1954

Canyon Ferry: Placer Gold to Power Dam

Carl M. Westby Jr.

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CANYON FERRY: PLACER GOLD TO POWER DAM

by

Carl M. Westby, Jr.
B.A., St. Olaf College, 1951

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
1954

Approved by:

[Signatures and dates]
PREFACE

Canyon Ferry is the name of a region along the upper Missouri River. The area first rose to fame because of its abundant quantities of placer gold which made it one of the three most famous gold strikes in Montana. After the gold rush days, the region lost its position of prominence and was not heard of for nearly seventy years. In the late 1940's, the name, Canyon Ferry, was again in the public eye, only this time as the center of a bitter controversy, concerning the building of a large new dam for power development. The dam is now built, a good portion of the rich valley flooded out, and, as a result, a portion of an area with a rich history has disappeared.

I first became interested in the topic when my advisor, Dr. Paul C. Phillips, told me about the region. The subject became even more interesting when I found that virtually nothing had been written about the Canyon Ferry region, and that most of the material would have to come from old newspapers, and other source materials. The search for materials took me through the Canyon Ferry area, to the State Historical Library in Helena, and of course, to Montana State University. The bulk of the material used has come
from the State Historical Library, in the form of newspapers, government documents, personal papers, photographs, etc. During the time I was at the Historical Library, the help and assistance given me by the librarian, Rita McDonald, was invaluable. Most of the other research material used was given to me by Dr. Phillips, as well as a lot of time, patience, and advice.

C. M. W.
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CHAPTER I

THE AREA

The Canyon Ferry region was a little noticed area from the time Lewis and Clark explored it, in 1805, until the discovery of placer gold along the west slopes of the Big Belt Mountains brought a rush of prospectors and gold seekers in the latter part of 1864. When the gold was gone in the early 1870's, the region returned to its sleepy existence. The only change from the pre-gold rush days was that now the valley was dotted with farms and ranches. This peaceful rather sleepy state of affairs was to continue until the late 1940's, when it was again awakened, only this time not by gold, but by a new power development, which was to effect the lives of nearly everyone in the entire region.

The Canyon Ferry region lies along the upper Missouri River. The region extends from a point eighteen miles east of Helena and 112 miles above the Great Falls, to a point thirty miles south at the site of the present Townsend, Montana, thirty miles below the Three Forks of the Missouri. It includes not only the valley, but the west slope of the Big Belt Mountain range on the east.

The area gets its name, Canyon Ferry, from a ferry crossing on the Missouri River and a community which started
there in 1865. The ferry was important because it linked the road east from Helena with the new mining camps in the gulches of the Big Belt Mountains. This crossing was at the north end of the region. Thirty miles to the south, where the Missouri breaks through a gorge into the broad valley, is another settlement, Townsend. In later years, the valley which is a part of the Canyon Ferry region has come to be known by the name of this town.

The Canyon Ferry region is a closed basin, bounded on all sides by high mountains or ridges, some of which are snow covered. These mountains are partially covered by pine, but in many places are just dry grass or black rock.¹ The Missouri River seems to have been superimposed at both ends of this basin, coming in from the south across a spur of the Big Belt Mountains and escaping at the north by a gorge through the barrier that connects the Big Belt and Lewis Ranges.² It embraces an area of about 500 square miles, and its altitude varies from 3700 feet in the valley to 8000 feet at the divide of the Big Belt Mountains.

The valley of the Canyon Ferry area, known as the Townsend Valley in recent times, is from two to twelve miles wide, and covers the entire length of the region. There is


much timber, grass, and water throughout the valley, and these resources make it an excellent grazing land.\(^3\) The Missouri cuts along the west edge of the valley and is wide, shallow, and fast. It is dotted with small islands which check the flow of the river and make it difficult to pick out the main channel.\(^4\) Lying to the east of the river is a level alluvial plain, covered with a fine, black loam soil. This soon gives way to a rolling benchland which is broken up by streams coming down to the Missouri from the western slopes of the Big Belt Mountains. The north end of the valley, near Canyon Ferry, is narrow. It becomes mountainous and hilly in character and is covered with pine and juniper trees. Here and there are located several large bottomlands bounded by high bluffs, hills, or spurs. The spurs mark the sides of draws, canyons, or gulches extending down from the mountains on both sides of the river.\(^5\)

On the northeast side of Townsend Valley the Big Belt Mountain front looks much like a deeply notched wall.\(^6\) This

\(^3\) Carling Malouf, *The Archeology of the Canyon Ferry Region, Montana* (Montana State University, Missoula, Montana, 1950), p. 5. This archeological study by Mr. Malouf is the only one which has been made of the Canyon Ferry region.


\(^5\) Malouf, p. 8.

wall is 1000 to 2000 feet above the valley at its northern end but lowers to the south and disappears near Confederate Gulch. East of the wall just described, long mountain spurs rise gradually to the main divide at an altitude of about 7000 feet. The central part of the mountains is a broad plateau-like area with an even skyline. The notches in the wall are the gulches which run down out of the mountains, and have played such an important part in forming the history of this region. These deep valleys, except Confederate Gulch, are steep and gorgelike where they notch the mountain front. As one penetrates these valleys they tend to widen a bit until some of them are between one-fourth and one-half mile wide in places.

The Spokane Hills which separate the northwestern part of the Canyon Ferry region from the Prickly Pear Valley are an uneven ridge about 1000 feet in maximum height above the floor of the valley. These hills lie close to the river's edge, and the plain between it and the hills is seldom over one mile wide. South of the Spokane Hills the Elkhorn Mountains protrude into the region and gradually get nearer to the Missouri River as they approach and pass by Townsend, where they turn in rather abruptly. At this point they meet the Big Belt Mountains coming in from the east to enclose the south end of the valley.

\[^{7}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 122-123.}\]
There is a decided difference between the geology of the Townsend Valley and that of the Big Belt Mountains to the east. These mountains, which are located in Central Montana, are a part of a wide detour to the east made by the Rocky Mountain front. They are cut off from the main mass to the west by the valley of the Missouri River. The whole is an uplifted area exposing ancient rocks in the center and bordered on the north, east, and south by upturned rock beds of Paleozoic and Mesozoic vintage, which descend beneath the Great Plains. When looked at more closely the structure shows an elongated dome, the Big Belts, with a northwest-southeast trend. The uplift is a fairly flat arch with easy sloping flanks, any steep local dips are due to laccoliths or other intrusions. The average peaks in the range are 7000 to 8000 feet high, but a few isolated peaks may go 1000 feet above this. Sharp valleys cut deep below the nearly level horizon but do not completely dissect the old surface.  

The upturned rocks on the margin make similar rows of foothills, all of the same angle. The harder rock beds are crossed by streams in narrow gorges, while broad valleys are carved in the outcroppings of weaker beds. In crossing the wide belt of carboniferous limestone it is common for streams to disappear or become interrupted, reappearing later as giant springs where less soluble rocks are reached.

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8Finneman, pp. 217-218.
The Missouri River from its origin at Three Forks to a point east of Helena follows the course of a depression, the Townsend Valley. The down-folding or faulting that made this trough accounts for the western front of the Big Belt Mountains. Tertiary beds, of the Cenozoic age, cover a width of eight to ten miles and are at least 1200 feet deep. The valley has three terraces, and a fertile flood plain three to six miles wide on which the stream meanders broadly, pending the deepening of the gorge by which it leaves.²

There have been no definite discoveries concerning the presence of ancient man in the Canyon Ferry area, but there is material available showing cultures in the country around it. Rich finds concerning early man were recently uncovered at the McHaffie site, fifteen miles south of Helena and about forty miles southwest of the old Canyon Ferry. The site uncovered a lot of information that would bear out the present feeling of archeologists that Folsom and other ancient cultures did inhabit this part of our country. The McHaffie site is unusual in that it has three occupation levels. Folsom Fluted points occur in the bottom; Scottsbluff points in the middle; and later types of points comparable to Signal Butte II come from the top level. The variety of tool types found at the bottom level of the site suggests it was camp ground for the makers of Folsom Fluted

²Ibid., pp. 218, 223-224.
points. There were choppers, scrapers, knives, and flake knives found. Points include only one definitive specimen. Mrs. McHaffie found another point in a stream near the site and suggested the possibility of a fourth occupation level. It was believed by the discoverers, however, that it had been deposited in the stream from some other place. All the types of artifacts turned up here more or less duplicate those from the better known Lindenmeier site in northeastern Colorado.

Men from the American Museum of Natural History have identified the animal remains from the McHaffie site and they are much the same as those at the Lindenmeier site. Bison, deer, wolf, and rabbit appear at both places on the Folsom level. No human skeletal remains were found and this further supports the present theory that the dead were disposed of away from campgrounds and workshops.

Artifacts from the Scottsbluff level have the same function as those from the Folsom Fluted level, and it is probable that these people were also hunters and gatherers. Artifacts of the Scottsbluff level have more shape and form than those from the Folsom Fluted level.

The cultural remains from the top level are very diverse. The tools found at the lower levels are also found here except for minor changes in form, their function being essentially the same as those in the older cultures.

The three levels all represent hunting and gathering people. When white men first entered the Helena Valley, west
of Canyon Ferry, they saw Indians with a similar culture. If the dates assigned to Folsom Fluted points are right then the same way of life existed for over 10,000 years in this area. Uniformity is found in animal as well as cultural remains. The same animals are found all the way through, thus denoting a fairly stable climate. This uniformity is the key to the understanding of the stream of life manifested at the McHaffie site.

There still is no definite way to tell which is the oldest point type on the continent. The main way of determining the sequence of points seems to come from placement of levels at the various sites. In three areas now the Folsom Fluted has been found below Scottsbluff types. As yet, Folsom Fluted have appeared above Clovia Fluted in only one place. But the sequence--Clovis Fluted, Folsom Fluted, and Scottsbluff--is acceptable as a working tool for archeologists.

Upper level points from the McHaffie site are much like Signal Butte II points, this also is compared with finds at Limestone Butte, South Dakota. The culture of all three of these areas can be dated at about 1500 years old.

As of now there are two main difficulties in accepting these finds as proof positive. One is the large area over which the points have been found (Montana, Colorado, New Mexico, Nebraska, and South Dakota), and the second is the question of typalogy, meaning the close classification of
all artifacts found, which needs to be studied much more.\textsuperscript{10}

Concerning the anthropology of the Canyon Ferry area itself, little was known until the middle 1940's. In 1946, the first survey party entered this area in order to salvage as much of the archeological remains as possible in the future reservoir site. Since then, discoveries have revealed no information about prehistoric population in this immediate area, except Indians, who do not appear to have lived here, but merely passed through.

Some material of great antiquity may exist in the area to be inundated by Canyon Ferry Dam, but, what happened after Folsom and Yuma times in this region is still undetermined. Corner-notched points appeared early, but they were probably preceded by fish-tail points which, in early times, were common throughout the Great Basin and Plateau. This type seems to have been a favorite from southern California to Montana. Large oval knives made of basalt, like the projectile points, were also fairly common in this ancient complex. Most such specimens found in the area are from the shores of Lake Helena, in the Prickly Pear Valley; but it can be shown that their distribution was intermountain through all of western Montana. Placing these points early in the Canyon

\textsuperscript{10}Richard G. Forbis and John D. Sperry, "An Early Man Site in Montana," \textit{American Antiquity}, October, 1952, pp. 127-132. The article shows the results of the only authoritative study made of an ancient man site in Montana. The McHaffie site is the only place where such a group of occupation levels has been uncovered in the state.
Ferry sequence is based on finds on high, ancient terraces around Flathead Lake in northwestern Montana.

Still another early western Montana point was found in the Missouri River bottomlands near Canton. Such points also are found on upper terraces around Flathead Lake, indicating their antiquity. Like its counterpart west of the Continental Divide, it is made of basalt, and, while, fairly well formed, is rather crudely chipped. The long pestle-shaped stones associated with these points in western Montana are entirely lacking in the Canyon Ferry region.

Subsequently there developed in the High Plains and mountains east of the Divide, a series of cultures distinct from those of western Montana. Corner-notched points of chalcedony appeared in abundance and this form continued in popularity until immediate prehistoric times when they were partially replaced by side-notched points. Only size and preferred materials for their manufacture were changed. The complex, or culture, of which these points were just a part, increased in quantity and variety of artifacts made. Apparently populations increased too. Plano-convex implements were foremost among the associated implements, and the thumb-nail scraper evidently came in early, too.

Sites in the Canyon Ferry region are of six types: Tipi rings, occupation sites, hearths, caves and shelters, "kills", and pictograph panels. The first type, tipi rings, are usually located on higher ground such as bluffs, crests,
and even in the mountains themselves. These rings seem to have been employed over a considerable period of time to hold down the edges of the tipis used by these people, and not just in the early or immediate prehistoric. Rings usually appear in clusters, all within easy access of hunting areas in the surrounding mountains, or flatlands along the Missouri itself, and at the mouth of draws where they widen to an alluvial plain. Rings are about eighteen feet across, usually complete, and no cache pits or hearths are found inside or outside of them. Rarely are trade goods found in such sites; and when implements are found, they are aboriginal. A few of the rings appear to have had ceremonial functions.

Occupation sites were the most numerous type in the Canyon Ferry area, especially in the part to be inundated. They cover a long period of time and many may be contemporaneous with tipi ring structures, but there is not enough evidence to prove it. No habitations were found and, such as were built were perishable and temporary in nature. Specimens mainly of chalcedoney, and an occasional obsidian chip were found. Corner-notched points were the type found although they were very scarce. At the mouth of White's Gulch a particularly recent occupation site and rock shelter were located. Specimens here included tubular pipes, turquoise beads and points of obsidian.

From all the discoveries made and all the material gathered, it seems certain that this Canyon Ferry region was
not the permanent home of any group of Indians. From what has been learned about the Indians in Montana, it would appear that the area was most frequented by the Blackfeet Indians, and, probably a segment of the tribe known as the Piegans, who lived in the regions to the north of the Canyon Ferry area. It is just possible that these Indians controlled, to a slight degree, the Canyon Ferry region. The Shoshone Indians who lived in southeastern Idaho are believed to have passed through the area while on hunting trips or on war parties. The Flatheads of western Montana are known to have crossed over the Rockies and passed through the Canyon Ferry region on treks east. The Nez Perce and the Upper Pend d'Orielles may also have journeyed through the area. So while the region was not actually lived in, still it was not unknown to the Indians who regularly passed through the valley.

Historical campsites where whites have seen Indians camp are generally on the Missouri River bottomlands. The mouth of Beaver Creek was said to have been used by Flathead Indians on their trips to the eastern part of the state. Another campsite was located on Indian or Squaw Bottoms. Indians, said to be Blackfeet, came here to hunt ducks and other waterfowl in the sloughs. Blackfeet also camped on the Cooney ranch near the mouth of Avalanche Gulch. On Dry Creek, just two and one-half miles east of Canton was another campsite of the Blackfeet.
Many early Indian trails seem to have followed near the river. After gold was discovered in Confederate Gulch in the latter part of 1864, the settlers started to farm these lowlands to supply the mining communities, and when they fenced in their lands Indian movements were obstructed. Soon they were forced to travel along the base of the Big Belt Mountains and perhaps the Elkhorns too, and these trails became an important thoroughfare for the aborigines. After the 1870's Indian traffic in the area virtually ceased. There are no archeological evidences to add to this historical data.

Fire hearths were not found in connection with any other man made item. One fire hearth, although found deep in the ground, is only suggestive that men might have lived here during the glacial or interglacial times.

None of the caves and shelters tested yielded any real results. A small shelter near Cave Gulch was a bit productive, and "The Shelter" at White's Gulch yielded many artifacts.

It was rumored that there was a buffalo and deer kill located around Canyon Ferry but it was never found. However, piles of rocks along a long course east of Winston would indicate the Indians at least had communal drives in this area. Buffalo and deer kills are common in the High Plains, particularly around Great Falls to the north, and Bozeman and Billings to the south.
The pictographs found are all in red and appear in a few canyons east of the reservoir, on the rocks and on the walls of the gulches. These panels have been seen high on the narrow almost perpendicular walls that form the entrance to Hellgate Canyon. As yet there have been no finds as to the origin of the people who made them or the purpose which they served. Animal figures are scarce, while human-like figures are abundant. No modern Indians know their significance or importance.

There are no ancient burial places known in this locality. There are some ideas as to places at Squaw Bottoms and in a canyon east of Canyon Ferry, but as yet they are unsubstantiated.

Most of the sites found in these surveys were along the Missouri River bluffs and in the widest portions of the bottomlands. There were sites on the main river or at the mouths of canyons to the east or west, but never along stream courses between mountains and rivers. The main thing shown is that in fairly recent historical times the region has not been the permanent habitation of any group of people. At the same time, it was used by the Indians as a hunting ground, and the area was passed through regularly by war parties or tribes on the move. From 1805 until the first permanent settlement in 1865 the white men knew of the region and frequented it while on trapping, trading, and surveying expeditions.

11Malouf, pp. 78-82.
CHAPTER II

THE FIRST WHITE MEN

After unrecorded generations of Indian occupancy, Lewis and Clark headed the first white expedition into the Canyon Ferry region. They entered the area by river from the north, in July, 1805, and left the valley by way of the gorge through which the river enters the valley from the south. They had left St. Louis in the early part of 1804, and by November of that year had proceeded up the Missouri River as far as the Mandan Indian villages. They spent the winter there getting their boats ready for further river travel, and by spring had made the final selection of men who would make the rest of the journey. It was here that they picked up Charboneau as an interpreter, along with his wife Sacajawea. After the ice was gone from the river, early in 1805, the party was on its way again, and by early June came to the Great Falls of the Missouri. Lewis and Clark made the eleven mile portage around the falls, then made camp for several days while the men restocked the expedition with food. It was here that they put their iron frame boat together and covered it with skins, but it leaked so badly it was unuseable. As a result, the party made several pirogues,
and continued on up the river with them and the mackinaw boats. Above the Great Falls, the whole expedition was impressed by the increasingly beautiful scenery. On July 19, Lewis and Clark came to a place where the river was deep and swift, and bordered on both sides by high, precipitous cliffs. This so impressed them that they named the place the "Gate of the Rocky Mountains".  

Towards evening on July 21, Lewis and Clark were moving the boats up the Missouri River, when suddenly the mountains fell back, and they entered a beautiful and extensive plain ten or twelve miles wide, and extending as far up river as the eye could see. This was the region to be known, in later years, as the Canyon Ferry area. On this first night, Lewis made camp on the site of what was later to be Canyon Ferry.

The next day they continued up the Missouri River through the large and handsome valley. Clark and his party, on land, spent their time hunting and exploring. There was no sign of Indians, but the Indian woman with Lewis recognized the country and said that the Three Forks were not far away.

Lewis and Clark, while passing through this very fertile valley, mentioned many types of animals, birds, trees, and plants. They saw elk, antelope, deer, goat, ibex, and a
bear. In the river were beaver, otter, and trout, and on its surface floated geese, cranes, and ducks. On the land were many small land birds and such game birds as pheasant and curlew. The journal listed the presence of willow, rosebush, honeysuckle, thorn, southernwood, sage, box elder, cottonwood, redwood, sumac, pine, and cedar; and a fine supply of berries such as currants, choke cherries, gooseberries, service berries, and cherries. The whole party was much troubled by gnats and mosquitoes, which were so bad, that the men had difficulty rowing or doing their work. 2

July 23 marked the beginning of their third day in the valley. They passed a large creek winding through a fertile alluvial plain, and named it Whitehouse's Creek, after a member of the group. It is believed that this was either Confederate or Duck Creek which enter the river almost together. Flags were hoisted on the boats so that if any Indians saw them, they would realize they were not enemies. They did not see any Indians although Clark found some old Indian signs. Their third camp was just a little way below the present Townsend.

As the expedition started on the morning of the 24th, the leaders reported that the valley and mountains appeared much the same as they did the day before. Lewis was afraid there was a falls in the river since the current continued swift, and the country was rugged and mountainous. Sacajawea

2Ibid., pp. 255-261.
said there were none, but he refused to believe her. This
day marked the end of the journey through the Canyon Ferry
region. The party passed Indian Creek just above Townsend
in the morning and then continued up the Missouri River,
reaching the Three Forks of the Missouri on July 27, 1805.3

Canyon Ferry was soon again visited by white men. In
1806, Sgt. Ordway, a member of Clark's returning expedition,
left Clark's party at the Three Forks. Clark continued over
the mountains and descended the Yellowstone to its junction
with the Missouri, where he waited for the rest of the party
coming down the Missouri. Ordway with his small party of
men went down the Missouri River, through the Canyon Ferry
region, to a point near the present Fort Benton. Here he
met the third segment of the expedition under the command of
Lewis, and all continued down the river and joined forces
with Clark at the mouth of the Yellowstone River. Ordway
gave no description of the region while passing through.

The next white men to enter this region were Thomas
James and three fellow trappers, part of a group in the em­
ploy of Manuel Lisa and the Missouri Fur Company. They had
come to the Three Forks of the Missouri, from Lisa's fort on
the Big Horn, with a party under the direction of Andrew
Henry and Colonel Pierre Menard. Menard and part of the
group remained at the Three Forks to complete the fort and
trading post, while eighteen men made up a trapping expedi­

3Ibid., pp. 262-267.
tion to go up the Jefferson. The remaining members of the party, Thomas James and his three companions, Ware, Brown, and Dougherty, were to trap down the Missouri to the Great Falls. Because the savage Blackfeet were reportedly camped at the Falls, the other members of the expedition were sure they would never see these four men again.

James and his party made two canoes from tree trunks, and on April 7, 1810, started down the Missouri River. On the first day the party caught some beaver, and on the second day passed a high spur of mountains on their right, while the mountains on their left were not so high. On the third day they came out of the mountains and entered into one of the most beautiful valleys James had ever seen. Far to the west they could see the snow covered Rocky Mountains which gradually descended into a plain that ran right to the river's edge. His description of the valley and its content was much the same as that given by Lewis when he entered it in July, 1805. The four men were apparently overcome by this extremely beautiful setting, and James mentioned that Dougherty broke into one of Burns' marvelous lyrics. That evening they made camp early and set their traps, and soon every trap was full.

On the fourth day, they continued down the river, but were now looking for a permanent camp site for the trapping

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4General Thomas James, Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans (St. Louis, Missouri Historical Society, 1916), pp. 66-67.
was so rich they decided to stay there until their luck ran
out. Brown and Dougherty, who were in the first canoe, ran
into a rock. They lost all of their pelts, their guns, and
all the ammunition except what was left in the powder horns.
Ware and James were close behind in their canoe, and the four
men made camp on the west side of the river. Since all their
equipment had been lost Brown and Dougherty took one of the
remaining guns and went back to the fort to get more guns and
ammunition. By going directly across country they reached
there late that night.

Before they left the fort the next morning, the sur-
viving members of the group which had gone up the Jefferson
came straggling in and told about having been badly beaten
by the Indians, and that the fort should expect an immediate
attack. Brown and Dougherty were sent out on horseback to
bring James and Ware back to help in the defense of the fort.
They got to the camp the same day, and had seen Indian signs
along the way, so were in a hurry to leave for the fort.
About four miles from their camp in the Canyon Ferry Valley
they saw eight Indians, but after a short wait were able to
proceed without pursuit, and reached the fort about two
o'clock the next morning. This little adventure marks the
end of Thomas James' trip down the Missouri River. After
this no one strayed more than five or six miles from the
fort, and about one month later the whole group moved out
and headed back down the Yellowstone to the Bighorn. 5

After 1810 there are no further written accounts of travel through this region until the period of the gold discoveries in the 1860's. From information taken from various journals, it is evident that there was some activity in this area. By 1830, the fur companies were trading in the Yellowstone Valley, and up the Missouri as far as the Marias River. West of the Continental Divide the trappers and traders of the Hudson's Bay Company had a secure foothold. Various groups had been along the Madison, Gallatin, and Jefferson Rivers, and were acquainted with the Big Hole country. As a result, the upper Missouri region was surrounded and it does not seem likely that it was completely overlooked even though the Blackfeet did guard their territory closely.

In 1824, Alexander Ross of the Hudson's Bay Company went east through the Deer Lodge country, crossed the Rockies, and trapped in the region of the Three Forks. Peter Skene Ogden trapped along the Gallatin or Madison in 1825, and then moved back across the Continental Divide again. James Dease, another Hudson's Bay man, was supposedly sent across to the Three Forks region during this period, although there is no written account of his movements. 6

In 1828, Samuel Tullock of the American Fur Company, and Robert Campbell of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company went

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5Ibid., pp. 67-71.

north from the Snake River to the Three Forks of the Missouri, but were driven out by the Blackfeet and crossed over to the Yellowstone.\(^7\) Again in 1829, Jedediah Smith, Thomas Jackson, William Sublette, James Bridger, Thomas Fitzpatrick, and Joe Meek, all Rocky Mountain Fur Company men, hunted the valleys of the Madison and the Gallatin and crossed by Bozeman Pass to the Yellowstone.\(^8\)

It is just possible that William A. Ferris went through the Canyon Ferry region about 1833. He mentions going through the Hellgate and then east to the summit of the Rocky Mountains, from which point he and his party could see the Missouri River valley. They did some hunting and then proceeded in a southeasterly direction to the Three Forks of the Missouri.\(^9\) From 1834 to 1843, Osborne Russell did much trapping on the Madison and Jefferson rivers and mentioned the Missouri River frequently in his journal. During these years he made many contacts with James Bridger and his men who were working for the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, and, from all indications, it again seems possible that Russell, Bridger, and their men were more than just aware of the upper Missouri area.\(^10\)


\(^8\)Ibid., intro. lxxxix.

\(^9\)Ibid., pp. 167-170.

An expedition under Captain Raynolds and Lieutenant Maynadier was sent out in 1859 to locate the best routes to the mines of Montana and Idaho. At the Three Forks the party split up with Maynadier going east to the Yellowstone which he descended to the Missouri at Fort Union. Captain Raynolds took part of the group from Three Forks down the Missouri, through Canyon Ferry, to Fort Benton, and on to Fort Union, where he joined up with the rest of the expedition and continued on to St. Louis.\textsuperscript{11}

This is the pattern followed through the years from 1810 to about 1864. During these years, the present state of Montana was overrun by the trappers and traders of the various fur companies who were trying to gain control of the vast western fur country, and it would not seem that this upper Missouri country was completely overlooked. Although the Blackfeet were hard fighters and battled long and hard to keep from losing control of their territory, the mountain men were, at the same time, a tough and hardy breed, and were not at all afraid to take a chance, where it might profit them. While it can not be proven that the trappers and the traders during this fifty year period actually worked through the Canyon Ferry region, yet it seems quite logical to assume that the mountain men passed through here during this period, and that they hunted and trapped throughout the area.

CHAPTER III

CONFEDERATE GULCH

Confederate Gulch has produced more placer gold per acre than has any other gold field in America. Thus goes the story and statistics seem to prove it true. The gulch is similar to many others in the Rocky Mountains. It goes high up on the western slope of the Big Belt Mountains, and twists and turns through fifteen miles of rough country until it debouches into Townsend Valley. Between the steep banks of this narrow gulch a little creek whirls and tumbles over the rocky bed to empty into the Missouri. There are four tributary gulches--Montana, Cement, Boulder, and Greenhorn--which help make the story of Confederate Gulch. Boulder Gulch runs south out of the main gulch, four miles above the mouth of Confederate. Montana and Greenhorn gulches are two miles above Boulder Gulch and extend to the north. Cement Gulch is at the head of Confederate Gulch and it also lies in a northerly direction.

In the gulch proper and its tributaries are several bars or small pieces of ground rising above the floor of the gulch. These were mined separately, and each bar usually had a name. The most famous of these is Montana Bar, situated
in Confederate Gulch near the mouth of Montana Gulch. It is seventy to eighty feet above the gulch, and approximately two acres in extent. Last Chance Bar is directly above Montana Bar, and Diamond Bar is just below and behind it. Slaughterhouse and Boulder bars are on the east side of Boulder Gulch as it runs south, while Cemetery Bar is across the gulch to the west of them. Eldorado Bar is found at the mouth of Confederate Gulch. Other bars are Wood's Bar, Gold Hill, Poverty Hill, and Spruce Bar.

The discovery of Confederate Gulch goes back to Missouri and the Civil War. In a battle at Lexington, near St. Josephs,1 the Confederate force under the command of General Sterling Price, attacked the Union troops under Colonel Mulligan and, after seven days of hard fighting, won the battle in August, 1861. A short while later the Union troops returned and soundly beat the Confederate forces at Salt River, and took many prisoners. Since the Union commander had no way of keeping them, the defeated Confederates were given various choices. They could lay down their arms, return to their homes and abandon the bushwacking type of warfare, or they would be sent out of the country. Many of the Confederate soldiers chose to leave the states, and, upon hearing of the rich gold strikes at Bannack, Alder and Last Chance gulches, decided to go up the Missouri to prospect in the

mines. They stopped first at Fort Benton, the head of navigation on the Missouri River. From that point they spread out over the territory, and played an important part in the development of Montana. Many of the former Confederate soldiers set out for the nearest strike at Last Chance Gulch, about 175 miles up the river, some following the stage road to the mining camp at Helena, while others followed the river upstream and prospected in its many deep gulches. In this latter group were the discoverers of Confederate Gulch.

The original discovery of Confederate Gulch was made by three men: Washington Baker, and Fountain M. "Pomp" Dennis, both ex-confederates, and Jack Thompson, an Englishman. They had prospected up the river from Fort Benton and, in the late summer of 1864, were camped near the mouth of Confederate Gulch. Thompson sank a prospect hole and got about 10¢ to the pan. This discovery caused them to start moving up the gulch and it grew richer as they went.² They soon saw this was the realization of their dreams. They staked out many claims and named the new found region, Confederate Gulch. Baker's big strike was unusual since he sank his shaft just a few feet away from a perpendicular slate-rock cliff. Most people would have expected the wall to continue down to the bottom of the creek, and would have tried another spot, where there might not have been any gold. But, he un-

covered a rich vein of gold in the cliff underlying the surface. Will Sutherlin, a newspaperman in later years, was of the opinion that a few feet further away and the vein would have been missed, the prospecting possibly abandoned, and the discovery of gold deferred.\(^3\) The fourth prospector to enter Confederate Gulch was another ex-confederate, John Wells, who came to the gulch shortly after its discovery.\(^4\) Wells' discovery proved to be the largest of the early strikes.

News of the discovery spread to the other well known gold diggings of the territory, and brought a stampede of miners, prospectors, gamblers, adventurers, and wanderers, outlaws and outlawed, with which the country was rapidly filled.\(^5\) The large concentration of gold found in the gulch gave those seeking the metal a real thrill. The superb grounds showed as much promise as any of the world's famous mines.\(^6\)

After these discoveries, late in the fall, operations had to wait until spring. Locations were taken, camps were set up, and the area was soon filled with people, waiting impatiently for spring to arrive and the panning of gold to begin in earnest.

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\(^3\) Will H. Sutherlin, "Confederate Gulch," article, Butte Miner, Butte, Montana, December 19, 1895, p. 16.

\(^4\) Ritch, Great Falls Tribune, December 29, 1935.

\(^5\) Williams, p. 1.

\(^6\) Ritch, Great Falls Tribune, December 29, 1935.
Confederate Gulch quickly became Montana's bonanza camp. Reports could hardly be exaggerated, and enthusiasm was unlimited. Early in March, 1865, about $1300 in gold was taken out near Diamond City, which was located five and one-half miles from the mouth of the gulch, on the north side of the creek. The next discoveries were about a mile above the junction of Montana and Confederate gulches. They were made by Christian Spiegel and John Haas, and their find gave up hundreds of thousands of dollars in the summer of 1865. The area around their claims came to be known as the German district. Through August, 1865, Montana Gulch was the richest producer in gold, with Cement Gulch running close behind. Daily runs in the former netted about $200, and, with plenty of water, could have reached $800. During the same year, Montana Bar and Boulder Gulch were opened up, but little work was done on them.

Sluice boxes were kept going until buildings were put on fifteen foot stilts to avoid being buried by the avalanche of tailings. Stores and saloons grew rich quickly for the men were getting $180 to a shovelful of dirt. One woman

7Ritch, Great Falls Tribune, December 29, 1935.
8Montana Post, Virginia City, Montana Territory, May 2, 1868.
9Ibid., August 5, 1865.
10Ritch, Great Falls Tribune, December 29, 1935.
saw, after a cleanup of sluice boxes, on a company floor, thirty-six gold pans of pure gold dust and gold nuggets piled as high as the pans would hold it. One nugget worth $900 was found,\(^\text{12}\) supposedly by a Commodore Thomas Cooper.\(^\text{13}\)

Lack of water with which to work the placers was a problem which soon confronted many claim owners in the gulches. Some exceedingly rich areas could not be worked until water was brought on them by man made ditches or flumes. The fabulous Montana Bar was in such an unfortunate position. Its richness was known as early as October, 1865, but work was held up on it until May 7, 1866, when water was brought in and turned on it.\(^\text{14}\) While early in 1865 the best claim on Montana Bar had been worth only $500, one year later $200,000 had been taken out.\(^\text{15}\) After the first cleanup the sluices were clogged with gold. It was not unusual to get from $1000 to $1400\(^\text{16}\) from a pan of gravel. The deposit on the bar was fairly shallow, the gold was coarse, and the best claims paid as much as $180,000. On Diamond and other bars in the vicinity four times as much ground was covered and the


\(^\text{13}\)Helena Daily Herald, Helena, Montana Territory, July 8, 1875.

\(^\text{14}\)Ritch, Great Falls Tribune, December 29, 1935.

\(^\text{15}\)Montana Post, May 2, 1868.

\(^\text{16}\)Stout, p. 213; Sanders, p. 179; Pardee, p. 172.
total was about the same as that of Montana Bar. Sometimes nail kegs full of dust were seen sitting around the clogged sluice boxes. There were only seven claims on the bar. The bonanza portion of it was located by John Schinneman of Illinois, Alex Campbell, Charles Fredericks, and Thomas Judson, and the other three owners were Alexander Metcalf, Archibald McGregor, and Christian Spiegel. The latter named person vied with Cooper for the honor of having found the largest nugget in the entire gulch.

By August 15, 1866, the whole bar was declared worked out. After the final cleanup the total yield was close to $1,500,000. This was the richest parcel of placer ground ever found on earth. One day's cleanup netted 700 pounds of gold, amounting to $114,800, taken out by twenty men using wheelbarrows to dump the dirt in sluice boxes. From the Judson-Metcalf claim on Montana Bar $18,000 was washed in seven days, and $4000 was carried away in a basket after a ten hour run.

In the fall of 1866, two and one-half tons of gold

17Pardee, p. 172.
18Bert A. Goodman, "Gulch Yielded Great Fortune in Gold," article, Great Falls Tribune, November 15, 1931.
19Ritch, Great Falls Tribune, December 29, 1935.
20Williams, p. 3.
21Helena Daily Herald, July 8, 1875.
22Ritch, Great Falls Tribune, December 29, 1935.
23Montana Post, June 16, 1866.
were shipped from Montana Bar by mule team and wagon to Helena, stored at the Hershfield & Company bank, and later in the fall taken to Fort Benton for shipment down river. United States Marshal J. X. Beidler, his sides and a group of miners guarded the gold shipment during the trip from Helena to Fort Benton. The gold was loaded on the steamer, Louella, bound for St. Louis, and from there was shipped to New York where it was banked with a private firm on Wall Street. The partners were Charles Fredericks, Alex Campbell, Thomas Judson, and John Schinneman. These men, coming to New York with so much gold frightened Wall Street into convulsions, for just at that time gold was a scarce thing. Fredericks went home to Germany for a visit, but when his friends in Germany learned what he had done with the gold, they told him to return to New York immediately and withdraw the full amount he had deposited. He followed their instructions and was able to recover all of his money. The next day he saw his friends and told them to do the same, but before they could take action the bank closed. These depositors


26Williams, p. 3.
did manage to work out some arrangement with the bank and got about half of their savings back.\textsuperscript{27}

Other rich diggings commenced about four miles above the mouth of Confederate Gulch, curved around the base of Gold Hill to the mouth of Montana Gulch, and then on up this tributary for about a mile.\textsuperscript{28} There was also considerable activity in Boulder and Cement gulches, and along the course of the main gulch from Diamond City to its upper reaches near Cement Gulch.\textsuperscript{29} On Jack Thompson's claim in Montana Gulch, two men took $1100 in one shift from a set of timbers, a set being four by ten feet. The \textit{Montana Post}, in 1868, told of a cleanup where $1800 was taken from two sets of timbers on the McGregor, Thomas & Company claim.\textsuperscript{30} During 1867 Diamond City Bar, lying opposite the lower part of town was worked out, and there was a lot of work done in Confederate City, a small camp three miles above Diamond City. In November, 1867, the first gold was taken from the main channel of Confederate, opposite Diamond City. This was worked steadily after January, 1868, and paid handsomely. Other outfits to start working in 1868 were Brumley & Williams and the Confederate Drain Ditch Company.\textsuperscript{31} While the big rush in Confederate Gulch was

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{27}Ritch, \textit{Great Falls Tribune}, December 29, 1935.

\textsuperscript{28}Williams, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{29}\textit{Montana Post}, May 2, 1868.

\textsuperscript{30}Ritch, \textit{Great Falls Tribune}, December 29, 1935.

\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Montana Post}, May 2, 1868.
\end{quote}
over by 1870, there were still some bars being worked at a profit as late as 1899. The most important of these was Boulder Bar.\(^3\)^\(^2\)

A Montana Post estimate of gold mined in the Canyon Ferry region from March, 1865, to January, 1868, was $6,146,000, of which Confederate Gulch and its tributaries got over half. The Montana School of Mines has estimated that for all the years since its discovery the total of Confederate and its tributaries was $12,000,000, with an added $5,500,000 from neighboring gulches. The Mines estimate was probably very close.\(^3\)^\(^3\) This estimate for the same general area appeared in a government bulletin put out by the Geological Survey.\(^3\)^\(^4\) Since no accurate records were kept, the above figures are probably as close to correct as can be found. Around 1900 an old miner named Chauncey Wood gave Addison Williams an estimate of about $10,000,000 for Confederate and its tributaries. He also said that most of these who got rich in the early days had ended up broke and died poor. Confederate Gulch for its size definitely proved the equal of any; for the same amount of surface worked it produced by odds a larger amount of gold than any other gulch in the world.\(^3\)^\(^5\)

\(^3\)^\(^2\)Williams, p. 3.
\(^3\)^\(^3\)Ritch, \textit{Great Falls Tribune}, December 29, 1935.
\(^3\)^\(^4\)Pardee, p. 173.
\(^3\)^\(^5\)Williams, p. 4; Sanders, p. 179.
The vast quantity of gold to be found in the gulches required the use of much water for sluicing because most of the gold was found near bed-rock, and to reach it the dirt all had to be broken up and washed away by the water. Confederate Creek and the other small bodies of water nearby could not supply the amount needed, so in order to remedy the situation, water was brought in by ditches or flumes from creeks and lakes farther back in the mountains. One of the more important early enterprises was the Boulder Ditch, built by Archibald McGregor, Alexander Metcalf, Christian Spiegel, and a fourth man, D. P. Rankin, who became interested in the property in 1868. It was built to carry water from the head of Boulder Gulch to the upper portion of Montana Gulch. Water from this ditch could also be used to work several rich bars around Diamond City, and bar and gulch claims below the town. Once finished, it was used during all the years there was mining in Confederate Gulch.

The Boulder Ditch was about seven miles long, passed through solid rock for three miles and was sometimes twelve feet deep. Work on this and other ditches was hard and slow and men earned their $6.00 a day, for the work was done with pick and shovel, and the dirt removed with wheelbarrows. Where the ditch crossed to the north bank of Confederate Gulch an inverted boiler syphon was used to carry the water,

36Butte Miner, December 19, 1895; Montana Post, May 2, 1868.
along the mountain side, 480 feet above the gulch. The finished pipeline was over 1500 feet long, was twenty-two inches in diameter, and weighed 70,000 pounds. The piping was brought in from St. Louis to Fort Benton by boat at 9¢ a pound, and the haul from there to Confederate Gulch cost 7¢ a pound. By May, 1868, it had already cost $90,000. The ditch when finished could carry well over 1200 inches of water, and the water when played upon the various bars by the hydraulic mining equipment had a pressure of 200 to 400 pounds per square inch. Montana Gulch, when sluiced out by water from this ditch, paid both the claim owners and the ditch company rich dividends.

The same company constructed a bed-rock flume in Montana Gulch with which to work it 3800 feet of ground. The flume was about 780 feet long, and by using the flume, the big ditch, three four inch nozzles, and 250 feet of eleven inch pipe they mined their claims. The Boulder Ditch Company even planned, for the future, to go eight miles further on to White's Gulch and get the large deposits there which were unworked because of lack of water. The latter plan was never realized.37

Ditches to bring water into the gulch were not the only kind needed. Drain ditches were necessary to carry the water away after the gravel and dirt were washed down. One of the first of these was undertaken by Taylor and Colin

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37Butte Miner, December 19, 1895; Montana Post, May 2, 1868.
Campbell to make work possible back of the town and under the
dump of Montana Bar. For their efforts they were to receive
half interest in each claim. Work was difficult due to the
wet and unmanageable ground, but Mrs. Taylor's cooking and
her bewitching smile evidently helped a lot. The drain was
finally turned over to Head, Huntington & Company, who push-
ed the work for a time, but could never find a bed-rock
bottom. A new company was soon formed to be known as the
Confederate Drain Ditch Company, and its owners were
McGregor, Metcalf, P. P. Thomas, Head & Huntington and Wil-
liam Hollingsworth. In December, 1867, the company was
nearly bankrupt, and would have given up within 200 feet of
its destination, at the junction of Montana and Confederate
gulches. Archibald McGregor, who was wintering in the east,
furnished more capital and the work was continued. About
the last of January they were ready to quit again, and the
men on the night shift said they would go down no more. The
next morning P. P. Thomas came up with a pan of dirt, and
when it was washed a pennyweight of gold was found. This
caused much excitement for the venture had appeared doomed,
but now work was resumed, the drain was finished, and it
paid its owners many times over what it cost them.38

Another big enterprise was the bed-rock flume of King
& Gillette, started in 1867 with a Captain J. C. "Moses"

38Butte Miner, December 19, 1895; Montana Post, May 2,
1868.
O'Brien as manager. This company owned 4250 feet of ground below Diamond City and 500 feet of ground above it, but needed water with which to sluice it out. It was an expensive undertaking, but when bed-rock was finally reached and operations were started it paid the owners many times over. In 1868, when lack of water kept the flume dry, King & Gillette planned to build a ditch from Deep Creek, twenty-five miles away, to bring water to their flume and to other local diggings, but the idea never became anything more than a plan. The water in these flumes was fast, and in this particular flume it could move half a ton of rocks.

In 1868, Hillis & Company needed a grade for a flume so that a piece of ground 500 feet long and 300 feet wide on Last Chance Bar, just above Montana Bar, could be worked. To provide this grade they dug a tunnel through bed-rock that was over 400 feet long, and 60 feet underground at one end.

Hydraulic machinery was used on all the bars and richer parts of the gulch. In 1867, there were fourteen two and one-half inch nozzles working on Diamond Bar. In the same year there were six pipes on Slaughterhouse Bar, one mile below town, one on Wood's Bar, and another hydraulic working in Cement Gulch. The pipes were run from the ditches and flumes, and acted as reducers to increase the pressure of the

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39 *Helena Herald*, Helena, Montana Territory, April 4, 1867; *Montana Post*, May 2, 1868.
water before it was played on the surface to be washed. The loosened gravel was then dumped in the sluice boxes and carried through them by the swift running water. The gold, due to its specific gravity, would work to the bottom and catch in the riffles placed in the sluices. Sluices or flumes were fifteen to thirty-five inches wide and 100 to 1000 feet long.

Because water was scarce and the ditches needed to bring more of it into the gulches were expensive to build, the price charged those who used the water was high. Some of the first men to use water from the Boulder Ditch were Ira Myers, C. C. McClure, W. H. Parkinson, William Springer, John Wagoner, and J. P. Hillis. They paid 60¢ per miner's inch for the water, but later the price dropped to 40¢ per inch. The definition of a miner's inch varies, but one is the flow through a hole one inch square, in a two-inch plank, under a head of four inches above the top edge of the hole, which gives out nine gallons per minute.

Because of the high price of water, people often stole water from the ditches by tapping or cutting into them. People who preferred to obtain their water in this manner, rather than to pay for it, were looking for trouble, and

40 Montana Post, June 8, 1867.
42 Butte Miner, December 19, 1895.
usually got it. One man was killed by the angry ditch owners when caught tapping the ditch. Some of the richer claim owners in the gulch were known to be guilty of stealing water, rather than pay the high price demanded. Schinneman, one of the bonanza claim owners on Montana Bar, stole water from one of the ditches. The owners of the ditch found this out, and were ready to move in on Schinneman, when he left the country. Just before leaving he got C. W. Cook to manage his property, and he, Schinneman, did not return to the vicinity of Diamond City until long after the incident had been forgotten.43

As is always the case, there were certain groups who were not above cheating others. One such incident occurred near Diamond City in September, 1869, and nearly ended in a gun fight. A certain company which owned 390 feet of ground agreed to give O'Brien, the manager of King & Gillette, 170 feet of it for use of his flumes. The company worked out its share to forty feet, then sold all 390 feet to another party. Fortunately O'Brien got wind of this and with a few men went to protect King & Gillette's property. The "new" owners arrived and were going to seize the ground by force, but O'Brien drew first and order was maintained. O'Brien did remain on the property day and night, for a few days, just to be sure no more "new owners" arrived to take over the

43Ritch, Great Falls Tribune, December 29, 1935.
Though the big placer mining rush was over by 1870, Confederate Gulch and its tributaries were by no means worked out. During the 1870's mining continued on a fairly large scale as the old placer grounds were worked over and over again, and new spots which had been overlooked previously were opened up. By this time, bed-rock flumes extended to the mouth of the gulch, and in 1874, the ditch property in Confederate Gulch was worth about $150,000. For the greater part of the decade, pay diggings were found from the mouth of the gulch to the head of Cement Gulch, at the upper end of Confederate. In 1876, the mining outlook was good enough so it was thought the men would make over $25 per day for the whole season.

Some of the claims continued to be worked through the 1870's, and most of the men who worked in the gulch were old timers in the area. One such company was King & Gillette, who, by 1871, was starting to make a profit after five years of work and the expenditure of thousands of dollars. From 1875 on they supplied, from their flume, most of the water

44Montana Post, September 16, 1869.
45Helena Daily Herald, July 26, 1871.
47Helena Daily Herald, July 8, 1875.
48Helena Weekly Herald, Helena, Montana Territory, June 1, 1876.
49Helena Daily Herald, July 26, 1871.
used in the gulch, which they in turn acquired from the Boulder Ditch. They also worked claims of their own toward the lower end of Confederate.

Eldorado Bar was worked during the seventies by several firms. The winter months of 1872 were so mild the men were able to work on Eldorado and elsewhere in Confederate with gratifying results. D. Butterfield appears to have been the one person who stayed on Eldorado Bar as long as it was any good. Another man who worked there was known as Siebrecht.

Boulder Bar was another old place that continued to be worked through the 1870's. In 1874, James Sullivan was ground sluicing there, while Quinnlan & Company were drift mining. The next year the National Mining Company under the leadership of Chauncey Wood and G. A. Hampton was operating on south Boulder Bar. At the same time, the Franco-American Company and Fox Worcester were on the main bar. M. H. Ryan's Company worked there in 1876. Between 1870 and 1880 Poverty Hill, Gold Hill, and Spruce Bar became active. Commodore Jones and John Smith mined Poverty Hill. Gold Hill

50 Ibid., July 8, 1875.
51 Ibid., July 26, 1871.
52 Helena Weekly Herald, November 21, 1872.
53 Weekly Independent, May 29, 1874.
54 Helena Weekly Herald, June 1, 1876.
55 Weekly Independent, May 29, 1874.
had the Gold Hill Mining Company, and H. H. Barnes and partners as occupants. W. H. Vance and Chauncey Wood worked Spruce Bar.

By 1875 all of the ground from the mouth of Cement Gulch down to Diamond City was secured by United States Patent, and there was much activity in the main gulch during the whole ten year period, either on the placers or drift mining. Buckingham & Company worked in the lower part of the gulch, while Penney & Company were drift mining in the upper gulch. Others working above Diamond were Hoaglan, McLeod and Tresch. At the mouth of the gulch, John Nanno worked for a long time with a large crew of men before getting a big cleanup in August, 1875.

High water often kept outfits from working, for it flooded them from their claims. In 1874, Bull, Hampton & Company, owners of a rich claim, were forced to hold up work because of the high water, until late in the summer.

In checking over a list of the richest claim owners in Confederate Gulch during the 1870's, familiar names appeared: Rankin, McGregor, Head, Thomas, the Brumleys, and Williams of

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56 Helena Daily Herald, July 8, 1875; Helena Weekly Herald, June 1, 1876.
57 Weekly Independent, May 29, 1874.
58 Helena Weekly Herald, June 1, 1876.
59 Helena Daily Herald, July 8, 1875.
60 Weekly Independent, May 29, 1874.
Helena. The better known miners in the area were Penney, Vogle, Watson, W. H. Vance, Hillis, Wood, Worcester, Butterfield, and Buckingham.61

By 1880, the placer mines in Confederate Gulch and its tributaries were almost worked out. Because of this, most of the miners and prospectors left the area, and those who were left behind were mostly old timers. Two flumes with eight miles of ditches and 4000 inches of water, completed about this time by King of the Diamond Flume and Hydraulic Company, could not even help much, for the supply of gold was about played out.62 In 1881, the chief miners in the area, besides most of the above named, were H. H. Barnes, Tom Cooper, Joe Emhoff, John Tresch, John Smith, John Charters, Pat Gillan, Thomas Bracket, George Anniser, John Nanno, Theodore Muller, H. King, Matt Forde, Preston Leeper, and L. Empertson.63

Although a general decline set in after 1880, there were a couple of good years during the following decade. In 1886, Eldorado Bar had three flumes to it, and was paying Butterfield, Mike Welch and John Comaskey good returns. Buckingham and Nanno had formed a company, and had a flume in the lower part of Confederate Gulch which was worked hard

61Helena Daily Herald, July 8, 1875.


63Rocky Mountain Husbandman, White Sulphur Springs, Montana Territory, May 26, 1881.
and paid well. The King flume was still making its owners a nice profit, and near Montana Gulch much pay dirt was being knocked off with hoses. There was a lot of money in circulation again, and more men at work than there had been for the last few years. Cement Gulch came back to life in 1887, when much of the old ground was reworked. Three new flumes were constructed to aid in the resluicing work. In Confederate, the King bed-rock flume was active at a point nearly opposite the upper end of Montana Bar. Many tailings from the famous Montana Bar had been dumped into the flume, and the ground on the floor of the gulch was being reworked. The probable three month yield was estimated at from $30,000 to $50,000; and some said the season's take would be $90,000. James Sullivan and Pat Gillan were still making a good living on Boulder Bar, W. H. Vance owned the Spruce Bar diggings and worked them the year around, and Eldorado Bar was still active. After these two boom years, things got slower and slower through the rest of the decade, and the trend continued during the period of the 1890's.

With placer mining virtually a thing of the past, in 1899, the Confederate Gulch Placer Mine, Land and Irrigation Company bought all the claims in the gulch up to Montana Gulch, and took off whatever it could by washing the dirt.

64 Townsend Tranchant, Townsend, Montana Territory, June 23, 1886.

65 Rocky Mountain Husbandman, White Sulphur Springs, November 3, 1887.
into sluice boxes, then running the tailings through a system of flumes.\textsuperscript{66} By 1928, all placer mining was being done in Cement Gulch, at the upper end of Confederate, and even here most work was at a standstill due to lack of water. E. B. Robison was mining on the east side of Cement Gulch, Herman Gogeler was about one mile below him, and John Swarbrick was in Ready Cash Gulch, a tributary of Cement, near Robison's cabin. It was still more than a likelihood that there was gold in the gulch all of the way to its mouth and on into the Townsend Valley, but in order to get it a dredge was needed since the original flood plain was covered with tailings.\textsuperscript{67}

Confederate Gulch, today, is still not completely deserted. For miles and miles it has been dredged out clear down to bed-rock. At Diamond City the right side of the main street has been completely mined away. The part of the gulch where the creek once ran is now about 100 feet below the town. On the other side of Diamond City lies Diamond City Bar which once paid a $100 a day to the man. The side hill on the east side of Cemetery Bar has been taken up by an old man from Winston who plans to start working it this spring. In Townsend there was a report that some company was planning to redredge Confederate Gulch. With this activity the famous old gulch is apparently not to be considered as "finished off" even today.

\textsuperscript{66}Williams, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{67}Pardee, p. 173.
Diamond City, founded early in 1865, got its name because of the position of its first four buildings, in a diamond shape, joined by paths through the snow. It became the center and metropolis of Confederate Gulch and the surrounding area. When Meagher County was created in November, 1867, Diamond City became the county seat, which honor it held until 1879 when the county seat was moved to White Sulphur Springs after a general election. When Broadwater County was created in 1897, Diamond City was included in it. At one time, during the boom years, over 600 men voted in an election.

Diamond City was a typical mining town with no beauty of architecture or any conveniences. The one long, single street followed the contour of the gulch, and was bordered by log and frame structures which were occupied by traders and surveyors. Stores, hotels, saloons, gambling houses, hurdy-gurdy houses, and hundreds of log cabins sprang up like mushrooms. Lumber for building these structures cost

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69 *Butte Miner*, December 19, 1895.
71 Hall, p. 1.
72 *Fairfield Times*, Fairfield, Montana; Bancroft, p. 758.
73 Goodman, *Great Falls Tribune*, November 15, 1931.
74 Hall, p. 2.
75 *Montana Post*, June 8, 1867.
12¢ a foot, and carpenters were paid $6.00 a day for their efforts. The town grew rapidly and by fall, 1865, was able to house and take care of a large part of its inhabitants in an adequate manner. There were still many living in tents or wickiups until winter came. The town never did have a fashionable hotel, or enough lodging houses through the years, so it was quite common to bring your own bedding and sleep out on the ground. The Diamond City Hotel which was one of Diamond's leading hotels through the years was the only two story building in town.

Of all the years Diamond City existed, there were only about four of its upbuilding. In 1867 and 1868, the town had a population of nearly 2000, and the surrounding area had over 4000 miners in it. By 1870, it had dropped to 460, with a slow but steady decrease during the 1870's the population was only 225 in 1879, and one year later a mere sixty-four. In 1883, there were only four families left, and it was felt that the place would soon disappear unless the mother lode were found. In the census figures from 1900 through 1930, the district was called Diamond City Township, and the figures were as follows for the ten year

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76*Butte Miner*, December 19, 1895.

77*Goodman, Great Falls Tribune*, November 15, 1931.

periods: 132, 44, 39, 22.79 There were people in the camp and the gulch for many years, and the camp remained except for the decay and removal of buildings. Though Diamond City had risen to prominence quickly, it just as quickly sank into oblivion.

In these camps people were usually classed as old miners, if they came from California and the west, or as pilgrims if they were from the east and new to this type of life. While the old timer was cool and sure of himself, the pilgrim was usually suspicious of all people, uncertain of his rights, and extremely nervous.\(^80\) Many of the early arrivals were ex-confederates, especially from Missouri. The German faction was the largest group in the camp in the early years, and came to act as the ruling element.\(^81\) The largest other single group in the gulch was the Irish, many of whom, in later years, became farmers and ranchers in the Townsend Valley. Through the years an intense rivalry developed between the two groups, and much bitterness and jealousy were created. All other nationality groups were in the minority in Confederate Gulch, as were other racial groups. In 1870, there were four Negroes in Diamond City and the gulch, and

\(^{79}\)Ibid., Twelfth, Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Census of the United States, for the years 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930.

\(^{80}\)Goodman, Great Falls Tribune, November 15, 1931.

\(^{81}\)Montana Post, June 8, 1867.
five Chinese in the town. Negros were hardly ever seen in any of the western mining camps, and the Chinese were brought in only after the white men had taken all the gold they could get from the placers. The Chinese were very meticulous and hard working, and picked up a lot of gold which the more careless white miners lost.

One of the discoverers, Jack Thompson, was an Englishman. He probably made the most money of the three, for his claim No. 21, in Montana Gulch, was very rich. He died at Philipsburg, Montana, about 1899, and is buried there. No one knows of his wealth, as to how much or how little he left.

Another of the discoverers, Washington Baker, an ex-confederate, was a large, blond man who always wore buckskin, two guns, and looked like a real westerner. His claims were also in Montana Gulch, so he should have made good money. He returned to Missouri in the late 1860's, and if he had saved probably lived comfortably the rest of his life.

The real adventurer in the trio was Fountain M. Dennis, better known as "Pomp". He undoubtedly held some of the richer ground in the gulch, yet in 1867, he was a rider on the dangerous Musselshell-Diamond pony mail route, where he is known to have had a number of thrilling experiences. He was a restless person, always craved for action, and even

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82 Ninth Census of the United States, 1870.
shoveling gold into a sluice box was too slow for him. After 1867, he disappeared and was next found in the sheep business on Carpenter Creek in what is now Musselshell County. Pomp was a slender, quiet man, respected by all, a fighter who liked to take on bad men. He died in a Billings hospital about 1904, and is buried near the entrance of the old cemetery in that city.

John Wells, the fourth man, also an ex-confederate, lived at Edmundson's Ferry where Confederate Creek enters the Missouri River, and ran the ferry for many years. Wells was an ardent Confederate who had vowed he would not shave until they won, so he went around looking like a miniature haystack, and acquired the nickname of "Wooly Johnson". It is said that a woman finally caught up with him and trimmed his beard.

One of the early arrivals was John Hines, later a big stock grower when his mining days were over. In speaking of Montana Bar, he said it was found accidentally, when a fellow came along wanting work or a place to dig he was told to try the bar up above, and on doing so he struck "earth's richest acre". Other early arrivals were Joseph T. Wunderlin, later a mine owner in Cave Gulch; Charles W. Cook, known later in stock, mining, and other businesses; and David R. Folsom, well known as a political and business leader in the state. There was also the group of Germans who knew little about mining, but who later developed the district and gained much
wealth by so doing. This group found the rich Cement Gulch, and three of its members, the Schinnemans and Christian Spiegel, were fortunate enough to obtain claims on Montana Bar, thus becoming wealthy.83

There were also many people who got their start in Confederate and then moved away. Ira Myers made enough money so that when he left, he went to Great Falls and founded its first lumber company. T. E. Collins, who practiced law in Diamond City, after spending time there as a miner, moved to Great Falls in 1880, and continued his law practice there. After leaving Confederate Gulch, Charles McClure made his home in St. Louis. P. P. Thomas and the Birchard brothers became prosperous Illinois farmers. William Daws went into business in Prescott, Arizona; Charles Creek, a top underground miner, bought a hops farm in Oregon; J. M. Robinson went into business in Deadwood, South Dakota; Jim Birtsell and Charles Fredericks became New York capitalists; and James Brumley, in later years, was a well-to-do resident of Indianapolis, Indiana.84 The Ingram brothers left the country in 1868 with $150,000 in their pockets to do with as they wished.85

Women were definitely in the minority around Diamond City and in the gulch for the first couple of years. In

83Ritch, Great Falls Tribune, December 29, 1935.
84Butte Miner, December 19, 1895.
85Helena Daily Herald, July 8, 1875.
fact, the great majority of them were dance hall women and prostitutes, working in the saloons, dance halls, and hurdy-gurdy houses. During the early days any ladies visiting the gulch were often allowed to pan a little gold, and they usually made several hundred dollars. This practice was followed principally because women did not often come into the gulch.86 When the town became firmly established, the number of women increased as the regular citizens of the town built their businesses and planned to make their homes in Diamond. Most of these people brought their wives with them, but with the single man it was a different thing. While some probably married a girl from their home, a great many married the dance hall women. Most of the dance hall women were not prostitutes, and are not classed as such by many, so whenever they got the chance they married and settled down as a miner’s or a farmer’s wife. In 1872, the children of Diamond City were taught by a lady school teacher.87

During 1866, Diamond City was visited by a woman who has since become an almost legendary figure. Calamity Jane, who has been called almost anything from drunkard and prostitute, to mule skinner and Indian killer, appeared in a different role this time. She had come into Confederate Gulch and was nursing a group of sick miners. The miners did not have money to buy food with, and Calamity Jane, rather than

86 Goodman, Great Falls Tribune, November 15, 1931.
87 Helena Weekly Herald, November 21, 1872.
ask for aid, got the necessary food supplies by holding up a store in Diamond City. Those who saw "Calamity", judged her to be twenty to twenty-two years of age at the time. 88

With women now in Confederate Gulch and Diamond City it is safe to mention someone else who got his start in the gulch. The first birth took place in Diamond City on January 15, 1866. 89

It was not all work and no play in the gulch, the inhabitants did have a social life, although it was somewhat limited in scope. Much fun was had in the dance halls and saloons. A traveling troupe would perform, then there would be dancing and drinking for all. At the time, champagne was $5.00 a bottle, and beer $1.00. 90 To those who desired a better class of entertainment, Diamond City offered the Union Theatre, 91 where could be seen plays or concerts by well known singers from the east. The miners, prospectors, and other people in the mining camps were by no means all crude, uneducated, and uncultured. There were many doctors, lawyers, teachers, and other people of education, which might help to explain why a theatre was built in Diamond almost as soon as were the dance halls and saloons.

88 Roberta Beed Sollid, Calamity Jane: A Study in Historical Criticism (Montana State University, Missoula, Montana, 1951), pp. 18, 120.
89 Fairfield Times.
91 Montana Post, May 22, 1868.
Another field of enjoyment was made available to the men in the area with the establishment of three lodges at Diamond City. The first lodge in the town was the Sarsfield Center of the Fenian Brotherhood, organized on December 17, 1865. This was a stronghold for the Irish group in the region. The Masonic Lodge was organized in 1866, had forty active members in 1875, and the Masons were still holding meetings at Diamond City in 1892. On April 17, 1868, an "International Order of Good Templars" was organized. They were much against intemperance. They built a nice hall which was later moved to White Sulphur Springs, and eventually became a Presbyterian Church. The lodge apparently got along well for in 1875, it had a membership of fifty men. Another avenue of pleasure was offered to the people of Diamond City when a small library was started. The library never became large, and in 1875 only had 400 volumes, but those books which were there were undoubtedly greatly appreciated and were probably almost worn out. As soon as there were a few families in the town, there was need for a school. A lack of books for the children was probably just as much of a

92Leeson, p. 808.

93Helena Daily Herald, July 8, 1875.

94Rocky Mountain Husbandman, White Sulphur Springs, July 14, 1892.

95Hall, p. 2; Leeson, p. 813.

96Helena Daily Herald, July 8, 1875.
problem here as it was in other camps and settlement, so teacher and pupils most likely used whatever they could find. As mentioned before, the teacher, in 1872, was a woman, and in 1874, a Mr. Kelley, formerly of Deer Lodge, was the instructor.

Without a trading center in the gulch, the first winter was a rather hard one. Luckily for all, wild game was plentiful, but staples were scarce and expensive, for they had to come from Helena or some point even further away. In December, 1864, flour was $36.00 a sack, and since there were no stores nearby, people hammered Christmas presents out of gold nuggets. As soon as Diamond City was established early in 1865, it became the trading center for some fourteen other gulches: White's, Avalanche, Benton, Thompson, Hellgate, Magpie, Cave, etc. As many as 4000 to 5000 people did business there.

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97 Helena Weekly Herald, November 21, 1872.
98 Weekly Independent, May 29, 1874.
99 Ritch, Great Falls Tribune, December 29, 1935.
100 Goodman, Great Falls Tribune, November 15, 1931.
101 Williams, p. 3; W. W. Alderson, "Gold Camp Tubers," Montana Magazine of History, Autumn, 1953, p. 49. Prices at Diamond City in December, 1865. One pound of tea, $4.00; four pounds of sugar, $3.00; two and one-half pounds of soap, $2.25; one can yeast powder, $1.00; one pound fine cut tobacco, $3.00; one small blank book, 50¢; one buckskin purse, $1.25; five pounds of lard, $3.37; one pair of drawers and overalls, $5.00; stabling two horses one night, $12.59; thirteen pounds of flour, $3.42; one frying pan, 50¢; five pounds of bacon, $2.65; four loaves of bread, $1.00; 100 pounds of hay, $5.00; one ox yoke, $5.00; horse shoeing (two), $11.00; hotel bill, two, one night, $4.00; potatoes, 12¢ a pound; one pound of butter, $2.00
brought trade goods here from Fort Benton, Salt Lake City, and Walla, Walla, and while prices were high, people could still afford to buy. From 1865 to 1868, Diamond City was as well known as any camp in the west, and was considered to be a better camp than Butte.102 By 1871, it was still a pretty good business place, with from 300 to 400 people drawing supplies from there. Since there were not many businesses, all the merchants and traders made a good living.103 Business decreased slowly until by 1890 only a few hundreds, at the most, traded in Diamond City, whose stores and saloons during the rush years had never closed their doors.104

There were no idlers or loungers around town in the early years for there was work enough for all at good wages.105 By 1868, there were too many laborers in Diamond, so they were urged to leave the gulch and stay away, while at the same time prospectors were welcome in the gulch.106

The unemployment problem was not a serious one for when the men saw that the big rush was over, their numbers thinned out quickly, as prospectors and miners left for other more lucrative diggings.

102 Goodman, Great Falls Tribune, November 15, 1931.
103 Helena Daily Herald, July 26, 1871.
104 Williams, p. 3.
105 Montana Post, June 8, 1867.
106 Ibid., May 2, 1868.
In 1864, Confederate Gulch was beyond the influence of law and government. There was no legal way to gain title, and actual possession was the only evidence of ownership. The old timers were quick to organize, and they reassured everyone by setting up a district with rules and regulations for government and all mining matters, the use of water for mining, and the disposition of claims after determining of what a claim would consist.

These various laws were based on certain principles which the old miners found to work best. One of the more important points to settle was how long one might "lay over," or do nothing, without being "jumped" by some prospector or miner who had no claim of his own. The matter was regulated by the presence of water, snow, frozen ground and the like. A man was not required to work his claim if it could not be done, and his claim would not be jumped if he were away fighting Indians, or was ill or lacking grub. Claims worth hundreds of thousands of dollars were held by no more tenure than a brief code like the following:

We, most of the miners of this district, resolve first, that the district shall be called Confederate Gulch, and that a claim shall be 100 feet long in the creek, 200 feet long in the gulch, and 50 feet front on the bank, and that a man may hold one of each.

Resolved, secondly, that no more Chinamen shall take up claims.

Resolved, thirdly, that a white man must stick up a notice at each end of his claim when he takes it up.

Resolved, fourthly, that a man may lay over his claim a month by posting a notice and paying the receiver $1.00.
Resolved, fifthly, that all disputes about claims shall be settled by a miners meeting and no lawyers.\textsuperscript{107}

In other matters, as usual, the outlaw element attempted to gain control before authority took over in the new camp, but soon honest men grouped together and formed the Vigilantes, so law and order once again prevailed. This group acted quickly and its judgment was harsh. In 1865, they hanged a man named Jack Howard, near Diamond, and on a placard above him was the word, "robber". During the next four years they got rid of about a dozen malefactors. Another group that helped maintain law and order was the Masonic Lodge, which was a great aid in getting rid of undesirables in the gulch. However, during these turbulent years, men were constantly at work making their fortunes in any part of the main gulch or its tributaries.\textsuperscript{108} While life and property in the camps became safe, there was still much gold moved out secretly to avoid being caught by desperadoes who might be lurking in the back country to rob a gold train.\textsuperscript{109}

Claim jumping or tapping water ditches were not the only reasons for a man being killed. Sometimes one man would push another just a little too far and end up getting himself

\textsuperscript{107}Goodman, \textit{Great Falls Tribune}, November 15, 1931.

\textsuperscript{108}Ritch, \textit{Great Falls Tribune}, December 29, 1935.

\textsuperscript{109}Goodman, \textit{Great Falls Tribune}, November 15, 1931.
killed. Such a killing took place in Diamond City on December 21, 1866, when a man named Gaffney killed a fellow known as McDuff. It seems that McDuff was an extremely overbearing and offensive person, and had been picking on Gaffney for some time. One day when he was drunk he "slapped Gaffney around" and treated him pretty roughly. This turned out to be "the straw that broke the camel's back," and Gaffney shot and killed McDuff. He was arrested, admitted the complaint, and was committed for trial at the next District Court. The court's decision in the case is unknown.

Closely askin to the problem of law enforcement was the job of controlling the Indians, who, in this area, were bothersome mainly because they liked to steal the horses in the camps, for being able to do this gave them prestige. They were known, if it were necessary, to take scalps, though I was not able to find any specific instance when this did happen. The bothersome redskins were usually Blackfeet or Crow, from the north and east respectively. In 1868, Indians in the vicinity of Diamond City fired on men, stole horses, and were generally troublesome. The men quit work and the whole camp emptied out to go after the Indians, but they were disorganized and accomplished nothing in the

110Montana Post, December 29, 1866.
111Ritch, Great Falls Tribune, December 29, 1935.
way of capturing or killing any of them.\textsuperscript{112} After 1870, any Indian problem virtually ceased in this particular region, although elsewhere in Montana there was a lot of Indian trouble for the next ten years. There was an occurrence in July, 1873, which gave everyone a big scare. A group of drunken Modocs went on a big spree, but fortunately did nothing more than make a lot of noise.\textsuperscript{113} The unusual thing about the whole incident was that the Modocs were from a small tribe in California, and no one could figure out how they got clear up to Confederate Gulch.

In 1867, Diamond City had three hotels, the leading one being the Diamond City Hotel. Mr. Weston's Weston House was recommended for good food, and a notable structure was the U. L. Wigwam, erected on the lower point of Montana Bar. It was built from the private subscription of union men of Diamond City.\textsuperscript{114}

The Diamond City Hotel was still there in 1872, along with three clothing and general supply stores, two shoe shops, one livery stable, four saloons, and two butcher shops.\textsuperscript{115} In 1874, the town looked much the same, except the gulch in front of town was now filled nearly to the town level with tailings. Some of the more prominent people and businessmen

\textsuperscript{112}\textit{Montana Post}, May 29, 1868 and August 28, 1868.

\textsuperscript{113}\textit{Helena Weekly Herald}, July 31, 1873.

\textsuperscript{114}\textit{Montana Post}, June 8, 1867.

\textsuperscript{115}\textit{Helena Weekly Herald}, November 21, 1872.
were as follows: L. Marks, who was a merchant, postmaster, express agent, and county commissioner; William Haas, one of the first settlers, who had gone to Europe the year before, found it crowded, and had just returned to Diamond with a new stock for his store; Jonas Higgins, who had opened his store in 1868, and was now the largest taxpayer in the county. H. B. Brainerd, formerly of Helena, had a billiard parlor; Charles Reahm and E. J. Harris owned saloons, while Henry J. Ramspeck brewed and sold beer. J. Laney had the livery stable; John Nowland was the proprietor of the Southern Hotel; G. S. Lewis & Son had the Diamond City Hotel, were in the stock and agricultural business, and had a meat market; the other butcher was A. Foller; and S. Allen was the local barber, charging 25¢ a shave.116

The town remained secure through the 1870's, with little change in the number of businesses, a few new ones coming in and some leaving. In 1875, one of the hotels had a new owner, G. A. Hampton; Gilbert Ecker had a shoe shop; there was a blacksmith shop; and Dr. Parberry, the physician, opened a drug store. D. P. Rankin, who was a member of the District Court, lived in Diamond and most likely practiced law since Diamond was the county seat. In November, 1875, Diamond City became the home of the Rocky Mountain Husband-

116 Weekly Independent, May 29, 1874.
117 Helena Daily Herald, July 8, 1875; Bancroft, p. 678.
man, its editor was R. N. Sutherlin.\textsuperscript{118} The associate editor was W. H. Sutherlin, and as traveling correspondent, his letters told much of territorial growth. The paper devoted itself to agricultural news and territorial development.\textsuperscript{119} It was moved to White Sulphur Springs in 1879, then to Great Falls in 1904, where it remained until its presses were shut down in January, 1943.\textsuperscript{120}

By 1879 both hotels had changed proprietors, there was now a combined livery stable and meat market owned by Thomas Flemming, there were only two general stores, and the city had a new attorney-at-law, T. E. Collins.\textsuperscript{121} The two general stores were owned by L. Marks and W. F. Haas, and the hotel by William Mills in 1881.\textsuperscript{122} In 1884 and 1885, the business interests of Diamond City were represented by W. P. Ware, postmaster and general merchant; G. A. Hampton, hotel keeper; and L. Conn, saloon keeper.\textsuperscript{123} The town still had its hotel in 1887, and the same owner. Now one store was owned by the Berg Brothers, and the other by John

\textsuperscript{118}\textit{Helena Weekly Herald}, June 1, 1876; Bancroft, p. 758.

\textsuperscript{119}\textit{Burlingame}, p. 327.

\textsuperscript{120}\textit{Conway, Rocky Mountain Husbandman}, Great Falls, November 26, 1925.

\textsuperscript{121}\textit{Fairfield Times}.

\textsuperscript{122}\textit{Rocky Mountain Husbandman}, White Sulphur Springs, May 26, 1881.

\textsuperscript{123}\textit{Fairfield Times}.
Schrieber, who was also the postmaster.\textsuperscript{124}

The gulch continued to be the home of a few old timers in 1895, most of them having been there since the boom days of the 1860's. The list is full of familiar names such as Hampton, Vance, Fox, Wood, Campbell, Penney, Bracket, Forde, Shine, Welch, Hennessy, McDonald, Buckingham, and McGregor. The latter named had spent much developing quart veins for he felt that with so much placer gold there had to be a source, but unfortunately he never found the mother lode. By this time, the Schrieber Hotel had replaced the Diamond City Hotel in the town.\textsuperscript{125} Diamond had now been struggling for survival ever since extensive placer mining had gone out twenty-five years before, and it was evident the battle was about lost.

During the winter of 1920 and 1921, the last of the old prospectors quit the diggings. Felix White gave up and was moved to the County Farm. "Chinee" George left at the age of eighty-two. He was an honest and industrious person who had come to Diamond in 1865, and in the early days was a well known figure on its streets. George Brandt, who lived at the head of the gulch, died the same winter, but was well enough fixed to take care of himself until the end.\textsuperscript{126}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{124}Rocky Mountain Husbandman, White Sulphur Springs, November 3, 1887.
\bibitem{125}Butte Miner, December 19, 1895.
\bibitem{126}Goodman, Great Falls Tribune, November 15, 1931.
\end{thebibliography}
In 1928, two log houses remained, one at the upper end of Montana Bar, and the other to the east across Montana Gulch. At Diamond there was one small, old frame building standing to remind one that this had once been a thriving, bustling city. In December, 1953, that old frame building was still standing, and it was occupied by an old crippled man. To get his water he crawls down a ladder for a distance of about eighty feet to where a spring near the bottom of the gulch issues forth. So today, as in 1928, Diamond City is a ghost town, and barring some unforseen miracle will continue to be one in the future.

127 Pardee, p. 172.
CHAPTER IV

OTHER GULCHES AND BARS

North of Confederate Gulch many other gold bearing gulches twisted down the west slope of the Big Belt Mountains. Some of these spread out on the level plain of Townsend Valley; others emptied directly into the Missouri River. The first of these is White's Gulch, four miles north of Confederate Gulch. Avalanche Gulch is two miles farther on, Hellgate is another two miles, then Little Hellgate, Magpie, Cave, Clark and Oregon, and finally Trout Creek with its two tributary gulches, New York and Kingsbury. Technically speaking the last four gulches and one creek mentioned are not in the Canyon Ferry region, for they all lie to the north of, or below the spot, where the new Canyon Ferry Dam has been built. They are, however, a part of that placer gold area on the western side of the Big Belt Mountains which made the whole region important.

White's Gulch is parallel to and nearly as long as Confederate. The gulch is narrow, varying from one-sixteenth to one-fourth of a mile in width. The course of the gulch is towards the east, but at the upper end it turns to the north. At the north turn, a large tributary, Johnny Gulch, extends
east for a short distance and then turns south. There are a number of small tributaries leading out of the main gulch, most of them towards the north. Some of these are No. 16, No. 2, Upper No. 2, Spring's, Horse, and Park. Miller's Gulch runs from south into White's Gulch.

White's Gulch was discovered on May 2, 1865, by Henry White, an old California miner.\(^1\) The deposits were rich and fairly extensive, and were worked for twenty years. The main gulch yielded over $500,000, and its tributary valley, Johnny Gulch, gave from $500,000 to $1,000,000.\(^2\)

White's City, the one big camp in the gulch, was located in the widest part of the valley, five miles from the entrance. For a short while after the gulch was found this camp had a population of one thousand people.\(^3\) This did not last long and by 1874 the gulch had only forty people, including six families.\(^4\) In the fall of 1878 there were thirty voters in the gulch, by June, 1880, the total population was thirty-five, and November, 1882, saw nineteen voters, and a smaller population than in 1880. White's City and the gulch had gone the way of Diamond City.\(^5\) Today the only trace of

\(^1\)Helena Weekly Herald, July 8, 1875; Leeson, p. 813.

\(^2\)Pardee, p. 179.

\(^3\)United States Forest Service Sign, White's Gulch, 1953.

\(^4\)Weekly Independent, May 29, 1874.

\(^5\)Leeson, p. 813.
this place is an occasional pile of rotted logs where a building once stood. Although no other camps were ever mentioned, there were traces of one at the mouth of Spring's Gulch. One cabin was nearly intact, another in part, and there were a couple of old rock foundations.

White's City could boast of one hotel, run through the years by Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Welcher, who in the later years also had the livery stable, and Mr. Welcher was the postmaster. In 1874, Mrs. W. E. Stager had the general variety store; while in 1875 the two stores in town were Stevens & Fritz and Ingersolls. In 1876, the merchants of the place were Stevens & Dawkins, who carried a good assortment of goods adapted to the mining trade; and sometime after this date, Alex Gibson took over as storekeeper.

The first strike in White's Gulch was on a low bar opposite the mouth of the tributary, Johnny Gulch. This brought a stampede of miners, who soon became more numerous than were the good claims, so many became discouraged and left. The gulch was very productive for the first couple

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6 *Helena Weekly Herald*, May 18, 1876; Leeson, p. 813.
7 *Helena Weekly Herald*, May 18, 1876.
8 *Weekly Independent*, May 29, 1874.
9 *Helena Weekly Herald*, May 8, 1875.
10 *Ibid.*, May 18, 1876.
11 Leeson, p. 813.
12 *Helena Weekly Herald*, May 18, 1876.
of years, producing anywhere from $20 to $50 a day per
man. But, by 1867, it was evident the place would never
be so extensively worked as Confederate. The creek bed in
the main gulch was worked by J. R. Bristol & Company, and
Myers & Company in 1874. At the same time the following
miners were in Johnny Gulch: Anderson, Lawler, Wagoner, and
Carpenter. C. L. and Isaac Harrington owned bar mines on
which they were running a hydraulic, and in 1875 they com­
pleted a four mile water ditch running from a reservoir in
the mountains. Production seemed steady yet in 1875, and
many felt it would be good for another ten years. Gold from
this gulch coined over $17 to the ounce, which was a bit
above the average (75¢ above Confederate).

In 1876, Stevens, Dawkins & Company were getting good
pay from a shaft right in front of the town, while Myers &
Company were still on good ground. Two drain ditches were
located below White's City, one of which went to bed-rock.
C. J. Hampton & Company and J. R. Bristol were using hy­
draulics on the bars. Men below town with ground sluice
diggings were Steger & Clark, J. R. Hathorne, and Edward
Keene. Other miners or teamsters in the gulch were Nick

13Montana Post, August 5, 1865.
14Ibid., June 8, 1867.
15Weekly Independent, May 29, 1874.
16Helena Weekly Herald, July 8, 1875.
Fritz, George Endon, Val Heinrich, J. M. Frazier, and C. V. Lee. The very rich Johnny Gulch was bringing fair results as late as 1876 and 1877. In the latter year, Bennett & Lawler worked on a bar 100 feet above the gulch and obtained $40 to a six foot set (6x4x4 feet). The Harringtons and Hendricks & Company were mining in the main gulch. All this activity seemed to assure White's Gulch of its future for the placers appeared to be getting a little better every year. Some of the claims were pretty large. The Bristol hydraulic claim was 2000 feet long, 400 feet wide, and up to 25 feet deep, and paid $15 a day per man.

After the late 1870's mining operations slowed almost to a stop. In 1883 there were only half a dozen miners left in the gulch (Wes Basey, J. Frazier, James McCabe, C. L. Harrington, and Harvey Means), and though there was still some activity in the famous old gulch in 1885, it was limited in extent. Today it is very evident that quite a bit of the gulch has been dredged out during the years. At present there does not appear to be any activity, although one miner's shack appears to be occupied.

North from White's Gulch is Avalanche Gulch, a place that never was so productive as White's or Confederate.

17 Ibid., May 18, 1876.
18 Rocky Mountain Husbandman, Diamond City, Montana Territory, January 25, 1877.
19 Ibid., May 31, 1883.
20 Leeson, p. 813.
Mining operations were along a part of the gulch beginning at a point about six miles above its mouth. While in most gulches a good deal of the placer mining was done in the main stream channel, none was apparent here. The probable yield in the gulch was $100,000. 21

Avalanche paid fairly well in gold during 1867, but did not cause a stampede of miners to the spot. 22 The Avalanche Flume Company tried its luck in 1868, but there did not seem to be enough water available to last a whole season. 23 In 1876, a group of miners was working about eight miles up the gulch, even though it had been a heart-breaking place for eleven years. It finally started to pay off in 1877, and attracted much attention when it continued to give up gold to the seekers in quite rewarding sums. 24 There was little mention of the gulch after 1877 since the big pay was over, and it was virtually deserted. However, in 1887, Wes Basey hit it well in a tributary of Avalanche, and Thomas Cooney took out a claim right next to his. 25 Other than this little else happened. Today Wellington Rankin has a ranch at the mouth of the gulch.

21 Pardee, p. 179.
22 Montana Post, June 8, 1867.
23 Helena Weekly Herald, September 3, 1868.
24 Ibid., May 11, 1876.
25 Rocky Mountain Husbandman, Diamond City, January 25, 1877.
26 Ibid., November 3, 1887.
Another two miles north, or down the valley from Avalanche, lies Hellgate Gulch, a spot where no actual placer production has been reported.\textsuperscript{27} The canyon at its mouth is very beautiful with its sheer walls, hundreds of feet high, and in places only nine to fifteen feet apart. From the valley the mouth of the gulch appears to be closed for the towering rocks that form the entrance overlap each other. As a result, the road leading into the fine, wide open gulch behind the entrance must make three or four right angle turns before reaching the gulch proper. In recent times there has been some blasting done to make the entrance wider. High up on the sides of these huge rocks are engraved curious Indian devices, figures, and hieroglyphics. There are also cave openings which are virtually inaccessible.\textsuperscript{28}

At first the gulch was thought to be rich, and in 1867 and 1868 much prospecting was done, and a drain ditch was dug.\textsuperscript{29} As late as 1874, miners were trying to find something there. One company did find a little placer gold two and one-half miles above the mouth of the gulch, and D. C. Bullard, W. G. Stagner & Company finished a bed-rock flume in the canyon, and were quite sure they had rich diggings.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{27}Pardee, p. 179. 
\textsuperscript{28}Montana Post, June 8, 1867; Weekly Independent, May 29, 1874. 
\textsuperscript{29}Montana Post, June 8, 1867; Helena Weekly Herald, April 9, 1868. 
\textsuperscript{30}Weekly Independent, May 29, 1874.
But, there were no appreciable results by 1876,\(^{31}\) and this apparently ended prospecting for placer gold in Hellgate Gulch. The Knowles ranch is right at the entrance to the gulch.

Magpie Gulch, the next in line down the valley, is nearly four miles from Hellgate Gulch. It is a long gulch, fourteen to fifteen miles, and is never more than one-sixteenth to one-eighth of a mile wide. Several tributary gulches enter from the north: Washout, Coxcy, Whitmire, Bar, and Never Sweat. From the south there are Fox and Grouse gulches. The mouth to the gulch is fairly close to the river, quite wide, and its sides slope gently. There are a number of interesting rock formations in the canyon. In driving through the gulch one sees piles of tailings and many other evidences of mining operations such as sections of old flumes lying in the stream bed. Many old cabins and sheds are still standing in this gulch, and a few appear to have had recent use.

The first prospecting was done in 1867,\(^{32}\) and it had all the characteristics of the other rich gulches in the region. Hopes ran high and in 1868 there were six to eight ditches being dug in the gulch. Work was difficult for the

\(^{31}\)Helena Weekly Herald, May 11, 1876.  
\(^{32}\)Montana Post, June 8, 1867.
ditches were deep, but no one thought of the possibility of failure. Pay was $18 a day per man or one ounce of gold.\textsuperscript{33} The first real pay dirt was not taken out until 1874 when a large extent of ground was opened up with favorable results.\textsuperscript{34} A new drain ditch was started in 1877, things looked good again, and for a time pay was up to $40 a day per man. Near the gulch Rotwitt, Stagener & Company had a hydraulic claim of 120 acres. Gravel in it ran three to fifteen feet deep over five feet of dirt. Their one trouble was the high cost of water.\textsuperscript{35}

The big pay from Magpie seems to have come from the drift mines during the 1880's. At the same time a one-half mile strip in Bar Gulch, a tributary, and another small one at its mouth were being mined through open cuts. From 1911 to 1914 a pit one-half mile long was dug by dredging, at a point two miles below the mouth of the gulch. In 1928, a little gold was being washed out by Jim Walston, and a shaft was being sunk by the Magpie Mining Company. Some old hands say the gulch paid $100 per foot, which is not at all likely. Magpie Gulch did pay about $280,000,\textsuperscript{36} which was better than the previous two had done.

\textsuperscript{33}Helena Weekly Herald, April 9, 1868, and September 3, 1868.

\textsuperscript{34}Weekly Independent, May 29, 1874.

\textsuperscript{35}Rocky Mountain Husbandman, Diamond City, January 25, 1877.

\textsuperscript{36}Pardee, p. 176.
Cave Gulch, two miles north of Magpie Gulch, is almost straight east of the old town of Canyon Ferry. It received its name from the many caves found along the sides of the gulch. The gulch has spots which are only forty or fifty feet wide. It also has pleasant valleys, one-fourth of a mile wide, which are good for grazing. One of its tributaries is Stove Gulch, coming in from the south, not far above the mouth of the gulch. Cave Gulch opens between low foothills, on which some rich bars were worked and a few still are today. The gulch was spotted, or only paid in places.37 Cave Creek from the mouth of the gulch to where it enters the Missouri River, is bounded by a rich alluvial flat which is excellent for agriculture.38

Cave Gulch was discovered in 1865 or 1866,39 and its first camp or settlement was known as Cavetown or Cave City. Cavetown was located near the base of the gulch, close up against the side of a mountain. It had about thirty houses of hewn logs,40 but all were deserted in 1876. The town grew a little through 1871, and Ed Ingersoll had a store there.41

37Montana Post, June 8, 1867.
38Pardée, p. 178.
39Helena Weekly Herald, July 8, 1875 (1865), and April 9, 1868 (1866).
40Montana Post, June 8, 1867.
41Helena Daily Herald, July 26, 1871.
In 1876, it was numbered among the cities of the past, with only one cabin remaining. This cabin was still standing in 1928.

Springtown was located about one and one-half miles below Cavetown, on the edge of the river plain. Today it is covered with water from the new lake. This town became important between 1872 and 1874 and, in the latter year, was mentioned as the trade center for a 100 square mile mining area. Lehman & Company of Helena had a branch store there managed by Dawkins and Albrecht. Ed Ingersoll had moved his store down from Cavetown, and there were boarding houses run by Captain J. V. Stafford and Al. Spencer. The town sported two billiard halls, one run by Al Spencer, the other by Dr. Rotwitt. Mayne & Luke were the butchers and made daily rounds with their wagon. If not then in the ranching business, they later entered it. The white resident population in the gulch at this time was near 150. In addition to this, the main gulch and its tributaries contained 100 Chinese, led by a Mr. Pie. In 1875, Spencer, Mayne & Luke, and Ingersoll were around, while the blacksmith was Frank Day.

42 Helena Weekly Herald, May 11, 1876.
43 Pardee, p. 177.
44 Weekly Independent, May 29, 1874.
45 Helena Weekly Herald, July 8, 1875.
little town was getting smaller, and in 1876 only Ingersoll and Spencer were mentioned as still being in business.

About this time another little village, Daytown, was founded, halfway between Canyon Ferry and Springtown. Court Sheriff, Sr. opened a dry goods and grocery store here, and in 1877 Al Spencer went into partnership with him. Frank Day, for whom the town was named, was the blacksmith. The founders chose this spot as being convenient to the greatest number of people in the gulch.46

The placer deposits were rich and, for a time, there were many miners in the gulch. Things were going well in 1868. There was a flume running along the side of the hills, and one along the bed of the gulch.47 Mines in the gulch were looking for men at $6.00 per day, though they were already employing about fifty men. Average pay for miners was $15 to $20 a day. The bar yields in the gulch totaled $5000 a week.48

Water was let in from Avalanche to the Cave Gulch ditch in 1870, and there was soon 200 inches running on the foothills of the vicinity. The water crossed Avalanche Canyon through 1500 feet of sheet iron pipe. All the prepara-

46Helena Weekly Herald, May 11, 1876; Rocky Mountain Husbandman, Diamond City, February 15, 1877.

47Helena Weekly Herald, April 9, 1868.

48Montana Post, July 10, 1868.
tion seemed to indicate an era of revival.49 The Cave Gulch Toot Hill mines were paying fifty to seventy miners well in 1871, but even with the new water supply they had to close fairly early due to lack of water.50 By 1874, the most extensive bar mines were adjoining the lower end of Cave Gulch. Here were hydraulics run by Warner & Stafford, Hornbuckle & Marshall. Over $100,000 was invested in building ditches, but due to lack of water many were not used.51 Eight companies were at work in the gulch in 1875, and there were twelve to fifteen other claims being worked by Chinese. Prospects seemed good yet. The water supply was coming mostly from Hellgate and Avalanche Ditch, owned by Stafford, Warner, Fisher & Loomis. Ditches in the gulch were owned by Hornbuckle, Hortop & Buswell.52 There was not much change the next year. John Weyberger was doing some drift mining, and one man, Chris Hansen, was known to have had a good season.53 Cave Gulch had six companies working there in 1877. Most of the claims were on a bar or an old river channel, judging from the elephant and mastadon bones unearthed. The old river channel had a stretch of gravel about one mile

49Rocky Mountain Gazette, Helena, Montana Territory, September 24, 1870.

50Helena Daily Herald, July 26, 1871.

51Weekly Independent, May 29, 1874.

52Helena Weekly Herald, July 8, 1875.

53Ibid., May 11, 1876.
long, and twenty to sixty feet deep. The bank was worked by hydraulics and the best gold was near bed-rock. The Island Company, better known as Hortop, Phillips & Company, had a claim 2000 feet long, one-fourth of a mile wide in some places, and it paid each man an average of $10 per day. One estimate made at the time said that $150,000 was taken out of the bar and gulch annually, for one firm bought $80,000 worth of dust in 1876, and there were two others buying from whom no figures were obtained.\textsuperscript{54} Placer mining was over by 1880, even though there was some activity in the gulch as late as 1885, which brought nothing of any consequence.\textsuperscript{55} The yield from these mines was about $400,000.\textsuperscript{56}

Cave Gulch was the only gulch where quicksilver was used to any extent in extracting the placer gold from the dirt and gravel. Here the gold was fine, while in the other gulches it was quite coarse. The quicksilver was dumped into the sluices with the water and dirt, and it picked out the fine particles of gold and precipitated them to the bottom of the sluice where they caught in the riffles.\textsuperscript{57}

Cave Gulch will long be remembered as the scene of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{54}\textit{Rocky Mountain Husbandman}, Diamond City, January 25, 1877.
\item \textsuperscript{55}Leeson, p. 813.
\item \textsuperscript{56}Pardee, P. 178.
\item \textsuperscript{57}\textit{Rocky Mountain Husbandman}, Diamond City, January 25, 1877.
\end{itemize}
much bloodshed, for here ten men met with violent death. Six were killed in shooting episodes, three were killed by ground caving in on them, and there was one suicide. 58

The best remembered of these incidents, and the one for which Cave Gulch is famous, was the shooting affray in the gulch on December 14, 1866. Besides being responsible for the death of six men, the incident is also thought to be the beginning of a feud between the Irish and Germans which lasted all through the mining era. The circumstances date back almost to the discovery of the gulch, at which time most of the discoverers were not hopeful of its future, and went back to Confederate Gulch. Included among those who left was a group of Irishmen. After their departure another group of miners entered the area, took over the ground, and developed fairly rich diggings. Most of the men who took over the Irishmen's diggings were Germans. When this was known, the Irishmen returned, and proposed to get back their old ground. They jumped portions of the diggings and began to work them. As a consequence of this action, the Germans, who were now the rightful owners, brought a lawsuit against the Irishmen. For a time there were no serious outbreaks, though each group apparently committed acts which angered the other group.

On Friday, December 14, the Irishmen started to fell trees and clear a place for a cabin. They were ready to lay

58 Helena Weekly Herald, May 11, 1876.
the bottom logs of the building, when one of the owners, Siegler, came and told them to stop. The latter, and his friends, lived in a cabin close by. Siegler then returned to his cabin and, on the way, was fired at by one of the Irishmen in the jumping party. He went inside to his eight friends, who had been brought in the night before, and they started to fire from inside the cabin. The sudden fusilade took the Irishmen by surprise, even though they were prepared for a fight. Three of them were mortally wounded, and died before they could be moved. Two others were wounded, and one of these soon died. The others were so frightened they fled up the mountain and escaped. One Irishman, George Jones, is said to have covered the twenty miles from Cave Gulch to Diamond City as fast as a horse could go. R. N. Sutherlin, who later was editor of the Rocky Mountain Husbandman in Diamond City, said one jumper was followed and shot five times, but lived. The four dead were Patrick Osborne, John Hassett, William Cheevers, and Mike McLaughlin. John Faherty was wounded.

There was much excitement and regret over the affray, but other legitimate claim owners in the area expressed the

59 Montana Post, December 22, 1866.
60 Anaconda Standard, Anaconda, Montana, April 23, 1916.
61 Conway, Rocky Mountain Husbandman, Great Falls, November 26, 1925.
62 Montana Post, December 22, 1866.
opinion that the Irishmen had been at fault and deserved what happened to them. They had no kick coming and would have given the same to someone else. The men who did the shooting put themselves in the hands of a Vigilante group from York Gulch. A possible lynching was feared, but the Vigilantes were well informed of what had gone on, and had told the miners to protect their rights as well as possible. The prisoners were taken to Helena for safe keeping, and turned over to the civil authorities to be dealt with. The sheriff of Meagher County tried to stop this proceeding, but was defeated in his purpose. Warrants were issued quickly, and Sheriff Ed Lovelock of Meagher County, went to Helena, and obtained the prisoners, whom he returned to Diamond City to be held for trial.63 These prisoners were J. L. DeHaven, John Bowman, Jacob Hart, F. Hiskner, J. A. Hassell, James Siegler, George Bashaw, James Duncanson, B. M. Bateman, P. Cansidine, Luke Finn, and William McCoy. The last three were members of the jumping party, and gave themselves up at the time the others were taken by the Vigilantes.64 All were taken before Judge Garrigan, their counsel waived examination, they were committed for trial to the next Circuit Court, and were held in the Diamond City jail.65 The charge against

63Anaconda Standard, April 23, 1916; Montana Post, December 22, 1866.

64Montana Post, December 22, 1866.

65Ibid., December 29, 1866.
the men was murder of John Hassett, and the trial was set for March 11, 1867. Near the end of the waiting period they were taken again to Helena and confined in the old log jail.

Although most of the miners felt the Irishmen or jumpers were in the wrong, the latter's friends got James M. Cavanaugh as special prosecutor and he, along with Walter F. Chadwick and County Attorney John H. Shober, conducted the prosecution. Attorneys for the defense were W. Y. Pemberton, Warren Toole, J. J. Williams, and a Mr. Mayhew. Selecting a jury was difficult since nearly everyone had formed an opinion or had already stated one.

Territorial court was held in the Dunphy & Bently block in Helena, in a building occupied, in 1916, by the Thomas Cruse Savings Bank. The courtroom was too small to hold all who wanted to see and hear the trial, so it was moved to Jack Langrishe's theatre on Wood Street. The stage was the courtroom and all action went on in front of the footlights. The spectacle became quite dramatic and the theatre was crowded every day.

The trial lasted nine days and resulted in a verdict of acquittal for the defendants. The decision was popular, and was almost a certainty from the first. This, in fact, became a precedent for all legitimate claim owners in Montana.

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67 *Helena Herald*, March 21, 1867.
The defendants were released, returned to Cave Gulch to their mining operations, and were quite successful for a number of years. The feud and hostility were not ended, for friends of some of the dead men still thirsted for revenge. The most aggressive of these was Patrick Duffy, and his special enemy seemed to be James Siegler, a very courageous person, and the leader of the men who took over the claims when the Irishmen returned to Confederate Gulch.

In July, 1867, Duffy worked himself into a stage where he demanded blood as recompense for the loss of his friends, killed the winter before. Siegler had sold out to his partners and was ready to leave for new diggings when he met Duffy, who renewed his insults and abuses towards Siegler. He told Siegler that he was going to kill him and to get armed for a death struggle.

Siegler accepted the challenge and tried to get a shotgun. He was unsuccessful so returned to Cave Gulch and, at the store where his saddle and blankets were stored, he got his own pistol. As Siegler left the store, he met Duffy coming up the street carrying his pistol in his hand. Siegler fired first, the bullet struck Duffy in the middle, knocked him to his knees, and turned him half around. As Duffy turned he threw his gun over his shoulder and fired without taking aim. The bullet struck Siegler's wrist, glanced and penetrated a vital part of his chest and, within fifteen minutes he was dead. Duffy died the same night, but
was happy knowing that Siegler had died first. Both bodies were buried on the flat near the mouth of Cave Gulch. This tragedy brought to an end the shootings in Cave Gulch, and to claim jumping in Montana. 68

Two gulches seldom heard of but which produced well were Clark's and Oregon gulches. They were discovered and worked during the same period as Cave and New York gulches. Of the two, Oregon was definitely the richer, and was more productive than the average gulch. 69 Activity in Oregon began in 1867, 70 and miners were still working there through the 1870's and 1880's. 71 During 1876, Thomas Gregory was working in the gulch, Charlie Hariger and R. T. Barnes were on bars, and John B. Tate had a claim at the head of the gulch. In Clark's Gulch, which heads in a section known as the Park, south of Trout Creek, there was practically no record of activity. In 1876, L. Williams had been using a drain ditch for eighteen months to help sluice out his claims, and J. M. DeBorde and Joel Euks camped in the gulch, and were working on bars contiguous to Clark's. 72 The total

69Pardee, p. 176.
70Helena Herald, March 28, 1867.
71Weekly Independent, May 29, 1874; Rocky Mountain Husbandman, White Sulphur Springs, May 31, 1883.
72Helena Weekly Herald, May 11, 1876.
estimated yield for the two gulches was much better than some of the larger gulches and amounted to from $300,000 to $500,000 in gold. 73

Close by Clark's and Oregon gulches are the last three places in this area. They are Trout Creek and its tributaries, New York and Kingsbury gulches, which are all known as the Trout Creek District. Trout Creek is two and one-half miles long and one and one-fourth miles wide, and these main tributaries enter it from the south. The stream of Trout Creek furnished New York and the other gulches in this district with water. Gold was discovered in January, 1866, a short distance above the mouth of New York Gulch. The discoverers were Price, Moore, Ritter, and Spivey, a party of hunters on their way home. 74

The boom town in this area during the gold rush was York, well situated in the valley of Trout Creek, at the mouth of New York Gulch. It was a very active mining camp and the largest settlement and trading center in the Big Belt Mountains, outside of Diamond City. York was a contraction of New York, for its founders hoped a city would spring up there. A few years after its discovery the cream of the gulches' placer deposits was gone, most of the inhabitants left the region, and York became a small hamlet. 75 There is,
in 1954, a small village of York, with a store, post office, and a bar. In 1867, there was another little camp in New York Gulch, called Ruby City. Across the valley from York was Brooklyn, another camp which soon faded out. The population of York and Brooklyn was close to 400 in 1866, and for the next few years after that the Trout Creek District numbered its inhabitants in the thousands. In 1880, a census listed the same area as having forty-nine people, and in 1884 the only people in the valley were a few farmers and ranchers. There was a sawmill in New York Gulch in 1874, run by Sutton & Marshall, who easily supplied the surrounding country with pine lumber, and in 1876, J. S. Faus was York's postmaster.

New York Gulch paid well for several years. Near the town, $600 to $900 was taken from a ten foot cap (a set of timbers ten feet wide). Extremely rich pay was taken from the upper end of the gulch in 1868. Many miners in New York, Kingsbury, and Trout Creek kept busy during 1871 sluicing new ground, and everyone was making fairly good money. The gulch was quiet in 1874, but production was

76 Sanders, p. 180.
77 Leeson, p. 814.
78 Weekly Independent, May 29, 1874.
79 Helena Weekly Herald, May 11, 1876.
80 Montana Post, June 8, 1867.
81 Helena Daily Herald, July 26, 1871.
fairly steady\textsuperscript{82} and, by 1876, New York and its tributaries, Kingsbury and Ruby, had proven themselves to be among the richest in the Belt Range. John Spurlock, William Stahl, Joseph Huffer, Michael Monaghan, and John S. Barnes were still working with profitable results.

Kingsbury Gulch, one of the early discoveries and a tributary of New York, was paying well again in 1876. Ed Brassey had struck the lost streak and was expected to take out another fortune.\textsuperscript{83} In 1883 the Marshall Ditch was being repaired in order that more water could be brought into Kingsbury.\textsuperscript{84} H. H. Barnes supervised the digging of a bedrock flume which enabled 2000 feet of New York Gulch to be worked in 1887.\textsuperscript{85} Eventually New York Gulch was bought up by the Trout Creek Mining Company, owned by F. D. Spratt and others. They ditched in water and between 1888 and 1891 re-worked the gulch by hydraulic methods. After this time a little drift mining was done occasionally by Duncan Robertson.

There was not much work done in the Trout Creek Valley in the early days, and when A. N. Spratt started working there in 1890, he was soon drowned out by the rising waters of Hauser Lake. In 1933, there were some unworked deposits

\textsuperscript{82}\textit{Weekly Independent}, May 29, 1874.

\textsuperscript{83}\textit{Helena Weekly Herald}, May 11, 1876.

\textsuperscript{84}\textit{Rocky Mountain Husbandman}, White Sulphur Springs, May 31, 1883.

\textsuperscript{85}\textit{Ibid.}, November 3, 1887.
in the upper two miles of New York Gulch, and an untouched deposit along Trout Creek. One old miner, Jack Radford, placed the estimate of New York and Kingsbury gulches at $500,000. Some say that the district gave up close to $5,000,000 in placer gold.86

In addition to these gulches, there were rich bars and terraces along the Missouri River, whose gold deposits apparently came from the Big Belt Mountains. The richest and most extensively mined of these terraces was French Bar, located on the west side of the river, at the north end of the Spokane Hills, two and one-half miles below the old Canyon Ferry Dam. The terrace was as rich as the gulches of the York area and yielded about $1,500,000.87 In 1867, the diggings had hardly been touched,88 but, in 1868, water was brought to the bar,89 and hydraulic methods were used to get the gold. Even then lack of water made some seasons short. By 1873 one of the most extensive and important placer mining projects in Montana Territory was that of Taylor, Dennison & Company at French Bar. The mines were several acres in extent, there were two ditches carrying 800 inches of water, two hydraulics worked day and night, and twenty-six

86 Pardee, pp. 176-177.
87 Ibid., p. 180.
88 Helena Herald, March 28, 1867.
89 Helena Weekly Herald, April 9, 1868.
men had constant employment. A tunnel 2000 feet long was built through granite for drainage and dump. Even with these aids much back breaking work was still required. The gold washed out in 1873 was worth $60,000 to $75,000.\textsuperscript{90} There was a mining camp at French Bar for many years. Mr. Lightbody ran the hotel in 1876, while Captain Drinkwater and his son were the merchants, and also distributed mail once a week. Among the old miners on the bar who answered to roll call every spring were Frank Gray and Jacob End.\textsuperscript{91} About the time French Bar was playing out in 1876, a group of Chinese struck good diggings on the Missouri, opposite French Bar, and made $5.00 to $8.00 a day per man.\textsuperscript{92}

The next terrace is Spokane Bar, along the west bank of the river, three miles below French Bar. It was mined during or shortly after the gold rush period, and though not as rich as French Bar, it did yield about $550,000.

Other bars located further down the river were El Dorado, not to be confused with the Eldorado Bar found in Confederate Gulch, American, Guel's, Mings, and Ruby. These terrace remnants below Spokane Bar have been mined in places, but any accurate gold yield is unknown, although it was definitely less than either of the other two. The total may be

\textsuperscript{90}Ibid., July 31, 1873.

\textsuperscript{91}Ibid., May 11, 1876.

\textsuperscript{92}Ibid., May 4, 1876.
As early as 1866 it was known that a large deposit of gravel on the east bank of the Missouri some eighteen miles from Helena, and four miles from the mouth of New York Gulch, known as El Dorado Bar, would prospect fairly well, from 11¢ to 60¢ a pan. The bar was about three miles long, the dirt was five to twelve feet thick, and most of it was in three benches, each furnishing tiers or claims. In 1867, certain companies were trying to bring water from Trout Creek by flume. The ditch, though not completed, had already cost $18,000. But it was felt that dirt which prospected 3¢ to 10¢ a pan would give $100 a day per man with hydraulics. The El Dorado Bar Ditch when finished was four and one-half miles long, and cost $50,000.

El Dorado Bar was best known as the site of a sapphire excitement that drew attention to the occurrence of these gems in Montana. Their presence was known in 1867, and reported again by J. L. Smith in the *American Journal of Science* in 1873. A company was organized in 1889 to work the placers of this bar and to get in addition to gold, precious stones like sapphires, oriental topazes, rubies, and emeralds.


94*Rocky Mountain Gazette*, February 16, 1867.

95Bancroft, p. 726.

The placers produced fairly well, but there was not much to create excitement or draw any real attention until 1891.

The big surprise to Montana mining was the 1891 formation of Sapphire and Ruby Company, Limited, backed by English capital, for exploration of the sapphire mines on El Dorado Bar and vicinity. The company had a capital of 450,400 pounds sterling, and the same number of shares. The sapphire company was formed only after much inquiry by experts like Edwin W. Streeter, the diamond merchant of London; A. B. Wood, the discoverer of quarts lodes at Leadville, Colorado; J. H. Yerrington, the gem expert of New York, and others who could adequately judge the extent and richness of the field. This showed the company was serious, would check the diggings well, and any gems produced from them. Property was bought from Augustus N. and Frank D. Spratt and others who had worked some of the ground as placers for a number of years. Sapphires had been found in the early diggings, but were disregarded by the gold hungry miners, who could not be troubled with the precious stones. The new owners found several first water diamonds in the gold washers boxes.

The boom ended with the failure of the chief operator, the British corporation. Since then there has been no further


98 McKnight, pp. 13-14.
search made for the precious gems, but during the boom numerous sapphires were produced. According to Kunz, the value of the gems cut was about $2000 a year. In 1893, the English company reported $790 from the sale of these gems. Minerals reported by Kunz as associated with the sapphires were white topaz, ruby-red garnets, broken translucent crystals of kyanite, stream tin, lemonite pseudomorphs after pyrite, chalcedoney, and white calcite.99

There were some silver lodes struck about two miles from Canyon Ferry, 200 yards from the river. The ore was two-thirds metal—silver and copper—so some thought there were large fortunes to be obtained here.100 Near Cave Gulch some bar diggings were worked below the water level, but were soon abandoned because the water could not be kept down.101

The story of placer mining in the Canyon Ferry region is brief, but one which was filled with adventure and excitement for all those who became a part of it. This era was to be followed by a period of lode or hard-rock mining, which when contrasted with the placer mining era was extremely colorless and insignificant.


100 Montana Post, November 18, 1865.

101 Weekly Independent, May 29, 1874.
CHAPTER V

LODE MINING

High up on the west slope of the Big Belt Mountains, above the rich placer mines, were deposits of gold quartz, and also small amounts of copper, silver, lead, and manganese. These gold-bearing lodes were in three areas, two high up on the ridges above Confederate Gulch, and one in the vicinity of York. In the York area the dikes of quartz diorite, which contain the gold, crop out from a point on the ridge north of York and move eastward in nearly a straight line along the upper courses of Magpie, Hellgate, and Avalanche gulches, a distance of nearly fifteen miles. These dikes stand almost vertical, are 300 to 400 feet wide, and from two to four miles long. Gold quartz lodes and their dependent placer deposits are closely associated with them.

Most of the money making mines in the York area were located on the Golden Messenger Dike, north of Trout Creek. Of these, the Little Dandy, near the east end of the Golden Messenger Dike, on the ridge between Dry Gulch and Kelly Gulch, was first developed in about 1883. The owner of this mine in its most productive years was John A. Rowand.

Numerous other veins along the dike were developed
before 1900. The most active of these was the Golden Charm, located near the west end of the dike, and also owned by Rowand. The Golden Charm and the Little Dandy were the two most active mines in the area during this period, with the Golden Charm giving up about $26,000 in gold and silver. Other mines here whose history is not known were the Gold Bug, the Gold Bar, the Gold Speck, the Last Rose of Summer, and the Mollie Muck-a-Chuck, all long since abandoned.¹

Since about 1900, the mines along the dike have been idle or practically idle except the Golden Messenger mine, in Dry Gulch, a tributary of Trout Creek from the north, a short distance above York. In contrast to the rest of the mines which were usually small bodies of high-grade ore, it proved to be a low-grade body of large dimensions. It is believed to have been in a group of claims purchased in 1899, by John and Charles Friedereichs and others, who incorporated the Columbia Gold Mining & Milling Company. The company developed the mine and built a mill on Trout Creek which burnt down in 1902. Later, the LaCasse Brothers, of Missoula, did much underground development work, and after them the French Bar Mining Company tried their luck. Eleven years later, in 1913, the York Mining Company developed the mine further, and built another mill. The mine was leased to Birtchey & Leydig, who operated the property for a short time. It was

¹Pardee, pp. 139, 132, 158-159, 121.
idle for several years, until 1927, when the Golden Messenger Corporation bought the property. Since 1928, the mine has been idle. The mine has produced much ore, but its history has been characterized more by financial difficulties than by profits. This has been due to uneconomical methods of mining, unsuitable milling processes, and often to lack of capital. The later milling operations, however, show a decided improvement in gold recovery. Total production of the mine was from $180,000 to $220,000.

There are only a few authentic records of production of gold from lodes along the Golden Messenger Dike available, but a reasonable estimate for the gold quartz veins along here would be $350,000 to $500,000. ²

The York group of dikes extends on to the east. The only mine of any importance in the rest of the area was the Old Amber mine, known also as the Golden Cloud. The mine lies on the south side of York Gulch about three miles above its mouth, and is located on what was probably the first quartz lode in the district to be discovered and worked. Before 1870, ore from this deposit was milled in York Gulch near the mouth of Rattlesnake Gulch. Later, a large mill was built at the foot of the slope, directly below the mine. The property was successfully operated for four or five years before 1899. Later, the owner, a stock company, failed,

²Ibid., pp. 146-147, 122.
according to one report due to mismanagement and according to another because the ore became unoxidized in depth and therefore unsuited to the process of plate amalgamation then in use. Apparently after this time the mine was closed, for in 1927, it was apparent the mine had been idle for some time. Though there are no records, the extent of the body mined, and several years of profitable operation would indicate that at least $100,000 to $200,000 must have been recovered.

Other quartz veins occur along the diorite dike that crosses York Gulch above the Old Amber mine. While there is evidence of much work being done on them, there is no record of their history or production, and they have been abandoned for a long time.³

There were gold quartz lodes located in Hellgate Gulch as early as 1867. The Dan Tucker had a wide vein that looked very promising, so a mill was to be built for processing its ore.⁴ There was a lode on Lee Mountain on the east side of Hellgate Gulch about six miles above its mouth, owned by the Ideal Mining Company. At the top of the ridge above the Lee Mountain claim was the A. J. White, Jr. claim, while on the west side of Hellgate Gulch, almost opposite the Lee Mountain claim was the Finchville claim of A. J. White and others.

³Ibid., pp. 157, 122, 161.
⁴Montana Post, June 8, 1867.
J. E. Walston had a number of prospect pits in Bar Gulch, a tributary of Magpie Gulch.

Two small areas in Confederate Gulch, each of one square mile or less, have several small but rich veins, which have been mined intermittently. One of the areas of gold-bearing lodes is on the divide at the heads of Montana, Cement, Benton, and Johnny gulches.\(^5\) There was evidence of a little activity in the early days, for in 1874, Mr. Howard was working on his Lone Tree lode at the head of Montana Gulch, and had erected a mill in the hope there was enough quartz around to make it pay.\(^6\)

From 1870 to 1880, there were drift mines or underground diggings, at or above Diamond City, which operated during the winter when the placers closed down, and were themselves closed in the spring when flooded out by the flumes. They provided enough work to keep 100 to 200 men busy through the winter. The drift mines were never extensive, their chief importance seems to lie in the fact that they gave men work during the winter so they could have grub money.\(^7\) Whims were used to bring the ore out of the mines. They had a large vertical drum, around which the cable was wound, with one or more radiating arms or beams to which a

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\(^5\)Pardee, pp. 161-162, 140.

\(^6\)Weekly Independent, May 29, 1874.

\(^7\)Helena Daily Herald, July 26, 1871; Helena Weekly Herald, November 21, 1872 and June 1, 1876.
horse or horses might be yoked.

In a twenty year period before 1933, H. O. Miller took $80,000 or more from his Slim Jim claim and others. John Buckingham's Hummingbird claim, at the head of Johnny Gulch, was opened up in 1917 and 1918, and produced some rich gold-quartz. "Blind Mike" Schabert, at one time, owned several lodes at the head of Montana Gulch. There were some other small lodes developed by shallow workings on the Durant and other claims at the head of Montana Gulch, near the Miller claim, which produced about $15,000.

The other small Confederate Gulch area is on Norris Hill, the ridge north of Confederate Creek and opposite the mouth of Boulder Gulch. In 1933, most of these mine workings were owned by M. A. Ellis & Sons, and none were active. Probably $100,000 has been recovered from gold veins in the Confederate Gulch area. For the entire region, the total production of gold from lodes is between $550,000 and $800,000.8

Mills appeared in the region soon after the first mines were opened up in the late 1860's. There was one near the Old Amber mine at the mouth of Rattlesnake Gulch, a tributary of New York Gulch, by late 1866.9 In 1867, there were two quartz mills at Trout Creek, but they were idle because

8Pardee, pp. 162-163, 140, 122.

9Bancroft, p. 725.
the mines were not bringing out enough quartz rock. In spite of this, another mill was getting ready to start up on Heald & Tooles' Gold Mountain Lode at the head of New York Gulch.\textsuperscript{10} In 1899, a larger mill was built at the Old Amber mine, but it worked at a profit for only four or five years.\textsuperscript{11} There were a couple of mills at the Golden Messenger mine, the first one, built in 1900, burnt down, and the second one was not used long before the mine shut down. There were two mills in Confederate Gulch, but not much ever came of them,\textsuperscript{12} for the gold production was too small to keep them going.

The mills were small and easy to run, and had from one to ten stamps. A stamp is a heavy pestle raised by water or steam power, which drops on the chunks of ore and crushes them. In the early days the plate and amalgamation process was used to recover the ore. This was done by adding small quantities of mercury to the stamping or grinding unit. The resulting amalgam was caught on mercury-coated copper plates. Periodically this amalgam was scraped from the plates and the precious metals in it recovered by distilling off the mercury. This was a wasteful process, for only about 35 percent of the gold could be recovered by this method. Around 1900, the cyanide method was introduced and became the best

\textsuperscript{10}Montana Post, June 8, 1867.
\textsuperscript{11}Pardee, p. 157.
\textsuperscript{12}Weekly Independent, May 29, 1874.
process for the recovery of the precious metals. By this method, the ore was treated with a dilute solution of sodium cyanide or potassium cyanide. The dissolved metal was afterwards precipitated from the solution and then fused and cast into ingots. As much as 92 per cent of the gold was extracted by the cyanide process. There was a cyanide plant at the Golden Messenger mine in 1901 and 1902, but it burned down. Another was built there after 1913, but the mine closed down soon after that and the plant was not used much. Arrastres were also used to grind the quartz rock. They were crude, dragstone mills for pulverizing the ores, especially those containing free gold.

Lodes containing copper minerals are found in a belt extending southeastward from York to White's Gulch, a distance of about fifteen miles. The belt runs parallel to the mountain front and two or three miles back of it. The Argo mine in Hellgate Gulch has been the only successful copper bearing lode. It is located on the east side of Hellgate Creek, about three miles above the mouth of the canyon. The lode was discovered before 1900 by Mike Finch, one of the first lode prospectors in the district. Between 1902 and 1909, the mine was run by the Eclipse-Argo Company, and for the next seven years there are no records of operation. In 1916 and 1917, the Castleton Copper Company operated the

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13 Pardee, pp. 147, 145.
mine, then during the rest of 1917 and 1918, the Furnace Creek Oxide Copper Company ran the mine. The business was run at a profit even though production costs were high at this time, about 19¢ for each pound of copper. There was a fifty ton concentrating mill right at the mine, run with electricity from the Montana Power Company. In 1928, the mine and mill were idle, but the ore bodies had not been exhausted in the mine, and there was a considerable amount of tailings which contained much copper. The mine produced 3,000,000 pounds of copper, and its smelter net was $501,000.14

All other claims in Hellgate have been inactive even longer than has the Argo. A short way upstream and across the gulch from the Argo were the Conshohocken group of claims. Just below them on the hill is the Mike Finch claim, and right below it was the Hellgate claim. The Ideal Mining Company owned several claims on the north side of Hellgate, opposite the Argo mine. They were located on a steeply rising narrow mountain spur that lies between the creek and a tributary gulch. In Gabisch Gulch, a tributary of Hellgate Gulch just below the Argo mine, an old claim called the Rex was supposed to have had a 700 foot tunnel in it.

Magpie Gulch had two tributaries in which there were copper claims. O. L. Whitmire owned several claims close

14Ibid., pp. 164-165, 167, 122.
above the mouth of Whitmire Gulch, about two miles above the
mouth of the main gulch. The Sybil Ann claim was in Coxie
Gulch northwest of the lodes described.

The last two copper lodes of any importance were close
to the Golden Messenger Dike, north of Trout Creek. The
first of these, a lode known as the Big Copper, lay about
8000 feet north of the dike at Mollie Gulch. The last was a
claim developed by the Copper Queen Company on the ridge
south of York Gulch, about three-quarters of a mile west of
the Old Amber mine. This place was active in 1928, but after
that there is no information available. There are a couple
of traces along Avalanche Creek, more in Cayuse Gulch which
is a tributary of Avalanche Gulch, and Upper No. 2 Gulch on
the north side of White's Gulch has an old caved in tunnel
with several tons of ore piled in a dump by it. 15

The only two metals of any importance to be taken
from this area by way of lodes have been gold and copper.
There have been very small amounts of silver, lead, mangan-
ese, and even ankerite taken out of the region, but they
never earned a profit for anyone. Lode mining in the Canyon
Ferry region is now also a thing of the past. Two mines,
the Argo for copper and the Golden Messenger for gold, pro-
vided most of the profit gained from the lode mining, the
total of which is $1,051,000 to $1,301,000.

15Ibid., pp. 167-170, 122.
CHAPTER VI

SETTLEMENT OF THE TOWNSEND VALLEY

To the west of the gold filled gulches in the Big Belt Mountains lies the large, fertile Townsend Valley, which also played an important role in the development of the Canyon Ferry region. Long after the gold rush days were over it continued to be a well developed agricultural and ranching area. The valley was opened up at about the same time as the gold rush in 1864, people coming in to settle and grow or raise products that could be sold to the miners. In the same way, little villages and hamlets sprang up and became trade centers for groups of miners. Places in the valley became Sunday meeting places for the persons who wanted to relax and enjoy themselves. The men would come from Diamond City, Crow Creek, Indian Creek, Horse Shoe Bend, and Hoggum to gather at Indian Creek ferry for a bit of horse racing.1 While not a very important place, the valley became a permanently inhabited spot, a home that provided well for its people over the years. Now much of this valley is to be inundated by the new lake which is forming back of the

1Helena Herald, November 14, 1867.

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Canyon Ferry Dam. Because of this, many who have spent their entire life in the valley have been forced to sell everything and move to new homes.

The early years in the Townsend Valley saw the rise of many small towns and villages. Of the six most important, only one now remains. There was also one other little settlement, mentioned chiefly because of its interesting name. Hoggum was a little mining camp near the Missouri River some thirty miles below the Three Forks. The gulch, in which it was situated, was discovered in 1867. All pay claims were "hogged up" by a few prospectors before the usual stampede was fairly begun. The disappointed seekers named the place Hoggum and left in disgust. A little branch camp near the main camp was known as Cheatem. The whole outfit was reported by itinerant miners as a fraud upon the profession. The main drawback to mining in this place was lack of water, with plenty of water the good paying would have been measured by the hundreds of acres. So the usual long water ditch was planned and surveyed, in this case, one from Crow Creek, eleven miles away.

Five of the six towns in the Townsend Valley could be included in a circle with a three mile radius. All were located at the south end of the valley. Centreville, the first


3*Helena Weekly Herald*, July 31, 1873.
of these, was founded in the early 1870's, on the east side of the Missouri River, opposite the mouth of Indian Creek. In 1873, it had a blacksmith shop run by D. Hoover, and two stores owned by W. C. Smith and James Barker. The town's new addition in 1874, was a post office, probably located in one of the stores. At least one new building was added to the town in 1875, when the Masons built a hall in which to hold their meetings. The same two stores and owners were still in business in 1881 and 1882, there was a dry goods house run by Overfield & Churchill, a hotel and saloon owned by J. McCormick, and two blacksmith shops.

When the Northern Pacific Railroad came through the country in the early 1880's, it planned a new town where the railroad crossed the Missouri River. This spot was about a mile up the river, where, in 1883, the new town of Townsend was built. Centreville then died out, and its residents went to Townsend or elsewhere. By 1891, Townsend had 245 people, and had become the center of the rich Missouri River Valley agricultural country, as well as the county seat of Broadwater County. Besides the railroad, it had a daily stage running to White Sulphur Springs and Castle, both of

4Ibid., February 6, 1873 and June 1, 1876.
5Weekly Independent, June 5, 1874 and July 29, 1875.
6Rocky Mountain Husbandman, White Sulphur Springs, May 26, 1881 and August 31, 1882.
which lay on the other side of the Big Belt Mountains. It was the marketing center for the whole valley, and had grown to be an extremely pleasant little town. 7 Besides being the trade center for the camps, ranches, and farms of the Canyon Ferry region during the 1890's, Townsend also served the St. Louis and upper Indian Creek districts to the west. Trains of freight wagons would move out from the railroad every day, loaded with machinery, provisions, powder, fodder, and merchandise. The largest trading firm in town was the Berg Brothers, with two large buildings in Townsend, and stores in Toston and St. Louis. Tom and Fick McCormick had a large livery and freight business, gave good service, and had become well known for being able to carry large and bulky loads. 8

Townsend continued to hold its place of prominence in the valley, and today is a town of about 1000 people. With the completion of the new dam and the formation of its lake, Townsend will be the only town in the valley, except for the little government village at Canyon Ferry Dam, and it will continue to be the county seat of Broadwater County and the chief trading center for the area, as it has been for so many years.

The next two places to attract interest were the two

7 The Helena Journal, Helena, Montana, July, 1891.
little hamlets of Springville and Vantilburg Mills, on the west side of the Missouri River, two and three miles north of Townsend respectively. They both started up in 1872 or 1873. The hotel and chief eating establishment in Springville was the Wilcox House, run by Dr. and Mrs. Daniel Wilcox; Murray & Hamilton owned a miner's and farmer's variety store; McKoin & Logan also did merchandising; and Joseph Girard was the blacksmith. Springville died out within a few years and its people moved to Vantilburg Mills or to Centreville.

Vantilburg Mills held its grand opening on January 22, 1873, when the mill, driven by water from a nearby spring, opened for business as Vantilburg & Company. The mill could turn out forty to fifty sacks of flour a day in its first year, and was considered a real asset to the valley. In 1874, the Vantilburg mill, farm and dwelling, and hay ranch were bought by L. M. Black at an auction in Radarsburg for $4,624. The same year, Gavin Johnston took over the mill from Mr. Vantilburg, and the village name was changed to Bedford Mills. Bedford became a popular stopping place

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9 *Weekly Independent*, June 5, 1874.

10 *Helena Weekly Herald*, January 30, 1873; February 6, 1873; and July 31, 1873.

11 *Weekly Independent*, April 10, 1874.

for freighters, teamsters, and travellers between Helena and Bozeman. It was a thriving little village by 1875, with a store and post office run by William Bailey,\textsuperscript{13} and in 1878, B. Austin had the hotel. In 1881 the store was run by Miss Minnie Gallagher, Thomas Crahan owned a saloon and billiard hall opposite the mill, and there was another saloon, a hotel, a blacksmith shop, and the Bedford flouring mills in the town. The mill was always busy grinding wheat from the local farms east of the river, the west bank being mainly hay.\textsuperscript{14} In the early 1880's, Court Sheriff, Sr. of Canyon Ferry bought the Bedford flour mill, and also ran a general store in Bedford.\textsuperscript{15} While he lived in Bedford, his Canyon Ferry property was managed by W. G. Broderick.\textsuperscript{16} The little village remained for a number of years, and placed its hopes for survival on the new railroad coming through the country. When the Northern Pacific ran its tracks south of the town a couple of miles, Bedford was finished as a town, and slowly died away. Today the highway goes through Bedford Mills, and all that remains is the old mill. Across the road is an old farm whose buildings look as if they might have been part of the former town.

\textsuperscript{13}Helena Weekly Herald, July 8, 1875.
\textsuperscript{14}Rocky Mountain Husbandman, White Sulphur Springs, June 2, 1881.
\textsuperscript{15}Helena Weekly Herald, May 10, 1883.
\textsuperscript{16}Rocky Mountain Husbandman, White Sulphur Springs, May 31, 1883.
The fifth village was on the east side of the Missouri, six miles down the valley from Townsend. Cantonville, or Canton, as it was soon called, also came into being during the 1870's, and like four of the other small hamlets it never became a large village. Canton was situated in the middle of the flat river plain, surrounded by farmers who made it their trading center. This section of the valley with its level land, good soil, fine view, and many Irishmen, came to be known as New Dublin. The principal resident of Canton was William E. Tierney, who had his home and store there.17 Through the years, Tierney became postmaster, and a second store was built in the hamlet by a Mr. Scott.18 In 1881, Thomas Howell owned a hotel at Canton, and there was a blacksmith shop there.19 Tierney had added a billiard hall to his store in 1882, Mr. Smith now owned the hotel, and there was a saloon and a blacksmith shop in town.20 The town never included much more than these buildings, for it was only a crossroads village. The store owned by W. E. Tierney remained open until late in the 1940's, and in December, 1953, the building was still standing. A building that was formerly an old dance hall was being used as a barn by a

17 *Helena Weekly Herald*, February 6, 1873.
18 *Weekly Independent*, June 5, 1874, and July 10, 1875.
farmer close by. All that was left of the old saloon was the floor with a billiard table sitting in the middle of it. As soon as the lake is formed, the whole place will be under water, and another bit of the region's history will have passed from sight.

The Catholic church of St. Joseph was built near Canton in the years 1875 and 1876, under the direction of Father Monterey, who was the assistant pastor in Helena. He dedicated the church on Sunday, October 22, 1876.\(^{21}\) It was a neat, substantial frame building,\(^{22}\) built with lumber that had been hauled from Helena. There had been religious services held in the valley for about ten years before the church was built, and Canton now became the first place in which a church had been built in the territory for over ten years. This was due to the fact that there were few priests in the territory, that the larger places had churches and sent their assistants to attend to the outlying districts, that the farming population was sparse, and the permanence of the mining camps was still an uncertainty.

St. Joseph's Church is one of the oldest churches in the state. At the time of its dedication, there were in Montana Territory, only six Catholic churches with resident priests; and, the church at Frenchtown was the only other

\(^{21}\)Helena Weekly Herald, November 2, 1876.

\(^{22}\)Ibid., June 1, 1876.
one without a resident priest. Two other churches for white people had been built earlier, but neither of them was in use by 1876. One of these, St. Michael's, had been built at Hell's Gate (Missoula), in 1863; the other was built near Silver City during the winter of 1864-65.

Of the six churches in the territory with resident priests, three of these were for Indians. The other three which were for white people were to be found at Deer Lodge, Helena, and Virginia City. Of the five churches that were used by the whites nearly eighty years ago, the one at Canton is the only original building now used for divine services.23 Fortunately, the people thought enough of this historic building to move it to a spot where it will be safe from the encroaching waters of the new lake. Today it sits on a hill, two miles east of Canton, where it will remain as one of the only reasons for anyone to remember Canton.

The sixth of the towns of settlement in the valley was at Canyon Ferry. The small town carried the same name and was located on the east side of the Missouri River, approximately one mile above the new dam. Just behind the village is a large hill, on top of which lies a cemetery that is to become an island in the lake. This little town was started in late 1864 or early 1865, when Captain J. V. Stafford and John Oakes built and ran the first

ferry. Stafford soon bought out Oakes' share of the ferry business, and ran it by himself for a number of years. At this time he also opened a hotel at Canyon Ferry and, during the following years, gained prominence throughout the region as a road builder, drain ditch constructor, mine owner, and farmer. In the latter part of 1865, the Stafford homestead was sold to Court Sheriff, Sr., who was then mining in Cave Gulch. A post office, called Canyon Ferry Station, was opened in the winter of 1866 and 1867. Stafford had either leased or sold the ferry by 1872, for Hirshman and Rotwitt were the operators of it at that time. J. B. Dawkins had a store at Canyon Ferry in 1875. Court Sheriff bought out the store, ferry, and post office in 1885, thus adding to his already large holdings. At this time, William P. Angell was the blacksmith. In 1886, the vote at Canyon Ferry, which included Cavetown, was fifty-four.

The first dam was built at Canyon Ferry in 1896. When it was finished, the river below was extremely rough, so the ferry was abandoned. The residents then had to cross the

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25 Leeson, p. 813.
26 Helena Daily Herald, July 26, 1871.
27 Court Sheriff, Jr., December, 1953, personal talk.
28 Leeson, P. 813.
29 Helena Weekly Herald, November 21, 1872 and July 8, 1875.
30 Leeson, p. 813.
river upstream, in rowboats, until the bridge was built in 1899. Timbers for the western approach to the bridge were furnished by Court Sheriff. The Missouri River Power Company, later the Montana Power Company, gave timbers for the eastern approach. The original plans for the bridge had called for construction almost on the spot where the new dam was built in 1950. The Jawbone Railroad had even been built from Helena to the proposed site. From there it was planned to extend it across the river, up the valley to White's Gulch, then through the gulch and over the Big Belts to White Sulphur Springs. The owners of the railroad intended to make a great deal of money hauling silver from the Castle mines, near White Sulphur Springs, to Helena. When the site for the bridge was moved to Canyon Ferry, the railroad company pulled out. Their reasons are unknown, but possibly they ran out of money about this time, or maybe due to some delay in construction of the bridge, the moment was past when they could make their big money. Whatever it was, the whole scheme was abandoned. Naturally the people at Canyon Ferry wanted the bridge at their door, for it would save extra hauling and bring more traffic through the young community. The Sheriff family favored this, and believably so, since they owned a saloon, store, and stage line right at Canyon Ferry, besides a sawmill a short distance away. At this

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time there were nearly 200 people living there. Once built, the bridge was used continually until late 1949, at which time it was closed by the Bureau of Reclamation, who was building the new dam.

The Sheriff family has played an important part in the town of Canyon Ferry since its beginning in 1865. Court Sheriff, Sr. came to Helena in 1865, and worked as a carpenter for a flume construction gang on the Magpie-Cave Hill ditch. The flume company sold water for $1.00 per miner's inch, for a twelve hour period. Cavetown was the only community in the immediate vicinity at the time, so he found a man from Helena who was interested in the merchandise business, and they started a store in Cavetown. Later on he bought out his partner and went on his own. In 1865, he bought out the Captain J. V. Stafford homestead, continued his other business, and in the 1870's, opened up a hotel and livery at Canyon Ferry. The elder Sheriff was probably best noted for his stageline between Helena and White Sulphur Springs, via Canyon Ferry and Diamond City. He operated the passenger service until 1915, when the motor vehicle took over, but continued to haul the mail until 1918. The trip took one day in the summer, and two days in the winter. As if these businesses were not enough, Sheriff was also the postmaster at Canyon Ferry, and for several years, owned a

flour mill at Bedford.

Court Sheriff, Jr. was born in 1886, went to high school in Helena, and graduated from Montana State College in agronomy. Court Jr. bought some land from his father in 1914, and started ranching. His land was on the fertile river plain north of town, and after he broke the land, he further increased its value by installing an electric irrigation system. In 1915, he drove on the last passenger stage run. In 1916, he branched out, and with Thomas Newland, hauled ore with six horse teams from the Argo mine in Hellgate Gulch to the railroad siding at Clasoi. He took over on his own in 1917, and charged $10 a ton for hauling the ore the eighteen mile distance, a trip which took two days. A six horse team could pull a five ton load. The ranching operation was extended in 1918, when he took out a grazing homestead in the Canyon Ferry area. Court Sheriff, Jr. is still in the livestock business and owns about 3000 acres of grazing land near Canyon Ferry. However, all of his irrigated and cultivated land was bought by the government, and will be flooded out, so now all of his hay land is gone. A placer mining claim in Magpie Gulch, the patent signed by President U. S. Grant, is still among the Sheriff family possessions. He now lives in a very pleasant new home in the government town at Canyon Ferry. The home is situated on a hill overlooking the valley and all of the land he once owned.

Court Sheriff III is in partnership with his brother-
in-law, Ray Johnson. They are on Sheriff owned land, and operate a grocery store, tavern lunch counter, post office, self-service laundry, apartment house, trailer camp, and a barracks for the dam workers and their families. They also sublease a mess hall to the construction company. Out of the family history one can get a good example of how prices have changed between the times of construction of the two dams. Young Sheriff and Johnson have contracted to feed dam workers at $3.00 per day, and they must pay extra for their bunks. His grandfather contracted to feed workers on the original dam for only 75¢ per day, and that included a bunk.  

Farms and ranches were sprinkled through the valley, from Canyon Ferry to Confederate Gulch and on to Centreville, in the late 1860's and early 1870's. These people had followed the miners into the country, and were soon providing much of the needed grain, hay, and beef to the mining camps. Once settled, they continued to improve their farms and ranches by putting more land under cultivation and building permanent farm buildings. The number of improved farms in the Townsend Valley, in 1874, was estimated at 200, averaging from 160 to 620 acres apiece. Naturally there were the usual troubles in the form of hail, grasshoppers, or

33 Independent Record, June 15, 1952.
34 Helena Daily Herald, July 26, 1871.
35 Helena Weekly Herald, February 6, 1873.
lack of moisture, but this did not disillusion the farmers and ranchers of this period either. After a few years, there were many fine, permanent homes, filled with happy, prosperous families. In the valley were several schoolhouses which also served as temporary churches.36

Granges were formed when the mining collapsed, and with it the loss of market and sharp lowering in prices received for goods. Transportation facilities were poor, roads were bad, and the people wanted railroads. To improve themselves, members of the granges had fairs, lectures, courses of study, and circulating libraries. The first grange in Montana Territory was organized at Deep Creek, December 22, 1873. This organization served the farmers and ranchers of the Canyon Ferry region. By September 21, 1874, when a territorial meeting was called, there were twenty-three organizations in Montana. R. N. Sutherlin of Diamond City was the National Deputy.37

The type of farm varied in that it was usually mainly a hay farm or a grain farm. Most of the ranches raised cattle, but there were one or two horse ranches. Following are the names of a number of the farmers and ranchers in the valley. John Oakes had a nice ranch at the mouth of Hellgate, the Blackwell Brothers were near the mouth of White's

36Weekly Independent, June 5, 1874.
37Burlingame, p. 353.
Gulch, about five miles from White's City. A mile east of Duck Creek were N. Bump, H. L. and F. J. Keene, M. Roberts, J. O. Cline, E. L. Sherman; and on Deep Creek, J. G. Pickering. Proceeding on to Centreville one could pass by farms owned by J. R. Marks, Nield & Perkins, Rosenbaum, Duane, Kirchers, and Moses Dogget. Down the valley a short distance from Deep Creek was the A. B. Cook ranch. Charles M. Russell, Montana's famous western painter, once rode for the Cooks. Near Magpie and Little Hellgate Gulches was the extensive stock ranch of Mayne & Luke, which in 1876, was supplying the camps below Diamond with beef. E. P. Smith was a rancher near Avalanche Gulch. Right below the canyon of Confederate Gulch was Mr. Sweat's ranch, and the grain farm of R. A. Johnson, then farms belonging to Mrs. Mary Nolan, William Daniels, A. Estes, John Link. Farther down along the creek bottom was P. J. Winston, then W. R. Morgan, and on the opposite side of the creek, J. R. Duncan. Thomas Cooney had a fine hay and cattle ranch on the Missouri River bottomlands.

Other ranches below Centreville and contiguous to Canton were the horse ranch of C. B. Smith, and the grain farms of Thomas Dean, P. McKnight, John Lloyd, Henry Whaley,

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38Rocky Mountain Husbandman, White Sulphur Springs, May 26, 1881.

39Helena Weekly Herald, July 8, 1875.

40Ibid., May 11, 1876.
William Myrick, Pat Griffin, William Pierce, Jerry Shinnick, Jacob Powers & Brother, P. F. Riley, Thomas McConigal, and Frank Keene. Below Canton was the ranch of T. A. Fletcher.\textsuperscript{41} Besides feeding themselves and many of the miners, these farms and ranches sold many supplies to the Army post at Camp Baker, especially hay and oats for the horses.\textsuperscript{42}

Captain J. V. Stafford had a fine ranch at the mouth of Hellgate Gulch. The crops he raised on 600 acres were extremely varied, and besides that he had an orchard covering three acres which contained many different kinds of fruits and berries. The grains and vegetables raised were wheat, oats, barley, buckwheat, potatoes, corn, tomatoes, and squash. In his orchard were 100 apple trees, crabapples, plums, cherries, raspberries, strawberries, blackberries, gooseberries, and currants.\textsuperscript{43} So in the late 1800's, diversified farming was apparently not an unknown thing.

Things were not always quiet in the valley, for there were some shootings in the early days, and a few hangings. As in most places in the west, the Vigilantes ruled for a short time before law and government came in. They often saved expense by trying a man before they caught him. W. M.

\textsuperscript{41}\emph{Ibid.}, June 1, 1876; \emph{Rocky Mountain Husbandman}, White Sulphur Springs, May 26, 1881.

\textsuperscript{42}\emph{Helena Weekly Herald}, March 28, 1872 and November 21, 1872.

\textsuperscript{43}\emph{Rocky Mountain Husbandman}, White Sulphur Springs, May 31, 1883 and July 31, 1884.
Sprague saw nine men hung on a hangman's tree in Dry Gulch.44

A rather amusing incident concerning an Indian scare took place near Deep Creek in 1875. People were on edge due to all of the Indian trouble in eastern and southern Montana. To assuage their fears they sent out scouts to look around. A bit later, two of the scouts came back and reported seeing a large group of Indians. The women and children immediately evacuated the area, and a party of thirty men along with Lieutenant Nelson and ten troopers from Camp Baker went out to meet the savages. They came upon the camp just before daybreak, surrounded it, and were ready to attack. Luckily "Doc" Bembrick, a local rancher, stepped out of his tent and asked the attackers to join him in an antelope breakfast. The Indians the scouts had seen were his Flathead herders. So the party ate, and returned home, perhaps a little disappointed at not having found anything.45

In 1950, there were a few old timers left near Canyon Ferry. Court Sheriff, Jr., who had been moved to the new village; Mr. and Mrs. Roland Eames, who had lived in Cave Gulch and were still around; and Maude Stafford, the daughter-in-law of Captain J. V. Stafford. The Cooney ranch has been moved for the second time, the first time being in 1896, when the first dam was built. An old log meeting house near Beaver Creek, used up to 1950 as a school house, is gone.

44McKnight, p. 58.
45Weekly Independent, July 28, 1875.
Reverend Van Orsdell held services there whenever he was in the community on his circuit of the mining camps.\textsuperscript{46}

The entire Canyon Ferry region and country to the east was served by an Army detachment located at Camp Baker. This camp was established in November, 1869, for the protection of the miners at Diamond City and neighboring camps.\textsuperscript{47} Camp Baker was first located on the bank of the Smith River, and was moved to its present site, ten miles to the south, in August, 1870. Its location is in the Smith River Valley, about two miles south of the junction of Camas Creek with the Smith River. Diamond City is eighteen miles west and a little south, and Thompson's Gulch on the east side of the divide, is thirteen miles southwest.\textsuperscript{48} There were no Indians in the immediate vicinity, a fortunate circumstance, but since the whole region was surrounded by fairly hostile Indians at this time, the fort was a necessary thing. The Blackfeet tribe to the north formed the greatest threat. Yet, by 1873, there had not been a raid for three years.\textsuperscript{49}

The name Camp Baker was changed to Fort Logan in 1878, in honor of Captain William Logan, Commanding Officer of Company A, 7th Infantry, who was killed in 1877, at the Battle of the Big Hole by the Nez Perce Indians.

\textsuperscript{46}Ebersole, January 4, 1950.
\textsuperscript{47}Helena Daily Independent, Helena, Montana, August 24, 1924.
\textsuperscript{49}Burlingame, p. 212.
In 1876, part of the 7th Infantry that was stationed at this fort took part in the Yellowstone campaign. Again in 1877, troops from here and from all other forts in the territory moved into the Big Hole country to subdue Chief Joseph and his warriors.

The post was abandoned October 26, 1880, and its troops were ordered to Fort Maginnis, in Fergus County. The last man to take command of the post as a military authority was Sergeant Ernst Rackovicz, and his command consisted of a single private. These two were left in charge of the remaining government property on the government reservation. The military reservation on which the fort was located was sold to Judge William Gaddis, who died in 1908, and his son, Charles G. Gaddis, is the present owner (1924).

The post was first garrisoned by Company G, 7th U. S. Infantry, under the command of Captain George S. Hollister; from June 30, 1870 to May 15, 1872. From May, 1872, to October, 1880, six other Infantry Companies saw service at this post. From November, 1869, to June, 1870, it was apparently left ungarrisoned.50

50Helena Daily Independent, August 24, 1924; Adjutant General's Office, War Department, Washington, March 13, 1924.
CHAPTER VII

ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

Roads and transportation played an important part in the development of the mining camps in the Big Belt Mountains, and of the ranches and farms in the Townsend Valley. As early as 1867, there were two roads from Helena to Diamond City. One went from Helena to Canyon Ferry, then up the valley on the east side of the river to Confederate Gulch and Diamond City. Part of this road between Helena and Canyon Ferry had a bad section in it where it went through a slough in the Prickly Pear Valley. People traveling on it made use of the Canyon Ferry crossing. The toll was 25¢ for a horse and rider, and 50¢ for a team. The heavy barge, anchored by cables, was carried across the Missouri by the current. Because the river level fluctuated, there were two ferry crossings, one for low water and one for high water. This ferry was in operation from 1865 until 1899, when a bridge was constructed. The other road to Diamond City ran from Helena to the Indian Creek Ferry, near Centreville,

1 Helena Weekly Herald, September 11, 1873 and December 21, 1876.

2 Independent Record, June 15, 1952.

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then down the valley to the mouth of Confederate Gulch.  

For a number of years there were two ferries at the Indian Creek crossing and they carried on a cut-throat business. As a result, ferry crossings were quite reasonable in price. Later another road crossed the Missouri River near Beaver Creek, fourteen miles above Canyon Ferry, and proceeded straight east into Confederate Gulch. The crossing was known as Blake Ferry or Edmundson's, from the man who purchased it in 1873. Four miles below Canyon Ferry another good road from Helena entered the area at Spokane Ferry. From there it followed along the east side of the river until it joined the Canyon Ferry road. The Spokane Ferry was run by C. C. Stubbs, and the fare for a trip across was 50¢.

In addition to the ferries already mentioned, there were three other crossings on the Missouri River between Spokane Ferry and Townsend or Centreville. Just one mile above the Spokane Ferry was the Rose Ferry. The upper or Pickering Ferry was located at the mouth of Confederate Creek. A band of outlaws at one time made this area their headquarters. In later years a ferry was put in the river to make a direct route between Bedford and Canton. The

3Helena Weekly Herald, September 11, 1873.  
4Ebersole, January 4, 1950.  
5Helena Weekly Herald, September 11, 1873.  
6Ebersole, January 4, 1950.
owners of this ferry in 1881, were George Byron and Thomas McGonigal. The boats used as ferries were fairly large, such as the one at Beaver Creek which was fifty feet long. The approaches to the landings were usually graded, and macadamized with rock or gravel, and this made loading and unloading easy. The ferries had other worries for there was the problem of ice, high water during the spring thaw, and in places the low water meant the stream was only twenty to twenty-four inches deep, which was too shallow for the ferries to operate. Even when the crossings were in good shape, the roads were often in bad shape, and sometimes impassable due to rain, snow, and mud.

From the main road which ran along the east side of the valley, other roads branched off into the various gulches. Two of these roads went over the Big Belt Mountains from Confederate and White's gulches to Camp Baker. The road over the divide from Diamond City to Camp Baker was eighteen miles long, and the trip took about two and one-half hours. The other road over the divide through White's Gulch, built in 1874, was fifteen miles long. It went through Benton's Gulch, on to Camp Baker, Brewer's Sulphur

7*Rocky Mountain Husbandman*, White Sulphur Springs, June 2, 1881.

8*Weekly Independent*, May 8, 1874.

9*Helena Weekly Herald*, September 11, 1873.

10*Helena Daily Herald*, July 8, 1875.
Springs, and finally ended at the Musselshell River. The grade through White's Gulch was easy, the road good, and it could carry heavy loads. Captain J. V. Stafford of Canyon Ferry, the builder of the road, was cautious and allowed only empty wagons on it until it had dried out and was well settled. These roads shortened the distance from Helena to Camp Baker by many miles. Completion of a new road from Townsend to White Sulphur Springs, through Deep Creek, in 1884, took most of the travel from the road through Diamond City and Confederate Gulch since it was a more direct route. However, these roads were used and kept in fairly good shape through many years, and cars can go over them in good weather today. The road from White's City to Diamond City was almost fifteen miles long, but the trip over the mountain was only a three mile walk.

The Carroll Stage brought mail once a week to White's Gulch, and, in 1876, the people were even talking of tri-weekly service. In the same year a man named William Warfield was stocking the route with horses so he could get a semi-weekly service from Helena to Carroll, through White's City. The main thing asked was a Thursday or Friday morning

11Weekly Independent, April 4, 1874 and May 29, 1874.
12Rocky Mountain Husbandman, White Sulphur Springs, July 31, 1884.
13Helena Weekly Herald, July 8, 1875.
14Leeson, p. 813.
stage, so they could have quick delivery of the territorial papers.\textsuperscript{15}

A mail route was opened from Helena to Diamond City in 1865.\textsuperscript{16} With two good roads leading into the camp in 1867, one company, Stateler \& Beveridge, made daily trips from Helena.\textsuperscript{17} A pony mail route between St. Paul and Diamond City was attempted in 1867. At Diamond City the mail was transferred to the Helena stage. The route went across Dakota to Fort Union, then up the Missouri River to the Musselshell, next through the Judith Basin and around the Smith River country, and finally across the Big Belts to Diamond City. Between the Musselshell and Diamond City the riders were constantly beset by war parties, mail was stolen, one rider was killed and others threatened. Henry McDonald, at one time a famous scout and Indian fighter, and later a writer and world traveler, rode this stretch, and so did Pomp Dennis, one of the discoverers of Confederate Gulch. These two men were about the only ones who could successfully cover the dangerous route.\textsuperscript{18}

Navigation of the upper Missouri River, between Three Forks and the Great Falls, a distance of 175 miles, was

\textsuperscript{15}Helena Weekly Herald, May 18, 1876.
\textsuperscript{16}Ritch, Great Falls Tribune, December 29, 1935.
\textsuperscript{17}Montana Post, May 2, 1868.
\textsuperscript{18}Ritch, Great Falls Tribune, December 29, 1935.
common among the early Indians. They used canoes for fast travel by one or two persons. Pirogues which were the other means of river travel, were a larger dugout canoe made from cottonwood trees. Sometimes two of these dugouts were lashed together with poles, which made them safer for there was less danger of tipping.

On their voyage westward, Lewis and Clark went up the river from the Great Falls to Three Forks with a keel boat, two mackinaws, and a number of pirogues. The keel boat was fifty-five feet long, drew three feet of water, had twenty-two oars, and a large square sail. When the wind was favorable they used the sail. When it failed they resorted to oars, or if the water was shallow, to poles. One other means of moving the keel boat was by use of the cordel, which was a long rope attached to the boat then carried on shore where twenty to forty men held on to it and pulled the boat. Cordeling was used only where the river bank was low, smooth, and quite free of brush, trees, and snags. The mackinaw was forty to fifty feet long, approximately twelve feet wide, with four feet depth of hold, and was propelled by six or seven oars. The boat was of light draft and could carry heavy loads. There were two patterns, one short or tapering at both ends, the other with a pointed bow but a square stern. Four years after the Lewis and Clark Expedition passed through the region, Thomas James, of the Missouri Fur Company, used dugout canoes on his trip from the Three Forks
into the Canyon Ferry region. In later years, when the river was traveled by trappers and traders, they undoubtedly used both the dugout canoe and the mackinaw boat to haul their furs to the eastern markets and bring back trade goods.

When the gold rush days arrived in the 1860's, it was not at all uncommon to see fleets of mackinaw boats heading down river from near Helena. The greatest travel of this type was from 1864 to 1868. Winter stopped most placer mining and the miners would then take the mackinaws as far as the Falls, portage around them, then go on into Fort Benton. From there they could travel on the steamboats to St. Louis and all points along the river. Some of the miners were known to go clear to St. Louis in the mackinaw boats. In 1867, there was a report of eighteen mackinaws leaving from the vicinity of French Bar and heading down river to Fort Benton and the United States.19

Thomas P. Roberts, an experienced civil engineer, was employed by the Northern Pacific Railroad Company in 1872. His job was to examine that portion of the Missouri above the Falls and determine whether or not it was navigable for steamboats. His report was regarded as of such importance in Washington that it was published at the expense of the United States government. Roberts charted the whole river between the Great Falls and Three Forks, and made

19 *Helena Weekly Herald*, September 26, 1867.
soundings at regular intervals. He found that the 102 miles of river from the Falls to Prickly Pear Creek, eighteen miles from Helena, definitely had enough water for safe and easy steamboat navigation. Erection of dikes, wing dams at some of the islands, and removal of rocks from a few places would make this portion of the river navigable at all times. At one spot, Half Breed Rapids, boats would have to be corded, but the location of Half Breed Island at the upper end of the rapids rendered cordeling a simple matter. Roberts said that the river discharged more than three times as much water at the Three Forks than did the Ohio River at its source. In no place was the river as shallow as the Ohio, on which there was much navigation at this time.20

Colonel Woolfolk, a river man and one of the leaders in the move to put steamboats on the upper Missouri, had much correspondence with Roberts, who told him everything he could about the navigability of the river. Roberts believed that boats could be 135 to 150 feet long, and that for use on the upper river should have steel hulls. This would make them larger than any of the boats then being used on the rest of the Missouri. With his report and the personal observation of many prominent Helena business men, the plan to bring steam navigation to the upper Missouri started to take

shape in 1878. The people of Helena were very much in favor of this plan and were sure that it would be a success. Two companies were formed to develop the plan, but were combined in October, 1878, to become the Montana Navigation Company, with a capital of $100,000. The membership of the company was made up of the prominent residents and business men of Helena. They included John T. Murphy, Albert Kleinschmidt, Cornelius Hedges, E. W. Knight, A. M. Woolfolk, Anton M. Holter, James M. Ryan, Henry M. Parchen, Abram Sands, Henry Klein, and Christopher Kenck. Hopes ran high as a party went down the river in a small boat to explore it and see if the plan was really feasible. Their report was most encouraging. It stated that the upper Missouri, without a doubt, could handle steam navigation. There was only one bad place in the river and it could be eliminated. The few shallow places could be made safe by the construction of wing dams which would confine the flow of the river. Bothersome boulders could be blasted out by dynamite.21

After hearing these reports, the people became more enthusiastic in their belief navigation would be a "reality in 1879, and every year thereafter." The years came and went, however, with no realization of achievement. Some work was done, by clearing the river of boulders, and wing dams were built in a couple of places. In September, 1879,

21 Helena Weekly Herald, September 12, 1878; October 3, 1878; January 2, 1879; September 26, 1878.
Captain Edward F. Maguire, of the Army Engineers, in charge of Missouri and Yellowstone River improvements, made a check of the river and said it was fine for the type of navigation desired. But, he could not give any help toward improving the river for at least another year. He did, however, express his unqualified admiration for the marvelous scenery encountered while going down the river. In 1880, the Army Engineers expended about $15,000 for rock removal and construction of wing dams at and near Beartooth and Half-Breed Rapids.

The question of steam navigation appears to have gone underground from 1880 to 1885, for not much was accomplished in that period. The completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad to Townsend and Helena in 1882 and 1883 was something of a deterrent to the plans for navigation, for it gave these people the connection with the east that they needed. Now they could ship their produce and freight by rail, and obtain everything they needed in like manner. Great Falls was founded in 1883, although it was not incorporated until 1888. Its citizens quickly became interested in the navigation question, for unless a railroad was to reach them soon, development of a river transportation system that would bring

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22Ibid., December 12, 1878 and October 2, 1879.

them supplies from Helena and Townsend was of prime im-
portance.\textsuperscript{24}

There was a Water Ways convention in St. Paul in 1885, and a group of representatives from Helena were in attendance. The delegates saw clearly into the future of Montana for they stressed the importance of the river in the transportation of lumber, precious metals, and coal. They also saw that this great undeveloped area of mountains, forests, and streams might possibly become a tourist wonderland at some-
time in the future. Government aid was asked by the Montana delegates in order to improve the bad spots in the river at Half Breed and Bear Tooth rapids.\textsuperscript{25}

The winter of 1885-1886 saw activity renewed for it was now that the two small steamboats were being built to carry passengers and freight up and down the Missouri between Great Falls and Townsend. The boats were named the \textit{Rose of Helena} and the \textit{Fern}.

Judge Hilger, who lived forty miles below Townsend at the head of the \textit{Gate of the Mountains}, was the owner of the \textit{Rose of Helena}.\textsuperscript{26} It was a stern wheeler, steel hull, about fifty-five feet long, and cost $4800. It drew only sixteen inches of water so could be used on the whole stretch of the

\textsuperscript{24}\textit{Great Falls Tribune}, September 5, 1885.

\textsuperscript{25}\textit{Ibid.}, September 12, 1885.

\textsuperscript{26}\textit{Townsend Tranchant}, Townsend, Montana Territory, May 5, 1886.
upper river. Plans for the craft said it would carry fifty to sixty passengers, and its main use was to be as a tourist boat through the Gate of the Mountains country. This boat was built at Dubuque, Iowa, by the Iowa Iron Works, and was shipped by railroad to Townsend in May, 1886. There it was assembled and ready to go by the end of the month. In June it made its way as far down the river as Hilger's ranch at the Gate of the Mountains. Invitations were sent to all of the important people in Helena to witness the trial run to Great Falls. This plan, however, resulted in disappointment. Parts of the channel were obstructed by rocks which were not cleared until late in August. The Rose of Helena could do nothing more than make trips through the Gate of the Mountains to Picnic Canyon the rest of that year.

It was not until May, 1887, that the steamboat moved into Great Falls, where it aroused much excitement and created new hope for transportation in that new village. The trip from the Gate of the Mountains took two days. The return trip was made in safety, but the Half Breed Rapids gave much trouble going upstream, so Hilger decided to keep his boat above the rapids and transfer passengers to another one waiting just below them. People would be able to get from his

27Great Falls Tribune, November 4, 1923 and April 24, 1886.

28Townsend Tranchant, May 26, 1886; June 2, 1886; August 11, 1886; and September 8, 1886.
ranch to Helena by stage coach. Judge Hilger's boat became the only steamboat to navigate the river upstream from Great Falls to a point in the vicinity of Helena.

The little boat operated for about twenty years, beginning in 1886. It made the one trip to Great Falls and back, but after that left home only to cruise through the Gate of the Mountains as a pleasure craft. The main reason the boat never entered upon its river service was that soon after the first trip, the Montana Central's Railroad line from Havre to Helena was completed, and it was not needed for passenger or freight service. During its nineteen years as a pleasure craft it carried about 10,000 persons, including President Harrison and other important government personalities. In 1906, the steel plated hull became rusted and full of holes so the boat was hauled on the river bank and remains there today, partially submerged in the backwaters of Holter Dam, at the upper end of the twenty mile lake, just above the Gate of the Mountains. The Hilger family kept conducting sight seeing tours through the same area after Holter Dam was completed in 1918, and the name Rose of Helena was perpetuated when they named a new motor launch Rose of Helena No. 2.

The second boat, the Fern, was built at Twin Bridges

29 *Great Falls Tribune*, May 14, 1887 and May 21, 1887.
in the winter of 1885-1886, and its owner was Dr. L. A. Davidson. This boat was sixty-three feet long, fourteen feet wide, could carry 125 tons exclusive of machinery, and had a hull made of choice cedar.\textsuperscript{31} It was floated down the river to Townsend in late May, 1886, to have its machinery installed and a cabin erected. In the early part of June, the lifeboat of the Fern made a test trip down the Missouri, looking over the condition of the river.\textsuperscript{32} While in Great Falls, Dr. Davidson got several liberal donations to aid in the purchase of machinery for his boat. Three of the people mentioned were Paris Gibson, founder of Great Falls; Mr. Hanks, the Tribune editor; and Mr. Chowen, the banker.\textsuperscript{33}

The machinery for the steamer Fern was purchased from E. J. Burridge of Dawson, Minnesota for a half ownership, and it was installed by early May, 1887. The people of Townsend felt this boat would have no trouble going up or down the river, so through trips were planned and freight was to be hauled even before the Fern had made her maiden voyage. They were quite scornful of Hilger's idea to split the route above and below the dangerous Half Breed Rapids.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Townsend Tranchant}, May 5, 1886.

\textsuperscript{32}\textit{Great Falls Tribune}, May 29, 1886 and June 5, 1886; \textit{Townsend Tranchant}, May 5, 1886.

\textsuperscript{33}\textit{Townsend Tranchant}, June 9, 1886.

\textsuperscript{34}\textit{Ibid.}, February 16, 1887; May 4, 1887; May 25, 1887; \textit{Great Falls Tribune}, April 30, 1887.
The steamer left Townsend on her maiden voyage to Great Falls September 28, 1887. Passengers were the crew and Editor Van H. Fisk of the Townsend Tranchant. The boat planned to return in eight or ten days, then start a regular service for freight and passengers. The ship struck a rock at Gorham and settled in four feet of water. It was refloated, but after going four miles it ran into a sand bar and stuck fast. Editor Fisk, upon returning home, still felt that river navigation was feasible, and that the Fern with proper tackling, plus some government aid in channeling, could make the trip. He was also of the opinion that boats twice as large could be used, even eight months a year.

Dr. Davidson's steamboat did not get to Great Falls until early November, 1887, when she sailed into Broadwater Bay and docked at the Holter Lumber Company pier. It was the second boat to descend the rapids, and it stayed below them after this time. The Fern was now docked, repaired, and after this used as an excursion craft or occasionally to haul freight. About a year after her arrival in Great Falls, she was bought by the Upper Missouri River Navigation

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35 Townsend Tranchant, September 28, 1887; Great Falls Tribune (Semi-Weekly), October 1, 1887.
36 Great Falls Tribune (Semi-Weekly), October 8, 1887.
37 Townsend Tranchant, October 12, 1887.
38 Great Falls Tribune (Semi-Weekly), November 9, 1887.
39 Great Falls Tribune, April 7, 1888.
Company, composed of several leading Great Falls business men. 40

In spite of the fact that after the two boats left Townsend and never returned, the people of Townsend kept urging development of the river for commerce and travel, for they felt that their town was the natural head of navigation on the Missouri River. 41 By 1887, Townsend was five years old, and had become the center of trade in the Canyon Ferry region. The farmers and the few miners left there purchased their supplies at Townsend, and cattle and other produce could be shipped from there to eastern markets on the Northern Pacific Railroad. The citizens of the community also realized that Great Falls and its surrounding territory were without railroad service as yet, so they would benefit by having a freight and passenger line established between Townsend and Great Falls.

Nothing ever came of any of the plans, even after a government surveying party went over the area in 1890. When this was done there was a short lived period of enthusiasm in Great Falls. Many people again saw great possibilities for the development of trade and commerce on the upper Missouri River. They hoped to get the produce from the Madison, Jefferson, and Gallatin valleys by boat; receive the

40Great Falls Tribune (Semi-Weekly Edition), July 13, 1889.
41Townsend Tranchant, January 18, 1888.
minerals being mined along the river for the smelter; and, of course, continue to obtain the lumber for the mills in their city. Great Falls was definitely planning for the future and not overlooking a thing. Mr. Powers of Helena, a figure long active in the river development plan, had by now come to the conclusion that the river was only good for excursion parties who might wish to see the scenery, and after 1887, he was right, for navigation on the upper Missouri was never developed.

Though the people of Great Falls, Helena, and Townsend did nothing in the way of promoting navigation on the upper Missouri after 1887 or 1888, the plan was still not dead. By the Rivers and Harbors Act of August 18, 1894, Congress extended the upper limits of the river under improvement to Stubbs Ferry, and directed that $20,000 be expended between the Falls and Stubbs Ferry. Between 1895 and 1899, $65,933.73 was spent in removing obstructions and constructing wing and closing dams. Operations were suspended in 1899 because of lack of funds and absence of incentive to further improvement. Appropriations for work had ceased with the Act of June 3, 1896.

The only boat used above Half Breed Rapids, of any size, was the Rose of Helena which made excursion trips

42Great Falls Semi-Weekly Tribune, November 22, 1890.
through the Gate of the Mountains country. Below the rapids, on the fifty mile stretch of quiet water to Great Falls, most of the boats used were for excursion purposes. Ships such as the Fern, the Alice Maude, the Swan, and the J. J. Hill, spent most of their time taking people on picnics, or for a pleasure cruise up the river twenty miles or so. The first three named would also haul freight such as hay from Craig, Cascade, or Ulm into Great Falls. These towns were fifteen, thirty, and forty miles, respectively, above Great Falls.

The upper Missouri was also used by the lumber companies to float logs downstream to their mills. As early as 1867, a W. Tennant was floating log rafts down the river to his mill at French Bar, in the immediate vicinity of Canyon Ferry. 44 The early sawmills were located along the river at places convenient to the region where the timber was being cut. The large sawmills for the upper Missouri region were eventually built at Great Falls. Ira Myers & Company located there in 1883, as the first mill in the city. In 1885, with A. M. Holter as president, the Holter Lumber Company started business in the city. 45 It operated just a lumber yard, but in 1889, it built a large sawmill. Before the mill in Great Falls was built, all lumber was sawed at the company's mill

44 Helena Weekly Herald, April 4, 1867 and May 2, 1867.
near Craig, Montana, and floated down to Great Falls on rafts.46 A third large mill was erected in the Falls early in 1891, when the Butte & Montana Commercial Company built a plant.47 Thus Great Falls had three big sawmills, and five lumber yards. The mills employed 700 to 800 men, and, in 1891, turned out about 20,000,000 feet of lumber.48 All three of these companies got their lumber from the upper reaches of the Missouri and its tributaries. These included the Dearborn River coming down from the east side of the main range of the Rockies, and the Smith River which ran between the Big Belt and the Little Belt ranges to the east of the Missouri River.49

The dream of hauling freight on the river between Townsend and Great Falls was realized at least once. In 1887, a bridge was built across the Missouri at Great Falls, and the contractor had four tons of cement brought to Townsend on the Northern Pacific Railroad, then floated down the river to Great Falls on rafts.50

The plan for navigation on the upper Missouri died by degrees. When the Northern Pacific Railroad came to Townsend

47Great Falls Semi-Weekly Tribune, February 4, 1891.
48Great Falls Daily Tribune, June 19, 1891.
49Great Falls Tribune (Supplement: "The Great Northern Review"), August 8, 1893.
50Great Falls Tribune (Semi-Weekly), August 24, 1887, Townsend Tranchant, September 28, 1887.
and Helena in 1882 and 1883, this region lost its need for the river as a source of travel or commerce. The Canyon Ferry region with Townsend at its upper end, acting as railroad and trade center, lost all its boat traffic after this time. The founding of Great Falls during the same years was the only thing that kept the navigation question alive. Until 1887, the people there were without a railroad and continued to hope and plan for navigation and trade on the Missouri River. Townsend was willing to aid them in developing navigation, and had hopes of becoming a river port able to serve Great Falls and vicinity. Any need for river boats was removed in 1887, when the Montana Central Railroad entered Great Falls from Helena and connected with the Great Northern Railroad which entered the town from the east at about the same time. Thus after 1887, there was no hope of developing steam navigation on the upper Missouri. The construction of power dams on the upper Missouri River between Great Falls and Three Forks was further assurance that navigation would not be developed on the upper Missouri River. The first of these was the first Canyon Ferry Dam which was planned in 1890, and whose construction was started in 1896. Two others, Holter Dam and Hauser Dam, were constructed in 1907 and 1908. These dams were to become part of the story of the growth and development of Montana Power in later years.
CHAPTER VIII

POWER DEVELOPMENT

The swift waters of the upper Missouri River early tempted promoters to harness them for the development of power. However, in the early years there was little market for power applied directly except for small mills along the river, and it was not until around 1890, that the idea of great hydroelectric power plants began to attract interest in Montana. Helena, by this time, had become a city of 13,834 people, and was the temporary capital of the state. It was lighted by an inefficient and costly steam generating plant. Cheap power was indispensable if people and industries were to be attracted to this ambitious little city. East Helena was making rapid industrial growth, and further development of her smelters waited only on the supply of power.

Initiative in promoting a hydroelectric development on the Missouri was taken by A. J. Davidson, A. Lambeth, J. H. Lawrence, T. H. Kleinschmidt, H. M. Parchen, O. R. Allen, C. C. Stubbs, William Muth, and A. M. Holter, along with other business men of Helena. By 1892, they were

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1*Helena Journal*, Helena, Montana, May 21, 1890; *Helena Weekly Independent*, April 24, 1890.

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joined by Samuel T. Hauser, one of the leading figures in early Montana business. They organized the first hydro-electric company early in 1890, when the Missouri River Power Company was incorporated. In May, 1890, this group chose a site for the dam at Stubbs Ferry, ten miles below the Canyon Ferry crossing. They decided a thirty foot dam would serve their many purposes, and during the next four years worked hard to make their plans a reality.

Many advantages to this project were pointed out, production of power, better markets for the products in the valley immediately above; new industries, which in turn would give employment to labor already there and cause a need for new labor, and induce immigration. The dam would create a large lake to provide water for the city water supply, help irrigate Prickly Pear Valley, and be an area for fishing, hunting, and boating.

These people did not proceed without opposition, for there were many who were against the plan, and most of them came from Great Falls. These latter claimed the river was navigable and could be used for passenger travel, and for carrying minerals, coal, wood, and grain to Great Falls mills and smelters. Consulting engineers blew their theories apart by pointing out that the railroad transportation between

2*Helena Weekly Independent*, April 28, 1892.


4*Ibid.*, April 24, 1890.
Great Falls and Helena was much cheaper than any river transportation would ever be, that electricity furnished more economical power than coal or wood, that there was no ore production at any point accessible to the river, that grain from the Three Forks country could much better go to Bozeman where there were already good mills, and that there had been no passenger travel on the river since the pioneer days. A. M. Spratt was opposed to the dam because it would flood out his sapphire property, but Hauser and Holter quieted him by placing a bond for his land, thus assuring against any loss.⁵

By 1894, money was available, and the Missouri River Power Company received permission from the War Department to build a dam in the vicinity of Stubbs Ferry.⁶ Nevertheless, with victory in sight for the proponents of this project, the whole thing died out for reasons which have never been made clear.

A government survey made in 1893 may have had something to do with it. At that time the government examined the river from Three Forks to Canyon Ferry under the direction of a Captain Hodges, and maps of five damsites were made by E. L. Vincent, assistant engineer. The government

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⁵Ibid., April 28, 1892.

gave final approval to the fifth site examined, which was at Black Rock Canyon,\textsuperscript{7} better known as Canyon Ferry, eighteen miles east of Helena, and there, three years later, the first hydroelectric power plant was built.

The company to build it, the Helena Water and Electric Power Company, was incorporated in Montana on May 18, 1896.\textsuperscript{8} The president was A. S. Hewitt, the treasurer, E. S. Gurnee, both of New York. Barton Sewell, the general manager, was from Chicago, and Samuel T. Hauser, vice-president, and Thomas A. Marlow, secretary, were both from Helena.\textsuperscript{9} Permission to build the dam was received from the Secretary of War in September, 1896, and construction of the dam started late that year.\textsuperscript{10}

Hugh L. Cooper was the engineer in charge of the entire construction. He later became world famous as a master builder of hydroelectric power plants. His greatest feat was the building of the immense Dnieprostroy Dam and power plant in Russia between 1927 and 1932.\textsuperscript{11}


\textsuperscript{9}Rocky Mountain Husbandman, White Sulphur Springs, September 24, 1896.

\textsuperscript{10}Records of the War Department, Office of the Chief of Engineers, National Archives, Washington, September 18, 1896.

\textsuperscript{11}Choteau Acantha, Choteau, Montana, January 29, 1948.
The first work undertaken was the building of living quarters and a kitchen to take care of the workers. Then a bridge was built to get the materials across the river, and 250 pilings were sunk in the river to start forming a base for the dam. The equipment used in building the dam consisted mainly of derricks, pile drivers, small steam engines, and just plain muscle. As soon as lights could be put up, 250 men worked day and night on the dam. The laborers handled 36,000 cubic yards of earth, and over 8000 cubic yards of rock, as well as 600,000 pounds of iron, which did not include the machinery for the power plant, another 750 tons. Lumber, to the amount of 2,500,000 feet, was brought from the Bonner Milling Company to Townsend by train, then floated down the Missouri in 50,000 foot lots. Supplies and materials were brought into camp by Hugh Kirkendall, a wagonmaster of much experience. He had worked with Jim Bridger when he guided troops and an emigrant train from Fort Laramie, Wyoming, over the Indian filled Bozeman Trail to build Fort C. F. Smith, near the mouth of the Big Horn Canyon, in Montana.

Storms, cold weather, and various unpredictable happenings made work rough and slow at times. One overzealous quarryman set off a shot which demolished the engine house.

broke the dome and connections off the boiler, knocked off the head of the cylinder on the uphill side, and bent both the piston and valve rod of the same. Luckily no one was hurt.

Laborers and teamsters received 20¢ an hour, while the blacksmiths and carpenters were given 30¢. Fortunately they were able to buy beef for 6¢ a pound, and pork for 8½¢ a pound.

In October, 1896, daylight saving time was introduced to the project. There was no workmen's compensation for accidents, and the injured party always seemed willing to admit he was at fault. One man stepped on a loose plank and was hurt. He knew about the loose plank so it was his own fault, therefore he signed a statement absolving the company for all responsibility in regard to the matter.

The power plant and dam were finished in October, 1898, and M. L. Gerry was named as engineer in charge. The completed unit was capable of producing 8000 horsepower. The dam was 500 feet long, 55 feet wide, and had a thirty foot head of water. The valley, as it approached the dam, was low and narrow, and this enabled a large reservoir of water to be kept at all times. The lake behind the dam was nearly seven miles long and two to three miles wide. It was


a quarter of a mile from the mouth of the canyon to the powerhouse, and the width there was 400 to 700 feet. The water at the dam did not freeze over in the winter time.\textsuperscript{15}

The first power line, a one pole line, was built from Canyon Ferry to Helena and East Helena,\textsuperscript{16} and the first power was sold at wholesale prices, mainly to the Helena Power and Light Company which had been distributing power in Helena from a steam plant.\textsuperscript{17} This power was used by the East Helena smelters, the capitol, and for city lighting and the electric car system. At first, only 3000 horsepower was sold in Helena. This left a surplus of power at the dam, and it was planned to use the extra 4000 horsepower to develop mining and other resources near the dam.\textsuperscript{18}

Late in 1900, the Helena Water and Electric Power Company conveyed all its properties to the Missouri River Power Company, a New Jersey corporation, organized by Hauser, Sewell, and Henry Suhr to take over the power plant and properties of the former concern. The Missouri River Power Company built a 60,000 volt transmission line to Butte during 1900 and 1901, to provide electric power for mining

\textsuperscript{15}Eighth Report, 1902, p. 456; Rocky Mountain Husbandman, White Sulphur Springs, September 24, 1896.

\textsuperscript{16}Tenth Report, 1906, p. 295.

\textsuperscript{17}Leighton, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{18}Rocky Mountain Husbandman, White Sulphur Springs, September 24, 1948.
industry.\textsuperscript{19} The new power line to Butte, when completed in 1902, became the longest and largest transmission power line in the world. It extended for sixty-five miles across the main range of the Rockies, 7200 feet high, and delivered 8000 horsepower to Butte.\textsuperscript{20} In 1906, the lines were extended to the Washoe Smelter in Anaconda, the voltage was increased to 70,000, and a new sub-station of 15,000 horsepower capacity, was built in Butte.\textsuperscript{21} The Missouri River Power Company continued to operate the Canyon Ferry plant until February 11, 1909, when it was merged with the United Missouri River Power Company.

In 1911, the United Missouri River Power Company defaulted in payment of its bond interest and went into receivership. On December 12, of the same year, a reorganization committee of the United Missouri River Power Company organized the Missouri River Electric and Power Company, in New Jersey. It was to take over all property and assume all liabilities of the old company. This company became a subsidiary of the Butte Electric and Power Company, June 1, 1912, when it leased all of its plants and lines to that firm.

The Montana Power Company was incorporated under the

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\bibitem{}\textsuperscript{19}Leighton, p. 16; The Western Mining World, vol. XVI, No. 11, Chicago, March 15, 1902.
\bibitem{}\textsuperscript{20}Western Mining World, March 15, 1902.
\bibitem{}\textsuperscript{21}Twelfth Report, 1910, p. 286.
\end{thebibliography}
laws of the state of New Jersey, on October 25, 1912. It was formed through the consolidation of the Butte Electric and Power Company and its three subsidiaries, of which the Missouri River Electric and Power Company was one. The effective date of consolidation was December 12, 1912. Montana Power continued to grow and expand in the years following, until it eventually controlled nearly all of the power developments in the state of Montana.

In 1920, the Federal Water Power Act was passed, and under sub-section 23(b), it was provided that no hydroelectric development could be constructed, operated, or maintained on "... navigable waters of the United States, or upon any part of the public lands or reservations of the United States... except under and in accordance with the terms of a permit or valid existing right-of-way granted prior to June 10, 1920, or a license granted pursuant to this chapter." This law did not affect the holdings of the Montana Power Company until March, 1942.

The Federal Power Commission, in December, 1937, started investigating hydroelectric developments without licenses, which were located on streams under Federal jurisdiction. In February, 1938, the investigation was extended to occupancy of public lands. Finally, in 1942, the Montana

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Power Company received notice from the Federal Power Commission, indicating necessity for licenses, and suggesting that application be made. There was no application made, so in July, 1943, an order was issued to show cause why it had not been done, and why the commission should not issue further orders. The Montana Power Company's answer in September, 1943, denied the necessity of licenses on its seven Missouri River developments. The October "show cause" order was amended to include all nine developments as one complete unit of development, and in December, 1943, the Company filed answers on its two Madison developments.

On September 24, 1946, the Commission ordered a public hearing to determine the issues presented by its orders of July 27 and October 5, 1943, and the Company's answers. The hearing was held before an Examiner, at Helena, from November 18 to December 7, 1946. At the hearing, Lewis & Clark, Cascade, and Gallatin counties interceded in favor of the Montana Power Company. A decision from this hearing was not rendered until September 30, 1947. The Examiner concluded that all seven of the Missouri River developments were on navigable waters, that certain were in part on public lands, and that the Montana Power Company had shown good cause for not applying for a license on the Holter development. The Madison developments were excluded from the decision. The Montana Power Company filed exceptions and an oral argument was heard on February 16, 1948. The decision
from this hearing came down November 30, 1948; it said that licensing was necessary on all of the Company dams, Canyon Ferry included. The case had reached the United States Court of Appeals by March, 1950. Montana Power was now appealing to the court to have the decision against them reversed in the case of four of its dams on the upper Missouri, of which the Canyon Ferry Dam was one. The claim was that although located on the same navigable stream, they occupied public lands and therefore need not be licensed.

Before the case was acted on by the Court of Appeals, the Canyon Ferry properties were sold to the Bureau of Reclamation, and the court did not decide the case, as it affected Canyon Ferry Dam, but let the Commission reconsider the matter in the light of the changed circumstances. Except for the Canyon Ferry situation, the Montana Power Company lost its appeal, and had to apply for licenses for all of its other dams on the upper Missouri River.23

Early in 1950, the United States Bureau of Reclamation bought the old Canyon Ferry Dam and power plant from the Montana Power Company for $950,000.24 This was to make way for the Bureau's new Canyon Ferry Dam, a mile downstream, on


which work was being started. The ground breaking had taken place in July, 1949, and late that year the first pre-fabs, water systems, electricity, and office buildings were ready.\textsuperscript{25} The construction engineer for the Bureau of Reclamation was, and still is, William P. Price, Jr.\textsuperscript{26} Until it turned over the old dam to the Bureau of Reclamation on March 15, 1950, the Montana Power Company was to receive any water it needed for downstream water requirements, and replace this water by releasing some from its own Hebgen or Madison dams. The government was not to interfere with Company dams above or below the Canyon Ferry Dam, and agreed to cooperate with Montana Power in providing water for the needs of the power dams downstream at any time.\textsuperscript{27}

At noon on March 15, 1950, the Canyon Ferry hydroelectric plant of the Montana Power Company was officially closed after fifty-two years of service. The government took over everything under the contract: dam, power plant, water rights, lands, and buildings.\textsuperscript{28} On the same day the government offered the residences, shops, power plant, and machinery for sale. Bids were to open on March 24, and buildings were to be sold in units local residents could buy and move them where they wished.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{25}Independent Record, July 26, 1953.
\textsuperscript{26}Townsend Star, Townsend, Montana, September 10, 1953.
\textsuperscript{27}Sunday Missoulian, February 2, 1950.
\textsuperscript{28}Columbus News, Columbus, Montana, March 23, 1950.
\textsuperscript{29}Independent Record, March 15, 1950.
The new Canyon Ferry Dam is a $28,844,000 multi-purpose project. As such, it will provide power, furnish water for irrigation purposes, assist in controlling the flow of the Missouri River, and in the future, be a resort area. The completed dam will provide water for about 310,000 acres of new land and give supplemental water to another 196,300 acres of land now inadequately irrigated. The new dam will serve Rural Electrification Administration facilities better, and the added power may also help bring new industry into the state.

When finished, the dam will have a structural height of 225 feet, a crest length of 1000 feet, and a base width of 173 feet. It will form a reservoir slightly over twenty-five miles long, and will be four and one-half miles wide at its widest point. The dam will have a storage capacity of 2,051,000 acre feet, and will cover an area of 35,200 acres. With the spillway gates open the storage capacity of the dam is only 1,055,000 acre feet. The spillway is controlled by radial type gates, the largest ever used in a reclamation project. They have a capacity of 150,000 cubic feet per second, and can handle any total flow from the 15,000 mile drainage area. These giant control gates are shaped like pieces of cake, and are thirty-four and one-half feet high and fifty-one feet across. Warm air from a compressor in the power plant will keep ice from forming at the face of the dam in winter. A seventy ton crane, mounted on tracks,
moves across the top of the dam, and will be used for repair work.

The prime contract, won by Canyon Constructors, also called for a building to house an electric generation plant with a capacity of 50,000 kilowatts. The power house is two and one-half times as large as the Placer Hotel; it is 200 feet long, 100 feet high, and 130 feet wide. The total height from the foundation is 133 feet or fifteen stories. The power house has three 18,750 kilowatt generators, driven by three turbines with rated capacity of 23,500 horsepower. A 125 ton steel crane is also part of the equipment in the power house. By mid-October, 1953, the switch yard and equipment over the power house were nearly installed, and the road across the top of the dam was nearly completed.  

There has been much opposition to the building of this dam by the people in the valley who have had to sell their homes and lands and move to other areas. The argument has been going on ever since the late 1940's, and seems to have ended in October, 1953, when two hearings were held. The first meeting was held with K. T. Vernon, regional director of the Bureau of Reclamation concerning the proposal to hold the reservoir at its minimum height of 3766 feet, thus saving 1700 acres of rich farm land from flooding. The people

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said the only loss would be to the government which would have less electric power available for sale. The Department of the Interior was to study the question, but as yet no answer has been given, and all the rest of the land has been bought up to the maximum height of the reservoir, and most of the buildings removed. From all indications, it appears that the lands will be flooded to the maximum height of 3800 feet, for which the dam was built.31

The other meeting in October was conducted by United States Congressman Lee Metcalf, for the purpose of trying to make proper adjustment to the people who had to sell their land. The wide range of prices paid for the land had been proven, in many cases, to be unfair and humiliating to the people. Congressman Metcalf felt an adjustment was necessary and said he would introduce a bill in Congress to have the prices adjusted.32 At the present time there is a bill in Congress, but its fate has not yet been determined. Although there are still many disgruntled people in the region, it appears that the time has long since past in which any concerted action may be taken to protect their rights and interests. Their last hope is the bill now in Congress, and it at best is only a monetary form of restitution.

The Canyon Ferry region has some potential as a resort

31Townsend Star, October 8, 1953 and October 15, 1953.
32Ibid., October 22, 1953.
area, and, in 1946, the National Park Service prepared a report for the Bureau of Reclamation concerning these possibilities. The land to the east of the reservoir is agricultural land in the fairly flat Missouri Valley between the Big Belt Mountains and the Spokane Hills. Much of the land is irrigated and the rest is dry pasture land. On the west shore the Spokane Hills rise quite abruptly and are moderately forested with pine, so a nice setting is formed with irrigated country lying between forested mountains.

Large parts of the Helena National Forest lie on both sides of the lake and the area is full of scenic drives, horse trails, trout streams, cabins, historic and valuable placer diggings, big game, and areas for outings. The distance from highway to reservoir is one to five miles, and within a 100 mile radius of the reservoir live 65 per cent of the state's population.

In regard to recreation needs, the area should be more fully developed so that it will be more attractive to tourists. Any recreational uses depending on the water's edge will be impractical due to the fluctuation of the depth of the water behind the dam. This factor will tend to make the area less attractive to tourists, will see no good swimming beaches developed, no side streams, and no picnic facilities without much expense to provide water and sewage facilities. Boating will not be good for small boats due to the size of the lake and the possibility of sudden squalls,
and boat launching will be difficult. Horseback riding in the area is very good. Winter ice sports will not be very good due to unsafe ice. There probably will not be much fishing, so it is not planned to stock the lake with game fish. Pheasant and duck hunting in the area will improve due to the large lake and irrigation. There should be enough land around the lake for private ownership, and there are very attractive cabin sites that may be developed if there is a demand, which has already happened.

Public roads around the valley will undoubtedly be left as access roads to the new reservoir. These roads lead down Confederate, Avalanche, Hellgate, Magpie, Cave, and Oregon gulches from the east to the reservoir; and to Canyon Ferry from the west. In this network of roads there should be adequate junctions to afford easy access to the lakeside.

No recreational facilities will be constructed on the reservoir unless part of a plan for the entire Helena region. A dike is to be built below Townsend to preserve about 2000 acres of good land that would otherwise be flooded in high water. This will improve hunting by giving more cover along the dike and in irrigation ditches. The whole area along the shore will be kept free from private exploitation against the public, and the Montana Power Company will agree to this.33

33Comprehensive Report of Recreational Use and Development Canyon Ferry Reservoir Site in Lewis and Clark and Broadwater Counties, Montana--Prepared by National Park Service, Region II, Department of Interior, for Bureau of Reclamation, Region 6, Billings, Montana, September, 1946.
A supplemental report in October, 1948, found the Canyon Ferry area to be very rich in historic sites and structures, mainly of the mining and ranching frontiers. It decided that the area will be good for camping and picnicking, that it will offer an outlet for fishing and boating, but that it will not be very good for swimming due to fluctuation. Cabin sites will be in demand, the area will be significant locally in a recreational sense. The National Park Service recommended that a more detailed historical study be made in the future in cooperation with the Montana State Historical Society, and there should be a trailside exhibit explaining the history of the area.

This report recommended that the State of Montana and the National Park Service cooperate in planning recreation for the area, that any development be properly administered by the appropriate State, county, or local officials, also that the Bureau of Reclamation consider recreational interests in planning physical adjuncts to this project and consult with the Park Service if conflict is apparent.

In addition to the above, people want to be able to go through the Beaver Creek and Trout Creek Canyons. Local movement has been for development of the area, and it does have excellent topography and tree cover. So the government recommended development for the above uses, in addition to minor development for sanitary facilities, picnic units, and access to water for boats. The estimated cost for this will
be $100,000 to $125,000, and the benefits of the recreation cannot be evaluated in any monetary terms.\textsuperscript{34}

With the completion of the Canyon Ferry Dam in April, 1954, a great era has ended. The once rich placer gold gulches to the east have been drained of their wealth, and today are unpopulated. The forests on the slopes of the Big Belt Mountains have been cut down and all that remains is secondary growth. Instead of a valley filled with farms, there is a large lake, backed up behind a great new dam. The people have moved from the valley to new homes on the benchlands above, or to other parts of the country. All the little villages and hamlets are gone, and Townsend stands alone at the south end of the region. The population of the Canyon Ferry region now consists mainly of the few ranchers and farmers living on the benchlands which lie between the valley and the Big Belt Mountains. Power rights and control of the new dam will undoubtedly be given to the Montana Power Company when the time comes for a decision. The casual observer will be aware only of the dam, the lake, and the mountains; not realizing that immediately before him lies a region with a history as rich and colorful as any he may find.

\textsuperscript{34}Supplemental Report On the Proposed Canyon Ferry Reservoir, Missouri River, Broadwater and Lewis and Clark Counties, Montana--Prepared by National Park Service, Region 6, Department of Interior, for Bureau of Reclamation, Region 6, Billings, Montana, October, 1948.
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