Hog'Em - Beat'Em - Cheat'Em

From information in the Broadwater Bygones (available at the Broadwater County Library)

Hog'Em, Beat'Em and Cheat'Em were colorfully named towns in what is now Broadwater County (originally Jefferson County) along the Elkhorn Mountain front.

The first trail blazers in Montana (hunters and trappers) used the site of the warm springs located just west of the Canyon Ferry Mansion as a convenient stopping point. Springville, one of the first named towns in Montana Territory, was created on the spot. By 1866 the first stores and cabins appeared with the first stage coach coming through Springville in 1869.

Many miners were drawn to the gold discoveries at Last Chance Gulch (Helena) and Diamond City (located up Confederate Gulch on the west side of the valley). As the gold played out at Diamond City, Springville saw a huge influx of miners drifting into the Indian Creek mining district.

Placer claims were filed on by the acre with wholesale gobbling of the land, which gave rise to the classic town titles of Hog'em, Beat'em and Cheat'em. The Helena Herald, June 12, 1867 reported:

> *This spring, three small but productive placer discoveries were made near Indian Creek and while, not rich, they yielded the exceptional return of $25 to $50 per man per day.*

So greedy were the miners staking claims around Springville that the area became known as Hog'Em.

Beat'em (or Rob'em as some called it) was on the flats of Indian Creek about one mile south of Hog'em. Beat'em was little more than a tent town that lasted but a short time. Cheat'em, three miles west and south of Hog'em, bordering Indian Creek (near the site of the county landfill dump) lasted the longest of the 3 towns. Cheat'em was where Mr. and Mrs. John Murray had a hotel, store and boarding house (1876-1893) located just before where Townsend's landfill is today. Ruts in the ancient stage road can still be seen where the stage line crossed from Springville over the Limestone hills to Radersburg.

Like most of the early mining towns in Montana, the towns of Hog'Em, Beat'Em and Cheat'Em died as the gold deposits were depleted. If you look hard you can still see old foundations from the buildings in the area – but watch out for the abandoned mine shafts!