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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A state house reporter's respect for political facts lies behind publication by Montana State University Press this week of what is probably the most important book of the year on the state's politics, "An Atlas of Montana Politics Since 1864." The author, Dr. Ellis Waldron, serves as Dean of the MSU Graduate School these days, but his knowledge of politics at the operating level traces to his days as state house correspondent for one of the major press services (UP) in Ohio.

The new book is the first and only complete record of every election at state and national level held in Montana since the beginning of territorial days. Starting with the election held in October, 1864, the volume traces the ups and downs of political tides right through the primaries of 1958. In 428 fact-filled pages, the fact seeker will find a listing of every one of the more than 5,000 candidates who have sought office, records of action on every constitutional amendment and referendum, and maps showing the development of the counties and the changing political complexion of the state.

Compiling the atlas was a major research project and the book has taken more than two years in development. Not the least troublesome part of the problem was caused by the fact that prior to 1904, Montana didn't print its final and official voting tabulations. As a result, Waldron had to search through tons of manuscript in the sub-basement of the Capitol. Some of the documents had been in storage for more than 50 years. A good share of the material in the book is now seeing print for the first time.

Publications and News Service

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY, Missoula
From the standpoint of anyone interested in politics, the unusual index is likely to prove a highly attractive feature. Containing the names of more than 5,000 candidates, the index tells when an individual ran, for what office, on what ticket, and whether or not he won in the primaries or general election. Accompanying each election report are maps showing the changing nature of Montana's county structure and how each party fared within the individual counties. As some indication of the quantity of research that went into it, there are 159 such maps in the volume.

From an historical standpoint, the dust jacket presents a chapter of the state's history that Montanans of this day have never seen before. The illustrations are a montage of photos made from election documents dating for the most part from the late 1860's. Included is polling information from Last Chance Gulch, Hellgate and Virginia City. There is also the imposing signature of Thomas Francis Meagher, sometime Secretary of Montana Territory and its acting Governor. It was while Meagher was chief officer of the territory, that Congress took the unprecedented action of annulling all acts of the 2nd and 3rd Montana territorial assemblies. Meagher's later disappearance from the deck of a Missouri River boat at Ft. Benton still qualifies as one of Montana's mysteries.

The dust jacket proves one other fact -- that Montana voters were thoroughly capable of making up their own minds even as far back as 1868. In one corner of the jacket is the facsimile of a comment penned by one of the early election officials "These votes are to (sic) D-----d independent!"