



Immersed in History: Three Weeks in Virginia City, Montana

June 2011 UW-Eau Claire Public History Field School

Background

Eleven students from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UWEC) attended the Montana Heritage Commission's (MHC) Fourth Public History Field School held in Virginia City, Montana from June 8-25, 2011.

The MHC field schools are held in partnership with Washington State University (WSU) and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall Indian Reservation Idaho. They are intended to immerse students in the history and culture of the region and introduce them to various public history sub-fields under the tutelage of practicing professionals.

This experience gives students an appreciation for studying history where it took place. To that end, participants received tours of Virginia City, Nevada City, buffalo jumps, and an ancient Indian dacite quarry. They also viewed the historic traces of the Bozeman Trail. In addition, the students journeyed to Laurin, Montana, to survey the differences between historic maps and the current landscape.

DAY TRIPS



PHOTO COURTESY TODD THEISTE, JUNE 14, 2011

Madison Buffalo Jump.



PHOTO COURTESY TODD THEISTE, JUNE 21, 2011

The viewshed from atop the quarry site is extensive and perfect for defense.



PHOTO COURTESY REBECCA ROHAN, JUNE 21, 2011

Male blue grouse defending its territory from students at dacite quarry.

LEMHI SHOSHONE AGAI DIKA (Salmon Eater) DAYS



PHOTO COURTESY HEIDI ANN HEIDEMAN, JUNE 18, 2011

The Agai Dika Days celebrations in Salmon, Idaho, were filmed by Naka Productions for an upcoming documentary.



PHOTO COURTESY HEIDI ANN HEIDEMAN, JUNE 10, 2011

Alex Snyder, Lucy Marquardt, and Teila Luchterhand practice the final assembly on one of the teepees in which the students slept.



PHOTO COURTESY LUCY MARQUARDT, JUNE 18, 2011

The weekend culminated in a spiritual run/walk up Lemhi Pass to honor former Lemhi leader Chief Tendoy.

PUBLIC HISTORY SUBFIELDS



PHOTO COURTESY HEIDI ANN HEIDEMAN, JUNE 10, 2011

MHC staff archaeologist Kate McCourt and student Alex Snyder excavating test holes in Nevada City.



PHOTO COURTESY TODD THEISTE, JUNE 18, 2011

Previous remodeling events are shown by leaving portions exposed.



PHOTO COURTESY CHARITY MOORE, JUNE 9, 2011

Inside buildings, the MHC uses preservation windows to show remodeling events.



PHOTO COURTESY TODD THEISTE, JUNE 9, 2011

View Of MHC storage space at McFarland Curatorial Center.

READING THE LANDSCAPE



PHOTO COURTESY TODD THEISTE, JUNE 14, 2011

Jack Creek
At various locales the landscape was examined to discern past usages as well as how it has changed over time due to natural and man-made forces.



PHOTO COURTESY HEIDI ANN HEIDEMAN, JUNE 13, 2011

Dr. Bill Peterson leading the examination of a historic map in Laurin, site of 1868 treaty negotiations with the Lemhi Shoshone.



PHOTO COURTESY TODD THEISTE, JUNE 14, 2011

BOZEMAN TRAIL
Trace of the historic trail where it passed between Ennis and Norris.



PHOTO COURTESY CHARITY MOORE, JUNE 12, 2011

Interpretive Panels

The MHC staff's time and effort were repaid by the UWEC students gathering images and drafting text for five interpretive panels intended to diversify Virginia City's interpretive program. Examining standard and non-conventional sources at the library, courthouse, online, and in the surrounding environment, they prepared interpretive panels on:

- The large and evolving Chinese presence in Virginia City during the Nineteenth Century
- The Lemhi Shoshone presence in the area
- Prominent Nineteenth Century African-American businesspeople Sarah Bickford and Jack Taylor
- The 1867 Montana Militia raised in response to Red Cloud's efforts to close the Bozeman Trail.

The class jointly edited the panels and presented their findings to interested Virginia City residents.

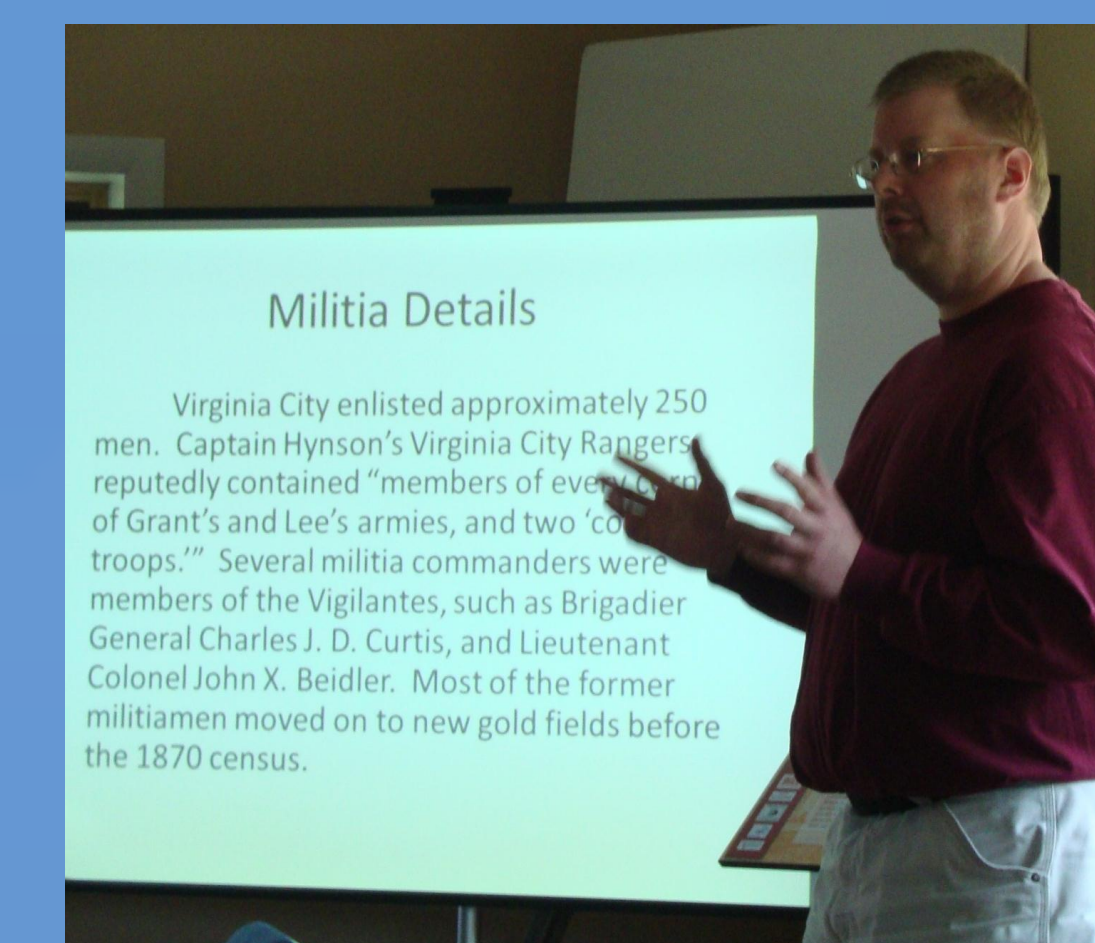


PHOTO COURTESY JENNA VATER, JUNE 24, 2011.

Todd Theiste addressing the residents of Virginia City.

HOME BASE



PHOTO COURTESY TODD THEISTE, JUNE 9, 2011

Bonanza Hall
One of most haunted sites in Montana, where students stayed while in Virginia City.

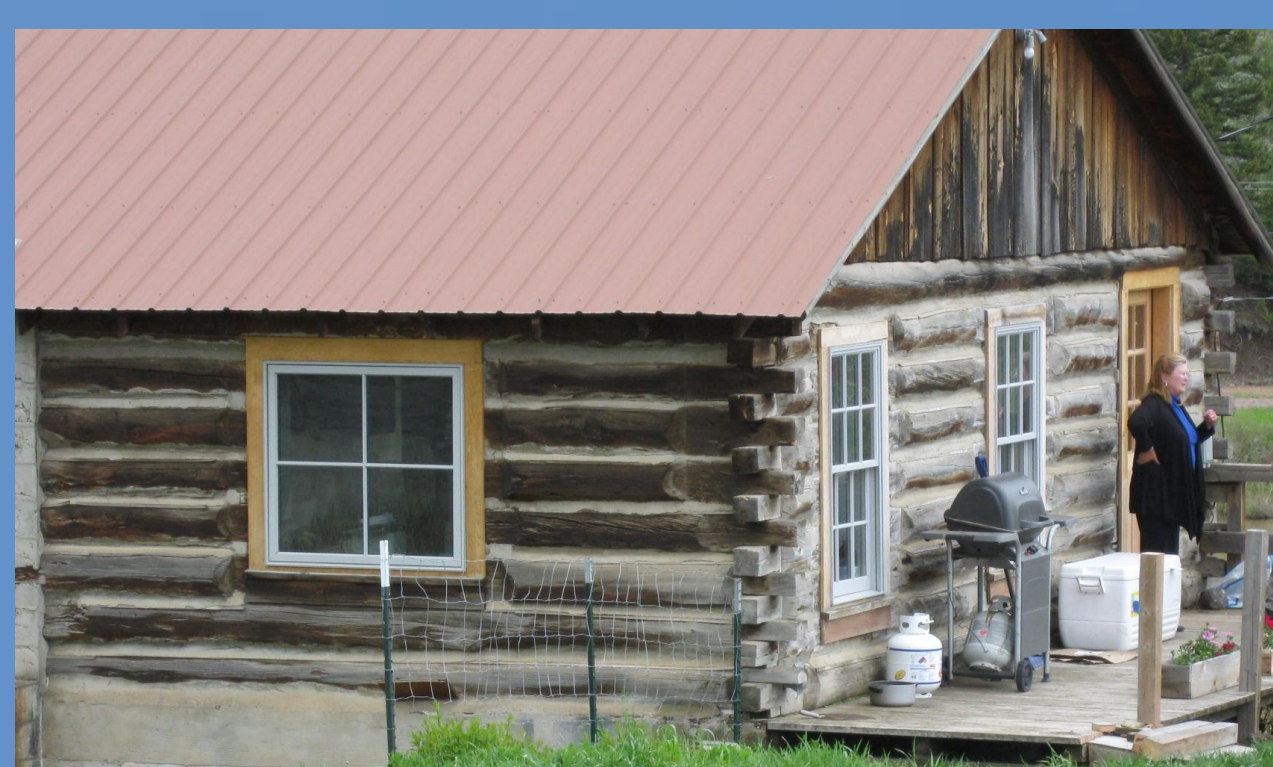


PHOTO COURTESY TODD THEISTE, JUNE 9, 2011

Rehearsal Hall
Our classroom, dining hall, and theater.



PHOTO COURTESY TODD THEISTE, JUNE 18, 2011

Bale of Hay Saloon
The historic saloon was the site for many of our "debriefing" sessions.

Public History Field School

Orlan J. Svingen | svingen@wsu.edu
William Peterson | bill.peterson@mt.gov

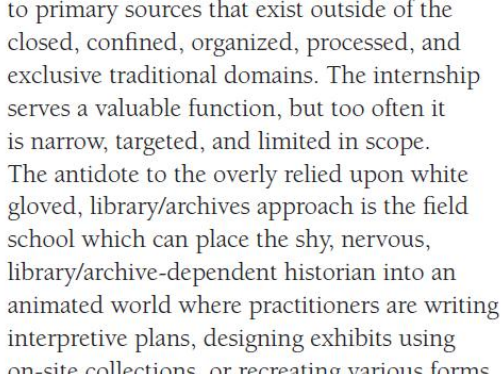
The time is now for public history programs across the nation to begin incorporating the public history field school as an integral and required curricular component for undergraduate and graduate training. Immersing students into a historic setting, complex with staff professionals working to research, curate, and interpret an existing historic facility, offers students instruction and experience that enriches their public history training and enhances their employment opportunities inside and outside the academy.



Contemporary photo of Virginia City, Montana. Courtesy of the Wild West School.



Archie, Shoshone, and Shoshone on horseback near the ruins of Virginia City, Montana. Courtesy of the MHC Field School.



professors must expose "historians in training" to primary sources that exist outside of the closed, confined, organized, processed, and exclusive traditional domains. The internship serves a valuable function, but too often it is narrow, targeted, and limited in scope. The antidote to the overly relied upon white glove, library-dependent approach to the field school which can place the shy, nervous, library-junkie-dependent historian into an animated world where practitioners are writing interpretive plans, designing exhibits using on-site collections, or recording various forms of historic technology. The field school places students into a dramatic setting where they are...

2010. It focused primarily on researching and writing draft interpretive plans for the future reconstruction of the unratified Treaty with the Shoshone, Bannocks, and Sheepsters of September 24, 1868. Known also as the Virginia City Treaty, it was negotiated and signed at Laurin, Montana Territory, fifteen miles north of Virginia City with Chief Tendoy and eleven subschiefs. Now referred to as the Lemhi Shoshone who are affiliated with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Idaho, these people are the descendants of Sacajawea, the Agai Dika woman who accompanied Lewis and Clark.



Anna Harris and Rachel Jarman searching for the Lemhi Shoshone Trail today opportunities along the Salmon trail. © William Davis/Reinhardt.edu

The previous Public History Field School was highlighted in the September 2010 *Public History News*.

STUDENTS, STAFF, AND INSTRUCTORS



PHOTO COURTESY WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY, JUNE 24, 2011

The Field School participants gathered for a group photograph on their last night in Virginia City.



PHOTO COURTESY CHARITY MOORE, JUNE 24, 2011

Prof. Orlan Svingen (WSU), Dr. Bill Peterson (MHC), Leo Ariwite (Lemhi Shoshone), Prof. John Mann (UWEC).