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Some chapters in the history of the Bitter Root Valley

Helen Marjorie Reynolds

The University of Montana

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Some Chapters in the History of the Bitter Root Valley

by

Helen Marjorie Reynolds, B. A., State University of Montana, 1925

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Approved:  

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Chairman of Board of Examiners.

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Chairman of Committee on Graduate Study
### SOME CHAPTERS IN THE HISTORY OF THE BITTER ROOT VALLEY

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The Bitter Root Valley

In the southwestern portion of what is now the state of Montana, lies a valley bounded on the west by the Bitter Root Mountains and on the east by a branch of the Rockies, locally known as the Sapphire Mountains. Through the entire length of this valley, flows a river which was called "Red Willow" on account of the willows of that color which grew so thickly along its banks.¹ The Indians, too, gave the name of "Place of the Bitter Root" to the northern end of the valley but Lewis and Clark applied that title to its entire length.² This river, which has its source in the Continental Divide at the upper end of the valley, empties into the Clark Fork near Missoula; in the more than one hundred and thirty years which have elapsed since it was first glimpsed by the white man, its titles have been varied--Lewis and Clark named it Clarke's River,³ Patrick Gass spoke of it as Flathead River⁴--to certain of the early fur-traders it was known as Coulter's or Courtine's Fork,⁵ to the missionaries it was always St. Mary's,⁶ the exploring parties of Stevens and Mullan added the title of Missoula River;⁷

¹. J. P. Rowe, Geographical and Natural Resources of Montana, Missoula, State University of Montana, 1933, p. 112.
³. Ibid., V. I, p. 265.
finally its present title was adopted.

The Bitter Root Valley lies in the heart of a country which has been the subject of much international controversy,—five nations have at varied times indicated their intention of owning it: Spain, France, England, Russia and the United States. Spain laid claim to this section on the basis that a Spaniard had been the first white man to lay eyes on the Pacific and that it, the Pacific had been granted to her as a gift by the Pope, thus giving her exclusive right to territory washed by it. England likewise based her claims on early exploration of the Pacific coast, namely the expeditions of Cook and Vancouver, but in this matter she stressed her policy that a country must be occupied and developed by a nation before she can lay claim to it, substantiating this statement by drawing attention to the fact that not only had British navigators explored the coast but British fur-traders had pushed from Canada into the region beyond the Rocky Mountains. The struggle between Spain and England reached its height over the Nootka Sound, a controversy, settled in 1790, by Spain giving up all exclusive right to this territory. It was also decided that all parts of the Northwest coast of America, not already occupied at that time by either of the contracting parties, should henceforth be equally open to subjects of both "for all purposes of commerce and settlement, the sovereignty remaining in abeyance."

Americans early began to take an interest in the Oregon Country—Jefferson's desire to learn something of this vast region anticipated the pur-

chase of Louisiana. As early as 1782, he had endeavored to gather some material concerning the flora and fauna of this section; he was much upset by a rumor that a large sum of money had been subscribed in England for the purpose of exploring the country from the Mississippi to California, fearing that the true motive for the proposed expedition was not as stated "to promote knowledge" but in reality was intended for the colonization of the territory. Again, in 1785, he showed this keen interest by persuading John Ledyard to attempt the experiment of visiting the western side of America, having first traversed Siberia. With the acquisition of Louisiana, this interest was to increase, for by the terms of the treaty, France relinquished whatever claims she possessed to the regions west of the Mississippi. As Jefferson began a study of the western boundary of this newly acquired land, his conception of it continued enlarging, until in his opinion, the territory acquired included West Florida, Texas and the "Oregon Country." In 1819, Spain transferred to the United States, her claims to the Pacific territory north of its forty-second parallel; in 1824, an agreement was reached between the American nation and Russia by which the latter agreed not to form any establishments south of 54°40', in return for the promise of the United States that she would form none north of that line. Thus fortified, the United States was ready to undertake an adjustment of the Oregon question—a question which was not really a matter of

13. Ibid., p. 469.
whether England or the United States would extend its sovereignty over the territory west of the Rocky Mountains, lying between 42° and 54°40' but a decision as to what method should be applied in the division between the two nations of the disputed territory. 14

The Oregon territory was not mentioned in the treaty of Ghent, save in general terms; during the period 1815-1845, the United States stood ready to accept the 49th parallel as her accepted northern boundary; England was determined to have the Columbia River from its intersection with the 49th parallel to the sea. So matters stood until 1818, when negotiations between the two nations were begun at London. Our delegates, Gallatin and Rush were given no definite instruction as to what boundaries to accept west of the Rockies, for at that time, the American government was perfectly willing to allow time to dictate to them the particular boundary needed in that region. Consequently, the American envoys suggested a treaty silent in regard to the boundary west of the Rockies; the English negotiators very definitely refused to accept such procrastination and proposed that equal commercial rights be given to each nation in the region between the forty-ninth and the forty-fifth parallel. The Americans were equally determined on non-acceptance of this idea and as an alternative, put forward, the idea of joint occupation for a period of ten years which was finally incorporated in the treaty. 15

During this period, there seemed a decline in American interest in the Northwest—some two or three hundred trappers from the United States

were its only representatives in the region; there were no American settlements and that government exercised no jurisdiction west of the Rocky Mountains,--McLoughlin was the sole administrator in that region. Monroe, in 1824, urged the establishment of a military post somewhere in the vicinity of the mouth of the Columbia in order that American interests might be encouraged and protected, but nothing came of his suggestion. With the approaching termination of the 1818 agreement, however, interest was once more aroused as to what action should be taken. Finally the joint occupation idea was indefinitely extended, with the proviso that either party could, upon giving twelve months' notice, annul the convention. From then on, American interest was steadily on the increase; with the coming of missionaries and settlers to the region, a vigorous demand was made that the United States government do something definite about this boundary. During the "fabulous forties," American desire for territorial expansion came out into the open. Polk was elected on the platform of "54-40 or Fight," but in the treaty finally drawn up in 1845, Buchanan diplomatically managed to make the resultant compromise of the original 49th parallel, acceptable to the majority of Americans. 16

However, before this matter had been legally adjusted, settlers in Oregon had taken matters into their own hands and in 1843, had established a provisional government of their own at Champoeg. By its terms the government was placed in the hands of three men,--Joseph Gale, David Hill and Alandson Beers. The triumvirate idea proving unsatisfactory, control was, in 1845, placed in the hands of one man--George Abernethy--this government existed until 1849, at which date Oregon Territory was organized

by Congress and for the first time in its history, the Bitter Root Valley was governed by an American administration. 17

In 1853, Washington Territory was founded and western Montana was divided between it and Oregon; the small upper portion of the Bitter Root which lies south of the forty-sixth parallel, remained in Oregon Territory; the remainder was transferred to the newly formed Territory of Washington. This arrangement lasted until Oregon became a state, when the remaining portion of the Valley, too, became a part of Washington Territory. In 1863, Idaho Territory was established and included all of Montana west of the Rocky Mountains; a year later Montana was formed into a territory and in 1889, became a state.

The counties of which the Bitter Root has formed a part are likewise numerous--first it belonged to Clark County, then when this huge county was divided, and the County of Skamania was created, the valley was transferred to it. Next it became a portion of Walla Walla County, then Spokane County and then for many years it was a part of Missoula County. 18 In 1893, this last named county was divided and the major portion of the Bitter Root Valley became the present Ravalli County.

The Route of Lewis and Clark through the Bitter Root Valley

A great deal has been written concerning the Lewis and Clark expedition, the motives which prompted such an exploration as they undertook, as well as its effect on the development of the west. For the purpose of this account it is only intended to give a brief resume of the route followed by the expedition while traversing the Bitter Root Valley and to indicate how it happened that on such a transcontinental trip, the exploring party ever came to enter this remote section.

The latter part of August, 1805, found the party on a branch of the Salmon River,¹⁹ intent on following that river on its course to the Columbia. Here, through information obtained from the Indians, and a hasty exploration of that river by Captain Clark,²⁰ it was determined that it would be impossible to make the passage by means of canoes, and that impassible mountains made it equally out of the question to follow this route on foot. It was finally decided to accept the assistance of an Indian guide, who offered to lead them over the mountains lying to the north and then through a pass to the westward where the expedition could again strike the waters of the Columbia River. To follow out this plan, it was necessary to obtain horses; accordingly some twenty-nine were purchased, pack saddles were made by the men and the expedition set off on its changed course the morning of August thirtieth.²¹

The old Shoshone guide led the party up the north fork of the Salmon,

²⁰. Ibid., V. III, pp. 36-40.
²¹. Ibid., V. III, p. 47.
a stream called Fish Creek by Captain Lewis, up this stream to its forks, up the left-hand fork, thence across a section of the Bitter Root Mountains, down Camp Creek to where it joins Ross' Fork and then down that stream until it reached what is now known as Ross' Hole. Here they made their first encounter with the Flathead Indians, on the morning of September fourth. Of this meeting, Lewis writes:22

a very cold morning every thing wet and frosted, we (were) detained until 8 o’clock to thaw the covering for the baggage & ground covered with snow, we ascended a mountain & took a dividing ridge which we kept for several miles & fell on the head of a creek which appeared to run the course we wished to go, ... and pursued our course down the Creek to the forks about 5 miles where we met a party of the Tushepan nation, of 33 lodges about 80 men 400 total and at least 500 horses, those people received us friendly threw white robes over our shoulders & smoked in the pipes of peace, we encamped with them & found them friendly but nothing but berries to eat a part of which they gave us, those Indians are well dressed with skin shirts & robes, they (are) stout & light complected more so than common for Indians, the chief harangued until late at night, smoked in our pipe and appeared satisfied. I was the first white man who ever was on the waters of this river." ... (September 5th)

... "A cold morning we assembled the Chiefs and warriors and spoke to them (with much difficulty) as what we said had to pass through several languages before it got into theirs, which is a gurgling kind of language spoken much through the thorough we informed them who we were, where we came from, where bound and for what purpose & and requested to purchase & exchange a few horses with them, in the course of the day I purchased 11 horses & exchanged 7 for which we gave a few articles of merchandize, those people possess elegant horses, we made 4 chiefs (to) whom we gave medals & a few small articles with Tobacco, the women brought us a few berries & roots to eat and the principal chief a dressed barow, otter & two goat & antelope skins.

Those people wore their hair as follows the men chewed with otter skin on each side falling over the shoulders forward, the women loose promiscuously over their shoulders & face long shirt which comes to their ankles & tied with a belt about their waist with a robe over, the(y) have but few ornaments and what they do wear are similar to the Snake Indians they call themselves Eoote-lash-Schute (Oat le shoot) and consist of 450 lodges in all and divided into several bands.

on the head of Columbia river & Missouri, Some low down the Columbia River (September 6th)

Some little rain, purchased two fine horse & took a Vocabulary of the language litened our loads & packed up, rained cont. until 12oClock at the Same time all the Indians Set out on their way to meet the Snake Indians at the 3 Forks of the Missouri.

The party continued in a northwesterly direction until it struck the main fork of the Bitter Root River; to this river they gave the name of Clark and then proceeded down it some five miles before they established their camp. Supper was rather a scanty affair:

... Rained this evening nothing to eate but berries, our flour out, and but little Corn, the hunters killed 2 pheasents only.

The next day, September 7th, was a cold rainy one; the party travelled on down the valley some twenty miles—not until after dark were they able to find a suitable camp site, one placed approximately where Grantsdale is now located. The next morning, an early start was made, the expedition was now passing through a section of the valley which has received a great deal of publicity relative to its fertility so it may be of interest to note what was Captain Clark's impression of the region:

A cloudy morning Set our early and proceeded on through an open Vallie for 23 miles passed 4 Creeks on the right Some runs on the left, the bottoms as also the hills Stoney bad land, Some pine on the Creeks and mountains and partial on the hills to the right hand Side two of our hunter came up with us at 12oClock with an Elk, & Buck, the ... foot of the Snow mountains approach the River on the left Side. Some Snow on the mountain to the right also, proceeded on down the Vallie which is pore Stoney land and encape on the right Side of the river a hard rain all the evening ... on this part of the river I observe great quantities of a peculiar Sort of Frickly pearre growin Clusters ovel & about the Size of a Pigeons egge with strong thorns which is So birded (bearded) as to draw the Pear from the Cluster after penetrating our feet.24

That evening the party camped somewhere near Fort Owen since Captain Clark notes in his Journal for that day:

... through the Said Vallie to a large Creek from the right divided into 4 different Channels, i.e. scattered Creek—

Captain Lewis takes up the Journal for September 9th and 10th; after leaving their camp near Stevensville, they continued down the east side of the valley and ate their noon meal directly east of the present town of Florence; proceeding down the river another five miles they crossed it and followed down its left bank until they reached "Traveller's Rest Creek," the Lo-Lo Creek of today. A portion of this day's account is interesting:

The country in the valley of this river is generally a prairie and from five to six miles wide the growth is almost altogether pine principally of the long leafed kind, whith some spruce and a kind of fur resembleing the scotch fur near the water courses we find a small proportion of the narrow leafed cottonwood; some redwood honey suckle and rosebushes form the scant proportion of the underbrush to be seen. at 12 we halted on a small branch which falls into the river on the E. side, where we breakfasted on a scant proportion of meat which we had reserved from the hunt of yesterday... Two of our hunters have arrived, one of them brought with him a red headed woodpecker of the large kind common to the U States this is the first of the kind I have seen since I left the Illinois. just as we were setting out Brewer arrived with two deer, we continued our rout down the valley about 4 miles and crossed the river; it is hear a handsome stream about 100 yards wide and affords a considerable quantity of very clear water, the banks are low and its bed entirely gravel, the stream appears navigable, but from the circumstances of their being no salmon in it I believe that there must be a considerable fall in it below... We continued our rout down the W. side of the river and encamped on a large creek which falls in on the West, as our guide inform(ed) me that we should leave the river at this place and the weather appearing settled and fair I determined to halt the next day rest our horses and take some Celestial Observations. we called this creek Traveller Rest—it is about 20 yards wide a fine bould clear runing stream the land through which we passed is but indifferent a cold white gravley soil."

After a well-earned rest, on the afternoon of September 11th, the

party once more started on. This time, their way lay up Lolo Creek toward the divide. It is rather obvious from the spelling that Captain Clark is once more keeping the journal:

(Sept. 11th) ... we proceed on up the Creek on the right side thro' a narrow vale and good road for 7 miles and Encamped at Some old Indian Lodges ... the day Verry worm.
(Sept. 12th) a white frost Set out at 7oClock & proceed on up the Creek passed a fork on the right on wich I saw near an old Indian encampment a Swet (sweat) house Covered with earth at 2 miles assend-ed a high hill & proceeded through a hilley and thickly timbered Countray for 9 miles. 26

On September 12th, the expedition travelled some twenty-three miles and so were nearing Lolo Hot Springs.

(Sept. 13th) a cloudy morning Capt Lewis and one of our guides lost their horses, Capt Lewis & 4 men detained to hunt the horses, I proceed on with the party up the Creek at 2 miles passed Several Spring which I observed the Deer & Elk had made roads to, and below one of the Indians had made a whole to bathe. I found this water nearly boiling hot at the places it Spouted from the rocks which are a hard Corse Grit, and of great size the rocks on the Side of the Mountains of the Same texture I put my finger in the water, at first could not bare it in a Second.

The party after some difficulty in locating a possible route, from this point crossed the divide and so passed out of the valley.

The eastbound expedition in 1806, reached Lo-Lo Hot Springs on June 28th, and the men all took advantage of the warm baths. Captain Lewis writes:

In the bath which had been prepared by the Indians by stoping the run with stone and gravel, I bathed and remained in 19 minutes, it was with difficulty I could remain thus long it caused a profuse sweat two other bold springs adjacent to this are much warmer, their heat being so great as to make the hand of a person smart extreemly when immerced... both the men and Indians amused themselves with the use of the bath this evening I observed that the indians after remaining in the hot bath as long as they could bear it ran and plunged

themselves into the creek the water of which is now as cold as ice can make it; after remaining here a few minutes they returned again to the warm bath, repeating this transition several times but always ending with the warm bath.27

While proceeding down the Lolo Trail, Lewis took time to observe the flora and fauna of the region. In this connection, he notes:

I saw a small grey squirrel today much like those of the Pacific coast only that this belly of this was white. I also met with the plant in blume which is sometimes called the lady's slipper or mock-erson flower. It is in shape and appearance like ours only that the corolla is white, marked with small veins of pale red longitudinally on the inner side.28

The expedition on June 30th reached their camp of the preceding year at "Travelers' Rest" and once again made a halt. After much consultation, it was decided that the party should now divide, one portion under Captain Lewis was to proceed down the Bitter Root, thence follow the most direct route possible to the Falls of the Missouri and from that point was to explore the Marias River. The remainder of the party under Captain Clark was to advance up the Bitter Root, thence to the headwaters of the Jefferson River where a cache had been made by the expedition of the preceding fall, and from that point was to proceed to the Yellowstone "at its nearest approach to the Three Forks of the Missouri." After two days of rest and hunting, the two groups started out. The Journal kept by Captain Lewis of his trip from "Travellers' Rest" to Hell Gate is as follows:

All arrangements being now completed for carrying into effect the several schemes we had planned for execution for our return, we saddled our horses and set out. I took leave of my worthy friend and companion Capt Clark and the party that accompanied him. I could no avoid feeling much concern on this occasion although I hoped this separation was only momentary. I proceeded down Clark's river seven

miles with my party of nine men and five indians here the indians recommended our passing the river which was rapid and 150 yds wide. 2 miles above this place I passed the entrance of the E. branch of Clark's River (by this he means the Hell Gate River) which discharges itself by two channels; the water of this river is more turbid than the main stream and is from 90 to 120 yds wide as we had no other means of passing the river we busied ourselves collecting dry timber for the purpose of constructing rafts; timber being scarce we found considerable difficulty in procuring as much as made three small rafts, we arrived at 11 a. m. and had our rafts compleated by 3 p. m. when we dined and began to take over our baggage which we effected in the course of three hours the rafts being obliged to return several times. the indians swam over their horses and drew over their baggage in little basons of deer skins which they constructed in a very few minutes for that purpose we drove our horses in after them and they followed to the opposite shore I remained myself with two men who could scarcely swim until the last, by this time the raft by passing so frequently had fallen a considerable distance down the river to a rapid and difficult part of it crowded with several small Islands and willow bars which were now overflowed; with these men I set out on the raft and was soon hurried down with the current a mile and a half before we made shore, on our approach to the shore the raft sunk and I was drawn off the raft by a bush and swam on shore the two men remained on the raft and fortunately effected a landing at some little distance below. I wet the chronometer by this accident which I had placed in my fob as I conceived for greater security.29

In the meanwhile, the party under Captain Clark had started up the Bitter Root, this time remaining on the west side of the river. They covered some thirty miles that first day (July 3rd) and went into camp somewhere near the modern town of Woodside. Of this trip up the valley, Captain Clark gives the following description:

I observed 2 species of Clover in this valley one the white clover common in the Western parts of the U. States, the other species which is much smaller than either the red or white both its leaf & blossom the horses are excessively fond of this species . . . Mountains is at this time covered with Snow for about 1/5 of the way from their tops downwards. Some Snow is also to be seen on the high points and hollows of the mountains to the East of us.30

The next day, July 4th, the party also covered a good distance, since

30. Ibid., pp. 248-250.
they reached the Nez Perce Fork and there made their camp for the night.

But one item in this day's record is of particular interest:

... this being the day of the declaration of Independence of the United States and a Day commonly celebrated by my County I had every disposition to celebrate this day and therefore halted early and partook of a Sumptuous Dinner of a fat Saddle of Venison and Mush of Cows (kowse root).31

The crossing of the Nez Perce Fork, was no easy affair; Captain Clark made the following entry for July 5th:

... Colter's horse swam and with some difficulty he made the Opposite Shore. Shannon took a different direction from Colter raised his horse up the stream and passed over very well. I directed all to follow Shannon and pass quartering up the river which they done and passed over tolerable well the water running over the banks of 2 smaller horses only unfortunately my trunk & portmanteau containing Sea otter Skins flags some curiosities & necessary articles in them got wet, also an assortment of Medicine and my roots ... after drying every article which detained us untill 1/2 past 4 P. M. we packed up and crossed the Mountain into the valley (where) we first met with the Flatheads.

Having entered the valley called Ross' Hole, Clark stopped for the night on Camp Creek, some two miles north of the present town of Sula; he then crossed the divide by what is now known as Gibbons' Pass.

The Fur Traders in the Bitter Root

Following Lewis and Clark, the region beyond the Mississippi was frequented for years only by the traders and trappers; so thorough were their explorations that no portion of the country remained to be explored after 1840;—in their search for the beaver, these hardy mountain men had traversed practically every route nowadays converted into main highways. The Flathead country was no exception to the general rule, in fact since it was a region very rich in furs, during the forty years which spanned the height of the trade, it was frequented at various times by the majority of those whose names have gone down in the annals of the fur trade. 32

In the winter of 1806, the news of the explorations of Lewis and Clark caused the Northwest Company to do some exploring on its own account, and for four years, the expeditions of David Thompson were to carry him into this general region. 33 Having reached the Columbia, near the present Lake Windemere, he erected Kootenai House,—the first post ever built by white men on that river. Here he spent the winter, the following summer he explored a portion of Clark's Fork and began building Kullyspell house on Lake Pend d'Oreille. The following year he constructed Salish House approximately three miles above the present town of Thompson Falls. 34 This site was selected with care,—the prairies in this vicinity were a place of ref-

33. David Thompson, Narrative of Explorations in Western America, The Publications of the Champlain Society, p. xii.
uge for the Flathead Indians when they were fleeing from their enemies the Blackfeet, for just above the prairie, the hills come close down to the river's banks and the Indian trail at this spot passed over a narrow rock shelf. This place was always known to the Indians and trappers as "Bad Rock" and it seems that the Peegans did not dare to pass beyond it. It was at this point that Thompson began trading with the Flathead; as a result of this trade and the ammunition which they were thus able to obtain, the Flatheads were able to hold their own in subsequent encounters with the Blackfeet. Thompson's narrative gives an account of this trade and the reaction of the Blackfeet to it:

The Salesh Indians during the winter had traded upwards of twenty guns from me with several hundreds of iron arrow heads, with which they thought themselves a fast match for the Peegans in battle on the Plains . . . The evening ended the battle; on the part of the Peegans, seven killed and thirteen wounded; on the part of the Saleesh, five killed and nine wounded; each party took care of its dead and wounded; no scalps were taken, which the Peegans accounted a disgrace to them; the Saleesh set no pride on taking scalps; This was the first time the Peegans were in a manner defeated, and they determined to wreck their vengeance on the white men who crossed the mountains from the west side, and furnished arms and ammunition to their Enemies. 35

In 1812, Thompson resolved to go further into the Flathead country, so in February, accompanied by Finan McDonald, he left Salish House, visited the Flathead camp some four miles below the mouth of Jocko Creek; he then rode up Clark's Fork until he reached the site of the present day city of Missoula and from that point climbed Mount Jumbo. Here he spent several hours making a sketch of the surrounding country, tracing out the route by which Lewis and Clark had traveled through it. There is no reference in

35. Thompson, op. cit., p. XC, also p. 425.
36. Ibid., p. XCVII.
his Journals which would indicate that Thompson included an exploration of the Bitter Root in this trip, but certainly his presence in the vicinity brought about a great change in the life of the Flathead Indians.

Though this period was one of intense rivalry between the Northwest Company and that of the Hudson's Bay, the latter company confined most of its efforts to an attempt to secure the predominance of trade east of the Rockies. It did, however, have some of the men in its employ at work in this general region, for in the summer of 1810, Joseph Howse built a post near Flathead Lake.

In the same year, Astor had established his Pacific Fur Company and the next few years were to be ones of intense rivalry between it and the Northwest Company for obtaining the trade from the country in and about the Bitter Root. In 1812, Ross Cox was sent to carry on the work amongst the Flatheads; his accounts of his relations with them and his description of the country in which they lived still make interesting reading today. Associated with him for a time was Russel Farnham. The latter had been a clerk in the Pacific Fur Company, one of the Astorians who sailed in the Tonquin. His career at Astoria and in the years following was a lively one. When Astoria was surrendered to the Northwest Company he was among the group who joined the latter company as was Ross Cox and Alexander Ross.

After the amalgamation of the Northwest Company with that of the Hudson's Bay in 1821, Ross was entrusted with the Snake River trade and im-

38. Chittenden, op. cit., V. I, p. 322.
mediately came to Flathead House. Leaving there in February of 1824, his party followed very closely the route of the Northern Pacific railway as far as Missoula, then turned south up the Bitter Root. Portions of his Journal for the time which he was in the valley are rather interesting:

(Feb. 23rd) Passed the defile of the mountains between Jacques and Courtine Forks. End of the defile has a view of noted place called Hell's gate—so named from being frequented by war parties of young Blackfeet and Piegsans—At Courtine's Fork (Bitter Root), the country opens finely to view clumps of trees and level plains alternately. . . . (Wed. Feb. 25th) Elk and small deer in great plenty, Flocks of swans flying about. (Tues. March 9th) Killed eleven elk, four sheep, seven deer—They're very fat here. (Thursday, March 11) Proceeding over slippery, stony road, at every bend a romantic scene opens. The river alone prevents the hills embracing—our road following the river crossing and recrossing. Here a curiousity called the Ram's Horn out of a large pine five feet from foot projects a ram's head, the horns of which are transfixed to the middle. The natives cannot tell when this took place but tradition says when the first hunter passed this way, he shot an arrow at a mountain ram and wounded him; the animal turned on his assailant who jumped behind a tree. The animal missing its aim pierced the tree with his horns and killed himself. The horns are crooked and very large. The tree appears to have grown around the horns. (Monday March 15) Early this morning 30 men, 10 boys and fifty horses set off to beat the road through 5 ft. of snow. Horses had to be swum through it—in their plunges frequently disappearing altogether. (Saturday March 20) In the evening, cry of enemies, enemies, Blackfeet, Piegsans, proved to be six friendly Nez Perce on snowshoes. (Friday, April 2nd) Today was surprised by the return of Laurent (hunter who had already threatened to desert and finally did so) He says he went as far as Hell's Gate but finding no beaver came back. The truth is he saw the Piegsans, got a fright and came back. (Saturday, April 10th) Members of the party, Grandeau, made a drum and John Grey a fiddle, the people were entertained with a concert of music. (Wednesday, April 14th) In the evening, we raised camp and moved to the foot of the mountain at source of Flathead River, 345 miles from its joining the Columbia—the river is navigable for 250 miles.

Ross spent the remainder of the winter trading with the Flatheads, he then travelled over the mountains to the headwaters of the Missouri and returned in November with five thousand beaver and numerous other pelts in addition. While on the trip he came in contact with Jedediah
S. Smith. The latter had left the main rendezvous of his company in the Green River country and had reached the Snake River when he encountered a party of Crow hunters who had been sent into that region to hunt by the Hudson Bay Company. Opinions seem to differ as to what then occurred; it would appear that Smith made the Indians some sort of an offer relative to getting them back to their own party in exchange for the furs which they still possessed. The entire group set out for the Salmon River Country where they met Ross. The latter was none too glad to see Smith and felt that a mean trick had been played upon him by the latter; however, since Smith was afraid to return to his own headquarters with so small a party he was permitted to accompany the Hudson's Bay brigade. Ross on this occasion guided the combined force across the mountains, down into Ross' Hole and from there on down the Bitter Root and out to Flathead House. This trip was of interest, for Smith was the first American to pass that way since Lewis and Clark; the fur traders who had preceded him in the Bitter Root had been Englishmen, though in some instances working for an American company. While passing through the Hell Gate region Ross was careful to place Smith and his men in the most dangerous position possible, knowing that the Blackfeet were accustomed to lie in ambush there, for these Hudson's Bay traders had been instilled with the importance of the summer.

40. Jedediah S. Smith, The Travels of Jedediah Smith, ed. Maurice S. Sullivan, Fine Arts Press, Santa Ana, California, 1934, Introduction. "Smith was born in New York 1798. Received a fair education. In 1822 joined Ashley's newly organized Rocky Mountain Fur Company and continued with him until the year 1826, when Ashley sold out to Smith, David E. Jackson and Wm. L. Sublette. In the years 1826-30, Smith investigated the possibilities of penetrating the Oregon country from California. He is the first American as far as is known to make his way into California from the east and out of California from the west."
trade with the Flatheads; consequently Ross greatly resented what he felt to be an intrusion in his own field. Later events justified his premonition, for a period of keen competition was to set in between the two companies. While Smith was at Flathead House he learned that the British had about sixty men trapping the Snake River Country and that in the previous year they had taken in the neighborhood of sixty thousand beaver.

Although Ross had brought in a huge supply of furs, for some reason he had fallen into disrepute with his superiors. For this reason he was placed in charge of Flathead House and Peter Skene Ogden was sent out as Chief trader. On December 10 Ogden started out, heading the most pretentious expedition which had up to that time been sent into the Snake River Country. On this trip he practically repeated the route followed by Ross in the preceding year, heading up the Bitter Root, thence over into the Salmon River country. The course of his trips while in charge of these Snake River brigades, and later while he was chief factor at Salish House, was frequently to bring Ogden through the Bitter Root Valley.

It was also during the twenties that the Missouri Fur Company entered western Montana. The company had been reorganized under Joshua Pilcher, who as an initial step towards securing the Upper Missouri trade, built Fort Benton (this was the post located at the mouth of the Big Horn River) and several posts on the Yellowstone. Pilcher met with a good many reverses, chief amongst them was the massacre by the Blackfeet of his two chief lieutenants, Jones and Immell, and the subsequent loss of the immense quantity of furs and merchandise which this party had with them. In one

last attempt to regain some of his lost fortune, Pilcher in 1828 resolved to attempt to open up trade with the Flatheads. He came into their country through the Beaverhead, thence into the Bitter Root and passed the winter of 1828-29 on Flathead Lake. He found that he was unable to break the powerful hold which the Hudson Bay Company had on the Indians of this region and was forced to abandon his scheme.42

However, even for that favored company the trade had begun to decline; from 1827 until 1846—the year in which the Hudson's Bay Company built its last post, Fort Connah—the numbers of furs taken steadily decreased. Before the trade came to an end several interesting characters were to be associated with this section of the country,43 notably Warren Ferris and John Work, both of whom kept journals, a perusal of which gives one an insight into many details of the trade in this region, particularly the rivalry between the Rocky Mountain Company men and those of the American Fur Company. Of special interest are the descriptions of the Bitter Root and their impressions on the Flatheads as a tribe.44 A further perusal of these Journals leaves one with a vivid impression of the difficulties and dangers encountered by the trappers;45 the ever present threat of death at the hands of the Blackfeet, a menace always uppermost in the minds of these traders furnishes one with a better understanding of the life of the Flathead nation. A study of these Journals written in so graphic a fashion, causes one to feel that at no time in its history has the Bitter Root been occupied by a more brilliant and versatile group of men than these romantic characters who came to it in search of the beaver.

42. Chittenden, op. cit., V. I, pp. 151-158.
43. Dale, op. cit., p. 32.
The Coming of the Missionaries

Closely connecting with the fur traders and rapidly following in their footsteps came the missionaries. In many instances it was only through the very great kindesses and able assistance rendered them by those in command of the Hudson's Bay post that the Fathers were able to proceed with their work. In connection with the establishment of a mission in the Bitter Root, Father De Smet particularly emphasises the help rendered by McLoughlin and Ogden. Something, too, was due the Northwest Company since it was probably through their efforts that certain Iroquois Indians were originally brought to this region, as that company hoped that the example of these Iroquois might inspire the western Indians who were not too industrious in their trapping.

Between 1812 and 1820 this small band of Iroquois Indians, numbering about twenty-four, left the Jesuit mission of Caughnawage on the St. Lawrence and, having crossed the Mississippi Valley, directed their course westward. The leader, Ignace La Mousse, commonly called "Old Ignace," finally lead the group to those regions occupied by the Salish Indians and was eventually adopted into their tribe. These Iroquois Indians had received Christian instruction at the St. Lawrence mission; this instruction they in part passed on to the Salish, arousing in them a desire to learn more concerning this new religion. Consequently, it was finally

proposed that an expedition be sent to see if the "Blackrobes" might be induced to come to them. So, in the spring of 1831, a group of four braves set forth; of these, two were partly Nez Perce by blood but "Salish by choice, since they lived as members of the latter tribe." The group reached St. Louis the following October and succeeded to a certain extent in making their wants known, since Cathedral records in that city indicate that two of the number who had taken sick were baptised before they died. The remaining two evidently died while making the trip back to Montana, as none returned to their kinsmen.

A number of years passed; then Old Ignace with his two sons decided to make another attempt. They, too, reached St. Louis in the summer of 1835; the two sons, having been baptised in the Christian faith, were left with the holy father, while "Old Ignace" started home alone. He managed to arrive home safely but two years then elapsed without a word from the missionaries who had been promised to them. Accordingly, he with four others started out again on this seemingly hopeless quest. In this group were three Flatheads and one Nez Perce. This party fell in with W. H. Gray, a Methodist missionary who was returning to secure more recruits for the Oregon Mission; they travelled in his company for a time, then the whole group was attacked by the Sioux at a point called Ash Hollow on the South Platte. All the Indians were killed and Gray barely escaped with his life. News of this disaster reached the Flatheads, but, nothing daunted, in 1839 two others volunteered to make the attempt—Pierre Gaucher and "Young" Ignace. These two joined some Hudson Bay men who were making the

trip to St. Louis by canoe; the expedition stopped at St. Joseph's Mission (Council Bluffs) hoping that it could accomplish its purpose there. It was here that the Indians obtained their first glimpse of Father De Smet, and though he was forced to tell them that he could do nothing for them and that they would have to proceed to St. Louis in order to make their wants known to the Father Superior there, this meeting was to be of untold importance in directing the later years of Father De Smet's life.

Since Father De Smet was to play such an important part in the history of the Bitter Root, it is perhaps worth while to tell something of the character of the man, and the background which was to prepare him for the work which he was to do in the Northwest. Born in Termonde, Belgium, in 1801, he was educated at the seminary in Malines. As a boy he was noted for his intellectual attainments and his physical prowess—he was familiarly known to his classmates as "Sampson". While he was still at school a missionary visited the seminary, seeking recruits for service in the country from which he had recently returned—America. A group of six young men volunteered to go, amongst them De Smet, who, since his parents utterly opposed the idea, was forced to pawn many of his personal belongings to secure funds for the trip.

He finished his novitiate and was ordained priest in 1827. In 1833 he returned to Europe and was forced by ill health to remain there until 1837. Once more in America, he was sent to found a mission among the Pottawatomies near the present location of Council Bluffs, Iowa, and in connection with his work there he made an excursion to the Sioux in an attempt to

secure peace between them and the tribe of Indians amongst whom he was working. It was during this time that he began his letters—many of them of this period contain scathing criticism of the Government liquor activities, and a graphic picture of the wrongs which the Indians suffered in the inevitable displacement of their race by the whites. 50

So it was that he was in Council Bluffs when the fourth Flathead delegation reached there in 1839. He was very favorably impressed by this group, and when at length it was decided that something must be done for these Indians, he volunteered to go. His orders were to survey the field and to bring back a report as to whether it would be worth while to carry the work farther. Leaving St. Louis on March 27, 1840, accompanied by the two sons of "Old Ignace," he went as far as Westport by steamer, then joined the American Fur Company caravan which left Westport April 30th. They followed the usual route across the country to the Platte and up that stream past Fort Laramie, on to South Pass. On June 30th in the Green River country he met the advance guard of the Flatheads and was escorted by them across the divide to Jackson hole, across Teton Pass into Pierce's Hole, where on July 12th they encountered the main camp of the Flathead, Pend d'Oreilles and Nez Perces. Father De Smet spent almost three weeks with these Indians and accompanied them as far as Three Forks, leaving them there with the promise that he would return the next summer and would then go with them to their home in the Bitter Root. 51

Much to his disappointment, when he reached St. Louis Father De Smet

51. Ibid., V. I, 306.
discovered that funds were lacking for the founding of the proposed mission. Ultimately some aid for the work was received from Philadelphia; the remainder of the requisite sum was raised by Father De Smet's own personal solicitation in and about New Orleans. As a result of his efforts, he was able to head a party consisting of Father Point, and Father Mangerini, and with them set out for the Rocky Mountains on April 30th, 1841. They followed much the same route as that of the previous year and experienced considerable difficulty in crossing the Platte River. On this occasion they were met by the advance guard at Wind River. It is of interest to note that in the group sent ahead to welcome the Blackrobes were Gabriel Prudhomme, a half breed who had acted as Father De Smet's interpreter the

52. De Smet, op. cit., V. I, p. 350. Father Point was an artist and made many sketches of the scenes encountered on the trip.

53. Palladino, op. cit., p. 79. "Father G. Mangerini, co-founder of St. Mary's with Father De Smet, labored ten years among the Flathead Indians and mastered the rich, but difficult Salish language so thoroughly that the Indians could not tell him from one of themselves by his speech. He composed a Salish grammar published in New York in 1861."

54. De Smet, op. cit., V. I, p. 309. Trip of 1841—Crossing the North Fork of the Platte. "The second difficult passage was over the North Fork, which is less wide, but deeper and more rapid than the Southern. We had crossed the latter in carts. Having mustered a little more courage on seeing our hunter drive before him a horse on which his wife was mounted, whilst at the same time he was pulling a colt that carried a little girl but one year old. To hold back under such circumstances would have been a disgrace for Indian Missionaries. It is said that we were observed to grow pale, and I am inclined to believe we did—after our horses had for some time battled against the current, we reached the opposite shore in safety, though our clothes were dripping wet. Here we witnessed a scene which, had it been less serious, might have excited laughter. . . . Here a horse reached the shore without a rider; further on, two riders appeared on the same horse; finally, the good Brother Joseph dancing up and down with his horse and Father Mangerini clinging to the neck of his, and looked as if he formed an indivisible part of the animal."

55. Ibid., V. I, pp. 264-293, V. II, p. 583. Gabriel Prudhomme acted as Father De Smet's interpreter and occasionally as his advance agent. He travelled some four thousand miles with the Father—later he was to act in this same capacity for General Stevens. He died at Fort Owen in 1855.
previous year, and the two sons of "Old Ignace." Of this number, the interpreter with one companion returned to the main body of the Flatheads to carry the news of the arrival of the Missionaries while they themselves went on to Fort Hall to secure provisions.

Here Father De Smet was to meet with great kindness at the hands of Frank Ermatinger, the Hudson's Bay Company man temporarily at the post. He gave the missionaries many gifts and sold other articles to them at greatly reduced rates. At this point Father De Smet received another gift, this time from a Flathead warrior named Bravest of the Brave. The latter had sent his finest horse ahead to Fort Hall as a present to Father De Smet. The sole proviso accompanying the gift was that no one should be allowed to ride it save its new owner.

57. Ibid., V. I, p. 305. The surrender of this horse is indicative of the Flathead feeling for the Blackrobe. H. H. Turney High, The Diffusion of the Horse to the Flatheads in Man, December, 1935. "The primary horse was the one which received the chief attention and affection. It was the great war horse, the fleet and spirited riding animal, trained to follow the fleeing bison correctly. Primary horses were the finest of the stallions or geldings, while secondary work horses were the mares and poorer males.--The fine beast was used exclusively for bison hunting and fighting. The Flathead allowed no one to abuse his prized charger."
The fathers left the Fort on August 29th, came up the Snake River, crossed the Continental Divide and directed their way to the headwaters of the Beaverhead where they encountered the main body of the Flathead. After a few days' rest, during which period it was decided that the mission should be located in the Bitter Root, the missionaries, with the escort of a few Indians, set out for the spot selected. Reaching the site agreed upon, a spot about a mile from the present town of Stevensville, they immediately set to work so that when the Indians returned from their hunt they found the buildings already started. There were constructed of cottonwood logs, roofed with split shingles, held together with wooden pegs. The floors were made of rough planks, obtained by herculean efforts with an ax. The original chapel measured twenty-three by thirty-three feet and

58. De Smet, op. cit., V. I, p. 310. I mentioned before that great dangers awaited us on the Snake River. This stream being much less deep and wide than the other two, and having such limpid waters that the bottom can everywhere be seen, could only be dangerous to incautious persons. But whether it was owing to want of thought or attention or to the stubborn disposition of the team, Brother Charles Huot found himself all at once on the border of a deep precipice, too far advanced to return. Down went the mules, driver, and vehicle, and so deep was the place that there scarcely appeared any chance to save them. Our hunter, at the risk of his life, threw himself into the river to dive after poor brother, whom he had to pull out of the carriage. All the Flatheads who were with us tried to save the vehicle, the mules and the baggage. The baggage with the exception of a few articles, was saved, the carriage was raised by the united effort of all the Indians, and set afloat; but after this operation it was held by but one of them, who found that his strength was inadequate to the task, and crying that he was being drowned, let go his hold. The hunter plunged in after him and was himself at the point of losing his life, on account of the efforts which the Indian made to save his own. Finally, after prodigies of valor exhibited by the Flatheads, men, women and children, who all strove to give us proof of their attachment, we lost what we considered the most safe, the team of the carriage. The gears had been cut to enable the mules to reach the shore, but it is said that these animals always perish when once they have had their ears under water. Thus we lost our three finest mules.

59. Ibid., V. I, p. 316. "On the 24th of September the feast of our Lady of Mercy, we arrived at the river called Bitter Root—on the banks of which we have chosen the site for our principal missionary station."
had two small galleries running the entire length of each side. This building was used only temporarily as a year or so later a somewhat larger structure replaced it.

Father De Smet, from previous experience amongst various Indian tribes, felt assured that the following of agricultural pursuits was a necessity if any manner of civilized existence was to be followed by the Flatheads. With this in mind he set out for Fort Colville, three hundred miles away in order to obtain seeds for the next season's planting. Though he felt the need of haste on this trip, he felt that he must make use of the opportunity which it offered to further spread the gospel amongst the Indians whom he encountered enroute to the Fort. Already news of the "BlackRobes'" coming had spread rapidly; prior to his setting out on this excursion, the Father had in a single day given religious instruction to individuals from numerous tribes, so now, taking advantage of the information which he had thus gleaned concerning them, aided by an interpreter, Gabriel Prudhomme, he translated the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Ten Commandments, with the Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity and Contrition. This accomplished, wherever he made camp he ordered those desirous of instructions to stand in a circle, insisting that each one should take care to stand always in the same relative position. When they were thus arranged, he would teach to one the First Commandment, to his neighbor the Second Commandment, and continued thus around the circle. When it came to the prayers, he taught each one a particular sentence of the same prayer; in this manner having them recite consecutively, they would hear the complete prayer. Whether this

60. De Smet, op. cit., V. I, pp. 331-333.
procedure could exact praise from a pedagogical standpoint, it is most cer-
tainly accomplished results, for at the end of three days all of the pupils
were able to recite the Commandments and the prayers in their entirety.
Father De Smet in addition baptized some 190 people during the journey.61

Of certain portions of his return trip to St. Mary's, Father De Smet
has left a graphic account.62

On the 3d of Nov—we were on the borders of Clark's Fork, to which were
obliged to keep close during eight days, whilst we descended the coun-
try bordering the stream. The river is at this place of greenish blue,
very transparent, caused probably by the deposit of a great quantity
of oxygen of iron. Our path during a great part of the day was on the
declivity of a lofty, rock mt. we were here obliged to cross a steep
rough pass from 400 to 600 feet high. I had before seen landscapes of
awful grandeur, but this one certainly surpassed all others in horror.
My courage failed at first sight; it was impossible to remain on horse-
back, and on foot my weight of 211 pounds was not a trifle. This,
therefore, was the expedient to which I resorted: my mule Lizette was
sufficiently docile and kind to allow me to grasp her tail, to which I
held on firmly: crying at one moment aloud, and at other times making
use of the whip to excite her courage, until the good beast conducted
me safely to the very top of the mountain. There I breathed freely;
for a while, and contemplated the magnificent prospect that presented
itself to my sight. The winding of the river with the scenery on its
bank was before me; on one side hung over our head, rocks piled on rocks
in the most precipitous manner, and on the other stood lofty peaks
crowned with snow and pine trees: mountains of every shape and fea-
ture reared their towering forms before us. It really was a fine view
and one which was well worth the effort we had made. On descending
from this elevation I had to take new precautions. I preceded the mule,
holding her by the bridle, while she moved cautiously down to the foot
of the Bad Rock (as it is called by the savages), as though she dared
stumbling and rolling with her master into the river which flowed be-
neath us.

Father De Smet finally arrived safely at St. Mary's December 8th, bring-
ing with him a supply of seeds which he had been able to obtain at Fort Col-
ville, together with a few bushels of potatoes, wheat and oats. These were
to form the nucleus for agricultural experiments in the Bitter Root.

62. Ibid., V. I, p. 348.
He found that great progress had been made in the buildings, the chapel was now complete and the fathers had encouraged the women and children to help make decorations for it. These decorations consisted of mats woven of rushes and then ornamented with festoons of green. Enough of these had been made to cover the floor and ceiling and to hang about the walls. Everything seemed ready for celebrating the Christmas Mass; then Prudhomme and one of the Priests fell ill, a sort of hurricane descended upon the village during the course of which the church windows were broken, large trees in the vicinity of the chapel were uprooted and three huts overturned. As a fitting climax to all these catastrophes, the tiny organ which had been transported so vast a distance with such infinite labor, was dropped by some of the Indians who were engaged in moving it. In spite of these setbacks, during the course of which the faith of the Flatheads in the "Black-robes" must have been severely shaken, when the appointed day came, all was in readiness.

This first Christmas was celebrated in a fashion very different to that of other early holidays in the Bitter Root. Mass was celebrated from early morning until late at night, and during the holiday season marriage ceremonies took place on a large scale. The father had experienced some difficulty in convincing the Indians that they must be legally married and moreover, that each must possess but one wife. Even he admits himself in an occasional quandary over the situations naturally arising from such a change in the manner of living.

Immediately following the holiday season, the fathers assumed other

63. De Smet, op. cit., V. I, p. 264.
64. Ibid., V. I, p. 359.
tasks, the performance of which now appeared necessary. Father Point accompanied the Indians on their hunt while Father De Smet and Father Mengarini began translating the catechism into the Salish tongue. The lay brothers were put at a task which the Fathers were beginning to think necessary:

Our brothers are engaged in erecting around our establishment a strong palisade, fortified with bastions to shelter us from the incursions of the Blackfeet whom we daily expect to visit us. Our confidence in God is not weakened, we take the precautions which prudence dictates, and remain without fear at our post.65

With the coming of spring Father De Smet decided to visit the Oregon missions previously established for the varied reasons of obtaining additional supplies and getting in touch with the new Catholic missions in the lower Columbia as well as to come in contact with Dr. McLoughlin. He appears to have been well satisfied with this trip; soon after his return to the Bitter Root he resolved to retrace his steps east in an attempt to secure further help for these newly established missions. Leaving the Bitter Root via the Big Hole, he again spent the early part of August with the Flatheads at their summer camp near Three Forks, thence he proceeded to St. Louis via Fort Alexander and Fort Union.66 He was to visit St. Mary's on four future occasions; 184567 at the time of the establishing of the St. Ignatius Mission; a brief visit in 1846;68 then twice in 185969 and 1863—

66. Ibid., V. I, pp. 370-390.
67. Ibid., V. II, p. 474.
68. Ibid., V. II, pp. 572-600. Father De Smet was at St. Mary's for but a week in August of 1846—bringing to the mission much needed supplies from Vancouver. He then accompanied the Flatheads to the Yellowstone, thence to the Blackfeet who were encountered close to what is now Fort Benton. Here, upon the father's urgent request, reconciliations over affairs of long standing took place between the two tribes and Father De Smet left for St. Louis, hoping that he had thus brought about lasting peace between the two nations.
69. Ibid., V. II, p. 765. "On 18th of March 1859 I crossed deep snow a distance of seventy miles to St. Mary's to revisit my first and ancient spiritual children of the mountains, the poor and abandoned Flatheads."
when though he knew it to be abandoned he was eager to journey to the former site. Though we find that Father De Smet's stay in the Bitter Root was, all told, but of a few month's duration, the influence which he had upon its history is great. St. Mary's was the starting point from which surrounding missions were established and for many years served as headquarters from which orders and missionaries could be sent at will.

Arriving at St. Louis late in October, Father De Smet was able to secure additional workers—Fathers Peter de Vox and Adrian, Hoecken, and one lay brother—John B. McGean. These were immediately sent to St. Mary's and a few months later they were joined there by additional recruits whose arrival from Europe the preceding fall had been too delayed to permit them to make the trip west in the company of the first group. In this second party which arrived in the Bitter Root in the summer of 1843 were Fathers Zerbinatti and Joset and Brother Vincent Magri. Both Father Joset and Father Zerbinatti were to be closely connected with St. Mary's since their headquarters were to be in its vicinity; of the other fathers whom we have just mentioned—Father Point left in the fall of 1842 to establish a mission amongst the Coeur d'Alenes; Father Hoecken took charge of the work amongst the Kalispells, establishing his quarters some sixty miles below the present town of Sand Point.

70. De Smet, op. cit., V. II, p. 402. (Summary of 1842 written on last Sunday of October) "From the beginning of April I had travelled 5,000 miles. I had descended and ascended the dangerous Columbia River. I had seen five of my companions perish in one of those life-destroying whirlpools, so justly dreaded those who navigate that stream. I had traversed the Willamette, crossed the Rocky Mts., passed through the country of the Blackfeet, the desert of the Yellowstones, and descended the Missouri, in all these Journeys I had not received the slightest injury."

Although Father Zerbinatti played a very active part in the life of the mission, his connection with it was of brief duration since his death occurred in 1845. His death was a serious loss to the mission but out of it developed an event which was to be of lasting importance to the Bitter Root—another worker was needed at St. Mary's; so Father Ravalli was summoned from the Colville Mission, to which he had been recently attached, to the Bitter Root to act as Father Mengarini's assistant.

Father Antony Ravalli was born in Ferrara, Italy, May 15, 1812; at the age of fifteen he entered the Jesuit society. After completing his novitiate, he spent several years studying philosophy, mathematics and natural science. Then he taught for a time at Turin, Piedmont, in colleges maintained by the Society; in the meantime he was completing his course in theology. It had always been his chief ambition to become a missionary; to prepare for this, which he considered to be his allotted task, he now spent three years in the medical department of the University of Rome. There seems to be some doubt as to whether he ever received a degree in medicine from the University, since the policy of the Society at that time did not encourage the obtaining of degrees other than that of S. J. He had, however, completed his work at Rome when in 1843 he met Father De Smet, who was then touring Europe with the desire to obtain new recruits for the Rocky Mountain Missions. Both men seem to have been mutually attracted to each other, for when Father De Smet returned to America, Father Ravalli was with him.

Travelling by the way of the Isthmus of Panama, they finally arrived in Oregon and were associated in the founding of a mission in the Willamette
Valley. They then journeyed overland, spending the winter amongst the Kalispells at Colville, finally late in 1845 Father Ravalli arrived at what he was always affectionately to term, "Dear old St. Mary's." The first year was a trying one--there were but few vegetables and the diet composed largely of meat and berries was one to which the missionaries found it hard to accustom themselves. Then, too, in order to accomplish the task which he hoped to do amongst the Salish, Father Ravalli had first to learn their language. He was already a skilled linguist, speaking French, English, German and Latin in addition to his native Italian, and these previously acquired skills undoubtedly helped him in this new pursuit, for from all account, the Indians considered him practically as one of themselves when it came to speaking their language.

The varied training which Father Ravalli had received was soon put to use. Before leaving Europe he had been presented with a small set of burr stones. These had been transported by oxen to St. Mary's, and one of his first tasks at the mission was to build a grist mill. In this he was assisted by Brother Claessans, who was skilled in carpentry, and the finished result, although somewhat small and crude, was capable of doing that for which it was intended--furnishing flour for the missionaries and a small amount for the Indians. Doubtless spurred on by this first success, Father Ravalli began investigating the possibilities of meeting another great need--that of obtaining lumber. This time there were no materials at hand with which to start; but ingeniously enough, the father welded four old

73. Peter Ronan, History of the Flathead Indians, 1813-1890, p. 35, Helena, 1890, "The capacity of the grist mill was about eight bushels a day."
wagon tires together and formed them into a crank to work the saw. The saw itself had been made from a fifth tire which had been flattened out and hardened into a steel blade by dint of hammering and then toothed by means of a cold chisel and long filing. Not to be outdone, Brother John Sprech decided to try out his own skill and from melted tin cans managed to produce a sledge hammer. So now the workers had at their disposal the wherewithal to obtain the lumber which they used for the roof and the interior furnishing of the buildings; the structures themselves were made of sawed logs.

During these busy first months, Father Ravalli had not abandoned his medical pursuits. His stock of drugs was running low and it was impossible for him to obtain a new supply immediately. Therefore he turned to his Indian friends for help; he had already gained their confidence by the successful performance of a few minor operations and the effective care he had given to their sick; to such a beloved individual they were eager to impart such knowledge as they possessed of their native herbs. Some of these were soluble in water; with these he injected dogs in order to learn the effect of the drugs which the plants contained. This procedure tested to the full the Indians' confidence in him, as they greatly resented having their dogs used for such experiments.\textsuperscript{74} For those drugs which were not soluble in water he needed alcohol, and for this purpose he decided to employ the Camas root, managing to distill from it what the fur traders who chanced to visit

\textsuperscript{74} As related to me by Miss Mary Winslett who claimed to have been told these facts by Father Ravalli.
the mission pronounced excellent whiskey. Later attempts at distillation brought him his desired alcohol and he was able to proceed with his experiments.

From his very first arrival amongst the Indians, Father Ravalli had felt the need of instructing some of the older women in primitive obstetrics. At first in but few cases would the Indians summon him; so, as soon as he had sufficiently mastered the Salish language, he took upon himself this additional task, a difficult one at best, particularly since he insisted upon cleanliness above all else. Strange to say, his ministrations in this line brought forth great criticism, not from the Indians, but from certain conservative elements among the early white settlers who indicated that they felt that a priest should confine himself to ministering to spiritual rather than physical needs.

So, it can readily be seen that the missionaries worked hard in these early years to make their work a success, but these years were very difficult ones; the Indians, spurred on, doubtless, by the renegade whites who used the mission as a convenient stopping place, grew restless and indifferent. It was impossible to fulfill all their plans and wishes with the limited means which Father Mengarini had at his disposal, so in 1850 he was forced to close St. Mary's, hoping that his drastic action might bring the

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75. De Smet, op. cit., V. II, p. 572. Father De Smet attributes this type of experimentation to Father Mengarini of whom he says—"he had also managed to extract a kind of sugar from potato and a non-alcoholic drink as pleasant and nutritious as the pale beer of Europe, made from a mixture of barley and native roots." The old settlers all insist that Father Ravalli was the chemist. John Owen, The Journals and Letters of Major John Owen, 1850-70, ed. Seymour Dunbar and Paul Phillips, 2 Vols., New York, 1927, V. II, p. 130, "Father Ravalli down and brot me a nice flagon of his own preparation."
Indians to their senses. 76

Father Ravalli was sent to Coeur d'Alene mission; from there he traveled to the Colville mission; in both locations he was to struggle against that most disheartening of problems--indifference. The discovery of gold was bringing with it hordes of immigrants with the consequent necessity of adjustment between Indian and white man. Of this trying time, the Father wrote: "For the love of God and the salvation of the Indian, I am happy to be here; otherwise a day seems a century." We know that Father Ravalli played an important part as intermediary between the government and disaffected Indians. Governor Stevens reports an interview with Father Ravalli, held in August, 1856, near Fort Walla Walla. The father had ridden over from the Coeur d'Alene mission, bringing important information concerning Kamiahkakan and other leaders; he had conversed also with members of the Spokane tribe--one and all they refused to attend the council to which Governor Stevens had summoned them. In fact, from the father's report it becomes evident that all the Indians in the upper country, if not openly hostile, were far from friendly. 77

At this Coeur d'Alene mission Father Ravalli's skill as an architect was again brought into use. He occupied what little time that was at his disposal in sculpturing a statue of Saint Mary and Saint John. Governor Stevens, passing through to the west coast in 1853, stopped at this spot and was so impressed by the church that he included account of it in his

76. Palladino, op. cit., pp. 61-70.
77. Stevens, Life, V. II, p. 75.
report. On this occasion, Governor Stevens and Father Ravalli did not meet, since the latter was away on a trip securing supplies; two years later the Governor was present when the oath of allegiance to the United States was administered to the Coeur d'Alene missionaries, who, according to his account of the episode, seemed much pleased with the idea of becoming American citizens.

During this period the only other available source of material concerning Father Ravalli comes from the journals of Major Owen. Among the records for June, 1855, while Owen was on one of his numerous trips west, he was in the mission vicinity and had his arm dressed by Father Ravalli. Three years later while the Major was on a similar expedition, his Indian wife, Nancy, took ill while the party was camped at the Forks of the Spokane River and Father Ravalli rode up from the mission to see her.

In 1860, Father Ravalli was transferred to Santa Clara, California, where he acted as master of novices in the Jesuit College. During the three years spent there he was given no opportunity to practice medicine and con-

78. Stevens, Report, Vol. 12, Part I, p. 133. "The Church stands a little distance from the rest and does much credit to those who erected it. It is constructed upon a plan designed by Pere Ravalli and is of the Roman demi-style of architecture. Pulleys and ropes were the only mechanical aids in the construction. Pere Ravalli is quite an architect and drew up many designs before the one adopted was selected."

79. Ibid., Vol. 12, Part I, p. 201. Stevens in his General Report, year 1855. "To show something which the missionaries have to undergo I will remark that Father Ravalli in his recent trip from the Dalles had the assistance of only two Indians and Indian boy in bringing up a train of twenty-two pack animals. He was obliged to see personally to the packing of each one of these animals doing most of the manual labor himself and could not get off (though he commenced of early dawn) until toward ten o'clock in the morning."

sequently was most unhappy. So he was finally permitted to return to Montana—this time to St. Peter's Mission among the Blackfeet. Father Ravalli arrived there late in the fall and seemingly spent most of the interim rounding up the horde of prospectors who had come into the country, utterly unprepared to undergo the rigors of that extremely cold season. The mission was turned into hospital filled with patients suffering from frost bites, pneumonia, and other conditions which followed exposure and cold. Several amputations were necessary, no easy task when performed with the meager instruments which were all the father possessed. At length, with the breakup of winter, the chief surgeon's work was over, so he was now transferred to St. Ignatius.

Four years later, those in authority concluded that it might now be feasible to consider the rebuilding of the mission in the Bitter Root. In 1856 Father Ravalli was permitted to return to his beloved valley and from that time on until his death in 1884 he was to be closely associated with St. Mary's. Co-workers of his during this period, both in the Bitter Root and at the mission established at Hell Gate, were Father Joseph Bandini (1867-1872); Father Joseph Guidi and Father D'Aste.

With the return of the missionaries to the Bitter Root, naturally their first task was the selection of a site and the construction of a chapel upon it. In the earlier years, the main body of the chapel was reserved for the Indians; what white folks came to service sat in the small gallery,

82. Owen, op. cit., V. I, p. 319. (March 9, 1865) "March 1865—The fathers here on a visit of several days. The fathers intend building a church here. The father seems to be alarmed at the spiritual condition of his simple neophytes."
83. Ibid., V. II. (Oct. 17, 1866) "Had a visit from the Rev'd Father Giorda. Presented him with some glass-adobes and other things for the new chapel now in course of construction."
84. Information obtained from Mrs. James Lancaster, one of those who as a child sat and listened to the sonorous Latin phrases of the priest.
and a perusal of a few of the original manuscripts containing notes of the sermons preached, would indicate that the father, on occasion, spoke for the benefit of the few in the gallery, rather than for that of the many squatting in the central portion of the church.

For above all, it must be remembered that Father Ravalli was an ardent scholar; portions of his library can now be seen at the mission in St. Ignatius. Even the most cursory examination of those volumes would indicate that they belonged to a student. The volumes, some of which are dated as early as 1803, are many of them written in Italian; this is especially true of those pertaining to architecture; however, those of later date are chiefly in German and French and show that the father was always anxious to keep abreast of the times, particularly of the medical thought of his day. During the years spent at Santa Clara, he was able to satisfy, to a certain degree, this desire for knowledge both by the possible access to medical volumes and by having at hand a laboratory in which to experiment. He was never a theorist, however, avid as was his desire to know of the very latest development in the scientific world, he was possessed to a great degree of that spirit of invention so necessary a part of the equipment of the pioneer physician. His ingenuity in critical circumstances is borne out in various tales handed down by the early pioneers.

On one occasion he was called to Deer Lodge to render aid to a man who had been seriously injured. He found his patient to be suffering from a

85. Manuscripts now in possession of Mrs. Henry Buck-Stevensville. Stevens Reports, V. XII, Part I, p. 133. "In his room which I was kindly given to occupy (this incident took place at Coeur d'Alene mission) was a library. I observed it contained several standard works of architecture."

86. As related to me by Father J. P. O'Shea.

87. As related by Miss Mary Winslett.
fractured jaw. Lacking suitable equipment for the treatment of such an injury, Father Ravalli visited the nearest source of supply—a blacksmith shop—where he obtained a small drill, some fine wire, and a supply of tin. With this apparatus he drilled a hole on each side of the fracture, ran the wire through these, cinched the ends together; then using his tin, he made a splint for the man's face. Incidentally, the trip to Deer Lodge and back necessitated the travelling of one hundred miles on horseback with the attendant inconvenience of fording the river some twenty times.

Another instance occurred when Father Ravalli employed that most common of articles, the knitting needle; this episode took place at the home of Judge Woody of Missoula, the occasion being the illness of his small daughter. The trouble having been diagnosed as an abscess in the ear, the father borrowed Mrs. Woody's knitting needle, had it thoroughly sterilized and with it perforated the child’s eardrum. In both of the above mentioned cases, the patients made full recovery.

Father Ravalli won the confidence of the majority of those with whom he came in contact, but occasionally he encountered the ingratitude which is the inevitable lot of the busy practitioner. Thomas Harris was one of the few patients who seems not to have appreciated what was done for him and his family by Father Ravalli. One instance of this is found in his Diary when he indicates that the reverend Father is not doing all that he might to cure Harris of his sore throat. Another entry, when compared with that of similar date in Owen's Journal, shows this trait even more decidedly. Owen

89. Thomas Harris, Diary, quoted in Owen, op. cit., V. I, p. 300.
notes: "The Revd. Father Rivalli left for his Station at Hell Gate. He went by the way of 3 Mile crk by request of Mr. Harris to see his Daughter Lucinda who is sick."\(^{90}\) The diary of Harris, for the same date bears the entry: "Father Ravalli pays me a visit— one day lost."\(^{91}\)

In the category of the dissatisfied, there is a brief record of yet one other individual—Joseph Lompre—a trader and trapper, who became an employee of Major Owen. In the summer of 1866, Lompre's eye began bothering him and after a time he was confined to the house on account of this affliction. Over a period of almost two years, this condition continued in spite of the remedies suggested by Father Ravalli and Dr. Baker, the agency physician, who made regular trips to the valley. Finally, Lompre grew disgusted and at his wife's urgent request (his wife was a Shoshone Indian) he placed himself under the care of an "Indian doctor." His eyes began almost immediately to show improvement and continued to become steadily better.\(^ {92}\) He lived until 1890, reportedly minus this affliction.

Fortunately, however, the two mentioned cases were exceptions to the general rule; so great was the confidence which older families had in Father Ravalli, that in later years he was sometimes summoned to give his aid in a case being cared for by another doctor. The father's tactfulness in refusing to see patients in any vicinity where another doctor resided, unless summoned in consultation by the physician himself, always won him a new friend and his unfailing ethical treatment of fellow physicians deservedly brought him their greatest respect.\(^ {93}\)

\(^{90}\) Owen, op. cit., V. II, p. 46.
\(^{91}\) Harris, Diary, quoted in Owen, op. cit., V. II, p. 46n.
\(^{92}\) Owen, op. cit., V. II, pp. 25, 51, 63, 64, 101.
\(^{93}\) Mrs. Allen Eller of Alberton, a granddaughter of Dr. Baker.
Father Ravalli was likewise a great favorite with all the children of the valley; one of their greatest treats was to be allowed to go to pay him a visit. If it were summertime he was frequently to be found in his garden, back of the mission. There he planted innumerable herbs with which he was never tired experimenting; there, too, was his sundial and a small rustic bridge of which he was very proud. Sometimes the father would be occupied in carving some bit of wood with which to decorate the mission; occasionally he was to be found at work upon a much needed piece of furniture for the cabin occupied by him and his associates. Great was the excitement amongst the younger generation when the father started work on a life-sized figure of St. Ignatius. The intricate steps towards its completion were eagerly watched and some doubts were expressed when the father indicated his intention of using an old piece of deerskin as a foundation garment with which to cloak the figure; when this, however, had been thoroughly immersed in tar, it began to assume the appearance natural to that of a "Blackrobe", and the onlookers all agreed that the finished statue was the most remarkable product which Father Ravalli had made. Frequently, when an object was finished, the children would beg to be allowed to go into the church to witness this new ornament being placed in the position chosen for it. To this repeated request they were invariably given the same, gentle reply: "Why, of course, you may come, but you must not laugh while you are inside!" And, some of those children, many of them Protestants, still carry with them that feeling of reverence for that which is sacred, together with loving memories of the "nicest old man I ever knew." 94

94. As related by Mrs. Eva Buck, who, as Eva Landrum, was one of the children who visited there.
Yet, he was never too tired to respond when his services were needed, and even after he was bedridden, utilizing the same litter on which many of his former patients had been carried to him, he now reversed the process and when the need was urgent, was thus carried to his patient's side. 95

Though his own illness was of long duration, he was a most patient sufferer; he read a great deal and whenever possible, he employed his time in the making of presents for his friends. One of the most interesting of these gifts was that of a gun presented to Major Ronan. Mrs. Ronan thus refers to it:

Among my momentos of Father Ravalli, I have a muzzle-loading double-barrelled shot gun. The metal part of the gun were found by an Indian on a hunting expedition in the Mission Mountains, back of the old Hudson's Bay Company's post and was brought by him to Mr. Ronan. The Indian said that the gun had lain so long that when he picked it up, the wooden part crumbled. The gun was of fine workmanship, with scrolled silver work around the breech and stock; behind the double hammers was a plate bearing the inscription "Lord S", in gold letters, and also in gold letters, between the barrels, immediately in front of the breach, the maker's name. . . . Because of my husband's romantic interest in it, Father Ravalli took the gun to Stevensville, assembled it, adding to the parts a wooden stock, beautifully carved by himself, with a deer head on the grip and fine scroll work along the sides of the stock; on the right he set in a silver name plate with ornamentation of filigree; on it, he inscribed "Peter Ronan." All this he did when confined by illness to his bed. 96

Thus far, the account of those last twenty years of his life in the Bitter Root might indicate that the major portion of the father's work was carried on amongst the white settlers. This would be an erroneous conclusion; although the lessened number of Indians in the valley and their changed mode of life naturally made the relationship between them and their priest a vastly different one than it had been in the days when the mission was first founded, Father Ravalli still continued to be their mentor and friend. The

95. As related by Mrs. Edison Buker, sister of one of the patients to whom Father Ravalli thus ministered.
96. Margaret Ronan, op. cit., p. 338.
mission itself was maintained, primarily, for the sake of the Indians and was closed when in 1891, the Flatheads finally withdrew from the valley. He frequently assisted in the negotiations between the government and the Indians and even during those last years when he was bedridden, was their sole medical adviser and dispenser of medicines.

His death occasioned universal sadness; the flag at Stevensville was flown at half-mast for several days and his funeral services were attended by people from all parts of Montana Territory. The passing years have brought recognition to Father Ravalli; in 1893, when Missoula County was divided, the upper portion, in which the mission is located, was given his name. In 1926, in the grounds surrounding St. Mary's chapel, was erected a stone tablet, dedicated jointly to Father De Smet and Father Ravalli. But the recognition which I believe would have given the most pleasure to this greatly beloved character is the pilgrimage made to his grave by each Flathead Indian who visits the Bitter Root Valley, together with the caption which the monument itself bears:

Montana's tribute to Father Antony Ravalli, who spent forty years in this far west for the good of souls and suffering mankind, as a zealous missionary and charitable physician.

98. Most fittingly, those selected to unveil this tablet were Dorothea Buck, granddaughter of Amos Buck, one of the early settlers in the valley, and the grandson of Chief Charlot.
The Exploring Expeditions of Stevens and Mullan

The fifties were to bring many interesting characters to the Bitter Root, men who were to play an important part in the development of the state of Montana; during this period the valley itself was to act as a focal point for expeditions working in this general region. In 1853, Congress appropriated $150,000 for the survey of railroad routes from the Mississippi to the Pacific; of the five separate exploring expeditions, Isaac I. Stevens headed the party charged with investigating the section of country lying between the forty-seventh and forty-ninth parallels. Although General Stevens was but thirty-four years of age at the time of his appointment, his fitness to act not only in this capacity but also to assume the additional duties of governor of the Territory of Washington had been indicated by the role he had played in the Mexican War. 99

When cognizant of the double responsibility which he was soon to assume, General Stevens at once began making as detailed a study of the region to be explored as was possible with the meager sources of information at that time available. It was felt that the best work would be accomplished by two parties working simultaneously from both ends of the route—accordingly Captain George McClellan was ordered to proceed to the Pacific Coast, via Cape Horn, and having reached Washington, he was to start east, exploring the passes of the most westerly mountains. Also operating from the western coast was a subsidiary party under Lieutenant Saxton, who with

a stock of supplies was to proceed from the lower Columbia to the Bitter Root Valley. 100 Most interesting are certain sections of the orders issued to both Captain McClellan and to Lieutenant Saxton relative to the necessity of making the parties under their command independent of receiving aid from the Hudson's Bay Company, and their joint responsibility for seeing that the Indians of the territory were taught to look to the Americans rather than to the British Company for aid:

I am exceedingly desirous no exertion should be spared to have means of our own for our expedition, and shall much prefer to be in condition to extend aid than to be obliged to receive aid from others. Whilst we will gratefully receive aid from the company in case of necessity, let it be our determination to have within ourselves the means of the most complete efficacy. I am more and more convinced that in our operations we should be self-dependent, and whilst we exchange courtesies and hospitalities with the Hudson's Bay Company, the people and the Indians of the Territory would see that we have all the elements of success in our hands. The Indians must look to us for protection and counsel. They must see that we are their true friends and be taught not to look as they have been accustomed to, to the Hudson Bay Company. I am so impressed with this fact that I wish no Indian presents to be procured from British posts.101

The party under Lieutenant Saxton is of particular interest to the student of western Montana history. The lieutenant arrived in Vancouver June 27, 1853, after some time spent in San Francisco securing supplies and assistants.102 His assembled party numbered fifty-two; the personnel of the group was varied. In addition to the officers in charge, there were eighteen soldiers,103 twenty-three packers, three herders, two cooks and a guide. The route followed was from Vancouver to Les Dalles, thence to

100. Stevens, Report, V. XII, Part I, p. 98.
103. Ibid., V. I, p. 260. "The soldiers may well complain—seven dollars a month is poor compensation for such hardships."
Fort Walla Walla. There Lieutenant Arnold ascertained that the most direct route to the Bitter Root—the southern Nez Perce trail, via the Koos-koos-kia—was a most difficult and hazardous one, hence he decided to proceed by the longer trail via Pend d'Oreille Lake. Enroute, at the Spokane River the party encountered Major Owen and his brother Frank. Major Owen was on his way west, having definitely abandoned Fort Owen on account of the frequent depredations of the Blackfeet in that vicinity. His chance meeting with Lieutenant Saxton led Major Owen to return with him to the Bitter Root and to re-establish the fort there. The expedition, thus increased in number, continued on its way up the Clark's Fork. Upon reaching Thompson's prairie they found that the Hudson's Bay post there had likewise been abandoned due to the hostility of the Blackfeet. The group finally arrived at St. Mary's village August 28th.

Upon reaching the Bitter Root, Lieutenant Saxton was very worried to find there no word of the eastern expedition. Since they had been most unlucky in the transportation of supplies—a great many had been lost enroute—he decided to send back to Vancouver every man who could be spared so that as large as possible a proportion of the remaining stores would be available for the eastern contingent when it should arrive. Here again was manifested the generosity and unselfishness so typical of the entire expedition. Lieutenant MacFeely, surrendering the more desirable task of accompanying Lieutenant Saxton to Fort Benton, volunteered to assume control of the group to be sent back to the west coast; what is more, he led his party back over the Southern Nez Perce Trail, a most dangerous undertaking at that season of

104. The Fort Owen Journals contain no entries for this period.
the year. 105

In the meanwhile, the expedition which Stevens himself commanded had arrived in Fort Benton September 12th. A week previously Lieutenant Grover had been sent ahead with a small detachment to the Bitter Root to see if Lieutenant Saxton had arrived there as per schedule. In giving instructions to Lieutenant Grover, General Stevens stressed the importance of forwarding an express to General McClellan from the Bitter Root, and that a subsequent hasty return from that valley to Fort Benton was imperative. Relative to this proposed trip of Lieutenant Grover, General Stevens had been interrogating the Indians with whom he came in contact in regard to the amount of time necessary for a trip to the Bitter Root from Fort Benton, and was evidently depending on the information obtained from a certain Blood Indian that the trip could be made in four days. 106 This party under Lieutenant Grover was naturally unable to make the distance in the time scheduled, but fortunately the time element was no longer a vital matter, since this contingent encountered enroute that of Lieutenant McClellan eastward bound.

It was at this time, too, that Lieutenant John Mullan first appears in connection with the history of this region. He had been sent southward with a party of six men to follow out General Stevens' command to explore the country about the Muscle Shell, to make overtures of friendship to the Flatheads who were reported to be hunting in that region and was then to proceed to join the main party in the Bitter Root. He carried out his instructions, crossing the mountains by the pass now bearing his name.

106. Ibid., V. XII, Part I, p. 100.
Having likewise dispatched Lieutenant Tinkham to explore the BearPaw Mountains, Stevens himself escorted the main party to the Bitter Root; upon reaching the summit of the Rockies, he issued a proclamation declaring a civil territorial government to be extended and inaugurated over the new territory of Washington.\textsuperscript{107} The route followed by his party was up Sun River, thence to Dearborn River. From that point, having traversed Caddotte's Pass, the party descended into Blackfoot Valley, then down to Hell Gate and up the Bitter Root to Fort Owen. Here General Stevens was subsequently joined by the other members of the expedition, though one group, namely that being led by F. W. Lander, managed to get lost, for its leader mistook Hell Gate River for St. Mary's, wandered about for some time and then had to double back on his tracks, finally crossing the mountains just east of Fort Owen by means of a trail which was but infrequently used by the natives of the region.\textsuperscript{108}

While in the valley, General Stevens had a series of talks with the Flathead Indians, in the course of which he informed them that he had given Major Owen a license to trade with them and that he was leaving Lieutenant Mullan in the valley to see that their rights were not invaded; he then went on to inform them of the great Council which he was planning for the following year and how the Blackfeet had already signified their desire for such a council in order that they might make everlasting peace with the Flatheads, the Nez Perce, Snakes and other nearby tribes. The Flatheads listened very politely to all this but when assured that their hereditary enemies, the Blackfeet, were desirous of making everlasting peace,

\textsuperscript{107} Stevens, \textit{Life}, V. I, pp. 375-380.
\textsuperscript{108} Owen, \textit{op. cit.}, V. I, p. 345. Here is found a map depicting the routes of the exploring parties in this region.
they became very dubious. Naturally, they had many questions to ask General Stevens as to how this millennium was to be accomplished, to which queries that muchly harassed gentleman made invariable reply to the effect that all such problems would be directed to Lieutenant Mullan, whom he was leaving in the valley for that express purpose.\(^{109}\)

Having thus arranged affairs in the Bitter Root, and having dispatched Lieutenant Tinkham to explore Marias Pass, Stevens continued west. To the student of Bitter Root history, the most interesting portion of the General's narrative for this period is that which depicts the route followed by Dr. Suckley, a member of the expedition who had resolved to make the trip west by water.

Dr. Suckley had a successful canoe trip,—Dr. Suckley in preparing for his voyage down the Bitter Root, found considerable difficulty in constructing a canoe suitable for the purpose, as the Indians and White inhabitants were totally unacquainted with any means of navigating the river, neither boat nor canoe having ever ascended higher than the Horse Plain, at the junction of the Bitter Root with Clarke's Fork or Flathead River. There seems to be no inducement for them to navigate it, as their hunting grounds lie in another direction and they are too indolent to explore a new route, if not absolutely necessary. At last, a skin canoe was made of three bullocks' hides, stretched over a frame, and on October 15th, he embarked with two white men and an Indian as a crew. No one knew anything as to the character of the river ahead of them and it was necessary therefore to proceed with caution. It was found quite shallow in many places and the canoe, which when loaded, drew only ten inches of water, had frequently to be lightened until he passed the Hell Gate.\(^ {110}\)

It took the docter twenty-five days to reach the Pend d'Oreille mission; in the interim, the party had exhausted its provisions and the improvised boat had so rotted that it was necessary at this point to obtain a new one.

\(^{109}\) Stevens, Report, V. XII, pp. 120-129.
\(^{110}\) Ibid., V. I, p. 291.
Meanwhile, in the Bitter Root Lieutenant Mullan was showing himself capable of coping with the varied problems which he was to encounter in the years 1853-54. He established his quarters some ten miles above Fort Owen; being some distance from the main camp of the Indians he might better regulate relations between them and his own men. This establishment, consisting of some four log buildings and a corral, was erected at a total expenditure of twenty-five dollars and was given the name Cantonment Stevens. The party which was stationed at this post had none too easy a time. They were forced to live largely on meat, since many of the provisions which had been left for them in the fall were spoiled and Governor Stevens found it impossible to get off a supply train to the Bitter Root until the following June.

Each member of the group stationed at Cantonment Stevens had a particular duty to perform. The task allotted to Fred H. Burr was that of making meteorological observations. This record, kept by him from October 9th, 1853 until September 18th, 1854, is decidedly interesting. It shows that the minimum temperature during that period was twenty-nine degrees below zero, a minimum reached January 19th. The record also shows that even in this coldest month, the only one of the twelve in which the thermometer dropped below zero, the mean temperature was thirteen degrees above zero. On the other hand, the maximum temperature recorded, that of August 4th, 1854, was ninety-six degrees above zero. During the entire summer the thermometer reached ninety degrees but six times; the mean temp-

111. Stevens, Report, V. I, pp. 319-352. V. XII, Part I, p. 181, contains a sketch of Cantonment Stevens made by Sohon, a member of the party located there.
112. Ibid., V. I, pp. 585-599.
temperatures for June, July and August being 64.2 degrees, 71.9 degrees and 72.6 degrees above zero.

While Cantonment Stevens was still in the process of construction, Lieutenant Mullan made a hurried trip to Fort Hall, and another to Fort Benton; expeditions in which he travelled almost a thousand miles and in the course of which he crossed the mountains six times. Prior to taking the trip to Fort Hall, Mullen had ascended the Bitter Root river to its sources and had then descended into the valley of the Wisdom and Jefferson Rivers. In March, he made another hurried expedition to Fort Benton; he left there with a loaded wagon drawn by four mules and two weeks later he was back at Cantonment Stevens, having conclusively proved that his cherished project of a wagon road from Fort Benton was feasible at least as far as the Bitter Root.

Having succeeded thus far, he was anxious to discover a route west of Hell Gate. The hazardous trips of MacNeely and Tinkham had definitely ruled out the possibility of the Southern Nez Perce route, so armed with information given him by the Indians, Lieutenant Mullan proceeded to explore the Flathead River and the country north of it. This trip proved uneventful, until he had nearly reached home; then while crossing the flooded Hell Gate River, he nearly lost his life while trying to cross the river on a raft which became unmanageable in the swift current.

In August, 1854, Lieutenant Mullan's party was ordered from the

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field. He left the valley with the sincere regret of all the Indians who knew or had heard of him, convincing evidence that in this particular, at least, he had been successful in the task which had been allotted to him in the preceding year by General Stevens. What is more, in a subsequent report of the work accomplished in the Bitter Root relative to establishing a feeling of confidence amongst the Flatheads, the General wrote of Mullan:

Not one unpleasant thing occurred during his year's sojourn in the wilderness, which marred the propriety of the intercourse of his party with them (the Indians) or tended to diminish his influence over them.

Mullan was resolved to explore yet one more route over the mountains while nominally carrying out instructions to proceed with his party to the west coast. Accordingly he led those in his command out of the Bitter Root by means of the Lo-Lo pass, a route which he found to be the most difficult of any which he had examined.

Lieutenant Mullan returned to Washington, D. C. in January of 1855, and nothing was done about his proposed wagon road for some years. Governor Stevens was then in Congress, urging the carrying out of such a plan, but the War Department, although favoring the idea (some $30,000 had at first been appropriated for the undertaking), felt that it would prove a useless performance unless accompanied by a military detachment. However, the Mormon disturbances and the Indian Wars of 1856-58 brought the project into a more favorable light, since it was becoming obvious that from now on it

116. Owen, op. cit., V. I, p. 75. "Aug. 7, 1854, I learn from Mr. H. (Higgins) that Lieutenant Mullan is to abandon his post in the Bitter Root valley—also Mr. Doty his at Fort Benton and they are to proceed on to the Dalles as soon as practicable."
118. Ibid., p. 10.
it would be necessary to have a large body of soldiers stationed at Fort Walla Walla. Mullen himself returned to the west and took part in the campaigns against the Indians. Then armed with information concerning the wants and needs of the region, co-incident to the Indian campaigns, he made his way back to Washington, D.C. and on this occasion was a successful enough lobbyist to secure the desired action. In March, 1859, Congress passed a bill appropriating $100,000 for the proposed road and instructions concerning its building were issued to Mullan.

In pursuance of his instructions, Lieutenant Mullan immediately started west; the fall and winter of 1859-60 he spent in exploration of the proposed route. Many in his party had been with him in 1853; most notable of these was Lieutenant Sohon, who on this occasion acted as explorer and interpreter. Also in the group was Walter de Lacey, to whom was entrusted the task of making a map and report.

Although the headquarters for Mullan's party were no longer located in the Bitter Root, his stock was wintered there and intercourse was frequent between Fort Owen and Mullan's two camps in the vicinity, Cantonment Jordan located near St. Regis pass, and Cantonment Wright, situated near the mouth

120. Mullan, op. cit., pp. 95-100.
121. Stevens, Report, V. XII, Part I, p. 198. "Gustavus Sohon, a private of the 4th Infantry, who was with Mr. Mullan in the Bitter Root, who had shown great taste as an artist and ability in intercourse with the Indians."
122. Owen, op. cit., V. I, pp. 263-264. De Lacey was a most welcome visitor at Fort Owen and was frequently there even after the Mullan road was completed, on one occasion he won the Major's gratitude by obtaining for him the correct time. Ibid., V. I, pp. 277-278. De Lacey spent the greater portion of the winter of 1862-63 in the Bitter Root and in April surveyed Owen's claim to a tract of nearly 600 acres, including the ground upon which the fort stood.
of the Big Blackfoot. Mullan himself spent Christmas of 1861 as a guest at the fort, and many of the reports for this period were written in Major Owen’s comfortable office and bear the heading, "Fort Owen," for the Major was very interested in the progress of the road and did everything possible to aid Mullan in the building of it. No less helpful was the attitude of the Flathead Indians. At a time when the nearby tribes were most restive and when they themselves had very just grounds for complaint against the government they made frequent demonstration of their affection for Lieutenant Mullan. Mullan refers to this in his report:

Having perfected all the details for resuming work in the spring of 1860, I proceeded to the Bitter Root valley and held a talk with the Indians whose dispositions towards myself had always been friendly. The necessity of getting supplies from Fort Benton, and the condition of my own animal, compelled me to lay my wants before the Flatheads. I told them I needed one hundred and seventeen horses, with pack saddles, and from fifteen to twenty of their men to accompany Mr. Sohon across the mountains. They promised me a reply the next day.—The next morning their chief, Ambrose, came to Fort Owen, where I was a guest, with a bundle of one hundred and thirty-seven sticks, each representing a horse or a man. Such nobleness of character as is found among some of the Flatheads is seldom seen among Indians; and I here record to their credit that I never had a want but which, when made known to them, they supplied and that they always treated myself and my parties with a frank generosity and a continuous friendship.

Another incident, which is of a more personal nature, took place the following year:

At the mouth of the Deer Lodge river, I met a Flathead Indian, who could talk a little English. I asked him where the soldiers were. I said I had a letter for Mullan and he said he would swim the river and take it to him. I gave the Indian the letter and he swam the swift current of that great river with the letter between his teeth and landed after going down the stream nearly a mile. I was then a good swimmer but I would not then undertake to swim that river for any consideration. 125

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123. Owen, op. cit., V. I, p. 238.
125. Robert Vaughan, Then and Now, p. 135.
By July, 1860, the road had been completed as far east as Hell Gate, and at Mullan's urgent request, the road was tried out by the government, send over it a detachment of soldiers detailed for duty in Washington Territory. The passage of this group indicated that his road was a success, for the government was saved some $30,000 by the use of this direct route.126

Mullan was, however, to spend two more years working upon it; the winter of 1861-62 was a very severe one and Mullan, located at Cantonment Wright, was forced at frequent intervals to suspend operations entirely. Many of the workers suffered from frost bite and other hardships incident to the intense cold—provisions were hard to obtain and much of the stock perished. In spite of these numerous setbacks, the lieutenant was able to complete his road by the fall of 1862, thus opening up a highway over which were to pass many of those whom came to the Bitter Root and made permanent homes there.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS WITH THE INDIANS OF THE BITTER ROOT VALLEY

Characteristic of the careless methods employed by the Indian Department during the second half of the nineteenth century, is the story of its relations with the Indians of the Bitter Root Valley. Elaborate treaty promises, subsequently unfulfilled, spasmodic lavish expenditures on articles non-essential to the welfare and progress of the tribe, procrastination in the carrying out of any and all promises made to it, all show the usual utter lack of comprehension of actual conditions. When, coupled with this last trait, is found an insistence on the part of the government that its own instructions be carried out meticulously, a truly deplorable situation results.

The Flatheads first entered into definite treaty relationship with the United States government, when in 1855 they signed a treaty at Council Grove, a spot some nine miles west of the present city of Missoula.\(^{127}\) Two other tribes were also represented at this Council; the Pend d'Oreille and that of the Kutenai, and it was the desire of General Stevens, chief representative of the government on this occasion, that all three tribes be placed together on one reservation. But this plan met with opposition; Michelle, the Kutenai chief, was willing to join with Alexander, Pend d'Oreille chief, in taking his tribe on to a reservation, provided that the reservation be located on the Horse Plains and Jocko River, but neither of these two chiefs was willing to go to the site insisted upon by Victor, chief of the Flatheads, namely,—the Bitter Root Valley.

\(^{127}\) Stevens, Life, V. II, pp. 67-82.
After much fruitless discussion, General Stevens finally persuaded the three chiefs to sign a treaty, the terms of which were calculated to give satisfaction to the three tribes concerned. A reservation for the three tribes was to be established on the Jocko but additional clauses in the treaty provided that only under specified circumstances would the Flatheads be obligated to make their home there. Since the terms of this treaty which deal primarily with the Flatheads were the subject of much controversy for a period of thirty-five years, it might be well to quote that portion:

It is, moreover, provided that the Bitter Root Valley, above the Loo-Lo Fork, shall be carefully surveyed and examined, and if it shall prove, in the judgment of the President, to be better adapted to the wants of the Flathead tribe than the general reservation, provided for in this treaty, then such portions of it as may be necessary, shall be set aside as a separate reservation for the said tribe. No portion of Bitter Root Valley above the Loo-Lo Fork shall be open to settlement until such examination is had and the decision of the President shall be made known.128

The Flatheads were also co-signers of a treaty made in October of 1855, with the Piegan, Blood, Upper Pend d'Oreille, Kutenai, Blackfeet, Gros Ventre, Nez Perce (and Flathead) Indians.129 This treaty, signed at the junction of the Judith and Missouri Rivers, guaranteed to all these tribes a joint hunting grounds, the boundaries of the said grounds being designated as follows:

. . . (the) territory lying within lines drawn from the Hell Gate or Medicine Rock Passes in the main range of the Rocky Mountains, in an easterly direction to the nearest source of the Muscle Shell River, thence to the mouth of Twenty-Five Yard Creek, thence up the Yellowstone River to its northern source, and thence along the main range of the Rocky Mountains, in a northerly direction, to the point of beginning.130

128. C. J. Kappler, Indian Affairs; Laws and Treaties, (2 V., Washington, 1904).
129. II, Treaties, p. 725.
130. Ibid., V. II, p. 736.
Prior to the signing of these treaties, in 1854, Thomas Adams had been appointed special agent to the Flatheads; Dr. R. H. Landsdale assumed that position in 1855; in 1856, Major Owen was designated as special agent to the Indians of the Bitter Root Valley and in 1858 became regular agent for the tribe. In this last-named choice, the Flatheads were most fortunate since Major Owen always had their best interests at heart and was always ready to fight for what he considered their just rights. His attitude toward his charges may be summed up in his own words, phrases used by him in a letter to the Indian Department: "They are Indians, it is true, but at the same time they are human beings." Though the treaty was signed in 1855, years were to elapse before it was ratified; in the interim, Major Owen had done all possible to better the condition of those under his care—a farm had been started and some one hundred acres placed under cultivation. As a reward for the faithfulness of this tribe during trying times, the Major was granted special permission by the government to secure for the Flatheads a resident blacksmith as well as an agency physician.

Meanwhile, as a number of years elapsed without their treaty having been ratified, this normally submissive tribe had grown most restive; during the Indian troubles of 1856-58, Major Owen repeatedly reported to his superiors that unless the government would soon take action in the matter of carrying out its treaty obligations to these Indians he would be unable to hold them under his control. In his characteristic fashion, he stated

132. Ibid., V. XII, Part I, p. 220.
133. Owen, op. cit., V. II, p. 185.
134. Ibid., V. II, pp. 185-193; V. I, pp. 226-227.
in October of 1859:

There is but little satisfaction in being an agent under the circumstances and I candidly believe it is nothing but my long residence and straight course which I have adopted with these Indians that render my living among them any use whatsoever.—My brain (though) fertile as it is has been seriously taxed for Excuses to Cover the Tardiness of the Govt." 135

The Major went on to show the coming danger from intrusion of white settlers, many of whom, much to the alarm of the Indians, had already settled above the Lo-Lo Fork. According to Owen, many of these newcomers were under the impression that the whole country had been thrown open to settlement under the terms of the treaty of 1855. A number of men who had been with Lieutenant Mullan in the valley had signified their intention of remaining; Captain Richard Grant had recently arrived in the Bitter Root with three hundred head of cattle. In addition to these existing evils, the Major foresaw the even greater danger bound to arise from the increase in traffic which would be a natural outcome from the opening of the road at that time being constructed between Fort Benton and Fort Walla Walla.

Finally in May, 1860, came the long-awaited information that Congress had in May of that year made provision for the fulfilling of the Flathead Treaty. 136 But this was far from putting an end to Owen's troubles, for the letter from the Department notifying him of this all important fact also carried such paragraphs as these:

In regard to the erection of buildings for the Industrial school and the employment of teachers therefor, in view of the fact that instructions regarding the organizations of schools for the Indian tribes are expected from the Commissioner of Indian affairs, I have to advise

136. Ibid., V. II, pp. 205-209.
that you postpone action for the present.

... On account of the great difficulty and expense of transporting the necessary machinery from this side of the continent, required for the Grist Mill to be erected at your agency, I deem it best that you defer its construction until next year when the materials can be brought up the Missouri to Fort Benton.

Closely following the disappointment incurred by the receipt of such news, came the invoices of purchases which had been made for the Flatheads.

It was then that Owen expressed himself in no uncertain terms, in a fashion most infrequently employed by Indian Agents when reporting to their superiors. His letter, on this occasion, was as follows: 137

Your communication 23d inst with invoices of purchases made by the Indian Dept on the Eastern side of the continent has been received. I regret exceedingly that the purchases were made without a requisition being made from my agency, setting forth the Articles most desired for the Flathead Nation. I have examined the Invoice with care and find it will amount to some Twenty five Thousand Dollars ($25000) The purchase could have been cut down one half and that amount invested in Heifers would have gone much further towards benefiting the Indians than tons of Coffee, Rice and Hardbread that are now en route for my Agency and shipped too at a very heavy expense. Hard bread is the last thing my Indians require & it would have been much better if flour was necessary to have purchased the wheat in the Bitter Root Valley & had it ground there. You will see by this purchase that the Thirty six thousand dollars the first installment due the Flathead Nation is over two thirds gone. I fear the Indians will not be satisfied in having so large an amount of property a great deal of which is perfectly useless forced upon them in payment for their lands, without their consent ever being asked or obtained. There is no building material shipped. No irons for either Mill & in fact many things absolutely necessary for the Indians have been omitted such as Guns, Kettles Ammunition Tin Ware & & which if purchased in this market and shipped to Flathead agency at present rates of transportation which is 40¢ per lb will involve a very heavy expense. One invoice 650 prs Blue Blankets are seriously objectionable, another 120 dz shawls equally so. another 1166-3/4 yds Flannel Equally so and ... what makes it appear doubly strange to me that so foolish a purchase should have been made is that the Indian Dept was advised from your office on the 22d day last December a paragraph of which I here quote in part where you refer to Articles required for the Flathead Nation such as Plows Waggons and other farming utensils. Tools for the shops of the Carpenter, Black-

137. Owen, op. cit., V. II, pp. 209-211.
smith, Tinner Waggon and Plow Maker, Machinery for the saw & grist mill & none of which (have bbn sent) save a few hand saws augers drawing Knives & Gimblets a sufficient quantity in themselves to stock a half dozen shops. Six plows & a few hoes, forks sickles & Scythes constitute the farming utensils. Twenty five plows would not have been amiss. How far will six plows go towards furnishing several hundred Indians. If the Department will Keep the Hard bread, Rice & Coffee at home and encourage the Indian in farming I will make myself responsible for the result. The Flatheads are not a barbarous people. They know very well that the lands they sold were not to be paid for in hard bread and the like . . . Their advancement in the scale of social life is not promoted in the shipment of trash, they may be pleased for the moment but no permanent good results from the adoption of such a course. The Department may rest assured that I will use every honorable effort to quiet the Nation under my charge and promote the friendly feeling that exists between them and the white man.

If such communications were typical, it is perhaps not surprising that Owen's report for the year 1860 was not included in the published Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; accordingly Owen refused to submit a report for the year 1861.138 He did, however, continue to do his utmost to help the Indians, though conditions in the valley at this time were not conducive to their welfare. Fugitives from all sections were pouring into the Bitter Root;139 destitute Snake Indians had taken up an abode there and were committing all manner of depredations, renegades of varying description did everything in their power to incite these hitherto loyal Indians to revolt against organized authority. That such individuals were to a measure successful is borne out by the fact that for the first time in their history, many of the Flatheads began to steal.140 Major

139. Ibid., V. II, p. 233.
140. Ibid., V. II, p. 214. "I am at a loss to know what I had better do with our horses. Indians are stealing right and left--Pend d'Oreilles, Nez Perces and Flatheads all stealing." This notation inserted in the Journals by some unknown individual in charge of the fort during one of Major Owen's frequent absences. When the major was in the valley the Flatheads, at least, behaved themselves.
Owen again and again reported matters to the Indian bureau, stating his inability to cope with such a situation, unaided as he was by any military force and repeatedly suggesting the necessity of confirming to the Flathead Tribe, at least temporarily, the conditional reservation in the Bitter Root, for it was his often expressed opinion that the Flatheads would never willingly leave it to remove to the Jocko reservation.\footnote{141}

A further perusal of certain letters written by Major Owen in the summer of 1862 indicates that he had received no salary as Indian agent for almost a year and a half; the employees at the Agency had fared but little better, and the Indians themselves had been forwarded but a small portion of their Annuities. Finally, tiring of rendering complaints concerning matters which were never rectified and realizing that the continuance of such complaints was futile, Major Owen asked to be relieved of his office, graphically describing the situation: "Cheerfully will I lay off my official robes—They are threadbare and out at the Elbows besides."\footnote{142}

Accordingly, in December of 1862 Charles Hutchens arrived at Jocko Agency to assume control and from that date on the Indian Department had no official representative in the Bitter Root Valley. Major Owen repeatedly speaks of the destitute condition of the Indians and frequently at his own expense saw to it that needed articles were furnished to them.

The reports of Indian Affairs during the sixties, all speak despondently of conditions in the Bitter Root;\footnote{143} the whites were now crowding into the valley, the Indians were becoming more and more sullen, and, lead on

\begin{footnotes}
\item[141] Owen, \textit{op. cit.}, V. II, p. 264.
\item[142] Ibid., V. I, p. 260.
\item[143] Report of Chapman, Flathead Indian Agent, March 3, 1866. (Ser.1284).
\end{footnotes}
by the examples furnished them by marauding Snakes, Bannocks and Blackfeet, were rapidly deteriorating into a most worthless race, hastened into this condition by the whiskey they could now obtain.\textsuperscript{144} The occasional distribution of food rations and clothing by the Agent at Jocko, satisfied them only temporarily and drought conditions in 1867-68, coupled with an invasion of grasshoppers merely served to bring matters to a crisis. At a conference, held with the Flatheads in June, 1867, Agent Wells found it impossible to make any adjustments\textsuperscript{145} --the Indians refused to do anything save reiterate that since the terms of the treaty of 1855 had never been carried out, the valley belonged to them and to them alone. Consequently, it is not surprising that a month later the most radical of the malcontents gathered at Lo-Lo, to discuss the possibility of ordering the white people to leave the valley.\textsuperscript{146} The white settlers probably exaggerated this affair in the hopes that it might be of aid in securing a Military Post somewhere in the vicinity and with it a market for their produce. At any rate, they resolved to take action; on March 1, 1868, they held a meeting at Stevensville and drew up a petition to the Secretary of the Interior that the Valley might be opened to settlement.\textsuperscript{147}

This action resulted in another delegation to treat with the Indians. Chief Victor indicated his willingness to have Major Owen act on behalf of the tribe;\textsuperscript{148} Colonel Cullen headed the delegation from the government.

\textsuperscript{144} Owen, \textit{op. cit.}, V. I, p. 321. "Victor, the head chief of the Flathead nation down today and filed complaints against the whites selling his people whiskey."
\textsuperscript{146} Owen, \textit{op. cit.}, V. II, p. 68.
\textsuperscript{147} \textit{Ibid.}, V. II, p. 96.
\textsuperscript{148} \textit{Ibid.}, V. II, pp. 121-122.
Major Owen received the impression, after a series of talks with the representatives of the government that they would recommend the buying of whatever improvements had been made by settlers in the Bitter Root and would suggest the wisdom of locating a reservation in that valley. After the departure of the delegation, nothing was heard concerning the results of their visit, a fact tersely reported by Major Owen: "These Peace Commissioners are one Stupendous Farce--They generally wind up in Smoke." In justice to Colonel Cullen, however, it must be noted that in spite of the failure of the government to act upon his advice, he did make the following recommendations: 149

... If deemed most expedient, a suitable reservation for the accommodation of the three tribes might be made in the Bitter Root Valley, as desired by the Flatheads. Four townships of six miles square each would probably be sufficient for all. This would necessitate the removal of a considerable number of white settlers, and in my opinion would not be so good for the Indians ... I would also recommend that the expenditures of money appropriated under the treaty here referred to be closely examined into, to the end that if any frauds have been committed the perpetrators of them may be brought to justice. The Flatheads have always conducted themselves with the utmost good faith towards us. In all my experience with Indians, I have never seen a nation whom I thought more deserving in every respect than the Flatheads, and I may add that I have never seen a tribe whom I thought had more just grounds of complaint.

Then, for a year, matters were again allowed to drift until in May 1869, General Sully became Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Montana. In October he came to the Bitter Root and made a treaty with the Indians which did not meet with the approval of the white settlers, since by its terms a reservation would be established in the valley and the two hundred white settlers would be deprived of their farms. 150 However, the treaty like that

of 1855, was not put into effect for Congress, in response to a Memorial which in February, 1869, had been addressed to it by the Montana legislature, passed in the fall of 1871, a bill opening up the valley for settlement. By the terms of this bill, the Surveyor-general of Montana Territory was to arrange for a survey of the Bitter Root Valley in the area above the Lo-Lo Fork and the lands were then to be opened for white settlement. The following June, a second bill was passed, appropriating five thousand dollars to care for the expense incidental to removing the Flatheads from the valley.  

This last came like the explosion of a bombshell to the Indians; they had resented what they had deemed the intrusion of the whites; now this was to be followed by forcible ejection from their tribal home. Chief Charlot immediately protested that the government had never carried out its promises made in the Treaty of 1855 and word was carried to Washington that the Flatheads were ready to resist their ejection by force of arms if necessary. 

Immediately General Garfield was appointed to treat with these Indians; he arrived in Montana in July and in the month which intervened before he reached the Bitter Root he had discovered that the danger had been greatly exaggerated, that the Flatheads were peacable and that no one had anything to fear from them. The ensuing conference with them was carried out with this thought in mind and with the desire to be finished with the troublesome matter as quickly as possible. To this end, unable to answer the queries of Charlot as to why the government had failed to make good its

promises in the past, he turned from him to the sub-chiefs Arlee and Adolph, and by dint of flattery and many enticing promises he persuaded them to sign a new treaty which provided for their removal to Jock Reservation.

This treaty Charlot refused to sign. General Garfield proceeded to act as though the signature had been obtained, seemingly labouring under the delusion that when all preparations had been made according to the treaty Charlot would finally consent to the arrangements and would go with his tribe. Charlot's name was not forged to the original document filed in the Indian Department, but the agreement published by that Department bore his signature; a fact which caused the head chief of the Flatheads to lose what little faith he had left in the United States government and its promises. Accordingly, he, and with him some three hundred and fifty followers, refused to leave the Bitter Root, and likewise refused to accept the patents of land which were available to them under the act of 1872, stating that they would remain in the valley as Indians, and not as citizens, since the government had failed to keep its share of the treaty of 1855, that treaty was therefore abrogated.

Perhaps, if conditions had been better at the reservation, some of the followers of Charlot might have been won over. As it was, the government was as slow as ever in carrying out the terms of its latest treaty—of the twenty houses ordered built by Garfield, only four had been even started a year later. Consequently, many of the families who had previously

154. Peter Ronan, History of the Flathead Indian Nation, 1813–1890, Helena, 1890, p. 62. "Under the 3d section of the act of 1872, patents for 160 acres of land each, were issued to 51 members of the tribe but they refused and still refuse to take them."

consented to go to Jocko, refused to budge and continued to roam at will in the Bitter Root. Many of the settlers sympathized with them in their plight, and were very good to those Indians who begged help from them. That the Indians appreciated this is borne out by the fact that in all the conversations which Agent Shanahan had with the settlers relative to their relations with the Flatheads, he received information of but one crime committed against the whites by the Indians. For this crime—the shooting of a cow, the culprit, according to the agent's report, had received one hundred and fifty lashes from Chief Charlot.

In 1884, Major Ronan, at that time Agent at the Jocko, was asked to escort Charlot and other prominent members of the tribe to Washington to see if such a visit could not offer a solution to such a long drawn-out problem. Every overture possible was made to Charlot but he was adamant—he would leave the valley if forced to do so by the President but he would not go up on the reservation. Even the inducement that he would once more be recognized as head chief, with its consequent humbling of Arlee, failed to make any impression upon him, so he was allowed to return to the valley on the self-same status which he had been occupying. However, as years went on, the settlers in the valley became more anxious to have their land ownership adjusted; in addition the summer of 1889 was one of great drought. Of the thirty-two Indian families left in the valley, but few received any kind

156. Peter Ronan, op. cit., pp. 58-68. In 1883, Major Ronan had accompanied a committee consisting of Senator George G. Vest and Major Martin Maginnis, to the Bitter Root. Their report of the conditions there resulted in the trip to Washington.

157. Report of Peter Ronan, Indian Agent, Report of Indian Affairs for 1891, p. 281. Special inducements had been offered to individual members of Charlot's band until now only the faithful few remained with him in the Bitter Root.
of a crop. Even Charlot was forced to ask for help and the citizens of
the valley were besieged by demands for food from the hungry Indians.

Consequently, in November 1889, General Carrington was appointed to
visit the Bitter Root, appraise the Indian claims, make arrangements for
paying them for their claims and for removing them from the valley. Gen­
eral Carrington was well versed in Indian affairs and consequently was
well adapted to the job he was to undertake. He began his conference by
showing to the chief the original of the contract made with the Indians in
1872; when Charlot was able to see with his own eyes that his signature
had not been forged and that his statement that he had never signed the
treaty was thus confirmed, the old chief was once more ready to co-operate.
Accordingly, a treaty was arranged, a treaty worthy of note in that it
really was based upon a sincere desire to recognize the rights and feel­
ings of the Indians and render them such justice as could be given at so
late a date. 159

158. Report of Henry B. Carrington, Special Commissioner to the Flatheads,
51st Cong. 1st Sess. (Ser. 2686) Senate Ex. Doc. 70, pp. 1-5.
159. Ibid., p. 12. The terms with Charlot were as follows: "Articles of
agreement made this 3d day of Nov. 1889—between Henry B. Carrington,
special agent to secure the several consents of certain of the Flat­
head Indians to whom patents were issued for lands assigned to them
in the Bitter Root valley under provision of an Act of Congress ap­
proved June 5, 1872.
"Of the first part and the hereditary chief of said Flathead Indi­
ants, who alone of the three chiefs then living, viz Charles—1st Chief,
Arlie 2nd Chief and Adolph 3rd Chief, did not sign the contract called
the Garfield Agreement, dated at Jocko Reservation, Aug. 27, 1872—
"... And the said 2nd party is the hereditary chief of the Flathead
Indians known as Charles' band, agrees also to move with the Indians of
his tribe, now in the Bitter Root valley to the Jocko reservation in
the spring of 1890 upon the acceptance given in writing that besides
the choice of location on Jocko reservation allotted him in paper of
this date, the old Arlie property for the benefit of himself and chil­
dren and grandchildren, and the removal of himself and effects without
cost to him; that the 32 families of his people, who on account of the
dry season have had scant crops and who in view of their removal will
need and shall have sent to Stevensville for distribution according to
their actual necessities, sufficient flour, sugar, coffee, tea, rice
and bacon, until the time of their removal, and that the burial ground
near St. Mary's mission and the graves of the buried Flathead Indians
shall have due protection and honor."
The treaty having been drawn up, General Carrington proceeded to the more tedious portion of his mission, that of appraising the lands held by the Indians. His interpreters were carefully chosen—Father D'Aste, who had been known by the Flatheads for many years, Michael Revais, official interpreter at the Jocko reservation, together with Eneas Francois, a patentee who was personally known by every member of the tribe. General Carrington apparently considered time no object and patiently made visit after visit to certain families whose claim in some fashion or other was obscure. The claims were finally narrowed down to fifty-one. A glance at the map which the Major attached to his report shows that the majority of these forty-acre tracts were located largely in the following localities—several up Eight Mile, a few close to the Pines Ranch then owned by the Bass brothers; a number up Three Mile, some thirty surrounding the town of Stevensville and the adjacent Burnt Fork (the map shows practically every section in the latter locality owned by Indians), a few just east of the Ourlaw mines and a number near Corvallis. None are indicated for the upper end of the valley.

General Carrington found upon further investigation that Chief Charlot was but one of many who was not residing upon land allotted to him; many of the patentees were living on the reservation and had never occupied their lands; in other instances, settlers had leased the land for a ninety-nine year period. Certain of the holdings overlapped the grant made to John Owen; of the township in which the town of Stevensville was located, it was discovered that eighty-one forty acre holdings belonged to the Indians; in still other cases, settlers had made improvements upon Indian lands, in good faith that the land was open to settlement.

One of two examples mentioned by General Carrington will give a fair idea of some of the difficulties which he had to encounter. As has been stated, General Garfield had remained in the Bitter Root but one day; as a result any who rightly deserved claims according to the terms then offered to the Indians, failed to receive them, while others wholly undeserving were given desirable plots of land. The government was determined that justice would be given, consequently General Carrington received instructions to seek out the widow or heirs in whatsoever cases the actual claimant was no longer living. This in many instances brought unforeseen difficulties, and the situations which he encountered would in many instances have proved ludicrous, were they not in reality so pathetic. For example, the widow of Chief Adolph claimed that she had a daughter Mary Anne living at Stevensville. A woman answering to that name appeared but upon investigation, it was discovered that she belonged to another family—that the patentee Mary-Anne had been killed by her husband some years before in order that he could take a younger wife. Other incidents were equally involved:

Under patent 40--Jos. Matte, Thomas McFarland living on the land, brings in a quite claim deed, signed by Alden Lent, son of Harvey Lent deceased, for said land described as being the same land that was hitherto surveyed for Joseph Matte and by him conveyed to Philip Carr and Philip Carr to said Harvey Lent. The paper bears date December 15, 1885--Joseph Matte was then and ever since insane, incapable of business transaction.

Under patent 43, Chief Adolph deceased, comes claim of Thomas M.

161. Garfield, op. cit., p. 497(Clause 5). "Any Flathead, twenty years of age or the head of a family, actually residing on and cultivating land in the Bitter Root Valley, was permitted to remain in the valley provided that he abandon all tribal affiliations."

162. Carrington, op. cit., pp. 16-17.
Slocum. Steven James explained the matter: "I swapped my place with John Hill, who had swapped with Adolph." Under patent 12, Stephen James, the patentee an old and ignorant Indian entered into a confused trade, giving a 99 year lease of quit-claim to Thomas H. Slocum of several tracts, and so conveyed Chief Adolph's land instead of his own.

Major Carrington soon found that the appropriation granted him was insufficient to carry out the task to which he had been assigned, but he had the courage to proceed nevertheless since he felt that to do otherwise would still further upset relations between Indians and the white settlers so he carried the task through to the end and so made possible a solution of the Flathead problem in the Bitter Root.

In the final departure of the band from the Bitter Root, everything possible was done to shield Charlot's pride. The leaders were photographed on that last day and the final departure of the tribe from the valley was conducted with due ceremony. After an overnight stop in Missoula, the band then proceeded on to the reservation. Of their arrival there, Mrs. Ronan has given a vivid description: 163

October 17, 1891, witnessed a unique and to some minds pathetic spectacle. Charlot and his band of Indians, numbering less than two hundred souls, marched into their future home, the Jocko reservation. Their coming had been heralded, and many of the reservation Indians had gathered at the Agency to give them welcome. When within a mile of the Agency church, the advancing Indians spread out, forming a broad column. The young men kept constantly discharging their fire-arms, while a few of the number, mounted on fleet ponies, arrayed in phantastic Indian paraphernalia, with long blankets partially draping the forms of the warriors and steeds, rode back and forth in front of the advancing caravan, shouting and firing their guns until they neared the church, where a large banner of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary was erected on a tall pole. Near the sacred emblem stood a valiant soldier of Jesus Christ, the Rev. Ph. Canestrelli, S. J. With outstretched hands the good priest blessed and welcomed the forlorn pilgrims. Chief Charlot's countenance retained its habitual expres-

sion of stubborn pride and gloom, as he advanced on foot, shaking hands with all who had come to greet him. After the general handshaking was over, all assembled in the Agency chapel... After the benediction, the good and learned Father Canestralli, who has spent many years laboring among the Indians, striving to enlighten their minds and purify their hearts, addressed them in their own language. The good words seemed to console and comfort them, if the peaceful expression of their countenances indexed aright their minds.

For the government still remained the problem of adjusting Chariot's band to life on the reservation, a task which was not an easy one. Though Chariot continued until the time of his death to manifest his good will towards the whites, he never departed from his original reaction of hearty dislike of their customs and methods of conducting themselves. In this, his example was followed by the older members of his band, who showed themselves very averse to adopting the customs demanded by agency requirements. It became necessary to establish a separate school for the children of these families, for the parents were very opposed to being separated from their children. Of this school the agent wrote:

The school is doing fairly well considering the many obstacles petty Indian prejudice throws in the way of getting the younger generation civilized. To quote some of their expressed prejudices will suffice: "In the school the hair of our children shall not be cut. We do not wish to see our children with short hair; only the whiteman was created by God to wear short hair. The Indian was made by him with long hair. In school our children learn English; when they know English, they can buy whiskey rom white men!"

The problem of the younger men of the band was an even more difficult one. That in their last few years in the Bitter Root Valley they had become a worthless, indigent group, was admitted even by the chief himself. Now they objected to the restraints necessarily imposed upon them, and were a source of evil influence upon the other reservation Indians. Old

and young in the band were most importunate that the money from the sale
of their Bitter Root lands be handed over to them immediately, while the
rations which were distributed only to them, made Charlot's band a source
of discontent to the other Agency Indians.

Time, however, made certain adjustments, but even today the descendants
of Charlot's band cannot be numbered amongst the most enterprising of the
Indians living at the reservation. As one views them at the present time,
it is impossible not to compare this modern production of the Flathead
nation with the Indian as he was when he first came in contact with mem-
bers of the white race. The resultant specimen of humanity offers nothing
of which the white man may be proud.
Happenings in and About Fort Owen 1850-1870

Though the decline of the fur trade brought with it a lessening in the number of white men who visited the valley, the missionaries speak of traders who made use of the mission as a convenient stopping place, while certain items in the Fort Owen Journals and in the Montana Pioneers' Register would indicate that the Bitter Root Valley possessed white residents when Major John Owen came to it and started his trading post.

It is certain that in the early fifties, a number of individuals had been foresighted enough to realize the possibilities of trade with emigrants along the Oregon Trail. Accordingly, they purchased worn out animals from the travellers, wintered them in the Bitter Root and had them in good shape to take them back to "the Road" to resell them the following spring. Among this number were Joseph Lomprey, Emmanuel Martin, William Rogers, Gabriel Prudhomme, Ben Keiser, Ben and Jim Simonds, all of whom were regular callers at Fort Owen in the first few years of its establishment. Somewhat later, this group swelled by Tan Ettan and Judge

165. Society of Montana Pioneers; Register, "Lavaddie-born in New Mexico 1824; came from Idaho across mountains, via the Big Hole--arrived in Bitter Root 1847--trapper."
166. Owen, op. cit., V. I, p. 247. "Lomprey was here today who has been in the country twenty years and he says he never saw the like." (Entry for Feb. 18, 1862.)
167. William F. Wheeler, Account of James Gemmel, in Montana Historical Society Contributions, V. II, p. 33: "James Gemmel had been on a trading expedition up the Snake and as far as the Bitter Root as early as 1850."
168. Woody, Frank H., A Sketch of the Early History of Western Montana written in 1876 and 1877, pp. 93-98. Of this group it is probable that several were half-breeds--though they considered themselves white, old-time residents of the region state that Lomprey, Keiser and the two Simonds undoubtedly had Indian blood in their veins.
Barr, Mormon traders from Salt Lake. These men were the first to bring wagons into the valley; they likewise carried on an extensive trade with the Indians which enabled the latter to introduce some fine-blooded stock into their herds.

Owen, himself, arrived in the valley in 1850; he purchased from the missionaries their holdings, and then promptly set about building his fort. Intermittent records of this period indicate that in addition to the traders above mentioned Major Owen carried on business with the military establishments as far away as Walla Walla; a frequent visitor at the fort during these years was Michael Ogden, son of the noted trader; with him on one occasion was James Sinclair, at that time in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company post at old Fort Walla Walla. Owen, op. cit., p. 50. A. D. Pambrun, owner of a ferry at Walla Walla and later to assume an important role in the history of Montana, was likewise often in the valley. In the spring of 1851 Major Owen made a trip to Les Dalles; enroute while at Fort Hall he secured the services of Thomas W. Harris; at Les Dalles he met Caleb E. Irvine, a gentleman who had also been a member of the Loring contingent in which Owen had come west in 1849, and persuaded him to resign from the army and accompany him back to Fort Owen. There Irvine made his headquarters for a considerable period of years, at first joining in the summer trade with the emigrants, later working with Lieutenant Mullan and finally settling on his own ranch in the valley. With Irvine came Samuel

169. Owen, op. cit., p. 50.
170. Ibid., p. 74.
M. Caldwell, to whom in 1852 is credited the finding of the first gold in Montana.\textsuperscript{172} Legitimate evidence of this discovery is lacking\textsuperscript{173} although the Fort Owen Journals under date of February 15, 1852 contain the terse statement "Gold Hunting--found some."

Conditions in the valley, however, were not conducive of success to the new establishment; the Blackfeet continued to make their accustomed raids; in September of 1852 they killed one of Major Owen's employees while he was making hay near the fort.\textsuperscript{174} This and other depredations committed by these Indians caused Owen in 1853 to abandon his trading post. Driving with them as much of their stock as they could manage, Major Owen and his brother Frank were on their way to Les Dalles when they encountered the eastbound contingent of Governor Stevens' expedition and thus encouraged, turned back with it to the Bitter Root.\textsuperscript{175}

With the establishment of Cantonment Stevens, the fort was no longer entirely isolated. Major Owen was in frequent communication with the men located there, the relations being of both business and social character. Of the individuals thus brought into this section of the country by General Stevens, Thomas Adams, Fred H. Burr and Christopher Higgins are probably the best known since they were to play an important part in the opening up and development of Western Montana.\textsuperscript{176} Perhaps less known, but even more

\textsuperscript{174} Owen, \textit{op. cit.}, V. I, pp. 48-65.
\textsuperscript{175} Stevens, \textit{Report}, V. I, pp. 251-255.
\textsuperscript{176} Stevens, \textit{Life}, V. II, p. 70.
deserving of recognition, is the picturesque character who acted as Governor Stevens' expressman, W. H. Pierson. Pierson was at this time about thirty-five years old, had had considerable experience as an Indian fighter and expressman and was thoroughly familiar with every section of the western country. Whenever possible, he took with him two horses, riding one and driving the other ahead of him. Then, too, he was accustomed to route himself via Fort Owen if it was at all feasible, as he knew that he could always rely upon obtaining a supply of food and a change of horses there, if time prevented him from taking further advantage of its hospitality. He traversed vast distances in an increditably short space of time; during the month of August (1855), he travelled from the Bitter Root Valley to Olympia, then back to Fort Benton, a distance of some eighteen hundred miles. Still later that same fall he made what was probably the most hazardous journey of his career, a trip of which the Governor has left the following account:

On October 28th, 1855, the homeward start was made; the party moved over to and up the Teton, continued up that stream and went into camp thirty-five miles from the fort. . . . Supper was just over, and the men were gathering around the campfires, for the evening was frosty, when a lone horseman was discerned in the twilight, slowly making his way over the plain towards the camp and soon Pierson rode in, or rather staggered in for his horse was utterly exhausted and tottered as it walked. The eager men crowded around, and helped the wiry expressman from the saddle and supported him to a seat, for he was unable to stand and his emaciated, wild and haggard appearance bore witness to the hardships he had undergone. He delivered his despatches, and after being revived with food and warmth was able to make his report.—All the great tribes of the upper Columbia, the Cayuses, Yakimas, Walla Wallas, Umatillas, Palouses and all the Oregon bands, those of the tribes who had signed the treaties at the Walla Walla Council and had professed such friendship had all broken out in war—a thousand well armed and brave hostile warriors under

177. Stevens, Report, V. XII, p. 220.
Kamiahkan, Purumoxmox, were gathered in the Walla Walla valley to wipe out the party on its return.\textsuperscript{178}

The daring expressman's story of how he ran the gauntlet of the hostile tribes with the dispatches and information upon which depended the lives of the party, heightened the impression made by his wretched appearance and doleful tidings. He left the Dalles on the return trip, fresh and well mounted and riding all day and night, reached Billy McKay's ranch on the Umatilla River and stopped to get breakfast. The place was deserted. After eating, he lassoed a fine powerful horse among a band grazing nearby and after a hard struggle managed to saddle, bridle and mount it. The steed was wild, and started off jumping still-legged. As Pierson rode from under trees surrounding the house, into the road, he saw a party of Indians racing down the hill into the valley, evidently on his trail and heard their yells as they caught sight of him redoubled their speed in pursuit. His new steed proved of speed and bottom and under whip and spur, gave over his jumping for swift running. They followed him for hours but gradually were left behind. He finally reached Lapwai the next day—After a day's rest, he secured fresh horses and a young Nez Perce brave and guide and started across the Bitter Root Mountains by the direct Nez Perce trail, the shortest but also the most rugged and elevated route and at dark made camp high up in the mountains. That night a furious snowstorm set in. A tree fell and crushed his Indian companion. Pearson dragged his insensible body free from beneath the tree and said to himself: "Now the Nez Percé, too, will break out. They will never believe that this buck's death was accidental; they will deem me his murderer, and always hunt my scalp after this." But to his great joy the young Indian came to his senses, and proved not to be seriously hurt. The storm raged three days; several feet of snow fell, too deep for horses to travel. When it ceased, Pearson sent the Indian back with the horses, and, packing his dispatches, blankets, and some dried meat on his back, continued across on snowshoes, which he had made during the storm, cutting the bows with his knife, and unraveling his lariat for the webs. The trail was hidden under the snow, but he guided his course largely by the marks of packs against the trees made by Indians who crossed in winter. Struggling on in this manner for four days, he emerged upon the Bitter Root Valley, near Fort Owen, almost dead with fatigue and privation. Stopping only a few hours for rest and procuring a good horse and equipment from the ever friendly Flatheads, he again took the saddle, and on the third day staggered into the governor's camp on the Teton.\textsuperscript{179}

\textsuperscript{178} Stevens, Report, V. XII, p. 221.
\textsuperscript{179} Stevens, Life, V. II, p. 121.
Still another member of Governor Steven's expedition was to leave his contribution to posterity in the shape of sketches which he made of the valley during his stay here. This artist, Stanley by name, drew a picture of the fort as it was when visited in 1853, showing it to consist of some few wooden buildings surrounded by stockade of logs—the latter arranged in palisade fashion. Still another member of Governor Steven's expedition was to leave his contribution to posterity in the shape of sketches which he made of the valley during his stay here. This artist, Stanley by name, drew a picture of the fort as it was when visited in 1853, showing it to consist of some few wooden buildings surrounded by stockade of logs—the latter arranged in palisade fashion.180 Sohon, who remained in the valley with Mullan, in addition to being map maker for the party, also enlivened his time by making sketches of this region; some of these were included by Governor Stevens in his report.181

Until 1855 Major Owen made but infrequent notations in his Journals; many of the entries until this date deal with trips which the Major made to and from the valley in connection with the trading he was carrying on in the vast stretch of territory between Fort Benton and Les Dalles. He was absent from the valley during the Council which General Stevens had with the Indians in July, 1855, but was there when Stevens passed through late in the fall; on that occasion accompanying him to Hell Gate and remaining camped there with him for a week while he awaited the arrival of his son and Lieutenant Doty from Fort Benton.182

The same fall and winter witnessed a considerable influx of people into the valley. Neil McArthur, who had first come into this section of the country in 1846, when as an employee of Hudson's Bay Company, he had start-

183. Ibid., p. 112. "I had a very unexpected but agreeable visit from Gov. Stevens on his return from Judith council. It was dark when he arrived he coming ahead from his main train accompanied by a Single trusty Man. He was very tired having rode the last day Some Sixty Miles."
\(\text{ed building Fort Connah, now having resigned his position with that company, had come into the Bitter Root with a band of fine-blooded horses and another of cows. He had hired Louis R. Maillot as his assistant and the two of them settled down near the present site of Corvallis. Judge Barr spent a part of the winter in a camp at Hell Gate; J. M. Lafontaine arrived in the valley and soon took up holdings at the mouth of Burn Fork; Fred Burr came back to the Bitter Root bringing with him some four hundred head of cattle (he had in his employ James Minesinger from Salt Lake).}^{184}

In addition to these, Rogers, Lomprey, and Harris; as usual wintered in the valley, as well as a number of other traders who happened to be in this locality that particular year.

With the valley thus being almost "overcrowded" during the winter, it is perhaps not surprising that when a general exodus took place in the spring that Major Owen speaks of being lonely.\(^{186}\) However, he seems to have kept himself well occupied experimenting with poultry and garden products. After many trials and tribulations with his one lone hen, he was at last able to make the entry on July 30th: "Madam Jake succeeded in bringing to light four chickens," a week later is the notation, "Madam Jake has just taken the field with her brood of four chickens and seems as proud as a May Day Queen." The, on August 18th comes the last, sad statement, "Madam Jake with her brood made way with last night--probably a wolf or Indian dog."\(^{187}\) In his garden experiments, the Major, too, met with but indifferent-


\(^{185}\) Miss Mary Winslett stated that Rogers brought with him his daughter, Mary, then a girl of twelve and that it was she who in 1867 married Joe Deschamps of Corvalli. The Fort Owen Journals contain no reference to this daughter.

\(^{186}\) Owen, op. cit., p. 123. "The place looks almost deserted I am alone Excepting my old wife one white Man and Ind Boy left in charge Mr MacRuther's stock."

\(^{187}\) Thid., pp. 137-139.
ent success. He had planted corn, watermelon, citron, pumpkin and squash, to say nothing of "osage" orange seed. Unfortunately for these agricultural attempts, there was a heavy frost July 15th, which causes his experiments to come to a most untimely end. Fortunately for the fort leader, Owen's Snake Indian wife, Nancy, had contented herself with gathering what nature unaided provided; in consequence an abundance of strawberries, raspberries and service berries was on hand.

Toward the end of the summer another character familiar to modern day residents of this section, Judge Frank Woody, came into the Bitter Root. He was then just a mere boy who by chance had come in contact with Van Etton at Salt Lake. The latter had offered him fifteen dollars a month to drive an ox team from Utah to the mouth of Hell Gate. Judge Woody's description of getting the wagons into the valley has become almost a classic. In later years, speaking of the incident, he said:

In the morning came the preparation for the descent on the Bitter Root side. We prospected the trail and found that we had two miles of straight-down trail ahead of us. There was no road—just an old Indian trail. One wagon outfit had been over the pass the year before, but it was light loaded and had made no road. Emmanuel Martin—known as old Manuel the Spaniard, had taken three wagons over, we learned later but it didn't help much. We looked over the old Indian trail and followed that.

The Indians were better road makers than most of the civil engineers; they didn't know much about grades and levels but they had good sense in picking a route. Our trail ran a little to the east from the present road over the pass, but it was practically the same, and you know how steep it is now. It was just as steep then, only it hadn't been dug out at all anywhere.

188. Owen, op. cit., p. 130. Owen persevered in his attempts to raise chickens; the next year he was presented with some hens at Fort Benton, they died in a blizzard which the Major encountered while enroute to the fort. In 1858, his poultry was all killed by marauding animals entering the chicken house. Not until 1862 do his troubles in this particular seem to have ended, for in that year is the triumphant entry: "Put away some eggs for winter." V. I, pp. 189 and 228.

We rough-locked the wagon wheel and took the two swing yokes of oxen and hitched them behind, to pull back. With the leaders and wheelers in front and the swing-teams behind, we started down the hill, two men pounding the swing teams over the heads to make them pull back; they just slid down the hill. And the dust they made. The yells and the snort and the dust made a Bedlam. But we got to the bottom all rightsided up.—

We straightened out and went down along the stream to Ross's Hole. There is a good road down the Bitter Root from there now, but there was none at all through the canyon then, and we had to make a detour over a small but steep mountain on the east side before we go into the Bitter Root proper. We did this, however, without accident and entered the famous valley.

Judge H. Woody then goes on to state how he secured employment which enabled him to remain in the Bitter Root:

The first job I had in Montana was cutting hay. When we drove our ox teams down the Bitter Root valley on that first trip I ever made here, Bill Madison and I were asked by the man who was in charge of the MacArthur stock near what is now Corvallis, if we wanted a job cutting hay. We told him we did but we had to go through to Hell Gate with our outfit. As soon as we had completed our contract with the freighter and had delivered our oxteams at the Hall Gate River, we went back up the valley. It was October, but the frost had not touched the grass more than to nip the tops a little in places. I never saw a finer stand of grass than that was. The meadow where we did the cutting was, I think, part of the McLeod ranch now. It was waist-high in fine grass and we went at it with hand scythes. Then we cocked it up with forks, eastern fashion, before getting it stowed away. There was a big lot of cattle ranging near there and they were fat and playful. They didn't seem to care much for our hay, but they delighted in tossing our little stacks about. . . . They made us a lot of extra work, but we were working by the day and we had been so long following oxen on the trail that the work didn't seem irksome. Anything would have been a good change from whacking steers on the trail.190

In August a group arrived from Idaho, driven out by the uprisings of the Nez Perce. In this group were Louis Rouboin (Marengo), W. W. Tallman and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Chase. The latter was the daughter of the Louis Moraigne of whom General Stevens had written in so laudatory of fashion,

and in appearance much more closely resembled her French father than she did her Flathead Indian mother.\footnote{Stevens, Report, V. I, p. 198. "Louis Moreagne . . . left St. Louis in 1831, served some years in the employ of the American Fur Company then went to the Bitter Root Valley, left there in consequence of difficulties with the Blackfeet. His wife a Flathead woman . . . his eldest daughter married to Henry Chase."} For that reason she has frequently been referred to as being the first white woman in this section of the country. Her manner with the Indian wives of the men associated with Fort Owen was ideal; Major Owen always referred to her with the highest of praise.\footnote{Owen, \textit{op. cit.}, A few months prior to the arrival of the Chase family, the Indians had had their first sight of a white woman. Dr. Landdale, returning from Salt Lake City, enroute to the agency had stopped off at the Fort. In his party was Minnie Miller, wife of Henry Miller. Of her, the Major says, "What Indians were here particularly were much amused she being the first white woman they had Ever Seen and then to see her riding a horse sideways astonished them more."} She was of a most social nature and seemed to enjoy having company. On New Year's day, 1857, she gave a tea-party for all the ladies near the fort; this was undoubtedly a unique affair for the guests; certainly their husbands, excluded from attendance, saw the humor of the situation. A few days later, another celebration occurred—this time the occasion being the solemnization of the marriage of John Silverthorne.\footnote{Ibid., p. 153. "Silverthorn wedded to one of the fair ones of the land. Woody, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 101, states that Silverthorn was working for David Pattee and that both had recently come into the valley from Salt Lake.}

In the early spring, McArthur moved to Hell Gate but continued to keep his stock in the valley. The men from the fort were frequent visitors at his camp. David Pattee made a raft and at some risk to his person navigated the intervening miles safely; Major Owen, too, was down, but returned to the Fort in a much more stylish conveyance, for to use his own words: "Left Hell's Gate Pond with Mr. Macarthur in his buggy and had a comfortable ride to the fort." Just how this comfortable ride was accomplished...
at a time when there was no vestige of a road down the valley, the major does not go on to state.

However, with the coming of summer, there was very little time left for visiting--Major Owen had been contemplating a trip to St. Louis to visit his old home but rheumatism and the involved condition of Indian affairs caused him to send his brother Frank in his place while he stayed at home to superintend the rebuilding of the fort. He placed Silverthorn and Tallman in charge of this work; David Pattee was engaged in erecting a saw mill. Major Owen had resolved that the new structure should be an adobe one; the accounts of the making of the bricks is interesting. For this type of work, the men received five dollars a day, and one hundred bricks a day per man was considered a good day's work. Then one of the workmen, Grinizan by name, began turning them out in what seemed prodigious quantities—at the rate of five and six hundred a day. At first the work on the fort went well, then difficulties arose. Owen had trouble in getting the cattle for trampling the mud for the bricks, the making of the adobes could proceed only when the weather was good; Pattee needed help from time to time on the sawmill; trips had to be made to the mountains and even to Fort Benton to secure materials necessary for the continuance of the work. On top of everything else, a prospector in the

194. Owen, op. cit., V. I, p. 166. "Lomprey finished foundation for S. W. bastion which I intend erecting fourteen ft square from out to out with two foot wall giving me a ten foot room in the clear."

person of a Dr. Atkinson, had come into the valley and many of the men about the fort were interested enough to accompany him on his trips. By midsummer the men had thoroughly tired of their job and wished to throw over their contract; they were persuaded, however, to continue and Major Owen pressed every other available man into service. Captain Hereford was persuaded to remain; Maillet was summoned down from Irvine's establishment, Will Rogers from his camp on Cold Spring, Irvine himself helped whenever possible and even Captain Chase was put to work on the wall. Finally, in desperation Owen sent Harris to the Mormon settlement on Salmon River to see if additional workmen could be secured; Harris returned in ten days' time, reporting that all the Mormons not needed for tending crops had gone into Salt Lake City.

This was the first inkling to be received in the valley concerning the Mormon disturbances; late in December news of the actual rebellion drifted to the fort, and with it a copy of Brigham Young's proclamation. This in turn followed by the arrival of a group who had been wintering on the Beaverhead, but through fear of trouble in that vicinity had decided to move on to the Bitter Root. Major Owen and the men associated with him immediately

196. Granville Stuart, Forty Years on the Frontier, V. I, p. 206. "Dr. Atkinson is a most original character. He is always traveling about the country with a pack horse and one or more companions, prospecting. He carries a large pair of field glasses, rides up the canons keeping along on the ridges when possible, from points of vantage, he will take out his field glasses, take a look at the surrounding country and declare that, 'There, the country does not look good.' Then putting away his field glasses he will ride on. I never knew of his digging a hole or of panning a pan of dirt."

197. Owen, op. cit., V. I, p. 171.


199. Ibi., V. I, p. 187—Rezin Anderson and Ross, goldminers had been associated with the Stuart brothers; also in this party was Jake Meeks, a trader.
ly began taking inventory of the fort stock, a detailed invoice of which amounted fifteen over thirty-six thousand dollars. This invoice was forwarded to Colonel T. W. Nesmith, then Superintendent of Indian affairs for Washington and Oregon Territory, in the anticipation that if the Mormons should move in this direction, the government might see fit to reimburse those located in this valley for the loss which they would thus entail. Owen at the same time formally married Nancy, the Snake Indian woman with whom he had been living for eight years, so that should this emergency arise she might be properly provided according to law. In this last particular, his example was followed by Thomas Harris and by C. E. Irvine.

The Mormon scare soon quieted down, but one of another type made itself known. A band of Nez Perce, returning from the fall buffalo hunt, stopped in the valley; many of the Indians were ill with small-pox which they had contracted from the Crows on the Missouri. Dr. Atkinson, fortunately at the fort at this time, vaccinated all the fort employees and their families, together with some of the half-breeds in the valley.

201. Ibid., V. II, p. 293, V. I, p. 11. "Nancy-Owen's Indian wife—was to all appearances considerably older than he. She was a diminutive woman, scarcely five feet high, and in her later years at least, with a very wrinkled face. She had no children. Nancy was an indefatigable worker; was unquestionably deeply attached to Owen, and so far as was possible clung to certain ingrained Indian traits in spite of her position. She took little or no part in festivities; devoted her waking hours to fishing, berry-picking, cooking or other toils, and at night took her blanket, rolled up in, and slept on the ground or some floor apart from the remainder of the Fort's population. . . . (Owen's) attitude toward his Indian squaw was unusual when compared with the ordinary association of the kind." (This is the substance of the statement of Mrs. Washington J. McCormick, who saw Nancy on her visits to the Fort.)
From 1858-1860, Major Owen was frequently absent from the valley in connection with his duties as Indian agent, but the work on the fort was being pushed forward by Harris and Irvine, whom he left in charge and the fort was gradually assuming its final form.\textsuperscript{203} W. B. S. Higgins, A. K. Gird, Louis Clairmond, Louis Grandmaison, L. L. Blake and Charles Frush had been added to the list of those employed in its construction, as well as a number of other individuals—presumably transients since no trace of their names can be found in later records concerning the valley.

The spring of 1860 was to witness considerable changes—C. P. Higgins and Francis Worden had opened a store at Hell Gate and a growing number of individuals were settling in that region.\textsuperscript{204} The Stuart brothers speak of frequent delegations passing their camp on Gold Creek,\textsuperscript{205} on their way to

\textsuperscript{203} Owen, op. cit., V. I, p. 8. "The transformation of the Fort from its early construction to its final adobe form, with its huge wall seems to have taken about eight years and to have been completed in 1860. The wall extended about a foot above the buildings its enclosed and its top was so smooth and level that a man might run on it. The adobe walls of the Fort buildings were about eight or ten inches thick, and, on the interior, were lined with hewed lath and plaster. All the buildings were floored with heavy planks, and nearly every room had a big fireplace. The supply of water for the Fort was obtained from an enclosed well sunk near the center of the courtyard, and tons of potatoes and other vegetables were kept in the underground roothouse, located between the library and southeast bastion. . . . The principal entrance to the Fort was at its southern end, and consisted of two very heavy timber doors surmounted by an arch into which they fitted. They were fastened by cross-timbers and wrought iron bars, and in one of them was cut a small narrow door to permit the ingress or egress of a man without the necessity of opening the entire gate. A much smaller but equally strong entrance was located in the center of the north wall." See Ground plan of Fort Owen, Ibid., V. I, Plate XIV.


\textsuperscript{205} Stuart, op. cit., V. I, p. 160.
and from the Bitter Root. They themselves made a trip over, having heard that Neil McArthur had left some books cached in the valley. "Famished for something to read," they decided to investigate the possibilities of the Bitter Root. They finally located Henry Brooks at his camp on Sweathouse creek and with him the trunkful of books which McArthur had entrusted to his care. After much persuasion the brothers succeeded in getting Brooks to sell them five of the books for the moderate sum of twenty-five dollars, and they went home very well satisfied with their purchases—a copy of Shakespeare, one of Byron, Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations, Headley's Napoleon and His Marches and a Bible printed in French.

Christmas of 1860 was a merry one with nearly all of the population of the new Hell Gate, up to help celebrate. The men gathered in from all parts of the valley; even Fort Connah sent up its delegation.

The Christmas Week has passed and We wind up the holidays with a party to Night. In fact it has been Nothing dancing and feasting for the last past ten Night Mr. Blake, Irvine and Harris, have reflected much Cr on themselves for the very liberal manner in which they Contributed to the Comfort and amusement of the Stranger guests. The one armed fiddler Much amused a Bleached Crowd Doctor. (Doctor Atkinson) The Ladies would liked to have Known on What he hung his bow. The orderly detailed by the Gallant Capt Higgins to wait upon the Major Stood the charge admirably. Gen Worden acquitted himself with Much Cr. Mr Miller and his Lady Commanded the respect of all. Mr. McClairen the Very agreeable Young Gent the accredite ag't of the H. B. Co though a Stranger from Scotia's land of Sone won the golden opinion of all. The Committee of reception and arrangements for the Evening Could not be surpassed for the pleasant Manner in which Everything went off. . . . I received a New Year's gift of Cake from a Young and agreeable Spiritual bride of Mr. Van Etten a Mormon from Salt Lake Cit. Capt. Grant a retired Gent of the H. H. B. Co. and Lady seemed to Enjoy themselves Much. For my esteemed friend Dr. At-

206. Stuart, op. cit., V. I, pp. 160-161. Maillet, op. cit., p. 215, states that part of his duties as an employee of McArthur was to instruct him in French. The Bible referred to by the Stuart brothers may have been acquired in the course of these lessons.
kinson whose mild affable and very pleasant manner seemed to be in the ascending during the whole evening. Through the ramifications of the dance he moved the light fantastic toe. . . . Mrs. Button highly pleased and condescending to dance with Mr. Moese. . . . in fact it was a time long to be remembered in the Rky Mts. Our grand children will have it handed down to them by their ancestors. 207

It was well that everyone took advantage of this opportunity for visiting, for shortly after Christmas severe weather set in. Communication with Hell Gate was practically out of the question; a party with mail from Cantonment Wright was four days enroute to the valley. Major Owen complained that he burned two hundred cords of wood in less than three months. Perhaps as a result of thus being confined to the house by the intense cold some of the men at the fort conceived the idea that a school should be started. The idea was carried out and a school room was fitted up for the children in the fort. This school, attended by some ten to a dozen half-breed children, continued for several years, 208 though it was never in session for more than a few months at a time.

The summer of 1861 brought with it misfortune in the form of delayed supplies. The American Fur Company's steamboat blew up at the mouth of the Milk river with a consequent loss of all that freight which it was carrying. 209 As a result some of the settlers made a special trip to Salt Lake to bring back supplies. 210 That same summer, an express was started from Walla Walla to Hell Gate. In the fall, several of the settlers took wagon loads of vegetables to the newly established camps at Grantville and Cottonwood, some one hundred and forty miles from the Bitter Root. Although it was a long haul, they made a good profit since the people in the camps were hungry for vegetables.

208. Ibid., V. I, pp. 248-250.
210. Ibid., V. I, pp. 185-188.
The spring of 1862 saw a decided change in affairs in the valley. Under date of June 28th, Major Owen noted: "Arrival of express from Fort Benton announcing the arrival of four steamers at that place from St. Louis with some 350 passengers for Heaven only knows where." Soon the valley was a regular thoroughfare for people travelling to and from the Salmon River mines. Former "Pike's Peakers," miners from California and Idaho kept pouring into the Bitter Root; there was a great demand for flour and the mill was forced to run twenty-four hours a day. Samuel D. Hauser spent some days at the fort; he, as many others, was greatly disappointed with the findings in the Salmon River Country and soon abandoned any idea of making a fortune there. Many of those who straggled back to the Valley were given work at the Fort by Major Owen in his mill. He gave employment to George Wyndes, a gentleman who claimed to be a nephew of Jefferson Davis.

Settlers, too, had begun to come into the valley; many of these were from Missouri and other border states and had come west to escape the war or because their homes had already been destroyed by marauding armies. In this group who settled in the Bitter Root were Mr. and Mrs. William Bantee, Mr. and Mrs. John Peters and E. B. Johnson who had taken up ranches on Willow Creek. John Chatfield and Joe Blodgett were located also in the upper part of the valley. Cyrus McWhirk from Walla Walla came here on

212. Ibid., V. I, p. 256. Hauser and his party soon left the Bitter Root, went to Gold Creek and then to Bannack and Virginia City. He later became one of Montana's first territorial governors. (Stuart, op. cit. V. I, p. 211.)
213. Ibid., V. I, p. 264.
214. Ibid., V. I, p. 265.
account of his health; since he was by way of being something of an inven-
tor, his presence was a real asset to the Fort community. In the course
of his stay, he made Owen everything from a folding card table to the fore-
runner of the modern day bed.\(^{215}\) He also spent some time making a sleigh—
the finished product was a source of great delight to the ladies living in
the vicinity of the fort, and one frequently used by them.

Also included in those who had come to the Bitter Root to make their
homes were George and Louis Dobbins, who with their wives had settled near
the fort in one of Major Owen's houses. To Mr. and Mrs. George Dobbins
in December, 1862, was born a daughter, Loretta, who according to all avail-
able records, appears to have been the first white child born in the val-
ley.\(^{216}\)

Another incident of interest occurred New Year's Day 1863. The gentle-
men of Fort Owen, having decided "to do themselves proud," issued special
invitations for a New Year's eve ball. Written invitations were a novelty
in those days and evidently the wording of these could not have been too
clear, for the Bantees and the Johnsons, from Willow Creek, arrived a day
late. So that they might not be disappointed, another party was prepared
and it turned out to be quite an occasion after all, for during the course
of the evening Elva Johns was married to Henry M. Cone—the first white

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\(^{215}\) Owen, \textit{op. cit.}, V. I, p. 273, "He has a very nice Lounge under way for
me Mr. Harris is having the Wool Washed and dried with Which he in-
tends Stuffing it. The back is made to let down by which arrangement
it can be in a Moment Converted into a bed."

\(^{216}\) \textit{Ibid.}, V. I, p. 264. Lucinda Harris, to whom has been attributed the
honor of being the first white child born in the Bitter Root cannot
rightly claim the title since her Mother was an Indian woman. (See
Major Owen's Geneological Register, \textit{Ibid.}, V. II, p. 293.)
couple ever to be married in the Bitter Root.217

With the population of the region so on the increase, it is not surprising to find that an express was again opened up between Walla Walla and Hell Gate. Charles Frush and G. Sherwood, residents of Hell Gate, saw the opportunity offered and immediately went into business. Their prices were high—one dollar express charged on each letter which they delivered and seventy-five cents on each one which was sent out. Of course, even with this convenience, letters took a good while to reach their destination, for mail from the East had to come by way of the Isthmus of Panama to San Francisco, then on to Portland and the Dalles, then overland to Walla Walla.218

With so many people coming and going in the valley, there was bound to be a number of reprobates in the group. Major Owen frequently complained of the country being full of stragglers, "who cannot be trusted out of sight,"219 but it was not until January of 1864 that any punishment was meted out to offenders in this region.220 Then, in connection with their general campaign, the Vigilantes decided that it was time that conditions in Missoula County were rectified. Having completed their work at Hell Gate, three of the committee then proceeded up the Bitter Root in search of "Whiskey Bill" Graves, a coach robber and murderer.221 Graves, a sullen, dangerous character, had sworn he would never be taken alive—it was snowing hard, however, and his captors were upon him before he realized it. He

218. Stuart, op. cit., V. I, p. 239.
220. Thomas J. Dimsdale, Vigilantes of Montana (Madisonian Company, Virginia City, 1921) p. 189.
221. Stuart, op. cit., V. I, pp. 235-236.
was hanged the following day some miles below Fort Owen, in the vicinity of what is now the Stevensville Golf Course.

This example of summary justice was repeated about a year later when a murderer was given similar treatment. Thomas Harris was then in charge of Fort Owen and he recorded a terse but graphic account of both affairs:

"(January 25th, 1864)--three men got in from mines in search of road agents or highwaymen found and arrested Bill Graves and have him in custody at the Fort tonight they say they have hung four at Hell Gate and were after the 5th one they feel sure he was caught and hung this morning, the names of the men hung are as follows Skinner John Cooper, Alic Carter and George Sheens, the fifth one not yet caught is Robt Zackry

"(January 25th) This morning the Vigilance party left with their prisoner went about two miles below the fort and left him swinging to a Pine Limb this they say is the twentieth man they have hung within the last two months and if Zacry is caught he is twenty one."

"(January 5th, 1865) Fogerdy the man accused of being the murderer of Watson was caught last night at the Scarker hoe and brought to Fort Owen to day and will be tried to morrow

"(January 7th) Yesterday James Forgarty was tried for having murdered Watson was proved satisfactory to the People that he was guilty and was hung by the People of the Valley today."

In spite of such happenings, the valley was beginning to take on the appearance of a civilized community. The summer of 1864 saw an even greater number of miners from other regions arriving in this section, and the farmers in the Bitter Root were beginning to recognize the opportunity which was theirs in furnishing supplies to all these people. Wagons from Gold Creek and Virginia City were constantly appearing in the valley; to the owners of these wagons, flour sold at fifteen cents a pound, cab-

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222. Owen, op. cit., V. I, p. 299.
223. Ibid., V. I, p. 307.
224. Register of Montana Pioneers indicates that some thirty families settled in the Bitter Root in the years 1863-64.
225. Ibid., pp. 304-321.
bages at twenty cents a pound, potatoes at three dollars a bushel, and
wheat at prices ranging from four to fourteen dollars a bushel. The far­
mers who took their own wagons of produce to the mines sold them at fabu­
lous prices. The Harris brothers in that one season sold four thousand
dollars worth of produce, in addition to the vast amounts of vegetables
which they stored away for future use. Money was at a premium, though
rates of interest were not as high in the Bitter Root as in some other
sections; ten per cent seems a sufficiently exorbitant rate. 226

Prices for articles purchased in the stores were correspondingly high.
The town of Stevensville was established in 1864 and the first store was
opened by Hauk and Johnson, 227 the following year Lew and Thomas Harris
started up a similar establishment. At the end of a few months the last
named found themselves with some three thousand dollars owed them so they
sold their stock of goods to Hauk and Winslett. 228

A perusal of the ledger from this store is not only interesting but
enlightening as to various customs characteristic of the times. 229 At first
glance, one might wonder as to the multiplicity of handwriting, this ex­
plained by the fact that the storekeeper himself but rarely made the nota­
tion; the purchaser was entrusted to make the proper entry unless, as was
very rarely the case, he was able to pay cash for the article which he
bought. Notation relative to greenbacks indicate their worth at the time;

226. Owen, op. cit., V. I, p. 306. (Nov. 1, 1864) (Harris keeping Fort
Owen Journal) "Mr. E. B. Johnson came to see me but could not pay
me the two hundred dollars due me. Agrees to pay it thirty days
after date at 10% interest."
228. Owen, op. cit., V. II, pp. 5-18.
229. Original Ledger of Hauk and Winslett Store (Now filed with other
possessions of Miss Mary Winslett).
upon several occasions there are records such as:

"John Silverthorn—$11.20 for $14.00 in greenbacks;
A Fisher—$12 for $15 in greenbacks."

Major Owen was not much luckier; he received $3.84 for $4.84 county script.

Other items give one an idea of prices at that time (1854-1857):

1/2 lb. tea—$2.50; 5 lb. apples—$3.50; 2 doz. screws—$1.00;
14 window lights—$7.00; 1 qt. coal oil—$1.50; 1 bar soap—$1.00;
1 lb. candles—$1.00.

Paper collars at the rate of thirteen cents each were bought at frequent intervals—whenever a dance was being scheduled the sale of these articles greatly increased. Since the proprietors brought their goods from Lewiston by mule teams via Lolo Trail, it is perhaps not surprising that their prices appear high.

The necessity of thus making such long hauls determined certain energetic men of the valley to promote some new roads which might directly connect the Bitter Root with an outlet for its products. The first one contemplated was to connect the Valley with Lewiston, Idaho, and was planned to follow the general course of the old Lolo Trail; another plan proposed was to build a highway east to the mining camps. Interested parties explored all possible routes—Burnt Fork, Skalkaho, Rock Creek and

231. Ibid., V. II, p. 23.
232. Ibid., V. I, p. 317. "(March 1865) we are getting up an Enterprise—the opening of a new road to the mines by way of Burnt Fork. All the citizens of Bitter Root will be benefitted by the movement—Lafontaine for one, a prominent man will contribute $2,000.00."
233. Ibid., V. I, p. 331. (May 1865) "Examining Skalkaho pass to ascertain if it was practicable for a wagon road."
234. Ibid., V. I, p. 332 (May 1865) "Major Graham ret’d after a fruitless search for a road down the mt. on to Close or Stony Creek. He speaks most despairingly. Estimated the cost of less than 4 miles work at $50,000." A road from the valley through to Phillipsburg was actually started in 1872, but only a small portion of it was ever finished. Leeson, op. cit., p. 683.
Willow Creek, but to no avail—the cost of such a road was prohibitive in each case, in spite of the liberal offers made by such public-spirited citizens as Tony Crappeau and J. M. Lafontaine.

Thwarted in these attempts, Major Owen made one final effort to divert trade from the recently established but flourishing town of Missoula. At enormous expense, he erected a three story grist mill, bringing the machinery for this new establishment from St. Louis. It was finally completed in the fall of 1865, at a cost of some fifteen thousand dollars, and at first seemed a success. Certainly the night of the mill warming saw Fort Owen assuming the position which it had formerly held in the region, a center to which were attracted the people from all the surrounding communities. But before long the Major discovered that there was not enough wheat being grown in the valley to keep his new mill running, a situation on which he philosophically comments: "It, (the mill) is like the Boy after he came in possession of the elephant--Too large--dont know what to do with it."236

Spasmodic efforts to facilitate communication from the Bitter Root to Missoula were also undertaken although jealousy of the latter community

236. Owen, *op. cit.*, V. II, pp. 10-12. The Mill venture was the beginning of the end for Major Owen; he had become so heavily involved financially as a result of its erection that he was never able to recover. He was forced in July, 1869 to mortgage his entire establishment. In December, 1872, the property was auctioned off at sheriff's sale, passing to Washington J. McCormick, the highest bidder. (*Ibid.*, V. II, pp. 325-326.) Other misfortunes had also come to Major Owen; in September 1868, Nancy had died after a rather long illness, soon after that, the Major began to fail mentally and it became necessary that he be removed to a hospital in Helena. He remained there until 1877, when his old friend Edward Bass escorted him back to Owen's relatives in Philadelphia. Here he was to stay until his death in 1889. (*Ibid.*, V. II, p. 26; V. I, pp. 15-17.)
made such attempts less popular than those intended to connect it with other regions. In 1865, Frank H. Woody and C. E. Irvine were granted the right to establish a ferry across Hell Gate River. In 1868 a tentative start was made towards building a road down the east side of the Bitter Root, but as late as 1876 this had not been completed.

In 1871 the Buckhouse Bridge was finished and in 1874 one was erected at Bass Spur. Prior to that time the route followed after leaving Missoula was up Miller Creek to "Ten Mile House". (This was located about a mile north of the present town of Lolo.) At this point the river was forded and one proceeded up the west side of the river as far as the Bass crossing; from that point, one continued up the east side of the river. The road was one in name only. During the early seventies there were no towns before reaching Stevensville, "unless you'd count the joint which was near where Florence is now. A fellow had what he called a store there, but he never had more than a dozen cans of tomatoes and perhaps six or seven of sardines setting on the shelf. Of course, he always had lots of whisky and he sure was his own best customer."

238. Owen, op. cit., V. II, p. 127--Oct. 1868--"Mr. Talbert off on a service for Wagon road to Missoula on right bank of the Bitter Root River."
239. Leeson, op. cit., p. 860. "In 1876, the county commissioners let a contract for a wagon road up the east side of the Bitter Root but when it was discovered that the pay was to be made in depreciated script, the contractors declines."
240. Ibid., p. 860 and 867--Leeson refers to this as the Stevensville bridge but the latter was not erected until sometime in the eighties, according to accounts of early residents.
241. Account of one who frequently drove over the road in those early days.
Further up the valley, Corvallis was quite a thriving settlement, as was Grantsdale, where a grist mill was located. A number of settlers had also settled in and about Como. Florence and Victor as well as Hamilton were not established until later; the first two were products of the coming of the Northern Pacific Railroad into the valley, whereas Hamilton was started as a result of Marcus Daly's activities in the region.

In spite of the lack of roads, regular communication was maintained throughout the valley. A post office had been established at Fort Owen in August, 1868. By 1878 a stage was making tri-weekly runs up through the valley, making the trip up one day and the return to Missoula on the following day.

Meanwhile, agricultural experiments were at last beginning to show results. The amount of land under cultivation was steadily increasing, wheat was being grown in sufficient quantities to warrant Baron O'Keefe sending

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242. Rowe, op. cit., "Corvallis-- a number of people who settled there came from Corvallis, Oregon; Darby, named for James R. Darby--the first postmaster and owner of a farm near there; Grantsdale, named for H. H. Grant, who built the first flour mill and kept the first store in that section of the country; Florence named for Florence Hammond--wife of A. B. Hammond of Missoula." Victor, very obviously takes its title from the name of the famous Flathead chief of that name. Stevensville was honoring General Isaac I. Stevens. Hamilton for J. W. Hamilton.

243. Owen, op. cit., V. II, pp. 123-129. "Quite a large pck. rec'd for P. M. at Fort Owen containing stamped envelopes, newspaper wrappers and letter stamps to am't of $33 no mil key as yet."

244. Carrie Adell Strahorn, *Fifteen Thousand Miles by Stage*, (New York, 1913) p. 123. "Bitter Root Valley, like Hell Gate Valley, is one of the garden spots of Montana. The river of the same name is the purest, clearest stream we had yet found. It flowed swiftly and magnified--Trout were plenty and so large that our angler wiggled about and threatened to hold up the coach while he landed some of the speckled beauties. The jerky stage made tri-weekly trips carrying mail and other commodities and an occasional passenger."--The party spent the night at the home of Peter McQuirk, at the upper end of the valley.
his threshing machine up to the valley each fall. As early as 1858, Major Owen had planted some apple seeds, but not until 1865 was any success met with in this line. The Bass Brothers by 1870 had a fair sized orchard started; in addition to apples, they were raising plums and cherries. A few years later they were experimenting with the cultivation of raspberries and strawberries. Currants and gooseberries had always been plentiful in the Bitter Root and as farmers became definitely settled, these two were cultivated in the gardens.

In the upper end of the valley, near Como, J. B. Harlan in addition to starting an orchard, met with a fair degree of success in the raising of bees. He had secured these bees from a woman in Missoula, who had become disgusted with her ventures in this line. Tomatoes, too, with him proved to be a valuable source of income, for he hauled each fall wagon loads of the still-green product, for which there was great demand, to the camps about Deer Lodge.

246. Strahorn, op. cit., p. 127. "E. W. Bass and his brother came from Missouri without means and secured a homestead from which they had become the richest men in the valley—Tall cottonwoods followed the walk outside the tidy picket fence—the path led to the flower garden where almost every variety of flowers known to grow in the country were found. . . . across the road, the fruit trees were braced to sustain their loads of apples, pears and plums and we heartily enjoyed some luscious melons. There were vegetables to be taken to the Territorial Fair at Helena: solid potatoes which weighed two pounds a piece, and a squash that weighed over a hundred pounds." (The above was written in the year 1878.)
247. Mrs. John Emhoff, a daughter of one of the early settlers in the vicinity of Stevensville states in this regard: "In the early days, all the fruit we had besides dried fruits, were currants, gooseberries, huckleberries and service berries. Mother used to hoard her five gallon kerosene oil cans just as folks hang on to the Mason jars today." Once emptied of their original contents, these cans were thoroughly boiled out, filled with jam or jelly and then were sealed up with sealing wax.
248. Statement made by Mr. Harlan.
However, aside from the brief excitement occasioned by the discovery of gold on Eight Mile and silver on Sweathouse Creek during the late sixties and early seventies, economic conditions in the Bitter Root were exceedingly disheartening. Crops suffered from ravages of drought and grasshoppers; money was a decidedly scarce article. Barter was a very necessary part of the economic set-up and "Bitter Root tums" were the order of the day. On the rather rare occasions when a man was hired to do a certain piece of work, he was never paid in cash. Upon completion of the work, he was asked what he desired and was paid in bacon, flour or other staples. Frequently it was very difficult to find enough money to purchase material for letter writing, while stamps were a real luxury. Nothing was purchased in the stores which could possibly be made at home, so with many little odd jobs to be done, children were kept well occupied.

Life was not all work by any means and many the good times which were

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249. Owen, op. cit., V. II, pp. 95-96. (March 8, 1868) "The name given the Lode is the White Cloud one McClure the lucky discoverer." (March 9) Chatfield down from town says that parties have gone down 8 Mile Creek for the purpose of laying off a town near the leads."

250. Ibid., V. II, p. 116--(July 1868) "Maurice returned from Helena via Philipsburg. He reported things generally dull. The latter place quite dead. In fact things look gloomy throughout the length and breadth of the Territory. Unless some New diggings are found I fear we are all Bankrupt. Large stocks of goods have been brought into the Territory this season. Where the money is to come from to pay for them I can't see. There is no money in the country."

251. When asked about the meaning of the term, Mrs. John Emhoff said: "We always called it that—it just meant when you needed help of any kind you summoned the neighbors, and when they needed your assistance, you helped them."

252. Leeson, op. cit., p. 825. From 1869 schools were in progress at Stevensville, Corvallis, and a little later up Burnt Fork. These were in session only during the summer months.
held in the valley. At holiday season, certain homes were the gathering place for the country round. The Harris ranch on Three Mile was one of these; "Uncle John" Robertson's on Burnt Fork was another; the Bass Ranch was noted for its hospitality both to Valley folks and to those who came from greater distances, as was the Winslett home in Stevensville where half the community was gathered on Christmas day. So life moved along in a very pleasant fashion, a method of living which changed but little until the railroad brought with it more rapid means of travel and a consequent means of becoming a part of the world as it existed outside the Bitter Root.
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