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October/November 2009

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37 places where the
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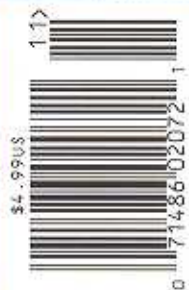
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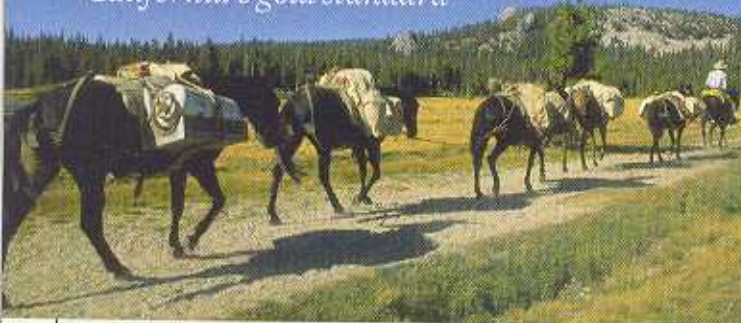
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The art of Montana Silversmiths



DISPLAY UNTIL
November 9, 2009

Bodie, Calif.

California's gold standard



according to Mark Langner, supervising state park ranger at Bodie State Historic Park.

Future president Herbert Hoover spent time in Bodie in the early 1900s. "He and his brother Theodore were mining engineers from Stanford," says Langner. "Theodore lived there for a couple of years, and Herbert would visit him."

But by the start of World War II, a presidential order that required gold and silver mines to cease operations caused the town to languish once again. In 1962, the uninhabited town became a state park.

Today, visitors can explore the local homes and businesses, including four of Bodie's original 65 saloons. A museum gives an overview of the area and offers tours of the local mill. There's also a schoolhouse, a morgue, and a banker's house to explore.

"Five percent of the town is left," says Langner. "It doesn't sound like much, but it's still a couple hundred buildings."

Some buildings are furnished and some aren't, but

everything is original—what folks left. And nothing is restored, so the dusty and battered and exposed feel is very authentic.

Parks.ca.gov, (760) 647-6425

William S. Bodey discovered gold here in 1859, and the town "Bodey" was established in 1861. No one's sure exactly when, or why, but the town's name eventually changed to "Bodie," likely to make the pronunciation easier.

Bodie didn't really prosper until the 1870s, when a cave-in at a local mine exposed a huge amount of gold and silver. After this success, Bodie grew to be one of the largest towns in the state by 1880, with about 10,000 residents. Over time, the mines stopped producing ore, and people moved on.

At the turn of the century, Bodie saw new activity when locals began using a cyanide-based process to extract more gold from the mines,

OTHER CALIFORNIA GHOST TOWNS:

>**CALICO** is a living museum, populated to feel like the successful silver mining town it was. www.calicotown.com, (760) 254-2122

>**KEELER**, near Death Valley National Park, is a shadow of its former silver-mining self. Some buildings remain standing by Cerro Gordo (or fat hill), the nearby source of the town's silver. www.keelercalifornia.com

>**RANDBURG**, in the Mojave Desert, is a former mining town. Today, visitors can see the opera house, hotel, and saloon, in addition to antique shops and other attractions. www.randburg.com, (760) 374-2285

>**SILVER CITY**, despite its name, was a former gold mining boom town. Relocated to nearby Bodfish, the 20-odd buildings—including a post office, general store, and barber shop—stand as a living history museum. www.lakeisabell.net/silvercity, (760) 379-5146

WHERE TO STAY: The Bodie Victorian Hotel in Bridgeport, was built in Bodie and moved to its current location decades ago. The hotel is believed to have been a bordello (www.bodievictorian-hotel.com, 760-932-7020).

WHERE TO EAT: Bodie Mike's Barbecue in neighboring Lee Vining, offers diners hearty fare (www.leevining.com/businesses/03.htm, 760-647-6432).

OTHER AREA ATTRACTIONS: In Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve, you can hike, go bird-watching, or marvel at the unusual, Dr. Seuss-like geological formations called tufas (www.parks.ca.gov, 760-647-6331). Drive to nearby Yosemite National Park for horseback riding, hiking, or peaceful gazing at the giant sequoia trees and breathtaking scenery (www.nps.gov/yose, 209-372-0200).



Cripple Creek, Colo.

A drunkard's dream

Immortalized in song by The Band, Cripple Creek was a boomtown from 1890 to 1910, when miners extracted more than 1.37 million pounds of gold from the area.

Miners wandered from saloons to bordellos to flop-houses during its heyday, and donkeys roamed the streets. At least one member of the

Wild Bunch was arrested here, according to Steph Hilliard, manager of the Pike's Peak Heritage Center. Today, although much has changed, some things have not.

"Donkeys still wander around," says Hilliard. "And town looks pretty much like it did 100 years ago." Many

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buildings are preserved, and the ones that had to be torn down were rebuilt in the same style.

Most miners rode to work from town on a narrow-gauge railroad. Today, visitors can take the same 45-minute trip on the Cripple Creek & Victor Narrow Gauge Railroad in a restored steam engine.

Visitors can also travel 1,000 feet below ground to tour the Mollie Kathleen Gold Mine. They can also explore the Outlaws and Lawmen Jail Museum or see what a high-end brothel looked like a century ago. "The Old Homestead Museum was once the town's most expensive house of prostitution," explains Hilliard. The building still has the original wallpaper from France and a selection of Tiffany lamps.

Cripple Creek's heritage of striking it rich continues today: limited-stakes gambling was legalized in 1991, and there are 16 casinos in town.

Visit cripplecreek.com,
877-858-4653

WHERE TO STAY: The Cripple Creek Hospitality House, a Victorian-style inn, is housed in the former Teller County Hospital. Although it's been renovated, signs and other small details remind of the building's previous purpose (www.cchospitalityhouse.com, 800-500-2513).

WHERE TO EAT: The Steakhouse, a local favorite, at Bronco Billy's Casino has been named among the best steakhouses in the southern part of the state (www.broncobillyscasino.com, 877-989-2142).

OTHER AREA ATTRACTIONS: The Ghost Town Museum in Colorado Springs speaks for itself (www.ghosttownmuseum.com, 719-634-0696). Reach the summit of Pike's Peak by car or cog railway. The views prove why it's the most visited mountain top on the continent (www.pikespeakcolorado.com, 800-318-9505). Or visit Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs to hike among dramatic red sandstone formations (www.gardenofgods.com, 719-634-6666).

**OTHER COLORADO
GHOST TOWNS:**

>CENTRAL CITY is a former mining town that also offers gambling. Travelers can tour mines, pan for gold, walk around the neighborhoods of 19th century buildings, or see a show at the Central City Opera House, the oldest operating opera house in the nation. www.centralcitycolorado.us, (303) 582-5257

>SILVERTON was founded as a silver mining town in 1874. Visitors can walk among the Victorian homes, tour mines, see re-enactments of shootouts, visit jail and mining museums, or ride the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. www.silvertoncolorado.com, 800-752-4494

>ST. ELMO looks like the set of an old Western movie, with white picket fences ringing the abandoned homes of gold and silver miners. The general store is still open for business. www.st-elmo.com, (719) 395-2117

>SUNSHINE is a former gold mining town that peaked in the 1870s. Today, a number of buildings are still standing. www.rockymountainprofiles.com/sunshine_colorado.htm

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