remained in the Tracy family, through Mrs. White, from the date it was given to private ownership by the fed-

eral government.

The house was designed and constructed by W. H. Babcock, also one of the city's early businessmen. Bricks were said to have been manufactured by Tracy.



80 YEARS - The W. H. Tracy home constructed in 1882 is shown in the upper photo as it appeared 80 years ago in 1889 and below as it appears today.



Historic City Landmark Razed

By Roxa Crowe

Have you ever witnessed the destruction of an 89-year-old community landmark?

Such a scene was observed this week when the old house on the corner of Tracy and Mendenhall was demolished to provide space for the erection of the new Empire Federal Savings and Loan Building.

Lifting its huge shovel the tractor placed it precisely on the trunk of the giant pine and shoved.

The earth heaved up the roots of a magnificent pine, tossing it on top of a mass of bricks, splintered wood, and crumpled sheets of roofing — the pile of splinters and bricks that had once been the Tracy mansion.

Built in 1882, the Tracy home was erected by one of the city's founders, William H. Tracy.

The house was residence for the Tracy family until 1966 points out Mrs. Edna Tracy White. "It was built by my father who came here in 1864.

"At that time, he and another man, W. J. Beall, lived in a cabin about where the library is now with a garden in back of the present-day McDonald's store. They both were there when the town was established.

"In 1869 Tracy returned

to Illinois where he married my mother, Sarah Jane Bessey. She returned with him as a bride of 17. They came up the Missouri River by steamboat bring with them a spring wagon."

On arrival at Fort Benton they bought a team of mules and came overland from there to Bozeman bringing their household items with them.

The first home was built on Main Street between Tracy and Black (where the Gambles store is now).

"I don't think the streets were even laid out then," Mrs. White comments. In 1882, on Tracy's Second Addition to Bozeman, the big house was built with bricks that Tracy made in his brick yard.

The Avant Courier of Thursday, Dec. 14, 1882 carried this description:

"Mr. W. H. Tracy last week moved into his new residence on the corner of Tracy and Mendenhall streets. The residence is one of the finest in Montana and very substantially built. Mr. Tracy is to be complimented on his enterprise in erecting so handsome a structure. No better residence has been built in Montana."

"It was one of the largest houses in town at that time," Mrs. White states. "Many times they took care of people who came to Bozeman and were finding a place to

live.

"The house was always the temporary home of the old-time Montana Methodist ministers who came. Van Orsdel, Iliff and Riggin were the three ministers."

In the winter of 1864-65 Tracy first moved to Gallatin County and settled on three forty-acre tracts in what is now the City of Bozeman.

Farming and stock-growing were his main concern although he handled real estate, dealing only in his own properties and platting three additions to the City of Bozeman.

In the seventies, Tracy engaged in the manufacture of bricks. By 1882 his brick kilns on the land north of town produced 350,000

bricks, and in 1883 they produced one million.

For more than 12 years he ran a general merchandise store at 11 E. Mendenhall.

Freighting was another one of Tracy's enterprises, hauling from Corinne, Utah and other railheads.

"The barns and buggy house were catty-corner to the house where the Chambers Fisher parking lot is," Mrs. White notes.

EDNA TRACY WHITE

Born at the Tracy home, at the corner of Mendehall and Tracy, in 1877, Edna Tracy attended Gallatin County High School. She graduated from Montana State College in 1908 with a degree in chemistry. Edna and her friend, Mary Alward, were the first women to enroll in the chemistry program at the College. Active in athletics and the Y.W.C.A. in college, Edna also helped to organize a literary society called "Hamiltonia" in honor of James Hamilton, then president of Montana State. She participated in a host of college activities and was instrumental in establishing several traditions of a symbolic and social nature.

From 1909 to 1912 Edna taught school at Pony and Virginia City. At the death of her mother, Sarah Bessie Tracy, Edna managed the family greenhouse business. She married John J. White in 1914, and worked as a homemaker. She enjoyed china painting and needlepoint. Edna served on the library board, supported the Museum of the Rockies, and provided scholarships for Montana State University.