

# HistoryLink

## A TRAIL TO DEADWOOD'S PAST

DEADWOOD  
SOUTH  
DAKOTA  
A National Historic  
Landmark



## South Deadwood Mining Camp

*"In every portion of the city the sound of hammer and saw is heard"* was exclaimed by a local newspaper reporter on October 14, 1876 about the up and coming mining camp of South Deadwood. Situated in the narrow expanse of Whitewood Gulch, this mining camp encompassed the lots along Lee, Deadwood, Pine and Sherman Streets. Land speculators in July of 1876 platted South Deadwood with the intention of diverting business and revenue from Deadwood's Main Street. This venture worked as South Deadwood captured an assortment of commercial, religious and civil amenities including the first county hospital, post office, public school, First Congregational and Methodist churches and the county courthouse. In 1881 South Deadwood and the other adjacent mining camps were incorporated into the newly formed City of Deadwood.

By 1900 this area developed into the warehouse district in Deadwood. Numerous wholesale and retail businesses graced Sherman and Lee Streets including the Cudahy Packing Company (Est. 1915), John Treber Beer Depot (Est. 1892), Armour & Company Branch House (Est. 1912), Adams Brothers Company (Est. 1894), Black Hills Mercantile Company (Est. 1919), and the Fish & Hunter Company (Est. 1897). This district also contained two rival railroad company's passenger depots, the Burlington & Missouri and the Chicago & Northwestern.

Through Deadwood's Historic Preservation efforts, many of the commercial buildings within this area have been restored using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.



South Dakota School of Mines & Technology

1879 South Deadwood mining camp along Sherman Street.



City of Deadwood Archives

1899 colored print of Sherman Street, former South Deadwood mining camp.



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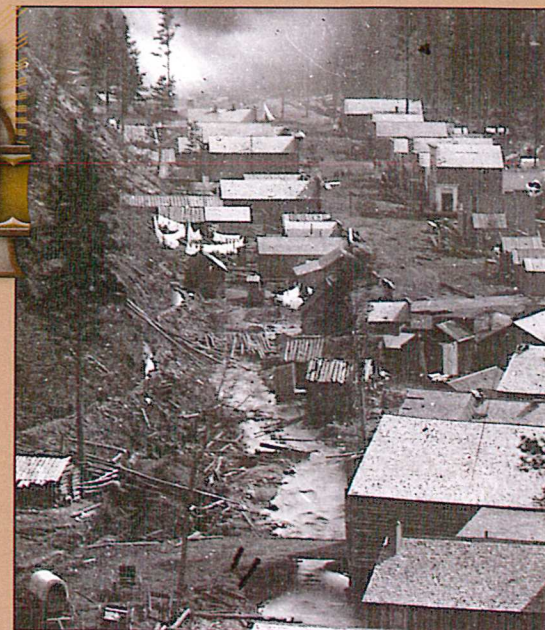
## Whitewood Creek a Short History

From a century of pollution to a restored fishery, Whitewood Creek flows through Deadwood Gulch. Whitewood Creek drains 105 square miles of rugged, mountainous terrain from its watershed divide atop Terry Peak to its confluence with the Belle Fourche River. Eons of erosion deposited gold in the gravels along the creek from a rock outcrop near Lead, South Dakota. The 1875 discovery of this gold helped settle Deadwood Gulch; however, it came with a price.

Mining and chemical extraction of gold from the ore created large volumes of tailings and finely pulverized rock that were discharged directly into the creek. The gold processing mill before you (Slime Plant) is one of the gold extraction operations that dumped its waste directly into the creek. In addition, raw sewage from Lead and Deadwood was discharged into the creek, creating the conditions of horrible pollution.

Whitewood Creek has tormented Deadwood in the past, especially from rain-on-snow events, sending devastating floods through town destroying homes, businesses and lives in its path. Bulkheads made of rock, timber and later concrete were installed along its banks to tame and control the creek. In the mid-1960s a concrete box culvert system enclosed portions of Whitewood Creek beneath the main highway through town. In 1973 the Homestake Mine Slime Plant was closed, and the cleanup of the creek began.

A wastewater treatment plant was built in 1977 to receive and treat Lead-Deadwood's municipal sewage to clean water standards. The polluted waterway of Whitewood Creek was restored and once again is a natural aquatic ecosystem that supports fish and other wildlife along with adding aesthetic beauty to Deadwood Gulch.



City of Deadwood Archives

Above: May 1877 view of Whitewood Creek and South Deadwood Mining Camp.

Below: September 11, 1967 box culvert installation.



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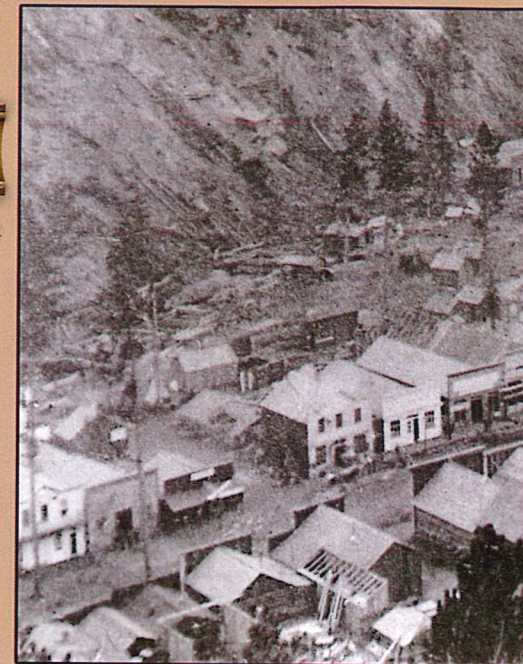
## Wall & Main Street: Commerical Center

From 1876 to 1880, the junction of Wall and Main Street was the commercial center in Deadwood Gulch. Initially, Wall Street was situated on the southeast/northwest boundary of Placer Claims 13 and 14 above Discovery in the Whitewood Creek Mining District. Within two years these claims were patented as Mineral Surveys #38 (September 14, 1877) and #76 (March 12, 1878).

In four years, a variety of notorious commercial enterprises operated within 100 yards of this crossroad including the Al Swearingen's Gem Theater, Nutall & Mann's Saloon #10, a grocery, mercantile and bank specializing in gold dust under the management of James K.P. Miller and James McPherson and Star & Bullock's hardware. Wall Street served as one of three roads to the South Deadwood mining camp located in Whitewood Gulch. In time Wall Street became the center of action with a constant flow of people and animals traversing through this thoroughfare.

To protect their assets against the threat of fire, business partners Miller & McPherson and Star & Bullock built fire proof warehouses behind their buildings. Evidence of Star & Bullock's stone and brick fireproof vault and accompanying metal shutters can still be viewed today by along Wall Street.

On September 26, 1879 fire destroyed Deadwood's business district including the junction of Wall and Main Street. Within 10 years of this fire, Deadwood's economic center shifted to the junction of Lee and Main Street.



Historic Black Hills Studios

Junction of Main and Wall Street, fall of 1876.

**SILVER WARE!**  
AT  
**STAR & BULLOCK**  
Cheaper than in the States  
And Delivered to any Camp in the Black Hills FREE!

City of Deadwood Archives

Advertisement for Star & Bullock Hardware Store,  
located at the corner of Wall and Main Streets.



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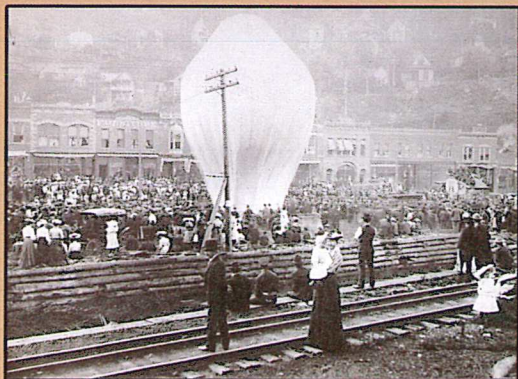
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Deadwood History, Inc.

Above: Aftermath of the March 4, 1894 fire.

Below: 1903 ascension of a balloon along Main Street.  
The buildings in this photograph exist today.



Deadwood History, Inc.

## Reshaping the Badlands

Typical of Deadwood's history, fire has reshaped the downtown district. This particular city block of Main Street adjacent to you was once a ramshackle collection of wooden commercial structures. On the night of March 4, 1894, fire leveled this city block with an estimated \$100,000.00 in damages. Furniture dealer Sam Schwarzwald (620 Main Street) and Horace Clark and Mrs. Martha Bullock (616-618 Main Street) were among the first business owners to rebuild after the fire. By 1903 most of the buildings you see today were rebuilt using an assortment of fire resilient materials including brick, stone and mortar. Their facades provide a tapestry of late Victorian Era architectural styles.

Over the next 100 years, an assortment of businesses, some legal and illegal, graced the interiors of these buildings. Gambling, alcohol consumption, drug use and prostitution were among the illegal activities that occurred on the second and third floors of this block. The Brothel Museum at 610 ½ Main Street (former Shasta Rooms and Tan Door) discusses the history of one of Deadwood's vice. On May 21, 1980, all of Deadwood's brothels were raided and closed. Two years later on February 15, 1982, fire once again destroyed a portion of this block (Ranger Bar and Pam's Purple Door). These lots would remain vacant until the legalization of gaming.

In 1996 Olympia Gaming Group Inc. began discussions on reconstructing the facades of the Horace Clark (614 Main Street) and Apex (612 Main Street) buildings. South Dakota architect Spencer Ruff was hired to design facades in the likeness of these buildings following guidelines in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. Known as "architectural infill", the new buildings seamlessly blend into the preexisting built environment. Upon completion of this project, a bronze plaque was mounted on the front of 612 Main Street.