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**Montana**  
**Historical Society**

**MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF TRUSTEES’  
HERITAGE KEEPER & HERITAGE GUARDIAN AWARD**

**NOMINATION FORM**

**ABOUT THE NOMINEE**

Name of Nominee Carol Hunter Woodley

Address 421 South 13th Street, Livingston, Montana, 59047

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**ABOUT YOU**

In case we need more information about your nominee.

Nomination Submitted by Jerry Brekke and Larry Lahren, Ph.D.

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Date Nomination Submitted Feb. 8, 2019

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**Return** completed form, narrative & support documents by **March 16, 2019**

to: **Heritage Keeper Awards Chair**  
**Montana Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 201201, 225 North Roberts**  
**Helena, MT 59620-1201**

Or e-mail to: Joy Lewis, [jlewis@mt.gov](mailto:jlewis@mt.gov), or FAX to: 406-444-2696.  
For information call: 406-444-1799

## NOMINATION NARRATIVE

### **1. Contribution(s) to Montana history—please describe the project or on-going service within Montana’s historical community that has been accomplished by the nominee. (Limit 500 words)**

For over two decades, genealogist Carol Woodley has been driven by a simple mantra. *“If you were here, you deserve to be remembered.”* That mindset and Carol’s dedication to professional research standards that are focused on documenting and preserving Park County, Montana’s historic cemeteries has substantially expanded our historical narrative. During the course of her lifework, she assumed leadership roles in Park County and Montana State genealogy societies, contributed service as a board member of Wilsall and Clyde Park, Montana, cemeteries, administered archiving of Park County’s historical public records, and served on a number of local government committees, including Park County Parks and Recreation, Yellowstone Gateway Museum Collections, and became a motivating advocate for the recently created Park County Cemetery Advisory Committee. Carol served for eight years as historian for the Mount Hyalite Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Her book, *“Chico Cemetery 1864-2014,”* documents the lives of those interred in one of Montana’s oldest operating cemeteries. It includes individual histories, obituaries, census records, family relationships, U.S. military veteran status and burial locations of 169 men, women and children interred since Chico Cemetery was set aside as hallowed ground by gold rush miners in 1864. The result of a 15-year, independent, research project, the book is one example of Carol’s lifetime contributions to understanding our heritage.

### **2. What are the particular strengths and impacts of the Montana history goals the nominee has achieved? What impact has the work accomplished had on the community/intended audience? (Limit 500 words)**

Within the scope of her long-time leadership of the Park County Genealogy Society (PCGS), Carol and her constituents engaged in a number of research and interpretive projects that have benefitted the historic community, inspired and provided a context for other groups and individuals, and, true to their effort, put a face on local history by honoring those who lived it. Among these projects are:

- The Park County Poor Farm Cemetery project resulted from the chance re-discovery of forgotten internments conducted by the county from 1892-1924. Intensive location and research of obscure public records resulted in identifying individuals buried in unmarked graves. In 2006, PCGS erected a memorial honoring some 165 individuals, including fifteen, unclaimed remains interred in 2017 during a multi-denominational service arranged by the Park County Coroner. The memorial project expanded an interest in the stigmatic Park County Poor Farm history, resulting in further interpretive signs and Montana State Department of Transportation installation of a historic site marker.
- The project renewed interest in recognizing and restoring historic cemeteries throughout Park County as resources of local heritage. Since 2006, this interest is manifested in an annual “Cemetery Walk” sponsored by Park County’s genealogical and historical community. The event features reenactments of the lives of people significant to family and community histories.
- As an member and past officer of the Montana Genealogical Society, Carol contributed to the creation of that organization’s “First Families” project.

- Perhaps the most enduring and comprehensive accomplishment of PCGS members is a dedicated effort to update and organize a public obituary and genealogical data base of Park County residents archived at Livingston/Park County Public Library.

Beyond group involvement, Carol's individual efforts have had a similar impact on the historical narrative. "*Chico Cemetery 1864-2014*," a ten-year self-assigned and self-published genealogy is now a fundamental resource for Park County historians. Her research led to documenting the unmarked graves of two Civil War Veterans and her assistance to their families resulting in obtaining headstones from the Veteran Administration.

Additionally, the work inspired a local resident and cemetery board member, Bryan Wells, to construct an interpretive kiosk at the cemetery to memorialize four U.S. airmen who died in 1962 when their Strategic Air Command aircraft crashed on Emigrant Peak. In 2016, 54 years after the event, the airmen's families, Dyess Air Force Base personnel, and other dignitaries attended a dedication in memory of the flight crew.

Not the least of Carol's impact was her service as Park County Special Collections archivist which entailed indexing and scanning historical road records, school records, and naturalization records archived by Park County. That effort (as nearly all of Carol's work) was accomplished on a volunteer basis under the auspices of Southwest Montana HRDC's RSVP program. Her work benefitted the public both in terms of tax dollars saved, as well as payment in kind for many of Park County's historically associated grant requests.

**3. Describe the nominee—provide a short biographical sketch/history of the nominee, including: length of involvement in service; effectiveness of service; level of prior recognition; and degree of commitment to the general concepts and highest goals of the historical community. (Limit 500 words)**

Carol Hunter Woodley's heritage is genealogically enviable. She's a fifth generation Montanan and a member of the Hunter-Francis family who were among the first pioneer settlers to arrive in the Shields River Valley. What's more, Carol can trace her lineage to Revolutionary War patriots and beyond. But her background didn't create a sudden interest. She was nearly sixty before she found time research her ancestral ties.

Little Carol Hunter married Big Carrol Noyd in 1954. Fourteen years and five children later, her husband suffered a fatal heart attack and Carol, now a single mother looking for work, joined the Swandal, Douglass and Gilbert Law Firm in Livingston, Montana, as a water rights researcher — an association that lasted for 30 years. Her first collaborative venture in self-publishing began in 1978 with "**Park County Property Owners Guide**" — a local, pre-internet predecessor of data now offered by the Montana Cadastral website. She completed a similar publication for Gallatin County in 1980. Along the way, Carol honed the critical thinking research skills necessary for professional investigation and developed an uncommon understanding of the people associated with the records. In 1995, her transition to genealogical research became complete.

"My dad's cousin died intestate," Carol recalls. "To settle her estate, the law required identifying three generations of her heirs. We ended up with 99 heirs."

Because of her long association and outspoken advocacy of PCGS in particular, and genealogy in general, Carol often maintains a higher profile than most, but attributes her tireless commitment to, "It's just because I have the time." Quick to recognize and credit the successes of those she works with, Carol was honored as the 2010 recipient of Montana State Genealogical Society's "Anna Mae Hanson Award."

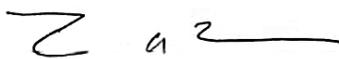
Now 83 years of age, Carol has refocused her energies away from leadership roles, but continues adding her expertise to community discussion. In addition to her current public board memberships, her self-assigned research (in association with Park American Legion #2) included completing a compilation of Park County Veterans military service records. Of her ongoing commitment to the historical community and her retirement years Carol has said, “I just want to do something for the community — something I wasn’t able to before.”

Those of us in the professional community agree that Carol Woodley achieved her goal.

Submitted by:

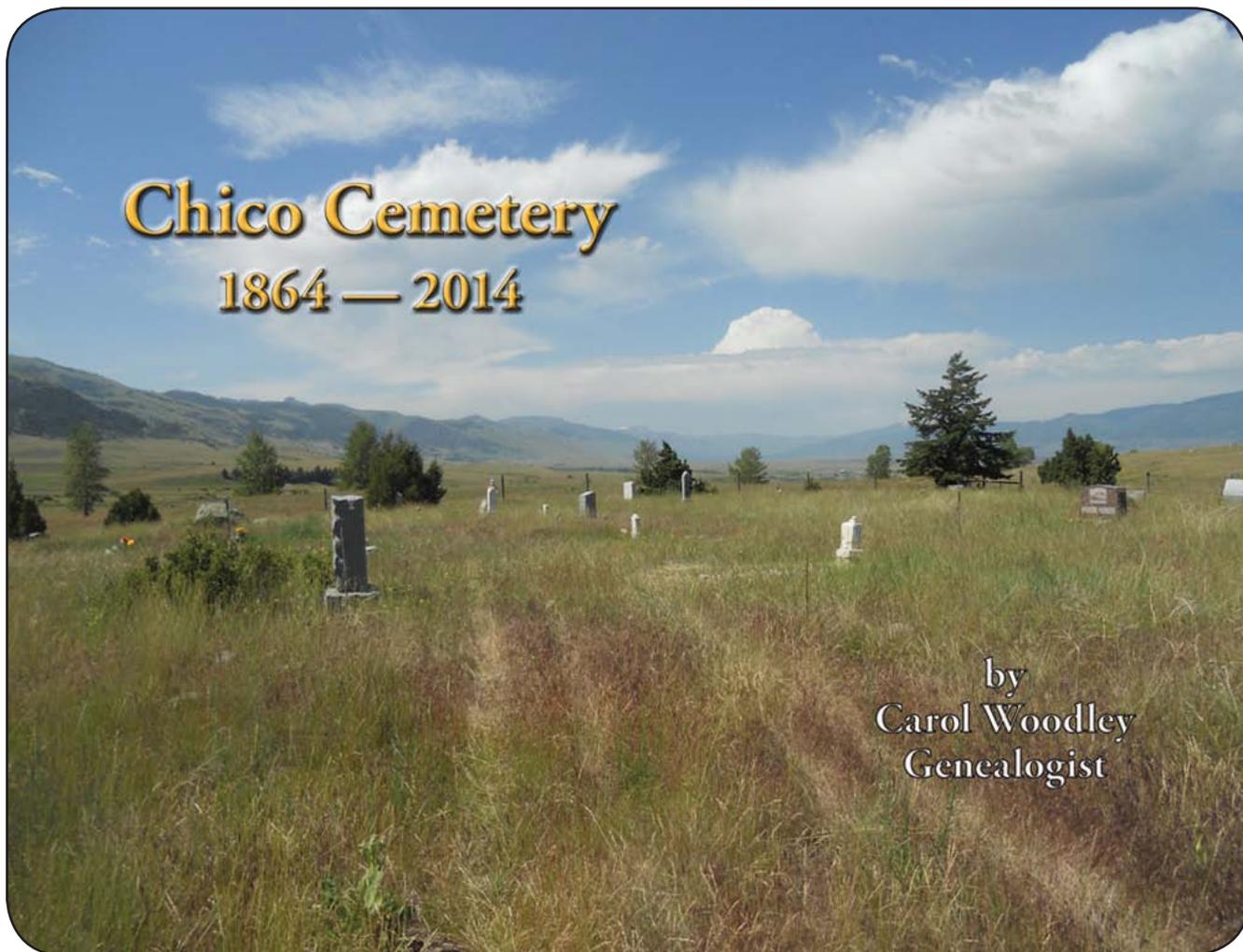


Jerry Brekke  
Park County Historian



Larry Lahren, Ph.D.  
North American Archaeologist

**4. Attach Supporting Documentation—i.e. news articles, commendations, letters of support. (Limit - three documents)**



Cover of Carol Woodley's self-published genealogy of 169 men, women and children interred at the historic Chico Cemetery.



Dedication of the Park County Genealogy Society Poor Farm Cemetery Memorial, May 20, 2006



Thanks to Bill Harris for taking the time to install this new plaque for the Park County Poor Farm.

Thanks to the Cemetery Board for being the stewards of this important history. (Audrey Dodge, Carol Woodley, Diane Kiger, Dean Gilbert, Mike Adams)

Striking history in our community worth a read:

[http://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/.../article\\_f07362f6-274...](http://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/.../article_f07362f6-274...)

To visit the Poor Farm take I-90 Exit 337 and take a right to follow Chicken Creek Road to the Poor Farm.



An August 2017 posting on Park County Facebook page displayed additional names of individuals whose records were located since 2006 — thanks to Carol Woodley and her cohorts. (Sreen shot from <https://www.facebook.com/ParkCoMT/posts/1904705559544539>)

THE LIVINGSTON

# ENTERPRISE

LOCAL NEWS

» FINAL RESTING PLACE: Cremated remains of 17 unclaimed residents are laid to rest

## FINAL RESTING PLACE: Cremated remains of 17 unclaimed residents are laid to rest



By: Liz Kearney

Enterprise Staff Writer

The graveside committal was small and subdued, with no family members of the deceased present.

The unclaimed, cremated remains of 17 individuals who died in various places around Park County were laid to rest Wednesday on the site of the former Park County Poor Farm on Chicken Creek Lane just northeast of town, where indigent people were cared for before federal programs like Social Security.

The remains had been in the possession of the Park County Coroner's Office for, in some cases, decades.

The remains date back as far as 1943, but most are from the 1990s and 2000s, Park County Coroner Al Jenkins said Wednesday.

**The Park County Poor Farm Cemetery reclaimed its history as hallowed ground in 2017 during a multi-denominational burial service for unclaimed remains.**