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# FRIENDS OF BODIE NEWSLETTER

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Volume 1 Issue 1

Spring 1994<sup>S</sup>

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## Executive Secretary's Message

The Department of Parks and Recreation is through with reorganization! Boy... this last year was full of surprises and most of them seemed to be ... knock on old wood ... GOOD!

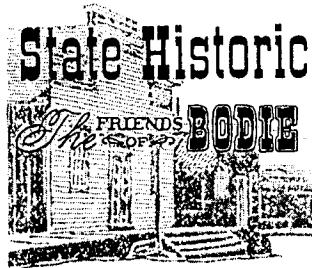
The Desert Protection Act passed this last fall. Part of this included The Bodie Protection Act of 1992, 1993, and 1994. Our thanks to all of you that participated in any way, shape, or form that you could. A special thanks to the Save Bodie! folks and Donna Pozzi.

After three years of waiting we finally received some funding to continue with the stabilization of structures. It was the type of thing where one minute the money was there ... then it wasn't ... then it was ... and finally the last word ... NO NEW STABILIZATION FUNDS FOR BODIE IN 1994, however, when the budget passed there was money to do work on three buildings. The money came from the environmental licence plate fund.

We were successful in establishing a Friends of Bodie fund, membership to the 'Friends' increased to close to 500, grant funds were obtained to hire someone to get down to accessioning artifacts, another cabinet was added to the museum sales area, the museum was opened for seven months, a radar survey was completed around the exterior of the cemetery to locate gravesites, and The Ghosts of Bodie Night was held in October this last year.

One of the more fun things which I had the opportunity to participate in was the coaching of the T-ball team the Bodie Mutts. The name was taken from Bodie's last baseball team which played from about 1907 to approximately 1911 or 1912. In fact the Bodie

### Bodie State Historic Park



entry in the Bridgeport 4th of July festivities was the Bodie Mutts and Lottie, the 1927 Dodge Graham which sits in front of the gas pumps on Main Street during the summer. A 1st place trophy was awarded for best historic entry.

It has been a good year for Bodie. We could not have done it without the continued support of the Friends of Bodie membership, SSPF Board of Directors, Sierra District staff, and the employees and volunteers of Bodie State Historic Park - to name just a few.

Sincerely,

J. Brad Sturdivant

P.S. A Friend of Bodie and Bodie Park Aid, Jill Lachman, has taken over four miles of State Route 270 as part of the CAL-TRANS Adopt-a-highway program. Complete with the flashy blue and white sign and orange collection bags. What a great idea!

# History Quiz: What is a Mining Claim?

by Jack Shipley

---It's August, 1849: you arrive in California with thousands of others at the new town of Coloma, stake a claim, and start panning for gold.

---It's August, 1859: last month your partner, W. S. Bodey, discovered gold in the hills that will later bear his name. You stake a claim, and head out to get supplies.

---It's August, 1988: your company, Galactic Resources from Canada, sends you down to the Bodie Hills to stake 1,350 claims so you can start an open pit gold mine.

Do you know what has happened here? We hear about "mining claims" in the movies, in history books, and in the news, but how many of us know what a claim really is? Can you actually lay claim to land that belongs to John Sutter (like the Coloma area in 1849), to the public (like the Bodie Hills in 1859), or to the federal Bureau of Land Management (like some of Bodie in 1988)?

Well, the answer is: sometimes! In some cases you just mine it for a while; in other cases you take over the land permanently for \$5 an acre. Does this sound like a good deal for the miner? Right! Does it sound like a giveaway of valuable public lands? Right again. Does it sound like something that only happened in the rapacious nineteenth century, but not today? Wrong: Large numbers of mining claims are being made right now. In order to understand how Galactic Resources could claim 47 square miles of public land in 1988, we need to study how W. S. Bodey could claim a few acres in 1859.

When the Forty-Niners got to California in the mid-nineteenth century, they conveniently "forgot" that all the mineral-bearing land already belonged to someone: some of it belonged to private ranchos (like that of John Sutter); some of it was former Mexican (now U. S.) government land, (like the Bodie Hills); and some was Indian land. The would-be miners simply decided, in true squatter fashion, "Well, they're not using this property, so we'll use it." All the men in

each camp got together, declared themselves a "mining district", elected a secretary or recorder, decided on a few rules (such as claim size), and proceeded to divide up all the valuable territory. Usually each person was allowed just one claim, although the first person to discover any district was allowed two. Any claim left unattended for a certain period (usually a week) was considered abandoned, and could be claimed by someone else.

This system spread from California throughout the West. Private landowners, like Sutter and John Charles Fremont, had rich lands stolen from under their noses. Indian tribes lost huge chunks of territory. (The bloody wars with the Sioux in the northern plains were fought largely because white miners -- like George Hearst -- kept taking Black Hills land that had been reserved for the tribes.)

The federal government was losing millions of acres with little or no payment, so some eastern states (led by Rep. George W. Julian of Indiana) began to complain. In the western states, however, a large interest group had grown up to protect mining "rights", and attempts were made by Congress in 1866 to legalize and regularize a claim procedure. Finally, under the Grant administration, the General Mining Law of 1872 was passed, which granted anyone the right to claim U. S. public (not private) land in 20-acre chunks, if they could prove that it contained minerals, and if they promised to do at least \$100 worth of work there each year. In a complete surrender to the mining interests, there was no limit placed on the number of claims a company could hold, and the company could actually acquire permanent ownership of each acre for a \$5 fee.

This was the time of great giveaways of Western land, as America worked to populate and develop the newer half of the country as rapidly as possible. Hundreds of millions of acres were given away or sold cheaply under the Homestead Act (1864), the Desert Land Act (1877), the Timber and Stone Act (1878), and various railroad land grants.

Most of the land ended up concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy corporations, contrary to the original intentions of the Congress. So, one by one, all these other giveaway acts were abolished, in order to stop their abuses, or at least to allow the Government some reasonable income from the sale of the public's resources. Even coal, oil, and *non-precious* metals cannot be claimed: they must be *leased*, with royalties being paid back to the Government. But for some

*Mining Claims continued from page 2*

reason, Congress has never had the ability to stand up to the powerful mining lobby and reform the 1872 Mining Law for *precious metals*.

That is why W. S. Bodey could dream of riches in "his" hills. And that is why a foreign company can still "claim" large amounts of public land the way Galactic Resources did in 1988. In fact, *most* of the large open-pit mines in America today are being dug on public land. And that, friends, is the history quiz for today!

## Ghosts of Bodie Night

by Mark Pupich & Sue Lamie

On certain fall nights in Bodie when the moon is full the ghosts of Bodie's past appear. Sixty or so members of the Friends of Bodie responded to our invitation to witness this phenomenon last fall just before Halloween. The clear sky and crisp air was conducive to a evening of thrills and chills. Undertaker H. Ward materialized to lead the group down Main Street to witness some of the ghosts appearing during the night. The group first saw the hanging of Joseph DeRoche by the "Bodie 601" vigilante committee. They then listened to Lottie Johl, a former lady of the evening, give her sad tale of rejection by the proper men and women of Bodie. Next was a rough and rowdy gun fight at the Sam Leon Bar. After witnessing the mayhem at the Sam Leon came a visit to the Bodie Bank, what is left of it, and a talk with J.S. Cain. A visit to the Jail was next; a tour of this fine facility was given by Constable Kirgan with a few of Bodie's bad men in lock-up. It was then back up Main Street to witness members of the "Champion" hose company respond to a fire alarm. And finally to the morgue and the coffin containing a not-quite-dead corpse.

The children that visited this ghostly evening participated in a costume contest and other Halloween fun

At the end of the evening the properly chilled group, having learned a bit more of Bodie's history started back to their warm homes and motel rooms. Meanwhile the ghosts of Bodie faded back into the past awaiting another chance to appear before kindred spirits.

A special thanks to the Bodie staff, and Friends of Bodie members Slim and Fay Osborne and John Slenter for their help in making this evening happen.



Ghosts of Bodie actors left to right: John Slenter, Chuck Fell, Mike Whitsel, Steve Demske, Lara Bjork, Susan DesBaillets (kneeling), Julia Hayen, Slim Osborne, Charlie Spiller, Mark Pupich

## Newsflash: The Bodie Protection Act Passed

Reprinted from the California State Park Ranger Association -- Save Bodie!

The Bodie Protection Act was passed, along with the California Desert Protection Act, in the closing hours of the 103rd Congress. If you were watching the news coverage of the unprecedented gridlock in Senate, you may have given up hope and assumed the Bodie bill would fail to pass before Congress adjourned. With all the other pieces of legislation that died in the past couple of weeks, it was easy to despair. The Feinstein-Huffington Senate race further complicated matters, with the Republicans reluctant to give Senator Feinstein a victory. Nonetheless, CSPRA can proudly claim to have achieved the impossible -- we got the bill through Congress.

*Bodie Protection Act continued from page 3*

It's been such a long time that you have probably forgotten what our modest little bill accomplishes. Please note: Bodie is **not** saved yet! Here's what the act will do after it is signed into law by President Clinton. Federal lands in the Bodie Bowl will be protected from mineral activity, subject to valid existing rights. New mineral claims cannot be filed under the Mining Law of 1872 on approximately 6,000 acres of public land. This is critical because Galactic's bankruptcy trustee has been releasing some claims rather than pay fees to keep them current. Now these lands will be safe from future claims. Additionally, there is to be an expedited validity check of all recorded claims: invalid claims will be voided. Patenting of federal land will not be allowed unless it meets certain "grandfathering" requirements. Any mining on valid claims would be subject to special regulations designed to prevent adverse effects on Bodie's resources and values. The Governor of California would be consulted before the Secretary of Interior could approve a mining plan. Also, restoration of effects of recent mining exploration within the Bodie Bowl would be required. Lastly, the Department of the Interior would conduct a study of the Bodie Bowl to recommend how best to preserve the area. This study would look at methods of acquiring private holdings, including valid claims, to ensure Bodie is protected from incompatible land uses. As you can see, we have our work cut out to be sure that this law is properly implemented; Bodie is **not** saved yet.

Many people need to be recognized and thanked for their help in passing the Bodie bill. Senator Dianne Feinstein and her Deputy Legislative Director Kathy Lacey, along with Congressman Rick Lehman and George Miller and their respective staffs, were tireless in their dedication to protecting Bodie. In the Resources Agency, Doug Wheeler and Michael Mantell were tremendous allies. We had loyal friends at the Wilderness Society and the National Trust for Historic Preservation who counseled us and lobbied on Bodie's behalf. Members of the Eastern Sierra Citizens for the Protection of Bodie were our partners all along the way. Many DPR employees played crucial roles, as did CSPRA and Save Bodie! members. There are too many to name them all and to cite their contributions but it is safe to say that thousands of people were involved in this important success. Now, it's time to celebrate!

## Year-Round Accessioning Begins

by Lara Bjork

As of September, Leona Pupich and I have begun Bodie's first year-round accessioning project, under the direction of the Sierra District Museum Curator William Lindemann. The project is currently funded by a nine-month grant from the Resource Management Division of the California Department of Parks and Recreation. Our initial goal is to accession 4,000 artifacts. Even with the accessioning that was already done, we will only begin to properly document Bodie's collections.

Bodie presents a museum management challenge, due mostly to the incredible number of artifacts on site. Accessioning, part of any museum collection's management, becomes especially important with this number of objects. Accessioning involves:

- assigning a unique catalog number to each artifact.
- recording the appearance and condition of the artifact, to distinguish it from others and to monitor its deterioration.
- documenting the artifact's source, history and location, to give the object a historical context.

Accessioning is like preventative medicine archaeology, providing protection against the failure of human memory and leaving behind an explanation of artifacts. Organized records allow systematic historical research, preserving meaning in silent artifacts for generations to come. But collections management does not benefit only scholars of the future. Documentation of artifacts is valuable as a security measure; should any theft or vandalism occur, inventories and descriptions of condition allow damage to be assessed. And, on a more immediate level, the more information gathered about Bodie, the more educational and enjoyable your visits to the town can be!

## Bodie Fund

by Brad Sturdivant

According to the Friends of Bodie brochure developed way back in 1986, a special fund was to be set up specifically for Bodie State Historic Park. Well ... as of this past summer an account was set up at a (the) local bank in Bridgeport.

Prior to this landmark all funds generated at Bodie went to the Sierra State Parks Foundation (SSPF) and proceeds were shared with other parks within the Sierra District.

Funds generated from memberships, photo workshops, and donations will now go directly into the Bodie account. All funds generated through sales will still go to the SSPF with the possible exception of selected sales items. This will not hinder our status within the SSPF for other necessary interpretive needs or projects.

I guess this brings us to the BIG question ... of ... how will these funds be utilized. Again, going back to the Friends of Bodie Brochure, there were three goals identified:

- Stabilization of structures
- Protection of artifacts
- Construction of a visitor center

We are looking at several options. One would be to leave the money where it is and go on a fund raising crusade and build a visitor center as stated in our brochure. Other possibilities could include:

- Build a room within a room in the brick portion of the Boone Store for artifact storage.
- Provide funds to hire staff to accession artifacts so they can be stored.
- Hire an interpreter to help with the ever increasing demand for interpretive programs.
- Stabilize structures -- this past summer state Environmental License Plate (ELP) funds were provided for projects of this nature and the future looks good for more beginning next fiscal year.
- Purchase of the private property on Bodie Bluff east of the park.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? We welcome your ideas. Both on how to use the funds and how to raise additional funds for protection of our non-renewable resource.



## News from the Museum Desk

by Joetta Stone

There have been a few items added to sell in the museum. We have 12 different bookmarks that feature a Mark Twain quote and a black and white photograph of Bodie, and a new postcard of the town of Bodie in 1926. We also have two new books: "Soiled Doves" by Anne Seagraves is a collection of stories of prostitution in the early west with a featured chapter on the love story of Lottie Johl, 175 pages. The other book, "Ghost Towns and Mining Camps of California" by Remi Nadeau gives brief histories of many California mining camps with maps and photographs, 324 pages.

It has been a good year membership wise for the Friends of Bodie. We currently have over 400 members, with 81 life time memberships. As an incentive we gave away our newest poster "Bodie in the Snow" to anyone joining while visiting the Museum. Thanks to all our members for your loyal support year after year. We will keep Bodie alive for our future generations.

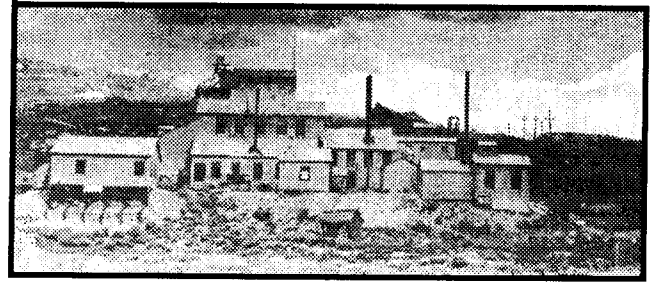
During a Survey in 1993 we discovered that about 1/3 of the Bodie visitors were from out of the country, mostly German and French. We may put together a brochure in German and French that could be sold with our English brochure. We have had many requests from foreign visitors for a brochure in their language and feel it would help them enjoy their visit to Bodie more.

## Arrested Decay

by Mark Pupich

Gold was discovered in 1859 by Wakeman (William) S. Bodie at a site in the Trans-Sierras that was later named in his honor. In 1880 the boom town of Bodie reached its peak with a population of around 6,000 and some 2000 buildings. Mining finally came to a halt in 1942 and left a ghost of what was once. In 1962 it became a State Historic Park with less than 10% of its heyday structures still standing. Still it is the most intact authentic western ghost town in existence today. It has not been restored, and except for the caretaker staff, it is uninhabited. The California Department of Parks and Recreation manages the townsite in a state of "Arrested Decay", which means, we are not restoring the town, nor are we allowing it to fall to the ground. We stabilize the buildings and artifacts while striving to keep its authenticity and work within our limited budget.

Funding for stabilization at Bodie has always been a precarious thing. In most recent years with the State in such financial hardship it has been practically nonexistent. Funding has taken an upturn this year as we are promised \$300,000 for stabilization made available through the environmental license plate program. It looks like we could get this same funding for the two following years also. This came about largely due to the efforts of Michael Mantell, California State Resources Agency Undersecretary. This last fall the state park stabilization crew (Maintenance Mechanic Chuck Fell, Maint. Assistant Jim Anthony, and Park Aide Mike Whitsel) stabilized the Dolan (east) House and much of the Burkham House on Mill Street. This year, with the new funding and assistance from a crew from the Office of State Architect, they plan to complete stabilization on the Standard Stamp Mill foundation, the east wall of the Assayer's office in the Mill complex, the south wall of the Miners' Union Hall, the morgue up by the cemetery, the O'brian warehouse and several outlying houses in the townsite. We all hope this trend continues as it is an absolute necessity if we are to prolong the existence of this vestige of our heritage we call Bodie.



## ACEC Update

by Brad Sturdivant

If you remember from our last newsletter I was part of a committee established by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Mono County. The purpose of this committee was to come up with a plan to assist BLM with management of approximately 6,000 acres of federal land, and Mono County with the management of approximately 550 acres of private property within an area deemed an ACEC -- Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

State Parks was part of this process, but we could not commit to revising the 1979 General Development Plan for Bodie SHP. The ACEC plan will, however, give recommendations to State Parks for possible changes/inclusions to the Bodie General Development Plan.

The plan strayed somewhat from making comments on just the ACEC and went a bit further to include some comments for another 125,000 acres of federal, state, and private properties within the Bodie Hills. Other areas included the access roads of HWY 270, Cottonwood Canyon, and private property on HWY 270.

After two years the ACEC plan is now complete and was out for public comment until the 15th of January 1995. It was truly amazing how much controversy was stirred up by the possibility of a full blown open pit mining operation in the view-shed of our fair city. The group attempted to satisfy all parties concerned and at the same time not sacrifice the "Bodie Experience" or do anything to harm the park.

At any rate the plan is complete and all participants are to be congratulated for seeing it through to completion.

## Mono Lake

by Dave Carle & Mark Pupich

Many of you have visited Mono Lake while driving along Hwy. 395 on your way up and down the Eastern Sierra. It is located about 10 miles south-east of Bodie as the California Gull flies. Mark Twain, in his travels through the Eastern Sierra back in the 1860s, visited Mono Lake and commented, "Its sluggish waters are so strong with alkali that if you only dip the most hopelessly soiled garment into them once or twice, and wring it out, it will be found as clean as if it had been through the ablest of washer woman's hands." James Cain ran a tug boat that towed lumber barges across the lake full of wood bound for the boom town of Bodie. During the construction of the railroad from Mono Mills to Bodie in 1881 the Chinese labors were hurriedly ferried to Paoha Island to protect them from an angry crowd of Bodieites.

This 700,000 year old lake once covered 338 square miles. Today the picturesque body of water with its unusual looking tufa towers only covers 60 miles, and is the focal point of the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area and Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve. Mono Lake is fed by several creeks that drain down off the eastern slopes of the Sierras. The Lake does not have an outlet, but water does continually evaporate from the Lake's surface. The water in the Lake is alkaline (pH 10) and 2.5 times saltier than the ocean. No fish can live in this lake, but alkali flies and brine shrimp flourish here and are an important food source for more than a million migratory birds.

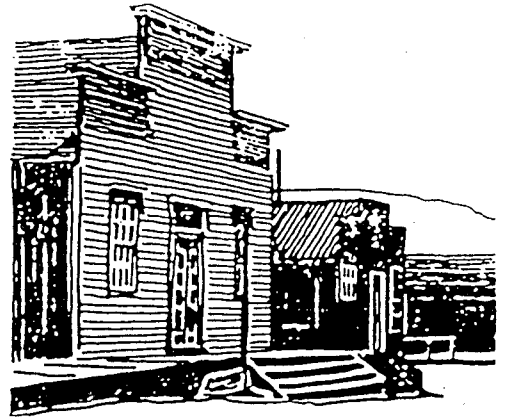
Back in 1941 the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power began diverting four of the five creeks that fed the Lake. Sense that time the lake level has dropped 43 feet. Because of the net decrease in the water volume, the salinity is approaching a level that even the organisms that have adapted to Mono Lake's harsh water can no longer tolerate. Also the exposed lake bed poses air quality problems under windy conditions as the alkaline dust is carried up into the air.

In 1979 efforts to save Mono Lake were started by concerned citizens groups. The Mono Lake Committee and the National Audubon Society began litigation against the stream diversions. The courts ruled that Mono Lake must be protected under the Public Trust Doctrine. Years of research and meetings went into an Environmental Impact Report to determine what the acceptable level of the Lake should be. On September 28, 1994 the State Water Resources Control Board ruled that the Lake level should be brought back to the surface elevation of 6,392 feet above sea level, 18 feet above its present level. It is estimated that it will take 20 years to bring Mono Lake back up to that level. There is also the job of restoring stream and waterfowl habitat now that water is flowing again down the creeks to the Lake.



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