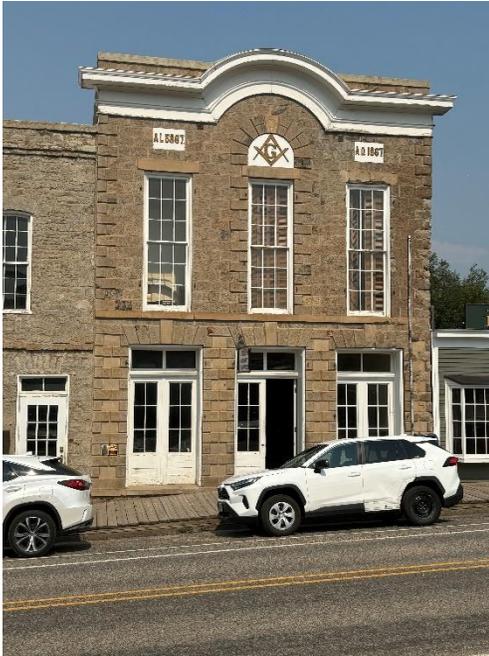


Recently, Therese and I made Bozeman, Montana a destination vacation spot. The reason that we chose Bozeman was that Therese's great grandfather settled there in the mid 1860's and we wanted to see if we could learn more about him and try to find the 160 acres of land that the Federal Government gave him if he built a house and farmed the land for a specified number of years. With the help of the Bozeman Historical Society, we accomplished both of these goals.

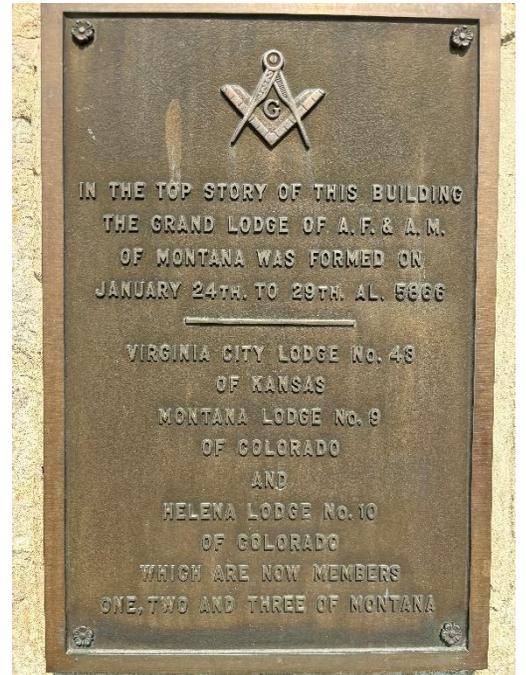
While in this area of Montana, we learned several things. First, Montana is the third largest state by size in the continental United States. Its territorial capital was Virginia City which was a gold mining town that grew to over 5,000 residents virtually overnight once gold was discovered. While many, if not most, of these old towns suffered a fire or fires during its early existence, Virginia City never had a fire so all of its old buildings still stand today.

Virginia City is a little over an hour drive from Bozeman so we drove there to see what we could find



besides an ice cream parlor that makes small batch ice cream. On the main street, I quickly discovered an old, but well kept, brick building with a Square and Compass imbedded in its bricks.

From a plaque on the wall, I discovered this building was used by members of Masonic Lodges from Kansas and Colorado who had Charters from lodges from



those states to hold meetings in the Montana Territory and to create the Grand Lodge of Montana.

Unfortunately, I could not find anyone to let me into this building so that I could see what the Lodge Room looked like or visit the third floor.

While I was in Bozeman walking along Main Street, I discovered two Masonic Temples. One belonged to Gallatin Lodge No. 6 A.F. & .AM. and the other to Bozeman Lodge No. 18 A.F. & A.M. Both of these Masonic Temples were two story brick buildings with retail establishments on the ground floor. While I did find a door to a stairway for Bozeman Lodge, I could not find any door to the second floor of the Gallatin Temple. The information on their websites was quite sketchy but I did find the stated meeting time and day for Bozeman Lodge, but we were not in town on that day.

Obviously, Gallatin Lodge was chartered before Bozeman Lodge which was chartered in 1872. I did inquire about why a town of this size would have two Masonic Lodges. When Gallatin Lodge was formed, its members came from the south and would only accept candidates who had some connection to the Confederacy. If you were a Northerner, you could not join. Therefore, some Northern Brothers formed Bozeman Lodge. Today, this distinction is supposedly not adhered to.

In case you are wondering where the name Gallatin came from, a history lesson in the Louisiana Purchase is necessary. Jefferson was President, Madison was the Secretary of State and Albert Gallatin was the Secretary of the Treasury. Mr. Gallatin later formed New York University.

When we visited Three Forks, MT, I saw that they also had a Masonic Lodge that was still active. The town of Three Forks is near the convergence of the Jefferson, Madison and Gallatin Rivers which form the Missouri River. Unfortunately, I was not able to visit an out of state Lodge on this vacation.