

DRIVING TOUR OF HISTORIC CARBON COUNTY



St. Olaf Church



Montaqua Hot Springs



Joliet Bank



Glidden Mercantile



Gebo Cemetery



Smith Coal Mine



MW&S Railroad Depot



Old Hillsboro/Cedarvale Town Site



Red Lodge Brewery



Smith Coal Mine

Big Horn Canyon Rd

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Miles

St Olaf Church

Red Lodge
Creek Rd

Boyd-Cooper
Dam Rd

Carbonado

Gebo Cemetery

FROMBERG

BRIDGER

RED LODGE

BEARCREEK

WASHOE

BELFRY

Beartooth Highway

212

72

310

212

310

72

308

SILESIA

ROCKVALE

EDGAR

BOYD

JOLIET

ROBERTS

LUTHER

78

During the winter of 1894-1895, a bill was introduced in the Montana Legislature recommending a new county by the name of Carbon, since at the time, the Red Lodge Coalfield was one of the largest producers of coal in the state.

A 1907 history stated "The county of Carbon has a brilliant future assured. No county in the state has so many and varied resources. It has the best defined and the best developed beds of high grade semi-bituminous coal west of the Missouri River, many fertile valleys where crop failures are unknown and the yield is always surprising large, a good home market for all produce, and, above all, a good healthful and invigorating climate and industrious and law abiding citizens."

Enjoy this driving tour; while a great deal has changed, much of Historic Carbon County is waiting to be discovered by you.

THE BEARTOOTH HIGHWAY

The highway was constructed for about \$1.1 million in 1931-36 (over \$15 million in 2005) as part of a nationwide series of National Park approach roads. The route, first surveyed in 1927, was chosen for maximum scenery in terms of both panorama and variety. Red Lodge leaders, including Dr. J.C.F. Siegfried and newspaper publisher O.H.P. Shelley, had been promoting its construction for nearly a decade, but others called the road "Red Lodge's pipe dream." When the federal bill providing funding passed in January, 1931, "The announcement touched off the greatest celebration this mining town has ever known," said the Billings Gazette.

SMITH COAL MINE

When mining first began in the Bearcreek and Washoe valleys in 1888 (tapping the eastern edge of the Red Lodge Coalfield), coal had to be hauled to Red Lodge by horse and put on railcar. In 1906 the Montana, Wyoming & Southern Railroad added a Bearcreek line, opening those valleys to greater production and population. In the early 1900s approximately 3,000 people lived in the area, nearly triple Red Lodge at the time. But in February of 1943, Vein Number 3 of the Smith Mine exploded, killing 74 of the 77 miners on duty that day. It remains the worst coal mining disaster in Montana's history, and signaled the end of the mining heyday in the Bearcreek valley.

MONTANA, WYOMING & SOUTHERN RR DEPOT

The MW&S Railroad was one of many short lines that operated in Montana during the early 1900s. The depot was finished in 1907 at the insistence of railroad speculator F.A. Hall and as a result of his efforts, the town of Belfry sprang up. The MW&S route ran from Bridger to Bearcreek, carrying the valley's high-grade coal to the Northern Pacific Depot in Bridger. Originally, a route to Yellowstone Park was planned, but it never materialized. The rail line closed in the 1950s.

OLD HILLSBORO/CEDARVALE POST OFFICE AND TOWN SITE

In the early 1900s Dr. Grosvener Barry and his family homesteaded east of the Pryor Mountains, where he planned to run a gold dredging operation. When gold didn't pan out, Barry turned to dude ranching, calling his establishment Cedarvale and having dudes arrive by floating the Bighorn River from a railroad station near Lovell, Wyoming. The Hillsboro post office opened in 1915 and operated until 1945, serving such notable characters as silversmith Eddie Hulbert and bestselling novelist Caroline Lockhart. Today, despite being part of the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area, Hillsboro is a ghost town, as remote and unpopulated as when Dr. Barry arrived.

GLIDDEN MERCANTILE

The Glidden Mercantile Company was founded in 1903. Just six months after opening his new store, Sam Glidden realized his space was too crowded and started work on this building. 500,000 pressed yellow bricks from Bridger brickmaker William Lavelle were used in the construction, and a Billings stonemason was in charge of cutting the red sandstone from quarries in Bridger Canyon. Completed in 1905, the store carried dry goods, hardware, and agricultural implements at both wholesale and retail prices. In 1915 it was renamed Bridger Mercantile Company reflecting Glidden's absence from the firm. It operated under that name until 1957.

GEBO CEMETERY

In 1895 Samuel Gebo found coal deposits in this area. Over the next two years he secured investors, initiated some minor improvements in his mine and helped lay out the Gebo townsite. He and his investors created the Clarks Fork Coal Company in 1897, persuading the Northern Pacific Railroad to extend a branch line into the Clarks Fork Valley and a spur directly to Gebo in 1899. The mine never lived up to its potential due to a string of legal disputes, and in 1907 it was sold and renamed Coalville. The mine produced from seams deeper than those at Bearcreek until it was closed abruptly in 1912.

MONTAQUA HOT SPRINGS

South of the town of Rockvale in 1904, a local prospector named Major Keown was drilling for oil when he struck 111° F water instead. He quickly built a spa, naming it after a combination of the Latin words for mountain and water. The spa's success and expansion, which included a popular restaurant and cabins, were doomed, however. In 1959, a 7.5 magnitude earthquake hit the Hebgen Lake area north of Yellowstone National Park, shifting the earth at far-away Montaquá. Not only did the earthquake eliminate Montaquá's hot water source, it also released a fissure of natural gas. When the gas was accidentally ignited, it caused an explosion and fire, destroying the spa. The remnants of the restaurant and hotel still stand.

JOLIET BANK

Organized in 1904 by Joliet's Barclay brothers, the Joliet Bank first opened in the Whitney Building on Main Street. Construction for a new building began in December of 1906, but before it could open in April of 1907, the Barclay brothers had sold out to Pagel Simonson and Company. The Joliet Bank then became Rock Creek State Bank and served the community until December 15, 1923 when it closed its doors. The I.O.O.F then owned the building until it was purchased by the La Cuesta Rebekkah Lodge #56 in 1979.

CARBONADO • Carbonado & Slack Pile Rd

In 1896, Copper King Marcus Daly purchased this land to construct a vertical shaft coal mine, as well as the associated townsite to be named after the newly formed Carbon County. For three years, up to 700 tons of coal was produced daily from the 980-foot-deep-shaft. But because of water seepage, production was expensive and the coal quality was poor. The mine temporarily closed from August 1899 to February 1900. It closed permanently a year later following the death of Marcus Daly. All that remains of the boomtown is a slackpile and cemetery.

ST. OLAF CHURCH

In 1904, a group of Norwegian immigrants in the Red Lodge Creek and Volney Creek valleys, tired of the long trek by horse and buggy into Absarokee, founded the St. Olaf Lutheran Church. For the next 20 years, services were held in area homes until this building was built, primarily with volunteer labor. The original heating system was a simple cast-iron stove, so it was often said that it wasn't until everyone was leaving that the building finally warmed up. The building is still maintained by the community for weddings, funerals and a few services each year. The church stands as a memorial to the Norwegian settlers whose dedication created this elegant, simple structure.

RED LODGE BREWERY

In 1910, the Red Lodge *Republican Picket* announced, "Red Lodge is going to have a big, modern, thoroughly-equipped brewery." German brewer Fred Lehrkind's family breweries had proved successful in Bozeman as well as just up the road in Silesia, Montana. The Lehrkinds were confident that the growing population of thirsty miners in Red Lodge and the excellent quality of their beer assured its acceptance and promised a boon to the economy of the town. The building was constructed from Fromberg brick at a cost of \$75,000 (\$1.5 million in 2005). The brewery produced 35,000 barrels of beer per year, all of which was aged five months to make a proper German lager. Prohibition closed the brewery down in 1919, and the building was converted to a pea cannery in the 1920s. The cannery operated until the mid-1970s, employing thousands of local farmers and cannery workers.

PROVIDE A FUTURE FOR YOUR PAST



History is not just about dates, names, and places.

Preservation is not just about bricks and mortar.

Both are about human values. About relationships among individuals and their communities that stretch from the past through the present to the future. As you

explore Carbon County's past through these Historic Tours, take a moment to consider how you might get involved in historic preservation. We can all enrich our future by preserving our past.

Our communities' older buildings demonstrate the architectural styles that speak to the character of the people who founded these towns and shaped our history. They created some beautiful structures – and vibrant communities.

In celebrating these historic buildings, we also see how important historic preservation is to Car-

bon County's future. The Red Lodge commercial district highlighted in the Downtown portion of this walking tour was not always so vibrant. We can ascribe at least part of its current-day health to the 1986 Downtown Revitalization Plan that demonstrated ways that individual building owners could preserve and enhance the historic beauty of their structures. Today, those well-preserved buildings are a source of both economic strength and community pride.

Many buildings featured on these tours (and others highlighted in blue) have been included in the National Register of Historic Places, the official list of the nation's cultural resources which have been deemed worthy of preservation. Listing in the National Register

provides property owners with benefits including local recognition and eligibility for federal tax benefits. Many registered buildings are further enhanced by signs outlining their role in the region's history.

Protecting and preserving the past is something that everyone can do. Whether you'd like to perform historically appropriate renovations, register your building on the National Register, or join with like-minded others to help preserve and interpret your historical legacy, the place to start is the place where this walking tour starts: the Carbon County Historical Society and Museum. To learn more, stop in, or go to <http://carboncountyhistory.com> and click on Preservation.



HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION



*The Pollard (Spofford)
Hotel, in 1896 and now.*



Carbon County is known for its historic character. From the elegant stone and brick buildings along its main streets to the elaborate gingerbread ornamentation on so many historic homes, visitors and residents alike have long sought refuge in "quaint" historic neighborhoods from Joliet to Red Lodge and beyond.

But what happened in Red Lodge wasn't an accident. Thanks to the hard work of dozens of preservation-minded individuals, that town was able to establish a Revitalization Plan in the mid-1980s, and much of the historic restoration you now see there is a result of those efforts.

Preservation requires an ongoing commitment from all of us, however. Log onto CarbonCountyHistory.com to find out how you can help with existing local Historical Society projects. Or look below for some other ways you can get started on your own:

- Inquire about nominating your historic property to the National Register.
- Encourage friends to research the history of their homes and buildings.
- Visit and help support historic homes and sites.
- Donate time and money to ongoing preservation programs.



*Unidentified early miners
in traditional gear.*

TRAVELING?

VISIT THESE AREA MUSEUMS
& HISTORICAL SOCIETIES



*Coal mine exhibit in the Carbon County
Historical Society Museum, Red Lodge*

CARBON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM
224 N. Broadway, Red Lodge • 406-446-3667

CHIEF PLENTY COUPS MUSEUM & STATE PARK
1 Edgar Rd., Pryor • 406-252-1289

CLARKS FORK VALLEY MUSEUM
101 E River St., Fromberg • 406-668-7650

CRAZY MOUNTAIN MUSEUM
Cemetery Rd., Big Timber • 406-932-6618

LITTLE BIGHORN BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL MONUMENT
Exit 510 off I-90, Crow Agency • 406-638-2621

MOSS MANSION
914 Division St., Billings • 406-256-5100

MUSEUM OF THE BEARTOOTH
5th St. & 5th Ave., Columbus • 406-332-4723

WESTERN HERITAGE CENTER
2822 Montana Ave., Billings • 406-256-6809

**YELLOWSTONE COUNTY
MUSEUM**
1950 Terminal Circle, Billings •
406-256-6811



*The Gebo Barn,
circa 1915 and now.*



ENVISION OUR FUTURE, DISCOVER OUR PAST



*Chapman House, in
Red Lodge's Hi Bog
District, circa 1920s
and now.*



TOUR HISTORIC RED LODGE & CARBON COUNTY MONTANA