January 5, 1896

Death of John S. Mendenhall.

John S. Mendenhall, known to his intimate associates and pioneer companions as "Jack," died on Saturday evening about half past five o'clock, as he had lived, peacefully and calmly.

Mr. Mendenhall had been ill with kidney troubles for several months, being utterly unable to attend to business during this time, but persistently refusing to seek a prolongation of life elsewhere. Wrapped up in his business, it was his chief joy to be in close touch with it, and to advise with his son, who had had it in charge.

Briefly, Mr. Mendenhall's history is as follows: He was born in Vevey, Ind., Oct. 18, 1835. In 1855 he went to Leavenworth, Kans., where he dolled freignt for Gelbert & Gorrish, and went with it to Salt Lake. He worked at clerking for the same firm until 1867. It was in this vicinity of the Mountain Meadows massacre that the provisions they bought at Salt Lake before pursing their fatal journey. Mr. Mendenhall's life in Utah was fraught with danger, and he occasionly gave some very interesting accounts of it. He returned to the states in 1870, but returned to Salt Lake and remained there until 1872 when he went to Ft. Lomoli, Idaho. At this point the party were obliged to leave their wagons, and the deceased proceeded to the Deer Lodge valley. In 1862-3, Mr. Mendenhall brought goods from Salt Lake to Bannocks. He prospected during the year 1863, and in 1864 went to British Columbia, returning to Montana and locating in this valley the same year. There he farmed successfully until 1880, finally opening a general store with A. Lamme, which at his death he entirely owned.

He was elected county commissioner in 1873, serving three years. This was the only official position he would hold, although time and again urged to do so. With his wide popularity, Mr. Mendenhall could have been elected to any office in the gift of the people of this county, but he steadfastly refused to neglect his business.

Mr. Mendenhall was a member of Bannock Lodge, A. F. & A. M. He was married in 1870 to Mrs. M. E. Smith, who, with a son by her former husband, and Samuel A. Mr. Mendenhall's son, survive the beloved head of the family.

The funeral was one of the largest ever seen in Bannock. The Episcopal church was not half large enough to hold all who wished to enter.

Both Masonic blue lodges marched in a body to the residence, accompanied by the pioneer's association and firemen in uniform.

From the residence the body was taken, under escort, to the Episcloal church, where Rev. Frank Lewis delivered a short but succinct tribute to the memory of the deceased, whom he said needed no extended eulogy. "Around the fire sidelines and on the streets, the attendance at this time to pay him reverence, is a more eloquent tribute than I can offer."

After the short prayer at the grave, W. M. W. R. C. Stewart, read the impressive funeral service of the dead, after which the brothers deposited the sprig of evergreen in the open grave, and joined in the grand honors. Each and everyone then deposited a spade full of dirt upon the coffin.

The scenes at the funeral, the long line of friends about and in carriages, attended, in a manner, the ostensible in which the deceased was held. There are few men who have lived in this busy west, who have received the same honors.

Besides all this, the schools and every business house and office was closed for half a day; and flags placed at half mast.
Mendenhall, John S., pioneer (Oct. 18, 1835-Feb. 1, 1896). B. at Vevay, Switzerland County, Indiana, he went to Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1855 and joined a freight outfit to Salt Lake City, where he remained two years before going on to California. He took a ship to New York City, but returned overland to Salt Lake City once more, working there until 1862. In May of that year he and Robert P. Meneefee took a party of about 25 men equipped with ox wagons northward intending to go to the Florence, Idaho, gold fields, about 40 miles southeast of Grangeville. They reached Fort Lemhi where they learned the intervening country was impassable for wagons. They then turned east via Lemhi Pass, reaching Gold Creek, Montana, July 15. On August 26, 1862, Mendenhall stood only 15 feet away while C. W. Spillman was hanged for horse stealing, the first vigilante victim in Montana. Mendenhall returned to Salt Lake City and brought a cargo of merchandise to the new mining camp of Bannack where he made considerable profit on the goods. He prospected in the Virginia City, Montana, region in 1863 and in the Kootenai region of British Columbia in 1864, then moved to the Gallatin Valley of Montana, settling in the new community of Bozeman. He farmed with Meneefee until 1868 when he entered the grocery business at Bozeman, remaining with that pursuit the rest of his life. He held various public positions. Mendenhall was married and fathered a son who survived him, as did his widow.


Mendoza, Juan Domínguez de: see Domínguez de Mendoza, Juan

Meneefee, Robert Philip, pioneer (Apr. 13, 1833-July 18, 1906). B. in Marion County, Missouri, he went to Kansas at 22 and took part in the border struggles from 1855-58 when he drove an ox team to Salt Lake City where he became clerk for a government contracting firm. On May 7 or 8, 1862, he and John S. Mendenhall left Salt Lake City with a party of 25 bound for the gold diggings at Florence, Idaho, about 40 miles by road southeast of Grangeville. They crossed the Snake River at pre-arrived June 9 at Fort their attempt to reach difficult country inter- Lemhi Pass, reaching Montana, June 20 a wandering, Gold Cre Meneefee became assis- Virginia City, Montana, to Bozeman where he dent. He was a party ranching undertaking the grocery business, administration Meneefee and Bozeman. He never Bozeman and was buried in the Bannock, History of Montana, Virginia City, 1, 1899; Register, Helen July 18, 1906.

Menéndez de Aviles, general (Feb. 15, 151 Aviles, Asturias, Sp. By 30 he was fighting became under Charles the Indies fleet, making the Atlantic beside Europe. In the Indi some disgrace, howe Indies had him imprisoned on charges w Philip reduced his premiss of his Parkman: Menéndez to conquer and set expense and within could leave Spain w the rival attempt by peninsula. Menéndez adelantado of Flor any means colonists illegally within its re June 1565; he founded and confronted with fleet at the St. Joh withdrawing then to Spain were nominall brothers, according pledged to treat we who might be Catho
John Mendenhall came to Bozeman in 1864. He farmed, owned the first saloon in town, and was the first Territorial Sheriff of Gallatin County. In 1869, he became a business partner with Dr. Achilles Lamme and they opened a store which was the first store in the area. John met and married Lamme's sister-in-law, Mary. Their son, Sam, was Bozeman's first city manager.
John Mendenhall was county's first law enforcement officer

By Phyllis Smith

The man who was elected the first territorial county sheriff had traveled to many parts of the continent before he settled down in the Gallatin Valley at the age of thirty.

Born in Vevay, Indiana, in 1835, John S. Mendenhall, known to his friends as Jack, left home when he was twenty to join an ex-digger freight train bound for Salt Lake City. There he clerked in a store for two years but left to try his luck in the gold fields of California. He didn't strike it rich but earned enough for a ticket to sail around the Horn to visit New York City.

Coming west again to Utah, he followed prospectors into British Columbia but returned to Salt Lake City, leaving almost immediately for Gold Creek in June 1862, then in Idaho Territory. There he joined Grantsville and James Stuart, future Bozeman miller P.W. McAdow, and others to form the first mining camp in what would become Montana Territory. Mendenhall didn't stay long but was on East Main Street with her brother-in-law Dr. Achilles Lamme, who decided not to continue his medical practice but enter business instead. Mendenhall sold his farm and moved into town to build a pattern book.

Queen Anne residence on the northwest corner of South Wilson Avenue and Dickens Street, the house is still a figured stop for summer house tours.

Mendenhall continued his public service as county commissioner, cemetery board member, and secretary to the Bozeman Fire Company. As vice president of the Bozeman Board of Trade, he was on Main Street in 1883 to salute the first train to enter the valley. The former sheriff's son, Samuel, also participated in civil affairs and became Bozeman's city manager in 1922.

Phyllis Smith is photo archives for the Gallatin County Historical Society. She has published three titles on western history and is currently seeking a publisher for her completed manuscript on the history of the Gallatin Valley.

Prime Time News
62 West 3 Jan., 1896

John S. Mendenhall was one of many who came west to search for gold, but ended up as farmer, sheriff and Bozeman businessman. Photo provided by the Gallatin County Historical Society.
Mendenhall's Story
is Exciting Page in History

John S. Mendenhall is standing in the door of his grocery store at 27 East Main, the present location of Gambles. His delivery wagon is parked outside. Mendenhall became associated with Achilles Lamme in 1869 and the name was changed.

By Roza Crowe

Vigilantes and lawmen played a vital and exciting part in developing the Old West.

Mendenhall Street, a main artery of Bozeman, was named after one of these pioneers of Gallatin County, John S. Mendenhall.

Besides being the first territorial sheriff of Gallatin County in 1865, Mendenhall was a member of the vigilantes in Gold Creek, points out Mrs. Robert O. Smith.

Coming overland from Salt Lake City in 1862, Mendenhall and a party of 20 to 30 men including James and Granville Stewart, Sameul T. Hauser, and Walter B. Dance arrived in Gold Creek with the help of an Indian guide.

They organized the first mining camp in Montana.

Organized Vigilantes

According to Vigilante Days and Ways by Nathaniel Pitt Langford (1890), they "were determined that it
would not have the bloody rule of assassins, robbers and wholesale murderers that typified mining camps in other parts of the west."

Believing in fair trial by the miners, these men kept order by vigilante justice. John Mendenhall, a member of this group, was standing 15 feet from the first horse thief in Gold Creek when he was hung.

Then, Mendenhall worked his way up to Bozeman via Emigrant Gulch through the Bozeman Pass with John Bozeman.

In 1864, six buildings were completed during the summer and fall in Bozeman and trade began.

**Became a Grocer**

One of these buildings was a general store established by Mendenhall. It was located on the site of the present day Gambles Store.

Dr. Achilles Lamme became associated with Mendenhall in the store in '869.

Mendenhall was born in Vevay, Indiana, on October 18, 1855. In 1855 he went to Leavenworth, Kansas and joined a freight train for Salt Lake City where he worked in a store for two years.

From Salt Lake City he moved to California, then sailed to New York City. Later he returned overland to Salt Lake City where he remained until 1862, "being well traveled for his time," Mrs. Smith comments.

Active in Bozeman civic affairs, Mendenhall served as county sheriff, county commissioner, member of the board of directors of the cemetery, secretary for Bozeman Fire Company, and

Married Mrs. Smith

On October 16, 1870, Mendenhall married Mrs. Mary Susan Oliver Smith, sister of Mrs. Achilles Lamme. She and her son, Harry L. Smith, came overland with the Lammes after Mrs. Smith's husband was killed in the Civil War.

"The Mendenhalls had one son, Samuel A., who was a civil engineer," says Roy M. Keister, attorney. "He practiced in Bozeman and in 1922 became the first city manager of Bozeman."

Samuel Mendenhall was married twice. The first marriage was to Leila Reid, a nurse in the first hospital in Bozeman. She died shortly after they were married.

Then he married Mary Lea Morris, daughter of W. W. Morris, a mine owner of Virginia City and Pony. There were no children from either marriage.

Harry Smith married Pearl Orton, and they had two children: Robert Orton Smith, who lives with his family in Bozeman today, and Mrs. Susan Smith Anderson, Pocatello, Idaho.

"Mrs. Mendenhall lived in the family home at 521 South Willson (where Malcolm Story now lives) until her death April 6, 1933," says Mrs. Smith. John S. Mendenhall died February 1, 1896.

Mrs. Smith has "Grandma Mendenhall's scrapbook" of early newspaper clippings about the Mendenhall family which was very helpful in constructing this sketch of the life of Mendenhall and another famous builder of the Gallatin country.