

HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN DEEP RURAL PLACES: A HISTORIC
RESOURCES STUDY OF PETROLEUM COUNTY, MONTANA



LAURA KRISTINE NOWLIN

A TERMINAL PROJECT

Presented to the Historic Preservation Program
of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Science

June 2008

“Historic Preservation in Deep Rural Places: A Historic Resources Study of Petroleum County, Montana,” a terminal project prepared by Laura Kristine Nowlin in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science degree in the Historic Preservation Program. This thesis has been approved and accepted by:

Michael Hibbard, Chair of the Examining Committee

Date

Committee in Charge: Michael Hibbard, Chair
 Elizabeth Carter
 Joy Sears

© 2008 Laura Kristine Nowlin

An Abstract of the Terminal Project of

Laura Kristine Nowlin for the degree of Master of Science
in the Historic Preservation Program to be taken June 2008

Title: HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN DEEP RURAL PLACES: A HISTORIC
RESOURCES STUDY OF PETROLEUM COUNTY, MONTANA

Approved: _____
Michael Hibbard

The field of historic preservation, until recently, overlooked rural communities in its mission to preserve historic resources. While the preservation community begins to focus more on landscape preservation and rural areas, there still exists a lack of information and understanding of the places, the people and their needs. This terminal project addresses the issue of preservation in deep rural communities through a single in-depth case study in the form of a Historic Resources Study of Petroleum County, Montana. This Historic Resources Study (HRS) has laid the groundwork for future preservation activities in Petroleum County in three ways. First, it presents a broad history of the area from which to gain knowledge of the local history and understanding of how and why the historic resources are there. Second, it supplies an identification and explanation of a selection of both rural and urban historic resources. Finally, it provides an overview of historic preservation and many of the programs that have been successful in rural places. In addition, it gives a list of recommendations for historic preservation action in Petroleum County and contributes to a heritage education program by providing a lesson plan for the Winnett High School.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Laura K. Nowlin

PLACE OF BIRTH: Lewistown, Montana

DATE OF BIRTH: May 24, 1984

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon

Montana State University, Bozeman

DEGREES AWARDED:

Master of Science, Historic Preservation, University of Oregon

Bachelor of Arts, History, 2006, Montana State University

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Rural Preservation

Cultural Landscapes

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

John Yeon Graduate Research Fellow, University of Oregon
September 2007 – June 2008

Museum Technician, Montana Heritage Commission
June 2007 – September 2007

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express sincere appreciation to my committee members, Professor Michael Hibbard, chair, and Elizabeth Carter and Joy Sears for their assistance in the preparation of this manuscript. I would like to thank my parents, James and Diana Brady, for their support and encouraging me to investigate the heritage of my home. In addition, special thanks are due to members of the Petroleum County community, Nancy and Ruth Freburg, Sue McKenna, Chris King, and Tom and Lu Pugrud, for their help, advice, and comments at various stages of my project. Also, a very special thanks is due to my great uncles, Jack and Dick Hanson, who have helped me on multiple history projects and are always willing to regale me with stories of the past. And finally, I want to acknowledge my husband, Levi, for his support, patience, and love while I pursued this part of my life.

Dedicated to my family, whose pioneering spirit has lasted through the generations,
and to the people of Petroleum County; past, present, and future.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Chapter | Page |
|---|------|
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Historic Preservation in Deep Rural Places | 1 |
| Research Methodology | 8 |
| Literature Review | 16 |
| I. HISTORY OF PETROLEUM COUNTY | 35 |
| Introduction to Petroleum County | 38 |
| The First Occupants (prehistory – 1860) | 42 |
| Early Settlement Attempts (1860s-1880s) | 46 |
| Stockmen and the Open Range (1880s-1910s) | 53 |
| The Homesteading Era (1910s-1920s) | 66 |
| Oil and County-Busting (1920-1925) | 84 |
| The Great Depression (1930s) | 94 |
| The 1940s and After | 100 |
| II. DISCUSSION OF HISTORIC RESOURCES | 110 |
| Rural Historic Landscapes | 112 |
| Explanation of Historic Resources | 118 |
| Description of Historic Resources | 128 |
| III. PRESERVATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES | 180 |
| Overview of Historic Preservation | 182 |
| Overview of Historic Preservation Programs, Organizations, and Initiatives | 197 |
| Preservation Management Examples and Recommendations | 211 |
| Recommendations for Petroleum County | 216 |
| <i>Teaching with Historic Places</i> Lesson Plan | 227 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| IV. CONCLUSION | 228 |
| APPENDICES | 236 |
| A. POST OFFICES OF PETROLEUM COUNTY | 236 |
| B. ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION | 237 |
| C. DOLLARS FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION | 239 |
| D. NATIONAL REGISTER BROCHURE: NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES | 248 |
| E. SECRETARY OF INTERIOR STANDARDS FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION | 249 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 253 |
| <i>TEACHING WITH HISTORIC PLACES</i> LESSON PLAN | CD |

LIST OF MAPS

| Map | Page |
|--|------|
| 1. Historic Map of Petroleum County | 37 |
| 2. Original Homestead Claims in Petroleum County | 68 |
| 3. Historic Sites of Petroleum County | 136 |
| 4. Topographic Map of Winnett | 156 |
| 5. 1922 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map | 157 |
| 6. 1929 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map | 158 |

LIST OF TABLES

| Table | Page |
|--|------|
| 1. Why Preserve? | 188 |
| 2. Timeline of Important Dates in Historic Preservation | 194 |
| 3. Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Conditions | 204 |
| 4. Major Differences Between Urban and Rural Communities from a Preservation Standpoint | 208 |