History of the Deer Lodge Valley to 1870

Virginia Lee Speck
The University of Montana

1946

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THE HISTORY OF THE DEER LODGE VALLEY
TO 1870

by

Virginia Lee Speck
B. S. Montana State College, Bozeman, Montana
1933

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

Montana State University
1946

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CHAPTER I

ON THE ROAD TO THE BUFFALO

The Deer Lodge Valley

The Deer Lodge Valley is about fifty miles long and spreads out five to ten miles wide between the continental divide and the Philipsburg and Gold Creek Mountains. Geographically it extends from Durant to three miles below the present site of Drummond; but the section of the Deer Lodge Valley described in this history is included between the Deer Lodge Pass and four miles below Gold Creek. On all sides of the valley except for the southeast, it is bounded by high mountains covered with timber and in the west by mountains with lofty snow-capped peaks.

Mt. Powell, directly west of Cottonwood Creek and rising 10,500 feet, overlooks the other peaks and dominates the entire valley. Mt. Powell was named after a member of Granville Stuart's party, John W. Powell, who came to Deer Lodge Valley in 1857 and who had a ranch at the foot of this mountain.¹

The river rises in the south with the Silver Bow Creek as its source and enters the valley through a narrow

defile near the present railroad station, Durant. It flows in a northwesterly direction through the valley. The first written record designates the river as "La Riviere des pierres a fleches" or Arrow Stone River, in 1831; and in 1841, Father De Smet christened it, "St. Ignace". These names were not known to the gold seekers and the river was called the "Deer Lodge" to the mouth of the Little Blackfoot, the "Hell Gate" to the Big Blackfoot, and then the "Missoula" River. Now the entire river is designated as the Clark Fork. The banks of the streams rising in the mountains and entering the river were fringed with willows and quaking aspens. Most of these streams received their names during the first years the valley was being settled. Race Track Creek was named for a race track located near it.

3 Lawrence B. Palladine, Indian and White in the Northwest (Lancaster, Pa., 1922), p. 39.
5 J. P. Rowe, Geographical and Natural Resources (Missoula, 1933), p. 300.
Robert Dempsey located his second ranch on a creek, which took his name. Blizzards were so bad during the winter of 1864, that Olin, a blacksmith working for Grant, had a leg so badly frozen five miles north of Cottonwood Creek that it had to be amputated. Since then the vicinity has been called "Freeze Out." Pikes Peak Gulch received its name from the gold miners who arrived in 1862 from Pikes Peak, Colorado.

The remarkable natural curiosity in this valley from which its name was derived was an outstanding landmark and was visible the length of the valley from the Dog Creek Divide on the north to the entrance of the valley on the south. This cone-like butte is situated towards the upper end of the valley. A spring issues from the top of this mound which is thirty feet high and is located in the middle of a marsh. This mound, as seen by Father De Smet as he traveled through the Deer Lodge Valley in 1841:

Is accessible on one side only, and is formed of a stony crust deposited by the spring which has risen as the mound has grown. The water bubbles up on the top, and escapes through a number of openings at the base of the mound, the circumference of which seems to be about sixty feet. The waters at the base are of different temperatures—hot, lukewarm and cold—though

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6 Robert Dempsey, Biography (Unpublished manuscript, State Historical Library).

but a few steps distant from one to another. Some indeed are so hot that meat may be boiled in them. We actually tried the experiment.  

Warren Ferris in 1831 stated that:

These waters are slightly impregnated with salt, which quality renders the place attractive to deer, and it is seldom without visitors of this description. . . . Clouds of vapour are continually emanating from the mound, which at a distance on a clear cold morning might readily be mistaken for smoke,—the mound itself has much the resemblance of an Indian Cabin, and hence which the name by the valley is designated.  

The name "Deer Lodge" by which this valley is known originated with the Indians and was derived from the expression in the Snake language "'it-soo'ke en car'ne," meaning the white-tailed deer's lodge, and is so-called by the Indians because the aforesaid deer were very abundant . . . in the brushy bottoms in its vicinity." This was a favorite feeding ground for the deer not only because the grass was green and plentiful the year round but also because of the salt in the formation of the butte.

Ferris on his map designated the valley as the "Deer House Plains" and the springs as the "Deer House" (1832)


9 Ferris, op. cit., p. 108.

10 Granville Stuart, Montana As It Is (New York, 1865), pp. 27, 59. Includes a complete dictionary of the Snake Language.
while Father De Smet on his map used "Riv. de St. Ignace" for the former and "Fountaines minerales appelées Loge auf Chevreuils"—mineral springs called lodge of the deer—for the latter. The Americans soon shortened the expression to "Deer Lodge."

The first written record of the Deer Lodge Valley is Ferris' description as he entered it in 1831.

This is a valley somewhat larger than the Big Hole, and like that surrounded by mountains, generally, however low, barren and naked, except to the south and east where lofty snow-clad peaks appear. All the streams by which it is intersected are decorated with groves and thickets of aspen, birch and willow, and occasional clusters of currant and gooseberry bushes. The bottoms are rich and verdant, and are resorted to by great numbers of deer and elk. The several streams unite and form "La Riviere des pierres a fleches," (Arrow Stone River) thus named from a kind of semi-transparent stone found near it, formerly much used by the Indians for making points of arrows. This river is one of the sources of Clark's River, and flows through the valley to the northeastward (Northwest). The valley owes its singular but appropriate name to a natural curiosity situated near the river a few miles from the eastern side. The curiosity referred to is a semi-spherical mound some fifty paces in circumference and fifteen feet high, rather flattened at top, and covered with turf and a sickly growth of yellow grass.12

Father Palladino observing the Deer Lodge Valley from the top of Dog Creek Divide in 1877 gave a very similar account.

11 West
12 Ferris, op. cit., p. 107.
The traveler is treated to one of the most glorious views which fills him with wonder and delight by its surpassing beauty and impressiveness. The valley lies there smiling before him, the little town nestling in its cottonwood groves by the bank of the river. The Deer Lodge River cuts the valley in a northwesterly direction and its meandering course is made more conspicuous by the fringe of the vegetation along its banks. Yonder, to the left, are the Hot Springs, while directly in front rise the bench lands which stretch back and up to the pine forests on the mountain side. And now, above the broad wooded belt, bare, bold cliffs lift up their heads, with Mount Powell, some 13,000 feet high, towering among them as a giant among pigmies; while a little to the right the eye is charmed by the snow-covered crests of the Gold Creek Range.13

GEOLOGY

The mountain valleys have no definite relation to any rivers and are not formed by the erosion of streams. They are structural valleys. The Deer Lodge Valley is an outstanding example of these as it is much too large to have been carved by the stream now occupying it. Another of its characteristics is the steep mountain wall lying along the western side.14

The valley was formed by movements of the earth's crust probably about the time of the upheaval of the mountains that make up the Rocky Mountain system occurred. During the great processes of mountain building the crust of the earth was in many places

broken and blocks of the crust were either uplifted or depressed. Sometimes indeed both things happened, the break in the hard crust of the earth being called a fault. It was thought that Deer Lodge Valley was formed by such breaking and faulting of the earth. The basins thus formed became filled with water and lakes came into being. Thus there was a lake in Deer Lodge Valley.\(^{15}\)

Around Warm Springs the valley floor was several miles wide and so flat that much of it was swampy. The hills on the east, about five hundred feet high were composed of light-colored clay and volcanic ash. Lake beds once filled the valley at least as high as the top of those hills.

Beyond Warm Springs the valley continues broad and flat; the terraces on each side are good farm land. On the west from Race Track are many deep canyons in the side of the mountain which were cut before the glaciers were formed.

At Deer Lodge, terraces about two hundred feet high are well-developed on both sides. North of Deer Lodge there is a terrace on the left, but the one on the right has disappeared and has been replaced by low hills composed of soft rock.

At Garrison the valley is much narrower and the cliff on the west is composed of a volcanic rock and on the east of sandstone, shales, and beds of lava. Just north of Garrison, the bottom of the valley bulged. The Clark Fork

\(^{15}\) Willard, op. cit., pp. 319-320.
had already established a meandering course on the sediments filling the old lake basin, and when the bulge occurred the stream persisted in the old course, cutting deeply into the harder rocks. 16

ANIMAL AND PLANT LIFE

Ferris noticed that wild life was abundant in the valley. "The bottoms are rich and verdant and are resorted to by great numbers of deer and elk." 17 Later traveling through the valley, his party killed three grizzly bears, several goats, deer, and two buffaloes. "The latter, however, is seldom found in this country, though it abounds in black and white-tailed deer, elk, sheep, antelopes." 18 Deer Lodge Valley was on the outskirts of the buffalo region and very seldom did the buffalo enter, though some were found in the Big Hole Valley. Mullan noticed large numbers of antelope, mountain sheep and goats, and reported

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17 Ferris, op. cit., p. 107.

18 Ibid., p. 166.
that the valley was a "great resort for game." The streams were alive with fish and were well-stocked until after 1870.

The hills, bottoms and small parks on the mountains were covered with bunch grass, rich in food value. Red clover grew near the streams. For trees, there were the willows, quaking aspens, cottonwoods, and the evergreens. Forest fires were noticed as early as 1861 and in 1869, D. L. Irvine reported that the forest surrounding Rock Creek Lake had been entirely destroyed.  

THE HIGHWAY

The Deer Lodge Valley was not the home of any one tribe of Indians but was the main thoroughfare of the Nez Perces, Flatheads, and Pend Oreilles to the buffalo hunting grounds. Before the snow fell each fall and again in the spring, a large array of Flathead Indians with their allies, the Nez Perces, Pend Oreilles, Coeur d'Alenes, and Yakimas, were traveling up the Deer Lodge Valley to the source of the Clark Fork of the Columbia, down the head-

19 Isaac I. Stevens, Report of Explorations and Surveys, to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, 1853-5. (12 vols., Washington, 1860), XII, pp.172, 244.

20 New North-West (Early files in Kohrs Memorial Library, Deer Lodge), August 13, 1869.
waters of the Jefferson, across the Gallatin plains and
over the Bozeman Pass to the buffalo plains.21 This was an
annual buffalo hunt to the Judith Basin or to the plains
of the Yellowstone to lay in a supply of meat. As early as
September, 1831, Warren Ferris mentioned finding an encamp-
ment of one hundred lodges of the Pend Oreilles in the Deer
Lodge Valley. They were living on a diet of roots and were
on their way from the Flathead Post to the buffalo hunting
grounds.22 Granville Stuart in 1860 mentions the "villages
of combined Nez Perces, Yakimas, Coeur d'Alenes, and Flat-
heads that passed every fall on their way to the plains
of the Missouri and Yellowstone to spend the winter hunting
buffalo."23 Again in May, 1861, he observes that "Nine
Pipes and quite a number of Flatheads passed (American
Forks) on their way to hunt buffalo bulls on the Missouri.
(The Indians only kill the bulls at this time of the year
because the cows already have calves or soon will have
them)."24

22 Ibid., p. 109.
23 Granville Stuart, Forty Years on the Frontier as
Seen in the Journals and Reminiscences of Granville Stuart
(Paul C. Phillips, editor, 2 vols., Cleveland, 1925), I,
p. 167.
24 Stuart, op. cit., p. 168.
The Flatheads and their allies did not care to linger in their journey up the Clark Fork due to the fact that the Blackfeet, Bannocks, and Snakes were constantly conducting horse stealing raids in the valley. The Flathead and Nez Perces Indians were well supplied with horses; a large number of them possessing as many as thirty or forty each. For that reason the Blackfeet and the Bannocks whenever they were in need of horses entered the Deer Lodge Valley in small parties to obtain horses when the Flatheads were on their way to the buffalo plains. The fierce battles between these two tribes took place on the east side of the mountains. The Blackfeet maintained that the Flatheads were encroaching on their hunting territory and large war parties would make fierce attacks on the large camps of the Flathead Indians.25

INDIANS

Of the tribes that traversed the valley, the Flatheads and Nez Perces were the most friendly in their dispositions and they were honest to the most scrupulous degree in their dealings with white men. One outstanding

characteristic was their deeply religious nature and their desire to be instructed in the Christian religion.\(^{26}\)

The Blackfeet were the inveterate foes of both the American and British fur trappers and the most dangerous of the Rocky Mountain Indians. They were outstanding horsemen, great hunters, and extremely fond of bright ornaments of dress, of liquor and of gambling. Father De Smet declares they were the most "wicked and greatest thieves" of all the Indians.\(^{27}\) Next to the Blackfeet, the Bannocks were the most treacherous tribe. They were war-like, lawless and the trappers and emigrants had many hostile encounters with them.


\(^{27}\) Chittenden and Richardson, *op. cit.*., p. 365.
CHAPTER II

THE COMING OF THE WHITE MAN

Lewis and Clark

In 1803, Thomas Jefferson made his famous purchase of the Territory of Louisiana and immediately laid plans to explore this unknown land. Captain Meriwether Lewis and William Clark with their party did not enter the Deer Lodge Valley, but they did explore all the bordering valleys. On their way to the coast in 1805, they traveled through the Prickly Pear and the Bitter Root Valleys. On the return trip from the Pacific Coast in 1806, the party separated in the Bitter Root, Lewis going eastward through the Hellgate and following the Big Blackfoot, crossed the mountains through the pass still bearing the name, Lewis and Clark. Clark, turning southward, made his way through Ross Hole, the Big Hole, and back to the Beaverhead River. Thus the Lewis and Clark party traveled on all sides of the Deer Lodge Valley.

FUR TRADERS AND TRAPPERS

Since the early explorers, Lewis and Clark, did not traverse Deer Lodge Valley, the first white men to travel through this unknown and unexplored region must have been
fur traders and trappers. The Three Forks region with its numerous tributaries was the best beaver trapping grounds on this continent.¹ This would lead one to suppose that the trappers looking for better and more hunting would have gone into the Deer Lodge Valley. Many of these men belonging to the fur companies and the independent trappers did not leave written accounts of their travels. The journals in which the Deer Lodge Valley is mentioned imply that this was no new hunting ground and that others had been here earlier.

David Thompson, a great geographer and explorer of the Northwest Company, established Old Kootenay House, the first trading post erected by white men on the waters of the Columbia River, in 1807. Finan McDonald was placed in charge of this post. The boundary of the United States had just been fixed (1797) and the Northwest Company sent Thompson to survey locations for posts. While at this post:

He noted in his diary that the Kootenai Indians told him 'that about three weeks ago Americans to the number of forty-two arrived to settle a military post at the confluence of the two most southern and considerable branches of the Columbia, and that they were preparing to make a small advance post lower down the river. Two of those who were with Captain

Lewis were also with them.  

This may refer to a party of Americans believed to have been on the Columbia River in 1807. A letter has been found in the Public Records Office in London from an American, Jeremy Pinch, addressed "to British Mercht. trafficking with the Cabanaws" which asked the British to discontinue furnishing arms to the Indians and made threats against them if they did not obey the regulations set down by the Americans.  

This British merchant referred to in this letter was David Thompson. Jeremy Pinch's party may have been with Manuel Lisa, who led a trading and trapping party up the Missouri River from St. Louis in 1807. Thompson came as far south as the present site of Missoula on February 25, 1812, and then turned north and visited Flathead Lake.  

In November, 1823, Alexander Ross of the Hudson's Bay Company started with a trapping expedition of one hundred thirty-seven people for the sources of the Missouri River. Again this expedition traveled up the Bitter Root,  

---  

2 Charles Norris Cochrane, David Thompson, The Explorer (Toronto, 1924), p. 111.  


4 Ibid., pp. 75-76.  

5 Cochrane, op. cit., p. 147.
and since the snow was so deep were able to cross the mountains only after twenty-one days had been spent building a road. Ross mentioned observing here the landmark, a huge ram's horn imbedded in a tree. The Indians regarded this as sacred and always left beads or some ornament hanging on it. This party traversed the Big Hole, crossed to the Jefferson and then to the Forks of the Missouri. After hunting and trapping here with tolerable success, the party returned by the same route to Flathead House in the early part of 1824.6

In 1824, Jedediah S. Smith,7 a member of Ashley's party, (Ashley was the founder of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company) set out on an expedition and came close to Deer Lodge Valley as he crossed the mountains into the headwaters of the Snake. There he fell in with a party of Iroquois under the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company. In one way or another he obtained possession of their cache of furs and then his party gave the Indians protection until they found their leader, Alexander Ross, in the vicinity of


7 Harrison Clifford Dale, The Ashley-Smith Explorations and the Discovery of a Central Route to the Pacific, 1822-1829 (Cleveland, 1918), pp. 96-104.
Flathead Post. Instead of following down the Clark Fork to the Flathead country, the Americans and Iroquois crossed the Bitter Root Mountains into the Bitter Root Valley, thus passing by the Deer Lodge Valley. Smith was the second American since Lewis and Clark to cross the continental divide, north and west of Three Forks. These men could easily have hunted and trapped in the Deer Lodge Valley and quite likely some of their Indian employees did enter it. It is rather unlikely that these men entered the valley themselves as they failed to mention the cone-like butte containing the hot springs. This was a great curiosity to the newcomers and those observing it for the first time gave detailed descriptions of it.

The first men to give us written accounts of entering Deer Lodge Valley are Warren Angus Ferris and John Work. These men represented rival fur companies: the Hudson's Bay Company and the American Fur Company.

The first record of a white man entering the Deer Lodge Valley appears to be in the journal of Warren Angus Ferris. During the summer of 1831, Ferris with a trapping party first met the Flathead Indians on the upper Snake River, and then he crossed over and trapped in the Jefferson Valley and then on the Clark Fork. On September 10, he was detained in the Big Hole Valley by a snow storm which disappeared over night. The next day, he left the Big Hole at
the northern extremity and crossed to the Deer House Plains.

On entering the Deer House Plains we were alarmed by the cry of Indians from the advance guard of the party, but almost as quickly freed from apprehension by the arrival of a Pend'orielle, who gave us to understand, that one hundred lodges of his tribe lay encamped eight miles below. Early next day they removed their quarters and took up a position in the immediate vicinity of our own, when we ascertained that they were on their way from the Flathead Trading House of the Hudson Bay Company to buffalo and were living upon a mixed diet of roots and expectations, the latter in much the largest proportion—plainly they were nearly starving. 8

On the morning of the fifteenth, Ferris' party departed southeastward for the Jefferson River accompanied by all the Indians and making a very picturesque march.

Three thousand horses of every variety of size and colour, with trappings almost as varied as their appearance, either packed or ridden by a thousand souls from squalling infancy to decrepit age, their persons fantastically ornamented with scarlet coats, blankets of all colours, buffalo robes painted with hideous little figures, resembling grasshoppers quite as much as men for which they were intended, and sheepskin dresses garnished with porcupine quills, beads, hawkbells, and human hair. 9

Two months later, John Work was the leader of a trapping party that set out to hunt in Western Montana. Late in the evening of October 23, 1831, two men arrived at his camp near Potomac from the Flathead camp reporting that a large party of Americans were already hunting the area they had set out for and that they had already hunted

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9 Ibid., p. 111.
several branches of the Missouri. 10

Writing in his diary, Work made these entries. On October 29, at Monteur Creek:

Twelve beaver and otter were taken. Some of the hunters were out and killed two elk. Some marks of the Americans were seen. The Indians had hunted the little forks up this far, and probably all above this is hunted by Americans, so that nothing is left for us. 11

Near the present town of Helmville, he again mentioned that the Americans had already been there and though at one time the beaver were plentiful, now they were shy and very difficult to trap.

At Avon, he recorded:

Some of the people set a few traps. Some buffalo bulls were observed on the hills, a party of the people went after them and killed two. The meat is very indifferent, but nevertheless acceptable as provisions are very scarce with us. 12

On the fifth of November, Work's party camped on the Deer Lodge River and found good feed for their horses. Here a buffalo bull was killed, but even though the people were hungry they did not use the meat. On the next day, they camped close to the present site of Deer Lodge and:

Some of the people set a few traps, little signs of beaver. The Americans hunted here in the summer. The

11 Ibid., p. 95.
12 Ibid., p. 98.
people were out hunting but very little success. They thought two days ago that bulls would be found everywhere, but they are disappointed.\textsuperscript{13}

Work, camped on Dempsey Creek, again complained that this country was formerly rich in beaver, but now the beaver were scarce as a result of trapping by both Indians and Americans.

Warm Springs was their next encampment as they:

Marched two and one-fourth hours, eight miles S. S. E. up the river to the hot spring. The road good through a fine plain. The men visited their traps which had been in the water two nights, twenty-two beaver were taken. Notwithstanding, that this quarter has been recently hunted both by the Indians and Americans, there are still some beaver, but having been so lately hunted they are very shy, moreover, the dams and small forks are freezing up so that they cannot be taken. Several of the people were in the mountains hunting sheep, and killed five.\textsuperscript{14}

On November tenth, they left the Deer Lodge Valley by crossing over the Deer Lodge Pass to the region drained by the Missouri.

From reading these excerpts of his diary, it is evident that John Work with his party of trappers entered the Deer Lodge Valley at the junction of the Little Black-foot with the Clark Fork, trapped and hunted up the valley towards the southern extremity, passing Dempsey Creek,

\textsuperscript{13} Work, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 99.

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 100.
Warm Springs, and then crossed the mountains to the sources of the Missouri. His party found a plentiful supply of feed for the horses in the valley, but the beaver were very scarce and difficult to trap.

August 4, 1830, Smith, Sublette, and Jackson of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company sold their interest to Thomas Fitzpatrick, James Bridger, Milton S. Sublette, Henry Fraeb, and Jean Baptiste Gervais. Thomas Fitzpatrick, a fur trader, was representative of this era. He was among a party of men that discovered South Pass in March, 1824. He became a leader of bands of trappers, became the head of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, was an excellent Indian fighter, guided the first two emigrant trains to the Western Coast by the Oregon Trail and also led Father De Smet as far as Ft. Hall. From his government reports he seemed a highly intelligent and fairly well educated man. Another outstanding leader of this Rocky Mountain Fur Company was the able hunter, guide, and mountaineer of the West, James Bridger. In the winter of 1831-32, the peaceful days of these two men trapping in the Powder River were shattered by a strange company of whites following their trail and finally camping with them. This was a party of the rival firm, Astor's

American Fur Company, led by the able, and daring William Henry Vanderburgh and Andrew Drips. Warren Ferris was working for the American Fur Company and was a member of the Vanderburg and Drips party.\(^{16}\)

Since the American Fur Company's leaders were not familiar with this country, they determined to keep close on the trail of the veteran leaders, Fitzpatrick and Bridger, thus making the rival leaders their unwilling guides to the haunts of the beaver. Already the Rocky Mountain Fur Company had tried to shake them off and then had proposed a division of territory at Pierre's Hole but to no avail. Still Bridger and Fitzpatrick hoped to get away from their rivals as the supplies of the American Fur Company had not arrived.\(^{17}\)

Fitzpatrick and Bridger, eager to elude Vanderburgh and Drips, hurriedly set out with their men from Pierre's Hole northward for Henry's Fork of the Snake, intending to cross the Continental Divide and again invade the Blackfoot region of the upper Missouri. Thinking themselves safe from pursuit, they traveled slowly on the way. But the rivals were not to be thrown from the track... Vanderburgh... with Drips and the remainder of his men set out about August 6, (1832) following fast on the heels of Fitzpatrick's company. They soon came to within hailing distance of their quarry.\(^{18}\)

Closely they dogged the footsteps of Fitzpatrick's

\(^{16}\) Hafen, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 90.

\(^{17}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 91.

\(^{18}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 102.
men. No ruse misled them, and every movement was at once detected and followed. Both parties reached the Three Forks region, and here Fitzpatrick and Bridger losing all patience, resolved to cease trapping and lead their rivals on a futile chase through a country destitute of beaver.

They accordingly took up their line of march down the course of the Missouri keeping the main Blackfoot Trail, and tramping doggedly forward without stopping to set a single trap. The others beat the hoof after them for some time, but by degrees began to perceive the wild goose chase. 19

In the meantime, Ferris was sent to the head of the Salmon River to find the Flathead Indians and then was ordered to rejoin his companions in the Big Hole. From the summit of the Rocky Mountains on August 26th, he received a thrill of pleasure as he surveyed the prairies bordering the Salmon River on the one side and the fertile valley of the Wisdom River on the other. On the day following, a blacktailed deer was killed and the trail and encampment of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company was noticed. 20

In crossing the Big Hole Valley to the northern extremity a variety of game was seen—bears, antelopes, deer, and great numbers of duck. On the fourth of November, the party passed into the "Deer-house plains" and again saw the trail and several encampments of the Rocky Mountain Fur


20 Ferris, op. cit., p. 162.
Company, when they first entered they found no game but later they saw an abundance of deer, antelope, and mountain sheep. 21

They killed two buffalo while here which was unusual as buffalo were seldom found here though moose, deer, elk, sheep, and antelope were seen in large numbers. Ferris made just a brief statement concerning the Deer Lodge Valley on this occasion, inasmuch as he had already given a detailed description when he observed it for the first time the preceding year. After following up the Blackfoot River and passing over the mountains, they located Bridger and Fitzpatrick on Dearborn River and camped with them there. 22 Ferris never mentioned the rivalry that existed between the two groups.

At this point, Drips at the head of fifty men pursued Bridger and Fitzpatrick up the Missouri to the Three Forks while Vanderburgh with a party including Ferris went in search of new fur country. On the seventeenth of September in rapidly falling snow Vanderburgh descended the mountain and entered the "Deer House Plains." From there the party crossed to the Three Forks and Vanderburgh began trapping on the Madison River. On October thirteenth, he

21 Ferris, op. cit., p. 166.
22 Ibid., p. 166.
crossed over to Alder Creek and camped and then on the
fourteenth moved down to the Stinking water where he became
aware of Indian signs. With six men, including Ferris, he
set out to survey the Indian situation and was ambushed
about six miles away. Vanderburgh's horse was shot under
him while the other men turned and raced for camp. Ferris
received a severe wound in the shoulder. One other man a
French voyageur, Pilou, was also killed at this time.\(^{23}\)
Bridger and Fitzpatrick had a brush with the Blackfeet and
Bridger received an arrowhead in his shoulder which remained
until Marcus Whitman removed it three years later.\(^{24}\)

The next year Ferris spent with the Flathead Indians,
and while traveling through the Deer Lodge Valley with a
group of trappers and accompanied by a camp of Flathead
Indian on their way to the buffalo, he came upon an Indian
letter.\(^{25}\)

In the first place, a small extent of ground was
smoothed and a map of the junction of three rivers
drawn. Near them were then placed several little
mounds, and a small square enclosure made of pointed
twigs, planted close together, in the center of which
is a stick considerably longer than the others was
fixed upright in the ground, having a bit of rag
fastened to it at top. A great many little conical

\(^{23}\) Ferris, op. cit., pp. 170-178; Mrs. Frances
Fuller Victor, The River of the West (Hartford, 1869),
pp. 130-132.

\(^{24}\) Hafen, op. cit., p. 105.

\(^{25}\) Ferris, op. cit., p. 231.
heaps of earth were arranged round the enclosure, and red earth scattered profusely among them. At the entrance to the enclosure were the figures of two persons standing, one of whom had on a hat and was represented in the act of smoking. Behind him lay a small bunch of horsehair rolled up and placed on a piece of tobacco. At the feet of the other were four little wooden pipes, and by his side a bit of dressed skin containing a few grains of powder. Near these persons were two sticks stuck in the ground so as to cross each other at right angles, a small stick was also planted in the ground at the foot of each of the two figures making and angle with the earth of forty-five degrees, and pointing towards the other. There were also a multitude of little figures of men clustered around them. Eight or ten paces off were thirty little sticks painted red, lying on the ground. Bits of scarlet blankets and cloth were scattered about, and finally, seven small figures representing horsemen facing the north, were arranged at a little distance.26

This communication was clearly intended to frighten and warn the Flatheads against hunting on the sources of the Missouri.

This message eloquently told the Flatheads that a trading post, which was well supplied, had been erected at the Three Forks and that enemy Indians were assembling in large numbers around the fort. Last spring they had scalped thirty of the Flatheads and they would do the same with any that ventured into the Three Forks region again. This was signed by seven Blood (Blackfeet) Indians on horses. The Flathead chief gave a brief glance at this message and uttered "es whau," (may be) and turned his

attention to other affairs.\textsuperscript{27}

Eight years later, Father P. J. De Smet\textsuperscript{28} secured sufficient funds for making up his outfit and set out from St. Louis, April 30, 1841, on his way back to the Rocky Mountains. His companions were the fathers, Gregory Mengerini, a Roman, and Nicholas Point, a Vendean, and the Lay Brothers Joseph Specht, William Cloessens, and Charles Huet. All belonged to the Society of Jesus. In addition to the horses and pack animals, their traveling outfit consisted of three carts and one wagon drawn by ox teams. "These," writes Father Paladinio, "were the first wagons and oxen brought into Montana,"\textsuperscript{29} and the first to traverse the Deer Lodge Valley.

Taking leave of the emigrant train with which he had traveled at Ft. Hall, Father De Smet followed the Snake River, crossed the continental divide and directed his course to the Beaverhead. On August 30, he was met by the main body of the Flathead Indians and was escorted by the Indians through the Deer Lodge Valley where the warm spring mound immediately drew his attention. Father De Smet

\textsuperscript{27} Ferris, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 323-324.

\textsuperscript{28} Lawrence B. Paladinio, \textit{Indian and White in the Northwest} (Lancaster,Pa., 1922), pp. 37-38.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., p. 38
Copy in part of Original Map
in De Smet Collection, Library St.
Lewis University, St. Louis, Mo., Nov. 1939
"Map sent to Revd. Father Elef, Apr. 1849"
Father Elef was Province Head of Sec. Jesus
(Historical Library, Helena)
continued down the Clark Fork, until he reached the site of Missoula. Here he turned south and completed his journey near the present town of Stevensville.  

Lewis and Clark, David Thompson, Jedediah Smith, Jeremy Pinch, and Alexander Ross were all early explorers and traders that were in the vicinity of the Deer Lodge Valley but from their written accounts these men did not actually enter it.

Warren Ferris in his description of the Deer Lodge Valley designated the Deer Lodge River as the "La Riviere des pierres a fleches," which indicated that the French or French Canadians had been in this region and had named the river. Thus they must have been the first white men traveling through the valley.

The Indians used this as a highway. Why did not more fur trappers and traders use it? The answer to this question lies in the barriers formed by the mountains. From the east the high Pipestone Pass and the Mullan Pass, were high and difficult passes over which to travel, while from the south there was the low Deer Lodge Pass. The early settlements were at Ft. Owen and Flathead Post and the Deer Lodge Valley was not on the main routes of transportation from Walla Walla, Ft. Hall, and Ft. Benton to

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30 Palladino, op. cit., p. 39.
these posts. The route from Three Forks followed the Jefferson and Beaverhead Rivers and over the Big Hole Pass into the Bitter Root Valley or from the Beaverhead over the Lemhi Pass into Idaho and over the Nez Perce Pass. From the northeast, these two posts could easily be reached by following the Big Blackfoot River to the Clark Fork.

From the early records it is known that John Work, Warren Ferris, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Jim Bridger, William Henry Vanderburgh, Andrew Drips, and Father De Smet actually entered and traversed the Deer Lodge Valley. These men have made very little mark or notable contribution in its history as none of them lingered or remained here, but they have given the first written descriptions of the valley and the accounts of the early white men entering it.

No other records mentioning the Deer Lodge Valley were found between the time of Father De Smet's journey in 1841, and a journey made by Major John Owen in April, 1851. At this time Major Owen was going to Walla Walla via Fort Hall after supplies.

Came over to Deer Lodge fork travd in all today about 15 miles. Caught some 50 fine speckled trout One of our Lodges turned back this morning leaving us number now Six Lodges We are camped on D. L. fk passed one of the Indian Roads to Buff. called Vermillion road

Tuesday 22" Raised camp late this Morning it being rainy we crossed into D. L. fk found D. Lodge it is quite a small Butte in the prairie with boiling
spring on the top I know nothing of the qualities of the water

Wednesday 23 d. . . . Crossed the divide between the waters of the Columbia & Missouri [Deer Lodge Pass]. Our camp on a small stream the first water of the Mo. we have been on since leaving fort.31

The fur traders abandoned this region after 1833 but not the entire state. In the period from 1840 to 1860, they concentrated on the Upper Missouri and the Yellowstone, although the beaver did not play out in the Deer Lodge Valley until 1846-47.32


32 Article by Granville Stuart in the New North-West (Deer Lodge), July 14, 1876.
CHAPTER III

DISCOVERY OF GOLD

Francois Finlay

Francois Finlay\(^1\) has been given the credit of discovering the first gold in Montana in 1852 at Gold Creek, though in later years Granville Stuart claimed this discovery for his party. Stuart's first version of the discovery of gold and the most accurate is as follows:

Bout the year 1852, a French half-breed from Red river of the north, named Francois Finlay, but commonly known by the sobriquet of "Benetsee," who had been to California, began to "prospect" on a branch of the Hellgate, now known as Gold Creek. He found small quantities of light float gold in the surface along this stream, but not in sufficient abundance to pay. This became noised about among the mountaineers; and when Reese Anderson, my brother James, and I, were delayed by sickness at the head of Malad Creek, on the Hudspeths cutt-off, as we were on our way from California to the states in the summer of 1857, we saw some men who had passed "Benetsee's creek," as it was then called, in 1856, and they said they had got good prospects there, and as we had an inclination to see a little mountain life, we concluded to go out to that region, and winter, and look around a little. We accordingly wintered on Big-Hole, just above the "Backbone," in company with Robert Dempsey, Jake Meeks, and others; and in the spring of 1858, we went over to Deer Lodge and prospected a little on "Benetsee's creek," but not having any "grub" or tools to work with, we soon quit in disgust, without having found anything that would pay, or done enough to enable us to form a

\(^1\) Granville Stuart, Montana As It Is, Written in 1865 by Granville Stuart (Paul C. Phillips, editor, in Sources of Northwest History, No. 16, Missoula, 1931), p. 4.
reliable estimate of the richness of this vicinity.\textsuperscript{2}

Stuart wrote this account in 1865. Eleven years later, (1876) he added several facts in another writing, but reiterated his former statement that Francois Finlay was the first discoverer of gold.

In the spring of 1856, a party among whom were Robert Hereford, late of Helena, John Saunders called Long John, Bill Madison and one or two others who were panning Benetsee creek on their way to Salt Lake from the Bitter Root valley where they had spent the winter trading with the Indians, and prospecting a little found more gold than had been obtained by Finlay. One piece weighed about ten cents and they gave it to old Captain Grant, who used to show it up to the time of his death in 1862 as the first piece of gold found in the country.\textsuperscript{3}

However when he wrote his Journals, Forty Years on the Frontier, he assumed another viewpoint.

On May 2, 1858, James Stuart, Reece Anderson, Thomas Adams, and myself packed up the tools we had, which was an old square pointed spade with the hand-hold broken out of the top of the handle, that Adams had found in his wagon when he had bought it in Salt Lake, and a tin bread pan that we had brought with us from California and started for Benetsee creek on a prospecting trip. We followed up the creek about five miles carefully searching for any prospect or evidence of prospecting but found nothing. Near the bank of the creek at the foot of the mountain we sunk a hole about five feet deep and found ten cents in fine gold to the pan of sand and gravel. This convinced us that there were rich gold mines in this vicinity, but as we had no

\textsuperscript{2} Granville Stuart, \textit{Montana As It Is, Written in 1865 by Granville Stuart} (Paul C. Phillips, editor, in \textit{Sources of Northwest History, No. 16, Missoula, 1931}), pp. 4-5.

\textsuperscript{3} Granville Stuart, "A Historical Sketch of Deer Lodge County, Valley and City, July 4, 1876," in Montana Contributions, II, p. 121.
tools or provisions we could not do much prospecting. This prospect hole dug by us was the first prospecting for gold done in what is now Montana and this is the account of the first real discovery of gold within the state. 4

In spite of Stuart's repudiation of Benetsee Finlay's assertion that he was the first to discover gold, Finlay had a staunch friend in Duncan McDonald, 5 son of Angus McDonald, who strongly supported him in his claim.

The Stuarts remained at Benetsee Creek only long enough to sink one prospect hole and to find out that gold was there.

We then went back to the Emigrant road, and remained there trading with the emigrants over two years, very frequently talking of the probability of there being good mines in Deer Lodge, until in the fall of 1860, we moved out to the mouth of the Stinking-Water river, (Ruby Creek) intending to winter there, and go over and try our luck prospecting in the spring. But the Indians became insolent and began to kill our cattle, when we moved over, late in the fall, and settled down at the mouth of "Gold Creek," and began to prospect. 6


5 Stuart, Forty Years on the Frontier, op. cit., pp. 138-139.

6 Stuart, Montana As It Is, op. cit., pp. 4-5.
GOLD TOM

A few months earlier in the summer of 1860, Henry Thomas or "Gold Tom," as he became familiarly known, arrived from Pend Oreille Lake to prospect on Benetsee Creek, one mile west of Pioneer. He relocated the Stuart diggings and got the same results when he panned—ten cents a pan. Enormous granite boulders in the creek bed forced him to sink a shaft twenty feet deep about twenty-five or thirty yards to the side of the creek. To remove the dirt and gravel from this shaft, he made his own windlass: he

Hewed out and pinned together with wooden pins and bound around with a picket rope, a bucket with which he hoisted the dirt while sinking the shaft. He would slide down the rope, fill the bucket with gravel, then climb up a notched pole aided by the windlass rope, and hoist the bucket of gravel. He encountered many boulders too large to go into the bucket. Around these he would put a rope and windlass them out. . . . He also hewed out boards eight inches wide and about seven feet long and made four little sluice boxes. He had no nails, but put them together with wooden pegs. He placed them near his shaft and then dug a ditch from the creek around to the sluice boxes, where he washed the gravel from his shaft and some of the surface dirt. He worked the summers of 1860 and 1861, but could not make more than one dollar and fifty cents a day and often less than that sum owing to the great disadvantage under which he labored. . . .

He usually preferred to be alone, and would spend

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7 Stuart, Forty Years on the Frontier, op. cit., p. 161.

8 Stuart, Forty Years on the Frontier, op. cit., pp. 161-162.
days and weeks in the mountains without other companions than his horses and trusty rifle. He was not at all misanthropic, and I never knew him to drink whiskey or to gamble.9

SLUICING FOR GOLD

In the fall (1860), the Bannock Indians in the Beaverhead Valley had become quite hostile and had killed some cattle, so that many of the settlers moved to the Deer Lodge Valley. Among these were the Stuarts and Rezin Anderson, who settled on Gold Creek to work the prospect they had started in 1858.10

The Stuarts did not have much time to spend on their claim the first year (1861), although they did a little prospecting with good results in "beautiful gold." With the help of Rezin Anderson, they erected a log cabin in November and later some corrals.11

Farming, evidently, was their chief interest during the spring and summer of 1861, but they were very unfortunate in the site they chose for their garden. Had they chosen the bench land, the dangers of frost would have been lessened, and the additional advantage of being able to use

9 Stuart, Forty Years on the Frontier, op. cit., p. 165.
10 Ibid., p. 155.
11 Ibid., p. 173.
the water from Gold Creek for irrigation would have been theirs.

After examining "Gold Tom's" apparatus, the Stuarts decided they would have to have more equipment to work their claim. They needed lumber for sluice boxes and they needed water to work the placer. To secure the latter, they had to dig a ditch and make an instrument for leveling one.

During the same year that the Stuarts were farming and digging their ditch, Perry W. McAdow set out (October, 1861) to visit an old friend, Major Owen, in the Bitter Root Valley. He came up the Missouri River and with Sterney Blake prospected several dry gulches near Gold Creek and found encouraging results--about ten cents per pan.\(^\text{12}\)

Early in the spring of 1862, rumors of the new and rich discoveries in Idaho and around Deer Lodge had found their way to Salt Lake City and Colorado, and had sent streams of emigrants on their way to the gold fields. The small settlement at the mouth of Gold Creek, known as American Fork, took on the appearance of a bustling mining camp. A number of men were out prospecting. The Stuarts were constructing sluice boxes, having secured a thousand

\(^{12}\) Perry W. McAdow in a letter written to Dr. W. S. Bell, (Helena, 1908), p. 1.
feet of lumber at ten cents a foot, and were digging a
ditch to their mine. They had lost much time by having
to stop to repair their ditch, which often broke. Blake
and McAdow, were also prospecting and washing gravel. That
same year, however, they moved up to Pioneer Gulch. With
a whipsaw they sawed enough lumber to make three sluice
boxes; and then by using some deep snow drifts for water for
a few days until it gave out, they took out one and one-
fourth ounces of pure gold. These were the first sluice
boxes erected or used in Pioneer Gulch.13

While at their diggings the men were friendly and
enjoyed visiting each other, for one day the Stuarts:

Sponged on Blake and McAdow for grub. We had rice,
etc., for dinner; beans, etc., for supper. Blake was
the cook, enjoyed our visit very much. They are a
jovial set of miners and we had much fun at one an-
other's expense in the way of jokes.14

On May 21, the Stuarts cleaned their sluice boxes
and found the first nugget in what is now Montana. Their
earnings, including the nugget, were only twelve dollars;
but the next month, one day's earnings netted them seven-
teen dollars and sixty cents.15

13 McAdow, op. cit., p. 5.
14 Stuart, Forty Years on the Frontier, op. cit.,
p. 209.
15 Ibid., p. 210
GOLD SEEKERS

The Deer Lodge Valley experienced a real gold rush during the summer of 1860 as men eager for adventure and riches were arriving each day. The newly constructed Mullan Road facilitated travel so that the new discoveries were very easily reached. Many of these men stayed at Gold Creek for just a short time and then went on to the mines at Bannack.

One of these parties, of gold seekers, A. H. Wilcox, Owens, and White, arrived on foot at the Mullan Pass bound for the mining camp at Gold Creek in July, 1862. They had arrived at Ft. Benton on one of the La Barge's boats and, so far, were ahead of most of the gold seekers. They camped at Dog Creek, and the next day in a snow storm waded the Deer Lodge up to their arms. They were dressing, since they had stripped and carried their clothes across, when two men--gold seekers that had been on the same boat as they--passed them on horseback. That night they camped at Gold Creek crossing (not at the settlement).  

Early the next morning, they struck out on the only road they saw, believing that all roads led to the mines.

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Instead of reaching their objective, they arrived at Bob Dempsey's place and he pointed out a cut-off over the hills that they could take. Even at this delay, they arrived in time to stake out claims ahead of the rest of the gold seekers from Missouri with the exception of Samuel Hauser, Walter B. Dance, and Frank Louthan.

According to Mr. Wilcox, there were only three sets of sluice boxes in operation within the boundaries of Montana at that time. One was operated by Granville Stuart on his claim, the farthest down the creek. "Granville was, I remember, wearing a pair of buckskin moccasins in the water and they were assuming all kinds of odd shapes."\(^\text{17}\) The next claim above his was owned by James Stuart, who had two men working it for him; and the third claim belonged to Henry Thomas, John Brown, and Ed Hibbard.

There were no buildings there; most of the miners lived in tents, though Granville was living in a lodge. In addition to the miners, there was a blacksmith, a Frenchman by the name of Louis Mott, and his family, which consisted of his Blackfoot Indian wife and five or six boys and a girl.

There were also two Frenchmen running a sawmill. Their mill consisted of one saw and one Frenchman on

\(^{17}\) Wilcox, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 11.
top of a log and another underneath but after the tenderfeet arrived they did a thriving business selling all the lumber they could saw at the rate of twenty dollars a hundred feet and they made more money that summer than any of the miners.\textsuperscript{18}

The Wilcox party did not find a fortune in their claim; for after spending one hundred dollars for lumber and buying tools and food, they cleaned up just two dollars and a half in gold dust. Since their money was spent and their provisions were gone, they struck out for richer stakes.\textsuperscript{19}

Another account of a party of gold seekers arriving in American Fork in July, 1862, is given by Judge Francis M. Thompson of Greenfield, Massachusetts. These men were passengers on the same boat as the Wilcox group.

(July 3, 1862) The night was very cold and ice a half inch in thickness formed in camp. Following down the Little Blackfoot which soon became a sizeable stream, we crossed the north end of Deer Lodge prairie and following down the Hell Gate river, about night came opposite the mouth of Gold creek, but finding the waters too strong for fording, we camped on this north side. By noon the next day we had the pack-train and goods safely over the Hell Gate, a feat accomplished with some difficulty. A little Frenchman who had walked and carried his own pack all the way from Benton, undertook to follow the train in the ford, with his pack strapped upon his back, but reaching swift water his feet were swept from under him and he rolled in the stream, sometimes the Frenchman and sometimes the pack uppermost, but by good luck he regained the shore from which he started. We found about twenty of our fellow passengers \textsuperscript{19}on the boat to Ft. Benton\textsuperscript{19} already at work in the mines, and some claimed that they were getting out about ten or twelve dollars per day.

\textsuperscript{18} Wilcox, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 11.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 12.
We saw one man who had been at work in the mines about two months clean up his day's work by which he realized an ounce of gold worth twenty dollars. Our party went some distance up the stream and staked out some claims, and we did a little prospecting, getting the color of gold in each pan of gravel.20 . . .

We rented from Johnny Grant, the owner, a deserted log cabin standing at the junction of the Little Black-foot and Deer Lodge rivers as our headquarters.21 . . . John Powell was hired as a guide for this party and during the latter part of July they found gold on the Boulder and then returned to their camp.22

We reached our home camp at the Johnny Grant houses to find that during our absence of sixteen days, at least a hundred of old miners had arrived from "Pike's Peak" the most of whom were dead broke—without money or provisions. Capt. Willard, who had remained in camp had welcomed them all, had dealt out our stores with a most liberal hand to all who would promise to secure us claims in any discoveries which they should make. His methods were not approved by most of his associates. . . . During the two days I spent at the home camp I was kept busy answering questions of the "Pike's Peakers" concerning the new discoveries. When three of our party set out to return to Boulder, we were followed by a crowd of the newcomers anxious to find some placer where they could get sufficient gold to keep them through the approaching winter.23

A party from Minnesota among whom was Mark D. Ledbeater also mined in the Gold Creek vicinity during that summer. He wrote home that:

"Vanderberg, the two Hoyts and myself are in the party. Claims above us are paying from $5 to $12 per

21 Ibid., p. 40.
22 Thompson, op. cit., p. 44.
23 Ibid., p. 45.
day and those below $4 to $6 . . . Three-fourths of the whole party are going on to Oregon after seeing what hard work mining is.\textsuperscript{24} . . . Another letter written a few months later, still from Deer Lodge, said in part . . . "Last week we (two men) took out fifty dollars in one day, and the next fifty-three dollars."\textsuperscript{25}

Conrad Kohrs,\textsuperscript{26} later the cattle tycoon of Deer Lodge, had been camping on Cottonwood Creek in the fall of 1862, but now his party broke camp and went down to Gold Creek. He found Sam Hauser, W. B. Dance, Joseph Le Clair, King and others working a small gulch on the right of Pioneer. His party went to Pike's Peak Gulch, but were unsuccessful. Upon hearing the news of a discovery at Boulder, he started there. On the way, he met Hank Crawford, who employed him as a butcher.

PIONEER BAR

This first mining district in the vicinity of Gold Creek was known as the Pioneer Bar. It extended five miles, east and west and two miles, north and south and included the following: Independent district on the east, Pioneer on the west, Pikes Peak between the two, Yam Hill or Pil-

\textsuperscript{24} St. Cloud (Minnesota) Democrat, November 27, 1862, quoted in Merrill G. Burlingame, \textit{The Montana Frontier} (Helena, 1942), p. 85.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., January 15, 1863.

grim Bar, French Gulch, Gold Hill, Squaw Gulch, Wood's Flat, Wilson's Bar, Trail Gulch, Prowse Bar, Windy Bar, Hart's Gravel, Rocker Gulch, and Dry Gulch. It was a section "among rounded grassy hills at the northern foot of the Gold Creek Mountains, which are an isolated spur, putting down from the main ranges."

Even though during the summer of 1862 so many emigrants had staked and worked claims in this area, by fall there were only a few miners left working, as the tales of the Bannack placers had lured them there. The placers at the head of Pioneer Gulch were being worked with rockers and were paying good wages, but the Stuarts too became rather discouraged as their claim wasn't paying too well. When Frank H. Woody stopped on his return from a visit to the Beaverhead mines in the fall and reported very rich claims there, they immediately decided to investigate. They were so well pleased with the Beaverhead outlook that they decided to move and hired a twenty by twenty feet log building erected in Bannack for one hundred forty dollars.


29 Stuart, Forty Years on the Frontier, op. cit., p. 225.
The following year, the Pioneer Bar was again deserted but this time for the new strike on Alder Gulch. James Stuart and Rezin Anderson were among those leaving Gold Creek for the Stinking Water workings on July 25, 1863, and they declared the Gold Creek and Pioneer placers were entirely played out. They were only earning three to five dollars per day and water was becoming very scarce. There were just eight miners left.30

The mines in the Pioneer Bar "were neglected until 1866 when they were found to be both rich and extensive."31 Ditches were constructed so that large quantities of water were available and mining operations were carried out on a larger scale.

DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN ALDER GULCH

Like many of the mining camps, Alder Gulch was discovered by men who had previously found their way to Deer Lodge. Lew Simmons, Bill Fairweather, Barney Hughes, Tom Cover, George Orr, Mike Sweeney, Harry Rodgers and Henry Edgar rode into La Barge City (Deer Lodge) on February 4,

30 Microfilm of The Joint Diary of James and Granville Stuart, Recording Life and Events In Montana Territory, 1861-1868, from William Coe Collection, Yale University, (Historical Library, Helena).

31 Raymond, op. cit., p. 271.
1863, with five gallons of alcohol which they had brought with them to be used in trading for horses with the Flathead Indians. They waited for the Indians to return from hunting on the east side of the mountains. The Indians arrived and camped on the Little Blackfoot. They, therefore, put their goods in with Perry McAdow and Sterney Blake, who were also after horses. Bob Dempsey did the trading, and they got thirteen head. On March 23, they left La Barge City to join James Stuart’s expedition to the Yellowstone. They did not meet at the Beaverhead River as they had planned and were captured by the Indians. On their return, May 26, they made a rich discovery in a gulch that Henry Edgar named "Alder Gulch."32

OTHER PLACERS

Every mountain range, enclosing the Deer Lodge Valley, and almost every stream and gulch in those mountains have contributed some placers of gold, silver, lead, and copper. New claims and placers were being staked out every year. Even in 1890, 147 new placers were recorded in Deer Lodge County.33


33 G. C. Swallow, Reports of the Inspector of Mines and Deputy Inspectors of Mines of the Year Ending November 30th, 1890 (Helena, 1890), p. 22.
Prairie Gulch, Uncle Ben's Gulch and vicinity, lie on the west side of Deer Lodge Valley, into which they run to the east. They were discovered in the spring of 1868 by Frederickson, Moss and "Uncle" Ben Pricer. These gulches are scarcely developed yet owing to the great scarcity of water, they will probably prove extensive, and will last for several years, they have yielded about $50,000. The vote last August (1869) was 42, population about 75.

Cariboo and Boomerang Gulches and vicinity are tributaries of Deer Lodge River, head in the main range and run west. They were discovered in the spring of 1867. The mine portion is about three miles in length; but it is as yet unknown for what distance they carry gold. Water is very scarce, and is supplied by ditches. The diggings have paid well for the work done. The total yield is about $80,000. The vote last August (1869) was 21. Population about 40.

In 1869, "Mr. McDougal & Co., near Woods Flat, cleaned up $3,000, five days work, seven men ground sluicing.

Walker & Co., cleaned up $1,800 this week in their hydraulic claim, Pilgrim Bar."35

In addition to the gold found in Deer Lodge Valley, mention is made that petroleum was discovered in 186736 and Granville Stuart found an outcropping of coal in Pikes Peak Gulch in 1862.37

The gold discoveries in the Deer Lodge Valley

34 Raymond, op. cit., p. 275.
35 New North-West (Deer Lodge), August 13, 1869.
37 Stuart, Forty Years on the Frontier, op. cit., p. 223.
attracted many people, yet more fortunes were made in trading with the miners than in actual mining. The rich gulches such as Bear, Bearmouth, Elk, were in Deer Lodge County but not in the valley. None of these regions ever produced the huge sums that were found in Alder Gulch. Still there has been always enough promise of hidden riches and fair incomes derived from mining to keep men interested in prospecting and extracting ore.

DITCHES

Placer mining required large quantities of water which in most cases in the Deer Lodge Valley was not available. At Pioneer Bar, it was soon discovered that in order to take out gold in paying quantities some means for obtaining water would have to be found. Granville Stuart realized this problem and in July 13, 1863, considered what the possibilities would be to build a ditch from Rock Creek to Pikes Peak Gulch. He found it possible, but at an enormous expense.\(^{\text{38}}\) In the fall of 1864, Cook dug a ditch on Pikes Peak, but his property with Bob Dempsey's ranch was bought by Thomas Prouse.\(^{\text{39}}\)

\(^{\text{38}}\) Stuart, op. cit., p. 250  
Some discoveries were made on French Gulch and a company was formed to dig a ditch. The ditch was completed in 1865. The Pioneer Ditch company—John Pemberton, Thomas Stuart, John and High Thomas, McNich Braton—completed a ditch in the fall of 1866. Other ditches constructed at the same time were Carruther's Ditch, the Enterprise, and a ditch from Willow Creek to Hart's Gravel. These were the first attempts at forming ditch companies and digging ditches.

Believing that a ditch would pay because there were so many rich and extensive mines in the Pioneer region by 1867, Colonel William Irvine, Thomas A. Irvine, Christopher Hart, John C. Thornton, Zeke Newman, and Conrad Kohrs organized the Rock Creek Ditch Company in May. They bought the Willow Creek Ditch Company and mines for the water right. Ditch building here was a difficult undertaking; doubly so, because of the rough country and the scarcity of money. The dimensions of the ditch were five feet across on the bottom, three feet deep, and seven feet across at the top. Much fluming was used and all the lumber for this had to be sawed by hand. The most difficult part for construction was on the Rock Creek hillside, where there were stretches of conglomerate. This could neither be dug nor blasted

40 Loc. cit.
since drilling and blasting would not break the stone. After spending one hundred thousand dollars, they ran out of money and issued script at the rate of twenty-five cents an inch. By 1868, the ditch was completed to Squaw Gulch, a distance of thirteen miles. A ditch was also constructed in the same year to Yam Hill. 41

The summer of 1869 was a dry season and a poor one for water, but a profitable one to the ditch company. The demand for water was so great that those owning script were able to sell at thirty-seven and a half cents per inch. That season all the script, a total of $35,000, was redeemed and an extra amount received which enabled them to do some repairing. The average price for water was twenty-five cents per inch for twenty-four hours since they mined day and night in the summer. 42

The construction of Rock Creek Dam commenced by building a tunnel, one hundred seventy-five feet long between Pioneer Creek and the lake in the fall of 1869. As soon as the water was low, the dam itself was started. This season there was a good supply of water and such a demand for it that it was sold four times:

41 Kohrs, op. cit., pp. 64-65.
42 Ibid., p. 66.
The miners who used it for the first time paid twenty-five cents, those who picked it up fifteen cents, the third user ten cents, and those who used it the fourth, it was usually lumped off at five cents an inch.\textsuperscript{43}

The income derived was a total of seventy-two thousand dollars, of which twenty-two thousand was used for repair and salaries of employees. Ed Irvine was general superintendent and David L. Irvine supervised the actual measurement of the water.\textsuperscript{44} The \textit{New North-West} stated that in 1869, Deer Lodge had 279 miles of ditches, costing four hundred ninety-eight thousand dollars; this did not include hundreds of miles of private ditches.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{43} Kohrs, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 67.

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Loc. cit.}

\textsuperscript{45} \textit{New North-West}, August 27, 1869.
<table>
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<th>Locality</th>
<th>Name of Ditch</th>
<th>Name of Owners</th>
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46 Raymond, op. cit., p. 279.
CHAPTER IV

SETTLEMENTS AND SETTLERS

Grantsville

The first settlement in Deer Lodge Valley was at the junction of the Little Blackfoot and the Clark Fork rivers. John Francis Grant lived at Ft. Hall where his father was a clerk for the Hudson's Bay Company until 1855, when the post was abandoned by the company. In 1850, John Grant married; and for nine years trapped, hunted, and traded with the Indians and emigrants on the Oregon Trail. His headquarters were in the Beaverhead Valley. Grant was very successful in his trading and his herds of cattle and horses increased to sizable bands. He needed grazing land for his stock in a region adapted to trading. The grassy pastures of the Deer Lodge Valley fulfilled the first requirement; and since it was the trail to the buffalo used by seven Indian tribes, the valley had good trading possibilities. He built two log cabins at the mouth of the Little Blackfoot River in November, 1859. His stock ranged the entire valley unmolested, and everyone, Indian and white, was welcomed to his home and food. His cattle, when fat, were driven to the emigrant road and traded, one fat one for two lean ones. Grant had several Indian wives
chosen from the various tribes that passed through the country and always maintained friendly relations with his in-laws. Some say he had as many as seven wives, one wife from each of the tribes that traveled through the valley; and in order to get the best results in trading, he would bring out the wife from the tribe that was visiting. One of his wives was a sister of Chief Tendoy, and another a relative of Pushigan.¹

Grant was a shrewd trader and soon built a sizable fortune. He loaned large sums of money to those he trusted but never kept an account book. He never locked his door, and he never lost a dollar; though, he had large sums of money stored in his cabins. Grant was generous, kindhearted, and well-liked. "Left Deer Lodge City for Virginia City in John Grant's wagon. He (Grant) having agreed to deliver Judge Dance, Worden and myself (Granville Stuart) there in the shortest possible time... three days... Had lots of fun. Johnny is a "bully" man to travel with."²

In the spring of 1862, Grant moved to Cottonwood

¹ Dave Hilger, John Francis Grant. Address of Dave Hilger at the dedication of the John Grant monument erected in the Deer Lodge Valley near Garrison, August 23, 1931 (State Historical Library, Helena).

² Montana (Virginia City) Post, January 6, 1866 (State Historical Library, Helena).
(Deer Lodge) and erected a home, part of which was the old Conrad Kohrs house. This house was by far the finest in Montana for several years. Some of the lumber used was hauled by ox teams from the St. Ignatius Mission, a distance of one hundred thirty-five miles. The building was two stories high with twenty-eight glass windows and green shutters.

After 1862, the population of Deer Lodge Valley increased rapidly and this brought in the tax collector and the assessor who greatly annoyed Grant. He had other troubles too. In February, 1866, he suffered two very severe losses: his large barn and hay, valued at three thousand dollars, were destroyed by fire and several hundred gallons of liquor were seized by N. P. Langford, the U. S. Internal Revenue officer. After these losses Grant declared that he would "clear up and go among the Indians again." The range was not all his as other settlers were coming in with stock.

Conrad Kohrs made him a good offer for his cattle in 1867: $19,200 for 365 head and his ranch. Grant accepted the offer and moved to Canada near Winnipeg. He did not prosper, and in 1886 while looking for a new home he visited his old home in the Deer Lodge Valley on his way to the coast. He died,

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3 Butte Miner, July 24, 1920.
4 Montana (Virginia City) Post, December 16, 1865.
5 Ibid., February 17, 1866.
May 1, 1907, in Edmonton where he was born.  

GOLD CREEK

In November, 1860, Granville and James Stuart and Rezin Anderson built the first cabin at the mouth of Gold Creek, thirteen miles west of Grantsville where soon appeared the settlement which was known as American Fork until July 14, 1862, when the name was changed to Gold Creek. The next year they nailed on a roof and laid a puncheon floor in their cabin. Fred Burr, John Powell, James Minesinger, and Tom Adams had built cabins there by the fall of 1861.

Life in these small camps was never dull, for the settlers were close together and enjoyed visiting back and forth and keeping in touch with the outside world. Even during the severe winter of 1860-61, there were people passing between Fort Owen, Hell Gate, Grantsville, and Cottonwood. These people always passed a night in each settlement carrying the news from one part of the country to the other.

John Owen had bought a plow at Fort Benton in 1860,

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6 Hilger, op. cit.

7 Perry W. McAdow, Letter to Dr. W. S. Bell, (Helena, August 4, 1908).
but was attacked by the Indians and forced to leave it on the east side of the pass. The Stuarts bought the plow from him and got it in the spring of 1861. For four years they had been without vegetables, and now they were determined to raise a garden. They planted beets, potatoes, muskmelons, peas, pumpkins, onions, cabbage, radishes, and corn from seeds obtained at Worden's store in Hell Gate. In addition to working in their garden, they sowed oats and wheat, and prospected; but the farm took most of their time in cultivating and fencing it. The garden did not prosper too well because of the frosts. On June 8, the frost killed the corn and potatoes and "slayed my one melon". By August, enough peas had survived the frost that they appeared on the table.

The Indian wives were sociable; Mrs. Powell and Mrs. Catherine Burr visited their friend Mrs. Dempsey; Mrs. Pambrum and Mrs. Catherine Burr would stop for a meal on their way to pick service berries at Flint Creek.

The Stuart herd of cattle numbered nineteen calves,


9 Ibid., p. 165.

10 Ibid., p. 171.
four yearlings, thirty-three cows, fifteen oxen, two young steers, and three bulls. The wheat they raised was sold to Henry Brooks of the Bitter Root at four dollars per bushel, and then they cut and put up hay which was badly needed the following winter.

The summer of 1862 saw great changes in the settlement. Many emigrants and miners were arriving each day. Worden and Higgins started a branch store with the Stuarts as managers. The store and grocery department flourished into a good business venture, for they received most of the trade of the emigrants going to the Idaho and Bannack mines. Hudson Bay shirts which sold at three and four dollars were in great demand because of the much longer tails than those of the American made shirts. Twenty dollars a hundred was paid for flour and twenty-five cents per pound for salt.

With the influx of the settlers in 1862, the men decidedly improved their appearances. When one family arrived with two pretty daughters, every man shaved and changed his shirt. A Mrs. Craft decided the men should

11 Microfilm of The Joint Diary of James and Granville Stuart Recording Life and Events in Montana Territory, 1861-1866 from William Coe Collection, Yale University, (Historical Library, Helena).
12 Stuart, op. cit., p. 188.
13 Ibid., p. 213.
wear shirts with starched fronts, neckbands, and wristbands, and then set out to teach the Indian wives the intricacies of ironing. Later that summer all the men were shaving and indulging in an occasional hair cut. The elaborately beaded buckskin shirt gave way to blue flannel shirts with black neckties. Shoes and boots took the place of the moccasins, and wash day was changed to another day than Sunday. The Stuarts were delighted with the arrival of a fine violinist, J. B. Caven, and his talented wife; and they enjoyed both the music and the society of the white woman. 14

One of the gold seekers was a dentist, Dr. H. J. McKellops, who later pulled a tooth for Granville. 15

In September, Granville made the acquaintance of two men that he liked and rode with them from Hell Gate to Gold Creek. These men were Henry Plummer and Charles Reeves, the notorious road agents. He even repaired Plummer's gun during their stop at Gold Creek. 16

The Stuarts realizing that trading with the miners and emigrants was a lucrative business moved to Bannack in November, 1862, leaving Rezin Anderson in charge of the store

14 Ibid., p. 215.
15 Ibid., p. 216.
16 Ibid., p. 223.
at Gold Creek. In March, 1863, Granville returned for supplies: two dozen long-handled shovels which he sold at ten dollars each, and fifteen pounds of chewing tobacco which the miners bought at fifteen dollars a pound.

In August, 1863, James Stuart and W. B. Dance opened a store and Granville and Rezin Anderson set up a blacksmith shop in Virginia City. In two weeks, Rezin and Granville took in three hundred dollars in their blacksmith shop.

The Stuarts were strong, upright men, who remained loyal to their Indian wives and children. Granville was a philosopher and dreamer and, above all, a keen observer. His knowledge of the cattle industry was exhaustive and his greatest contribution was the history of that industry. He took a keen interest in the schools and in promoting Deer Lodge in every possible way. James Stuart was a man of action, liked gambling, was a good politician and a shrewd business man.

Fred Burr hired Frank Goodwin to build his cabin for

17 Ibid., pp. 231-232.
18 Ibid., p. 234.
19 Ibid., p. 258.
20 Ibid., p. 258.
two horses and fifty pounds of flour in the fall of 1861.

Fred Burr was a trader and also prospected with the Stuarts. Most of his time was spent on the road to Ft. Benton, Hell Gate, and the Beaverhead. His wife was a sister of Aubony, Granville's wife.

John Powell's chief occupation was hunting. Day after day he would go out after game and would very seldom return empty handed. He knew the country and was often hired by various parties to act as their guide. He also liked nothing better then to spend the evening gambling and drinking whiskey. He left the Gold Creek settlement in August, 1862, to settle farther up the Clark Fork.

Bob Dempsey was among the earliest of the settlers. He was born in Ireland in 1825 and came to America in 1846. Between 1850 and 1860, he traded with the emigrants for their worn-out animals which he wintered in the Beaverhead and Big Hole Valleys. His first farm, purchased by him in 1861, was on the west side of the Clark Fork, about four miles below the mouth of Gold Creek. This little settlement was given the name of Dublin.

21 Ibid., p. 186.
22 Ibid., p. 217.
Mrs. Dempsey was a woman of uncertain temperament. At times after becoming exasperated by the drunken loafers always hanging around there, she would put one or more of them to flight. In one encounter, a Charles Allen lost a tooth, received two blackened eyes, and had his face so badly scratched that he was unrecognizable. 24

Dempsey sold his ranch in the fall of 1862, to take up another six or seven miles above Deer Lodge on the creek that now bears his name. In 1863, he went to Bannack and later followed the gold rush to the Ruby Valley, where he managed a wayside inn. 25

DEER LODGE

On Cottonwood Creek eleven miles up the Deer Lodge River, the first settlers--Thomas Lavatta, Joseph Hill, Alejo Barasta--were of Spanish or of Mexican descent and came from Ft. Union. The settlement founded by them and known in 1860-61 as Spanish Fork and also as Cottonwood since it was situated on a creek lined with tall cottonwood trees. 26 It is rather interesting to notice the different

25 Dempsey, op. cit.
SKETCH of the TOWNSITE of

LABARGE CITY

in Deer Lodge C° as surveyed by

Ja. W. Withrow in March, 1863.

Drawn by W. W. de Lacy, C.C.

MAP 3
Survey of the exterior boundary and four blocks of interior lines: of the Town Site of La Barge.

Exterior Lines

Beginning at a stake driven on the north side of Cottonwood Creek for a starting point. Turn thence West and at thirty eight (38) chains cross Cottonwood Creek, At Seventy and ten one hundredth chains (70.10) intersect the bank of Deer Lodge River and at Eighty chains (80) drive a Stake for the north West corner of Town Site.

From said Stake turn South and at Seventy four and twenty one hundredth chains cross creek and at Eighty chains (80) drove a Stake for the South West corner of Town Site.

From thence turn East and at Thirty five chains (35) intersect Deer Lodge River and at Eighty Chains drove a stake for the South East corner of Town Site.

From thence turn North and at Ninetie Seventy five one hundredth chains 19.75 cross creek. At Seventy and twenty five one hundredth chains (70.25) cross cottonwood creek and at eighty chains (80) intersect the point of beginning the Same being the North East corner of Town Site.

Interior Lines

Four Blocks of Interior lines have been completed, being Blocks 20, 21, 22 and 23. For particulars see accompanying diagram.

(Signed) Jas. Withrow
Surveyor

MAP 4
nationalities represented in the early settlements in this valley: Dempsey's settlement represented the Irish and was called "Dublin." Grant was a Canadian; Cottonwood was Spanish; and several miles south of Cottonwood was a French settlement.

La Barge, Harkness and Company was organized to carry on trade with the miners. Two friends of Captain La Barge, John S. Pemberton and Leon Quesnell, then living in Cottonwood, believed the company would set up a mercantile establishment there that summer (1862). They platted the townsite, had it surveyed and named it "La Barge City." Harkness had charge of the trading end and brought the stock of miners supplies and trading goods to Gold Creek. Soon finding that he disliked everything in the mountain country except the trout fishing, Harkness left, giving away most of his stock of goods and selling an ambulance to John Grant. "La Barge City" was placed on the maps and that name was used during 1862-1863, when it reverted to Cottonwood. 27

In addition to the names, Spanish Fork, Cottonwood, La Barge City, this settlement was designated "Idaho City",

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the county seat of Deer Lodge County, when it became part of the Territory of Idaho organized in 1863. Since Montana Territory was formed shortly afterwards, the name Idaho City was immediately dropped.

In 1862, the Deer Lodge Town Company--W. B. Dance, James Stuart, John S. Pemberton, Granville Stuart, Leon Quesnelle, Louis Dischneaux, and Frank Truchet--located and appropriated six hundred and forty acres of land for the town of Deer Lodge City. This was not recorded until January 18, 1868. The company had De Lacy survey the site; but they gave away so many of the lots that they did not make enough to pay for the survey.

In accordance with an act passed by the legislative assembly of the Territory of Idaho, a pre-emption claim was filed on October 28, 1864, by the Deer Lodge Town Company for three hundred and twenty acres. This, however, did not fill the requirements of the law. The members of this company then were J. S. Pemberton, C. A. Broadwater, L. DeMar, Leon Quesnelle, W. F. Sanders, A. Fall Dayton, Ramsey F. Irnsha, F. Ruff, and E. P. Lewis. It was not until, August 6, 1869, that the present town plat consisting of eighty-two

28 Idaho Territory Session Laws, 1st Sess., 1863-64 (Lewistown, 1864), pp. 674-676.

29 Town Plats, Book A., Deer Lodge County, pp. 30-33.
blocks was filed by D. P. Newcomer, probate judge of Deer Lodge County. It was surveyed and mapped by D. L. Griffith. The streets running north and south were named A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. and those running east and west, first, second, third, ... tenth streets. The patent for the land was recorded on October 4, 1872.30

The townsite was a square with the Deer Lodge River on the west. The east and west streets were eighty feet wide and the north and south were one hundred feet. "Here, ... Leon Quesnelle and Louis Demers built the first house in 1860; ... Worden & Co., erected the first store in 1863, and made the primal innovation on the Indians."31 Thomas Lavatta was also among the first settlers but built about a mile above the town of Deer Lodge on Cottonwood Creek.

The second house built in Deer Lodge was a squat-looking, dirt-roofed, sixteen by twenty foot cabin. It stood on Main Street opposite Murphy, Neil and Company's store, close to Worden's store. It was built in 1863 by Louis Dischneaux. It had been used as the office of the clerk and recorder, as a residence by Thomas Stuart and

30 Book 1, Misc. Page 1, Transcribed Records, Powell County, Montana.

31 New North-West, (Deer Lodge) July 9, 1869.
John S. Pemberton, and finally as a warehouse. This cabin was torn down in 1883, and a wagon shed erected in its place.32

Warren C. Gillette and James King set up a trading establishment in November, 1862, with a good stock of miner's supplies in an unfinished building erected by C. A. Broadwater. Their stay was brief as King was induced to go back to the States and Gillette decided that trade was more brisk in Bannack.33

The Stuarts and Frank L. Worden formed a partnership in June 1864 and opened a store in Deer Lodge which James managed. Granville remained in Virginia City until 1867, when he, too, returned to Deer Lodge. F. E. W. Patten bought the Virginia City store in 1865.34

In 1864, the most startling features of the city were "six log cabins, some peacefully ruminating cows, a stray vaquero, and a lot of half-breed papooses, engaged in making mud pies."35 The business district was the store, Stuart and Company, and a blacksmith shop.36

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32 Leeson, op. cit., p. 561.
33 Robert Vaughn, Then and Now; or, Thirty-six Years in the Rockies (Minneapolis, 1900), pp. 229-236.
34 Montana Post (Virginia City), November 25, 1865.
35 Ibid., December 16, 1865.
36 Ibid., December 23, 1865.
A year later in 1865, the number of log cabins had increased to about one hundred and twenty-five and the business district was greatly enlarged. Now there were three or four stores, a number of hotels, a cabinet-shop, a brewery, butcher shops, saloons, and corrals. This was the base of supplies for the new mines of the Hell Gate country: the Big Bear, Elk Creek, Dave’s Deep Rock and Douglas Gulches. Peter Martin and Company’s hotel was described as a creditable and satisfactory establishment. Three steam sawmills were kept busy turning out lumber for the many buildings under construction. The Dance and Stuart Sawmill used a fifty-four inch, circular blade driven by a forty-horse power portable engine and could cut fifteen thousand feet of lumber per day. Johnny Grant owned a gristmill and the first threshing machine.

The next year (1866), Dance, Stuart and Company erected a fine adobe building for their store, which added greatly to the appearance of the town, and a new fireproof building for a warehouse. At this time these men were "doing a smashing trade." An advertisement of Dance,

37 Ibid., November 26; December 23, 1865.
38 Ibid., December 16, 1865.
39 Ibid., July 28, 1866.
Stuart & Co.'s read:

**Deer Lodge City (Cottonwood)**

Groceries, Wines, Liquors, Queensware, Hardware, Clothing, Blankets, Boots and Shoes, Buffalo Overshoes, Bridles, Saddles, Whips, Harness and California Mining Tools. All of which they will sell very low for cash. Come down in the Valley where the sun shines, (roads good) and the grass grows high.40

The City Meat Market was opened by Charles P. H. Bielenberg.

A. K. McClure, passing through Deer Lodge in 1867,
described it:

A little village of probably two hundred inhabitants, situated on the river of the same name, and nearly central in the most picturesque and beautiful valley I have seen in Montana. There were no mining camps within ten miles of the town, and it wears the quiet, sober air of an agricultural community.41

This community in 1869 had increased to several hundred houses, had become the county seat, and was the business center of some sixty thriving mining camps.

Not in itself a mining town, peopled by a relatively larger number of families than other towns, and thus having an inherent social superiority; its cozy dwellings built on good sized separate lots, surrounded by shade trees, and neatly inclosed, combines with other characteristics to give it a distinctive and superior appearance, while the industry and steady thrift of its denizens is particularly noticeable. The Court House, a fine structure, stands in the center of a spacious green-warded square, and a quarter of a mile to the south, on a slight eminence, will be built the

40 Ibid., January 5, 1867.

Penitentiary of Montana. 42

Mr. Sam Scott purchased the lot adjoining the Scott House so that he could build a two story addition to his hotel. The Sun Pearl Gallery, advertised ambrotypes, photographs, and porcelains. 43 Another prosperous business was Peter Valiton's Deer Lodge Brewery. He supplied Pikes Peak, Caribou, French and Uncle Ben's Gulches, Missoula, French-town, and other camps. He was:

Located in a large substantial building, put up in 1864, and purchased by the present proprietors in February, '67. Here is the bar-room, beer house, coolers, bottle and fermenting cellars on the first floor, while above is the malt house, kilns, mills and store rooms, the mill being run by horse-power. Every portion is kept as clean as a good house wife keeps her parlor, and cheerfulness is dispensed by the genial face of Peter the Great—Brewer. Last year this brewery made the second largest returns to the Internal Revenue Officers, the brew reaching nearly a thousand gallons per month, and a larger one has been ordered from St. Louis. Three expert brewers are kept employed and the value of the property is about $7000. 44

Vegetables were quoted as follows: potatoes, six cents a pound; beans, fifteen cents a pound; cabbage, fifteen cents a pound; beets, fifteen cents a pound; onions, ten cents a pound. 45

42 New North-West (Deer Lodge), July 9, 1869.
43 Ibid., October 1, 1869.
44 Ibid., August 13, 1869.
45 Loc. cit.
Deer Lodge continued to flourish during 1870. The Masonic Temple was built at a cost of eight thousand dollars. Grand Lodge authorized the issue of a charter to "Deer Lodge No. 14." The officers named were W. B. Dance, W. M.; N. C. Boswell, S. W.; and P. Valiton, J. W. The Scott House was recognized as a fine hotel; the Wells, Fargo Company was represented; and the new penitentiary was being constructed at a cost of thirty-nine thousand three hundred dollars. It was to have fourteen cells, according to the first contract, although others were to be added later. The granite being used in its construction was found ten miles from Deer Lodge, while the rubble stone for the walls was found only four miles away.

George W. Irvin came to Deer Lodge in 1866 and ran a drug store; then in 1866-1867 he served as the first postmaster. Edward Stackpole became the postmaster in 1869.

The oldest hardware store in Southwestern Montana was established by Strang & Richardson in 1866. Marvin W. Trask, at the age of seventeen entered the company as an apprentice
and in 1907 purchased the store.\footnote{50}{Mrs. Marvin W. Trask, Deer Lodge (Interview).}

John O'Neil manufactured furniture, setting up his business in 1867. He made everything from cradles to coffins and employed eight men. Some weeks his business amounted to one thousand dollars.\footnote{51}{New North-West (Deer Lodge), November 11, 1870.}

W. A. Clark had gone into partnership in 1868 with Robert W. Donnell, who had a wholesale mercantile establishment. Tutt and Donnell had a store in Deer Lodge but they dissolved partnership. Then Clark entered the firm, moved the stock from the Helena store to Deer Lodge. S. E. Larabie, the Deer Lodge manager, became a member of the firm. In a year they were able to sell everything at a large profit and with Donnell's approval, they established the Donnell, Clark, and Larabie Bank.\footnote{52}{William Daniel Mangam, The Clarks of Montana (1939), p. 28.}

Thomas Lavatta was one of the early settlers erecting a cabin close to the present site of Deer Lodge on Cottonwood Creek soon after Johnny Grant did. He was employed as a guide for the early Catholic missionaries and later was an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company.\footnote{53}{New North-West (Deer Lodge), June 10, 1893; October 2, 1896.} His daughter, Mary,
married Rezin Anderson in 1866. Another daughter, Ellen, became the wife of James Stuart. Rezin Anderson did not wholly approve of this marriage and remarked that the "next thing he does he had better take Isabell's infant daughter for a spiritual."54

One of the first two white children in Deer Lodge was Mrs. Thomas Morgan, the daughter of James M. Bailey, who arrived in Deer Lodge in 1865.55

Peter Normandin took up a homestead about 1869, five miles south of Deer Lodge at the age of sixteen. He came via Fort Benton from Massachusetts in 1864, but originally came from Montreal. In 1860, he married Marie Beaurais from Quebec Province.56

In May, 1869, Guine Evans, the daughter of Morgan Evans, made the first homestead entry by a woman in Montana. She proved up on a homestead which was located on Warm Springs Creek and was granted a government patent to it.57

54 Microfilm of The Joint Diary of James and Granville Stuart, op. cit.
55 New North-West (Deer Lodge), November 16, 1888.
56 Biography of Peter Normandin in State Historical Library, Helena.
57 Stuart, op. cit., II, p. 34.
WARMSPRINGS

Fifteen miles south of Deer Lodge is the natural curiosity, the mound with the spring on its summit. Louis Belanger located on the springs in 1865, but then abandoned the claim. Henry Girard finally fulfilled the requirements of the pre-emption law and acquired the title. Henry sold the property to his brother, E. Girard, in 1870. Louis Belanger, his brother-in-law, returned; and the two erected a ten room hotel, several bath houses, and engaged in stock raising. This grew into the town of Warm Springs.58

GREGSONHOTSPRINGS

There is another group of springs, the Upper Deer Lodge Hot Springs, just ten miles beyond Warm Springs at the southern extremity of the valley. These were first owned by the Gregson brothers, Eli and George. They came to Montana and mined in Alder Gulch in 1864, then took up a farm which included the springs on April 11, 1869.59

58 Biography of Nathalie Belanger in State Historical Library, Helena.

59 Anaconda (Butte) Standard, December 1, 1913.
The shortage of white women on the frontier and in the mining camps caused most of the men to form an alliance with one or more Indian women. Most of the Indian wives of the men in these settlements belonged to the Snake and Bannock tribes. Some men, as the Stuarts, remained true to their Indian wives and children, while others would send them back to their people and marry white women. One of John Grant's wives, Cora, was greatly respected and well-liked by the whites as well as the Indians. She died in March, 1867, of consumption. Thomas Adams and his wife dissolved partnership by mutual consent after living together a month. Several years later he discovered he had a child, a boy, in an Indian camp and kidnapped him. The boy who could not speak English, cried so pitifully that Adams' friends persuaded him to return the boy to the mother. Many times the Indian wives would get disgruntled and return to their tribes; then the husband would have to give his father-in-law a horse or two to persuade his wife to return.

The Indians were continually stealing the horses.

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60 Montana (Virginia City) Post, March 16, 1867.
62 Ibid., I, p. 194.
from the settlers; of these Indians the Bannocks and the Blackfeet were the worst. The Flatheads and Nez Perces were friendly and trustworthy. The latter did not hang around and beg. Nearly always the Nez Perces had money to pay for their purchases. If the others had money, they said they had won it gambling with the Nez Perces. The chiefs of these tribes, when passing through the settlements, would dine with their white friends. The early settlers kept an assortment of trading goods; combs, calico, beads, knives, powder, and lead. Credit was not refused to any of the Flatheads or Nez Perces, as these Indians never failed to pay their debts on their way back from buffalo hunting. If the person that had contracted the debt died or was killed, a relative paid it in robes, skins, or buffalo tongues. If a settler visited the Indian camp, he was welcomed to the best he had.63

Powell's Indian horseherder, Joe, informed the Stuarts that the Indians had stolen ten horses from Grant and three from Powell (1861). That night Granville tied his three best horses to the door and slept in the doorway with his rifle and revolver at his side. Several days later he found out at Grantsville that the Blackfeet had been the

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63 Ibid., pp. 157-158.
horse thieves. These thieves had run in to a large camp
of Flatheads on the other side of the mountains and managed
to escape with a few of the best horses, but the remainder
fell into the hands of the Flatheads who returned the re-
covered horses to their owners. Horses were stolen every
night, so that the settlers knew the horse thieves were still
in the country. Noticing a party of Indians passing along
the foot of the mountains, Granville rode after them, think-
ing they might be horse thieves. Instead, he found a party
of squaws from Grantsville on a root-digging expedition.
A few days later, a party of Flatheads passing passed waving
a scalp of a Bannock triumphantly and driving a band of
horses recovered from the Bannocks. That night all of the
Stuart horses were stolen except the three tied to the door.
The Flatheads had secured all the horses belonging to the
party of Bannocks and the Bannocks had to resort to stealing
from the settlers in order to replenish their loss. This
band of Flatheads were on their way to the buffalo hunting
grounds and caught up with these horse thieves again in the
Big Hole and killed two of them. In July this party returned
from hunting bringing three buffalo calves that they had
cought at Three Forks. For two months, the Stuarts kept
their horses tied to the door at night and staked close to
the cabin during the day.64

64 Ibid., pp. 176-179.
By September, the Flatheads were again encamped on the Little Blackfoot. The whiskey traders were plying their trade, which netted ill results for many Indians and whites. In February, 1862, a party of Flatheads passed through Gold Creek with a band of stolen Bannock horses. Later the Bannocks passed through on the trail of the Flatheads and returned with the horses and two scalps. Later in the month, a Flathead discovered a Bannock camping on Cottonwood Creek, scalped him and took his wives. Two of the women escaped, but Powell and James Stuart ransomed the third, since captive Indians were treated as slaves. When John Powell's wife and the ransomed woman didn't get along, James married her.65

Victor, a well-known Chief of the Flatheads, visited the Stuarts in April and discussed Indian affairs.

"He thinks it is very probable that we will have trouble with the Pend d'Oreilles after awhile on account of our Snake and Bannock women. Maillot came from Cottonwood today to see Victor. Victor is much dissatisfied with John Grant's conduct this winter and is on his way to see Grant and try to have some settlement with him. He says Grant has Snake and Bannock wives and plenty of Indians (Snakes and Bannocks) coming to visit him and when they leave they steal horses from the Flatheads. He says Grant will have to keep the Snake and Bannocks away from his place, etc. As Deer Lodge Valley and the valleys of the Big Hole, Beaverhead, and Jefferson have been, from times immemorial, a neutral ground for the Snakes, Bannocks, Nez Perces, Pend d'Oreilles, Flatheads, Spokanes, Coeur d'Alenes, and Kootenais, it looks like the old chief is too

arbitrary in insisting that the Snakes and Bannocks should be forbidden to spend the winter and hunt there the same as all others, because of little squabbles common to all tribes."\(^{66}\)

In the spring of 1863, the Flathead village arrived.

"The chief rode out into a spot that suited him and dismounting stuck his spear into the ground and sat down beside it. The squaws came up, unsaddled his horse and led it away, while others undid their packs and set up the lodge over his head. Some style about that fellow!"\(^{67}\)

The Indians were on their way to hunt the buffalo bulls; at that season, they were in separate herds and were very fat and fine eating.

The last great exploit of the Blackfeet Indians in the Deer Lodge Valley was in 1864, when they stole one hundred and eighty horses from John and James Grant, Thomas Lavatta, and several others. The men raised a small party and set out in pursuit. They were successful in finding the Indians encamped and surprised them, but let them escape on six or seven of the best horses.\(^{68}\)

In the fall of 1869, one hundred Nez Perces and Pend Oreille Indians camped on the outskirts of Deer Lodge waiting for the Flatheads to join them in their yearly excursion to the Yellowstone country. "There will be 'Heap stealum'\(^{69}\)

\(^{66}\) Ibid., pp. 203-204.

\(^{67}\) Ibid., p. 246.

\(^{68}\) New North-West (Deer Lodge), July 14, 1876.
horses going on ere long." After another band of Pend Oreilles had passed through in October, forty-five of Al Peacock's band of horses were missing. When the Indians were apprehended with some of the stolen horses, they denied the theft, claiming that they had captured them from the Blackfeet.

The Deer Lodge Valley continued to be used as the road to the buffalo by the Indians until the buffalo were gone and the Indians were placed on reservations. The trade carried on by the early settlers was very profitable; they gained valuable furs, buffalo skins, and horses.

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69 Ibid., September 24, 1869.
70 Ibid., October 1, 1869.
CHAPTER V

GOVERNMENT

TERRITORIES

Montana country west of the continental divide was included in the territories of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho before it became part of the Montana Territory. Until the northern boundary of the United States was fixed in 1846, this portion was claimed by both the English and the Americans. The Hudson Bay Company maintained a trading post at Post Creek and a number of posts in Washington and Idaho. Oregon had received enough settlers by 1840 to become conscious of the fact a government was badly needed. With more interest in the Pacific Northwest and more farsightedness than Congress possessed at that time, the Oregonians were determined that this region must become part of the United States. Their ambition, therefore, first prompted them to organize a provisional government in 1841 and adopt a constitution on July 5, 1843. They then designated the country in the United States, north of the forty-second degree of north latitude and west of the summit of the Rocky Mountains, the Oregon Territory.¹ The fifty-four degree

Territories

MAP 5
and forty minutes of north latitude was their northern boundary.

In 1848, Congress created the country between the forty-second and forty-ninth degrees of north latitude and west of the summit of the Rocky Mountains as the Territory of Oregon. Then, in 1853, the Washington Territory was organized with the Columbia River to Walla Walla, the forty-sixth parallel, the forty-ninth parallel, and the summit of the Rocky Mountains as its boundaries. The Territory of Idaho, when it was created in March 3, 1863, included all of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming and had its capital located at Lewistown, Idaho. This was too far away for Montanans to take part in the government. Through the influence of Sidney Edgerton, Montana Territory was formed in May 26, 1864.

The Deer Lodge Valley, in addition to being a part of four territories, has been a part of twelve counties, but now has its major portion in Powell County. The southern part is mostly in Deer Lodge County, although a small corner of it is in Silver Bow.

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2 Loc. cit.
3 Ibid., VI, p. 3963.
COUNTIES

It was included in Clackamas District in Oregon Territory in 1843 and in Vancouver District in 1845. The name "district" was changed to counties and the name Vancouver changed to Clark in honor of Captain Clark of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1849.

After the creation of Washington Territory, Deer Lodge Valley became Skamania County in March 9, 1854, and became Walla Walla County in April 25, 1854.

In 1858, Shoshone County was formed and included western Montana; and in January 17, 1860, the name was changed to Spokane. Spokane County was divided in

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9 Loc. cit.
MAP 7

Washington Territory
April, 1854

Walla Walla County

Washington Territory
1858

Shoshone County

Washington Territory
1860

Spokane County

Missoula County
Missoula

Washington Territory
Counties--1854-1860 Dec. 14, 1860
Territory of Montana - 1879
MAP 9
December 14, 1860 and the eastern portion was named Missoula.\textsuperscript{10}

The Territory of Idaho created Deer Lodge County in 1863;\textsuperscript{11} but by 1885, Silver Bow County had incorporated the southern part. Since 1901, most of the valley has been included in Powell County with its county seat at Deer Lodge.

**FIRST ELECTIONS AND OFFICERS**

There was no attempt to form a government in western Montana until after 1860. When the county of Shoshone, comprising this area, was set off from Walla Walla in 1858, the county seat was placed at Colville and John Owen was appointed a county commissioner.\textsuperscript{12} Missoula County was created December 14, 1860, with the county seat at Hell Gate and C. P. Higgins, Thomas Harris, and F. L. Worden, county commissioners; M. W. Tipton, sheriff; H. M. Chase, justice of the peace. None of these men were qualified for their positions except Higgins and Harris. They arranged for an election to be held in June or July at three places of polling: Jocko Agency, Hell Gate, and Ft. Owen. The total vote cast was 74. The officers elected were the following: Lander, representative to Congress; Dr. Bates of Spokane County, representative;

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., pp. 618, 404.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 445.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 404.
Henry Claren, probate judge; Frank H. Woody, auditor; Granville Stuart, C. P. Higgins, H. Van Dorn, county commissioners, the auditor, and the justice of the peace were qualified. No records were kept and no business was transacted.  

The second election took place July 14, 1862, with polls at Gold Creek, Fort Owen, and Hell Gate. There were thirty-one names on the Deer Lodge Precinct list, but only thirty were cast as Thomas Lavatta failed to vote. The polling place was the log cabin of P. W. McAdow, A. S. Blake, and L. L. Blake on the south side of the creek, a fourth of a mile beyond the present site of Pioneer. The officers elected were Granville Stuart, and Thomas Harris, county commissioners; F. L. Worden, treasurer; Charles Allen, justice of the peace; John W. Powell, coroner; L. L. Blake, representative, James Stuart, sheriff. There were no party lines and only one ticket except for representative.

Not long after this, James Stuart arrested a horse.


14 Photostatic copy of election returns with Granville Stuart's papers in the State Historical Library.

thief and tried him before a mass-meeting of the miners around American Fork. The men found him guilty but were won over by his old age, poverty, and sense of guilt. They made him return the stolen property but gave him a purse of fifteen dollars, some provisions, and twelve hours to leave the country.¹⁶

The first man arrested for horse stealing in this section was Jack Williams in December 1861. He was neither hanged nor tried.

Other horse thieves apprehended did not fare as well. One evening (1862) three men—B. F. Jermagin, William Arnett, and C. W. Spillman—rode into Gold Creek with six fine-looking horses. It was soon found out that these strangers were gamblers as James Stuart had lost three hundred dollars one night and had broken the monte bank of two hundred dollars the next night. In a short time two men from Elk City slipped into town inquiring for three horse thieves. Spillman was found in Worden's store and quickly surrendered. Arnett was dealing cards at a saloon; but on the order to throw up his hands, reached for his revolver that was lying in his lap. He was shot and killed instantly, clutching the cards in his left hand and his revolver in the right with


such a grip that he was buried with them. Spillman's testimony of overtaking Jermagin on the trail acquitted Jermagin, but Spillman received his sentence to hang. Spillman faced his execution courageously to become the first man to be hanged in Montana. For several years afterwards Gold Creek was called "Hangtown."  

Seldom did the miners and settlers extend any clemency to cattle and horse thieves. A young man, Leander W. Johnson, had been convicted of cattle stealing March, 1866, and had been sent to Virginia City for safe-keeping. The sheriff of Madison County refused to admit him to the jail under his custody and sent him back to Deer Lodge. He was hand-cuffed and placed in a log cabin until a safer lodging could be found. That night he was taken to the slaughter house on the river a short distance south of the town and hanged.  

In September, 1862, Granville Stuart and Woody went to Hell Gate to organize the county government of Missoula, Washington Territory.  

August 7, 1863, D. S. Payne, the United States

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17 Ibid., pp. 218-220.
18 Montana Post, March 24, 1866.
19 Stuart, op. cit., p. 222.
20 Ibid., p. 256.
Marshall of Idaho Territory, arrived to make estimates of the resources and population and to establish election precincts.

There were sixty-six names on the poll list of Deer Lodge Precinct, Deer Lodge County, October 24, 1864.

The first session of the legislature of the Territory of Montana, 1864-1865, gave many men the right to construct roads and bridges with the privilege of collecting tolls to pay for their construction and upkeep. This was just an easy way of making money for no work was done on the roads and the bridges were flimsy structures, yet the tolls were collected. The Hell Gate and Deer Lodge Wagon Road Company whose members were Christy P. Higgins, W. B. S. Higgins, and John F. Higgins was one of these. The length of their road was ninety miles and they had the right to construct two bridges and two toll gates or one bridge and one toll gate with the tax doubled. The following was the list of charges: Buggy or vehicle drawn by one horse, one dollar and fifty cents; vehicle drawn by two horses, two dollars; each additional pair of animals, one dollar; man and horse, one dollar; each head of loose horses, fifty cents; loose cattle, twenty-five cents per head; sheep, ten cents per head. This was approved January 9, 1865, but all of these concessions were repealed in the 1869-70 session.21

21 Acts, Resolutions and Memorials of the Territory of Montana Passed by First Legislative Assembly (Virginia City, 1865), pp. 561-562.
Silver Bow had been made the county seat of Deer Lodge County in 1864, but in 1867 the county seat was moved to Deer Lodge. At the time it was placed at Silver Bow there were more people working in the mines in the southern part than in the upper part of the valley. When the placers played out, Deer Lodge again became the center of the population. Granville Stuart and Conrad Kohrs were elected county commissioners: Howard Zenor, recorder; Wesley Jones, sheriff; O'Bannon, clerk of the court; Henry Frederickson, treasurer. 22

An interesting case according to the Montana Post on the probate court docket of Judge C. P. Hall in 1865 involved a lady obtaining several hundred dollars from a miner in a questionable fashion.

"The interesting lassie was sojournning, for the time, at Blackfoot City, and while there, the prairie diggings south of that place, were discovered. A portion was very rich—the balance being worthless. Our fair friend had an acquaintance who secured a claim; but, it not being worth working, he told her to trade it off to one of the boys. At this juncture, up comes the plaintiff, who is confidentially told of the rich discovery, and, of course, he wishes a claim. Lady has a claim for sale, and invites our "honest miner" to go with her to "prospect" the ground. While engaged in washing a pan of the dirt, a very pretty little bird flies up. Young lady likes birds; calls attention of her friend to it; he gazes at the beautiful creature (the bird, not the lady), with rapturous eyes.

Young lady makes a good prospect; "strikes" a bargain; and the curly-headed miss coolly pockets seven hundred dollars for a worthless piece of ground, which, virtually, was not hers. The miner soon finds that he has tossed his money away and complains to the lawyer. The case was dismissed.

In the election of 1869, M. B. Harrison was named district attorney; D. P. Newcomer, probate judge; Wesley W. Jones, sheriff; H. C. Frederickson, treasurer; J. Gilchrist, Clerk and recorder; Lewis Cohn, assessor; D. Irvine, superintendent of public instruction; Thomas Strong, coroner; and Conrad Kohrs, Granville Stuart, commissioners, with W. E. Dance and Thomas H. Irvine, each claiming the third seat.

ROAD AGENTS

The people in Virginia City and Bannack were not the only ones that had to contend with the Road Agents or Plummer's Band. Granville Stuart had an interesting experience in April, 1863, while carrying three thousand dollars in gold dust from Bannack to Gold Creek. Since he realized there might be danger in store for him, he was careful not to let anyone know of the money he was carrying nor that he was intending to leave Bannack. One morning he arose and left at sunrise. As he was congratulating

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23 Montana (Virginia City) Post, December 23, 1865.

24 New North-West (Deer Lodge) November 5, 1869.
himself on having been able to get away without being noticed, he heard galloping horses. Looking back, he saw a party of three, two of whom he knew—Charlie Reeves and William Graves. He stopped, cinched up his saddle and protected himself by keeping his horse between him and the road agents. At the same time a friend of his, Edwin R. Purple, rode up and the two determined to ride together. Their safety depended upon not letting the other party get in back of them. This they managed to do until they reached Warm Springs, where the robbers gave up and left them.25

Conrad Kohrs had even closer escapes from death at their hands. Kohrs had been with a party in Bannack, hunting Reeves and Moore, who, after drinking one night, had shot into a teepee and killed a Frenchman. They had consequently been banished from Bannack and were in Deer Lodge. Going there to buy some cattle from Johnny Grant, Kohrs entered the saloon run by Bill Bunton, where he found the road agents. He had to submit to their insults and abuse, for at the first sign of resistance on his part they would have killed him.26

Johnny Grant needed some money to buy supplies in

Fort Benton, and asked Kohrs to pay up his debt. Kohrs collected some of his bills in Bannack and prepared to ride to Deer Lodge.

When I was ready to go I started very early in the morning. Early though it was, Plummer was on the street and asked me where I was going, to which I replied that I was going up on Grasshopper to look for the cattle I had left there.

I took the trail I had come in on until I found the one leading to Deer Lodge and followed this all the way, never striking the wagon road. My horse was taken sick and I walked a good deal of the way across the Big Hole River, where Melrose now stands, and went into the hills upon Camp Creek to spend the night. The next morning I took the foot-hills without a trail, traveling towards Moose Creek, and then over the divide. Opposite Divide Creek I saw a lot of teams on the road to Cottonwood, so I determined to get on my old horse once more and try to catch up with them.

I was fortunate in finding the party composed of Johnny Grant, Louis DeMar, L. R. Maillet, who were taking home goats they had bought at Virginia City. They were driving a bunch of horses they had purchased behind their wagons. So I turned my horse into the bunch and took my containers which contained the money and rode in the wagon with Grant.

It seems that Plummer, after seeing me leave Bannack, suspected I was going to Deer Lodge and notified his gang in Rattlesnake that I was on the road. When our teams reached the north side of Silver Bow Creek, a point now called The Hump, we were met by George Ives and Dutch John, who told us they had just come from Deer Lodge and were on their way to Virginia City.27

Because they had not found Kohrs on the road, they had been to Deer Lodge and were on their way back.

After getting supper the Frenchman (Normandin) commenced playing cards, using the buffalo robe on the dirt floor as a table. About ten o'clock, Bissell,

27 Ibid., pp. 39-42.
a man from Oregon, who was coming through with a small herd of cattle, came to the cabin and stated there were two men prowling around his camp. He was afraid they would steal his horses and asked our assistance. The mountaineers laughed at him, told him he was dreaming.

About midnight the game was broken up. It was a beautiful moonlight night and when going to our wagons we discovered two men, who proved to be no other than George Ives and Dutch John not more than fifty yards away. They were armed and could have covered us right there, but finding themselves detected, ran away and we were confident it had been their plan to surprise the cabin and carry away what money they found in our possession... After this scare we put four men armed with double-barreled shot guns on watch the remainder of the night and next day reached Cottonwood... without further molestation.

Another time while carrying five thousand dollars from Virginia City, he was warned by a half-breed that Dutch John and George Ives were looking for him. He was riding one of the best horses in the country then and when he noticed his pursuers were gaining on him, he stopped, threw off his gun, blankets, and overcoat. He realized his safety lay in the fleetness of his horse. He arrived at Johnny Grant's place just fifteen minutes ahead of George Ives and Dutch John. It had taken just six hours to travel from Camp Creek (Melrose) to Deer Lodge. The horse was ruined by the hard and fast ride as Kohrs did not take proper care of it. 29

28 Loc. cit.
29 Ibid., pp. 43-45.
In January 15, 1864, a party of Vigilantes with Kohrs acting as their guide set out for Hell-Gate after more of the robbers. They found and hanged Steve Marshland in the Big Hole. They surrounded Bill Bunton's saloon in Deer Lodge after dark, but Bunton was the only one of the band found. He was arrested and hanged. The next day they continued on their way to Hell Gate. X. Biedler, Elk, Morse, Charley Brown, and Nelson Story were in this party.

Broadwater and Pemberton had built two log cabins in Cottonwood (Deer Lodge) in 1863, but were using only one. Because Moore had been seriously ill during his banishment from Bannack, Broadwater let him use the empty cabin and gave him food and medicine. Later Moore repaid this kindness by warning him that Plummer's band was watching his movements and knew he was carrying six thousand dollars. Broadwater left in the evening instead of the following morning as he had intended for Deer Lodge. By dawn that morning he felt he was safe because he could see Mt. Powell rising in the distance. At a turn in the road he came upon George Ives and Johnny Cooper, who did not have their horses saddled as they had not expected him so soon. By whipping and spurring his horse to its utmost speed, he managed to reach David Contway's ranch, fifty yards ahead of the others.

30 Ibid., pp. 49-51.
He out-witted Ives and Cooper by securing a fine horse of Contway's and mounting it while the horses of the road agents were still grazing in the foothills.31

With the gold rush, the usual element of gamblers, criminals and thieves entered Montana. For a short time, they succeeded in controlling the government and using the government to attain their own means. By 1870, the territory became better organized; the Vigilantes had removed the threat of road agents; and Deer Lodge began campaigning to be chosen as the site for the capital.

By 1850, the route from Fort Owen up the Clark Fork to its source, over the pass to the Big Hole, and thence to Fort Hall was fast becoming well traveled. Numerous travelers were going through the valley, and some were remaining to make it their home. In 1851, Major Owen traveled up the Clark Fork on his way to Fort Hall for supplies. John Francis Grant and his father, Captain Richard Grant, both had homes in the Beaverhead Valley, but they often brought the worn out animals they had secured in trading with the emigrants into the Deer Lodge Valley to fatten.

The first supplies came in on pack trains. By the latter part of the fifties, a few wagons were being used but horses and mules were still the principal means of transporting men and supplies into Western Montana. In 1841, Father De Smet brought several carts and a wagon to the Bitter Root from Fort Hall. This wagon in Father De Smet's party was the first wagon to travel through the Deer Lodge Valley. The wagons belonging to Captain Richard Grant were the next to enter the valley. Louis R. Maillet stopped at the Grants in Beaverhead in December, 1857, and found Captain
Grant badly crippled with rheumatism and afraid of the Mormons. He prevailed upon Mr. Maillet to move his family and stock to the Flathead. Captain Grant was placed in a spring wagon on a bed of robes and blankets while his goods, skins, and furs, were loaded into three large Murphy wagons pulled by oxen. They crossed over the Deer Lodge Divide from the Big Hole and down the Hell Gate Canyon to the Flathead.  

THE STEVENS SURVEY

The first step toward building roads in Western Montana was made when Isaac I. Stevens was appointed in 1853 by Congress to make a survey for a possible northern railroad route and Congress appropriated $40,000 for the expedition. Included in his party were men who have left their names imprinted in Western Montana: Thomas Adams, F. H. Burr, aides; C. P. Higgins, a wagonmaster and Lt. John Mullan.  

Lt. Mullan, leaving Fort Benton September ninth, 1853, explored the Judith Basin, the Prickly Pear Valley,

1 Louis R. Maillet, "Historical Sketch of Louis R. Maillet" in Montana Contributions, IV, pp. 209-211.


then crossed to the Little Blackfoot and traveled down the Hell Gate to Fort Owen. A. W. Tinkham, one of the engineers, left Fort Benton, October 31, 1853, and striking Mullan's route found the Mullan Pass favorable for either a wagon or a railroad route. [4]

Lt. Mullan spent the winters of 1853 and 1854 in Montana to make further explorations near Missoula. On the last day of December 1853, he entered the Deer Lodge Valley from the Big Hole, returning to Fort Owen from Fort Hall. There was little snow but large numbers of antelope were feeding in the valley, and mountain sheep and goats were seen on the peaks. [5]

To find out whether the Walla Walla--Fort Benton route was practical for wagons, he left Fort Benton on March 14, 1854, with a wagon for Cantonment Stevens via the Little Blackfoot and arrived at his destination just fourteen days later. He found this route was only forty miles longer than the one through Cadotte's Pass and not too difficult for wagons. [6]

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THE MULLAN WAGON ROAD

The first organized attempt to build a major highway in Montana was the direct result of the exploring party under the direction of Governor Isaac I. Stevens, but it was not until 1857, that Congress could make the appropriation for the Walla Walla--Fort Benton highway. Then Indian uprisings caused another delay of several years. The road was not completed until 1863. During 1860-1863, Mullan spent some of his time in the Deer Lodge Valley. In May, 1862, he employed Samuel Hugo of Deer Lodge to construct a bridge over the Hell Gate River as the high water prevented him from doing it at that time.7 Traveling in the spring of the year was quite difficult because of the high water and fording the streams and rivers was dangerous. The rivers including the Deer Lodge were larger than they are at present because no water was diverted for irrigation purposes. Harkness in 1862 complained that the Mullan Road needed repair as the spring floods had carried away the bridges and that twenty yoke of oxen could not pull one

wagon up a steep hill. Since the Mullan Wagon Road provided a route for the many people flocking to Oregon and to the Idaho and Montana mining sections, it became vitally important to Deer Lodge. Many of the travelers lingered there and eventually settled. The road also provided an easy route for travel direct to the Deer Lodge City settlement.

THE FISK EXPEDITIONS

The people in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Northern Illinois interested in the gold discoveries insisted on a northern route to the gold regions; therefore, Captain James L. Fisk was appointed to map out this much desired road and guard the emigrants accompanying him. The first expedition left Fort Abercombie (near Fargo) on July 7, 1862, and arrived at Fort Benton, September 5. The settlers began leaving the train there and again at the Prickly Pear and at Deer Lodge; so that only a few remained to accompany Fisk to Walla Walla, where he disbanded the expedition. Granville Stuart noted the date of Captain Fisk's arrival at the mouth of the Little Blackfoot as September 26. He also mentioned the fact that Captain Fisk was inspecting

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8 James Harkness, "Diary of James Harkness, of the Firm of La Barge, Harkness and Company, St. Louis to Fort Benton by the Missouri River and to the Deer Lodge Valley and Return in 1862" in Montana Contributions, II, p. 351.

9 Burlingame, op. cit., p. 134.
the Mullan Wagon Road from Fort Benton to Walla Walla.\textsuperscript{10}

At that time Conrad Kohrs had not been in Deer Lodge long and was camping on Cottonwood Creek. His party was out of provisions. When they heard of the arrival of the Minnesota train, they determined to make a call with the hope of being able to secure a dinner lingering in the back of their heads. The Minnesotans proved as hospitable as they had desired them to be and gave them a supper of pork and beans, coffee, bread, and dried fruit, a bountiful meal to them who had lived on a diet of straight fish.\textsuperscript{11}

Fisk's first expedition was so successful that he made a second one, leaving St. Cloud, Minnesota, June 15, 1863, and arriving near Johnny Grant's ranch on September 21. This time the expedition traveled up the Deer Lodge Valley, noting some pieces of petrified wood around the warm springs and then going to Bannack where he sold his wagons and returned on the Overland Road from Salt Lake City. Fisk described Cottonwood City (Deer Lodge) as a town of thirty houses with one hundred fifty inhabitants. The mines, however, even though they were paying ten dollars per day to the man, had been deserted for the Stinking Water diggings.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{10} Granville Stuart, \textit{Forty Years on the Frontier as Seen in the Journals and Reminiscences of Granville Stuart} (Paul C. Phillips, editor, 2 vols., Cleveland, 1925), I, p. 224.


After the Mullan Road was completed, wagon trains were used from Fort Benton and freighting offered a good livelihood to ambitious teamsters. Alexander Pambrun freighted with John Grant from 1862-1867 between Fort Benton and Deer Lodge. On October 9, 1861, Bob Dempsey and Joe Blodgett, accompanied by two teams of emigrants, passed American Fork (Gold Creek) with a wagon loaded with goods and flour purchased in Salt Lake City. Wagon traveling was slow as ox teams were used. A wagon load of vegetables was brought over from the Bitter Root for sale to the vegetable hungry populace of Cottonwood (Deer Lodge) and Grant's settlement. Major Owen had packtrains hauling hard bread to the Flathead Indian Agency on the Jocko from Fort Benton via the Mullan Pass.

Before the Mullan Road was completed, Salt Lake City was the closest point from which supplies could be hauled by wagon. After the road was completed more trips were taken to Fort Benton, especially when the boats from St. Louis arrived. Many times these long trips ended with disappointment as the boats had met with some accident and did not reach Fort Benton or had lost all their cargo. James Stuart

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14 Stuart, *op. cit.*, p. 188.
made such a trip in July, 1861, to find that a deck-hand stealing alcohol in the hold had set fire to the boat and had caused the loss of the entire cargo.\textsuperscript{15}

During the summer of 1862, people seemed to be pouring into the valley, as there were new arrivals every day. The travel, emigrants and freight, was so brisk that the blacksmith made money shoeing horses, mending wagons, and repairing firearms. Granville Stuart and Anderson, situated in a most advantageous location, took in the sum of $62.30 in one day early in the spring.\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{FIRST MAIL}

In the early sixties, there were no means of sending or receiving mail unless it was carried by a friend to Walla Walla, the nearest postoffice. Granville Stuart mentioned receiving letters carried by the Bachelder Express from Walla Walla to Hell Gate. He sent letters to relatives by Thomas Pambrun who was going to Walla Walla early in August, 1861, and then received four on August 22. These had come by express to Hell Gate, and then Thomas Pambrum brought them to American Fork. Again in November, Johnny Grant brought the Stuarts a letter from Rezin Anderson, who was

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[16] \textit{Ibid.}, p. 239.
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visiting in Iowa.\textsuperscript{17}

Louis Mullan, a brother of Lt. Mullan had a contract in 1863 to carry mail from Hell Gate to Gold Creek, but by May this had "fizzled out". Louis Mullan had lost money on the contract.\textsuperscript{18}

STAGE COMPANIES

A. J. Oliver was among the first to run a stage into Deer Lodge and his advertisement ran in the Montana Post for December 2, 1865, in part as follows: "A. J. Oliver & Co's. Express, Tri-Weekly Line between Virginia City and Deer Lodge City." Evidently one of their drivers was quite popular and well-liked by the Deer Lodge people. These items appeared in the Deer Lodge notes of the Montana Post:

Oliver & Co.'s Express have through the indomitable energy and perseverance of Mr. Frank Martin, the accommodating genius who presides over this route, kept us supplied with mail facilities, for which they and Frank in particular, are deserving of great credit.\textsuperscript{19}

The most trusty and obliging genius, "Frank," who rules and reins the interests of Oliver & Co., on the line from Virginia City to this point, is running on quick time, making the round trip (two hundred and fifty miles) in five days. It is understood that Oliver & Co. will soon put a semi-weekly line on this route. It needs it greatly, to accommodate the largely increased demand for quick transportation. Unless they

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 189.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 245.
\textsuperscript{19} Montana Post (Virginia City), January 27, 1866.
move in the premises shortly, other parties declare their intention of establishing a competition line on the route. A gentleman who arrived here a few days ago, from Boise, informs me that there are no less than four thousand men now en route to the Blackfoot mines. 20

On July first, the United States Mail was supposed to be delivered by Overland Stage, but a note in the Montana Post states that the Oliver and Company were still carrying it. 21

On November 1, 1866, Wells, Fargo and Company purchased the Holladay Overland Mail and Express, which it in turn sold to Gilmer and Salisbury in 1869.

On July 9, 1869, Mr. C. C. Huntley was running a number of the Abbott and Downing Concord Hacks on the stage line between Helena and Deer Lodge. Each one was considered:

Lightest, best, most comfortable, and handsome vehicle in the coach line that is made in the world. This line is completely supplied with new Concord harness, and under the skillful whip and line of "Brad," bronchos, bloods, scrubs and thoroughbreds, are all the same for a safe speedy and pleasant trip over the continental backbone, between the "kidneys" of vital Montana. 22

On Friday evening of last week the mail sack for Deer Lodge was accidentally left at Mead's--the changing station--ten miles from town. On the arrival of the coach here, Mr. Huntley immediately dispatched a conveyance for it, and the sack was in the Deer Lodge Office and distributed the same evening. Mr. Bradley, the

20 Ibid., April 7, 1866.
21 Ibid., July 28, 1866.
22 New North-West (Deer Lodge), July 9, 1869.
driver—best man ever held lines over a coach team in Deer Lodge County—in his courtesy to travelers, attention to business and expertness as a driver. Huntley pays him $50 a month more than the drivers receive on the Overland, because he is the best driver in Montana and has the hardest route.  

The stage drivers earned forty dollars a month and board for driving four horses and sixty dollars a month plus board for driving six horses. On the trip to Dillon, a distance of one hundred ten miles, four horses were driven and the time taken was two days.  

In the winter, the trips were cut down from twice daily to every other day leaving on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

Some of the stage fares at that time were as follows:

Corinne to Deer Lodge, eighty-eight dollars, but the trip took four and half days so the total expense was $102.  

From Helena to Deer Lodge the fare was $6.00, while the fare from Helena to Pioneer was $8.00. The distance from Fort Benton to Deer Lodge was 195 miles and from Helena it was forty-six miles.  

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23 Ibid., October 15, 1869.
25 New North-West (Deer Lodge), December 3, 1869.
26 Ibid., April 8, 1870.
The coach and express lines made their stops at the Valiton and Company, Feed and Livery Stable, and also at the Scott House.\textsuperscript{28} The Scott House advertised clean feather beds.

The Deer Lodge Hotel—This well managed establishment, of which L. R. Maillet & Co. are the proprietors, offers superior inducements to the traveling public, there to deposit their traps and "coal up" for a new cruise. They will find there, good beds, first class fare, and many different kinds of most seductive "wash-down".\textsuperscript{29}

The telegraph line, an independent line, between Deer Lodge and Helena was financed on a script subsidy of two thousand dollars. This amount was purchased within three hours after the announcement that P. A. Largey of Creighton and Company had secured permission from the Western Union Telegraph line for its construction. Mr. S. A. Willey was the first operator.\textsuperscript{30}

**RIVER TRANSPORTATION**

Don't say we are backward in internal progress and improvement over here for it remained for a Deer Lodge party to first attempt the Navigation of the Rivers of Montana. Messrs. James Stuart and Frank Worden, having descended the Deer Lodge River and Heli Gate in a boat, making the trip in safety and with great dispatch. This, I believe, is the first time a trip of like

\textsuperscript{28} New North-West (Deer Lodge), October 29, 1869.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., April 7, 1866.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., April 15, 1870.
character has ever been attempted on these rivers. 31

By 1870, a telegraph line, not always too efficient
in the winter, a daily stage in the summer to Helena, and
regular freighting companies had been established. Thus
Deer Lodge was connected with the outside world. Already
the people were interested in the possibilities of a rail-
road being routed through the valley.

31 Montana (Virginia City) Post, July 28, 1866.
CHAPTER VII

CATTLE INDUSTRY

Montana's history is the history of the exploitation of her natural resources. It is a record that definitely reveals how tremendous were the sums that have been realized from the fur trade, how vast were the amounts of gold dust that have been exported, and how great was the wealth that has been derived from the cattle industry. In all three of these great fields, often unscrupulous utilization of the natural wealth of the state, the people who once lived in the Deer Lodge Valley have played an important role. Their active participation in all of them—the least in the fur trade, however, and the most in the cattle industry—has helped to make Montana's history.

FICKLIN EXPEDITION

The miners and the emigrants and, at first, the army created the supply and the market for cattle. The first known cattle buyer being Benjamin F. Ficklin, a teamster for a supply contractor for the United States army. His trip into Montana, the Ficklin expedition, occurred about the time of the Mormon uprisings which had caused the government to send an army of five thousand men to Utah.
via the Overland Road.\(^1\) Ficklin accompanied the army to Camp Scott, Utah. Shortly after his arrival there he was sent to the Flathead for five hundred head of beef cattle to be delivered on April 1, 1858. He left the camp December 9, 1857, for the Beaverhead, intending to bargain with the mountaineers in the valley. He found, to his surprise, that they had all moved to the Deer Lodge and Flathead Valleys when they heard of the burning of the supply trains by the Mormons. Ficklin was unsuccessful in obtaining stock in the Flathead Valley, but he made a contract in Deer Lodge for the delivery on April 16 of three hundred head of beef cattle at ten dollars per hundred and of a hundred head of horses.\(^2\)

JOHN GRANT

One of the earliest cattle men of this region was John Grant, who made a large fortune which he later lost in Canada. Captain Richard Grant and his son, John, brought their cattle into the Deer Lodge Valley to fatten them as it did have a nutritive natural range. Captain James Fisk on his second expedition in 1863, gave a glowing description of Grant's cattle by saying that he had four thousand head

\(^1\) Clyde McLemore, "Ficklin's Expedition to the Flathead Country in 1858" in Frontier and Midland, XVI (1935-1936) p. 66.

\(^2\) Ibid., pp. 66-67.
of cattle and two or three thousand ponies, which ranged the whole valley. He traded ponies in Salt Lake City for flour and furnished the miners in Bannack and Virginia City with meat. "He is reported worth three hundred or four hundred thousand dollars."³

CONRAD KOHRS

John Grant's successor proved to be even more successful in this industry than he had been. Carston Conrad Kohrs was born in the province of Holstein, a possession of Denmark then, on August 5, 1835. His father died a few weeks after his birth and then in 1844 his mother married Claus Bielenberg.

Since his step-father discouraged his desire to attend school, Kohrs went to Hamburg at the age of fifteen and shipped as a cabin-boy on a schooner. He made two trips to Brazil and on the first was seriously ill with yellow fever. He landed in New York in 1853 and later went with his sister to Iowa, where his family joined them the next year.

In 1857, he went to California via the Panama Canal and returned to Iowa to start out the following year for the Frazer gold fields. In 1862, he set out from Davenport, Iowa, for the Florence mines but stopped at the Lemhi Pass as there was no wagon road through the mountains. However,

³ Fisk, James, Expedition of Captain Fisk to the Rocky Mountains (Washington, 1864), p. 25.
John Jacobs, a mountaineer, offered to guide them through
the Deer Lodge Valley and over the Mullan Road. In the Big
Hole, he encountered Conver; Comstock, discoverer of the
Comstock Lode, and William Hickman, one of Brigham Young's
destroying angels. At that place, he lost the use of his
limbs in an attack of rheumatism, and Hickman gave him an
interesting cure. After sixty or seventy rattlesnakes had
been killed and the oil had been fried out of them, Kohrs
was taken to the river where he was given a bath. Using
gunny sacks for towels, they gave him a strenuous rubbing
and later rubbed in the snake oil. In two days he was en-
tirely cured. The first man he met from Deer Lodge was
Thomas Lavatta.

The valley was full of antelope and many herds of
fat cattle belonging to the mountaineers who lived
there. The first herd we saw belonged to Dave Court-
way, the next to Bob Dempsey.  

Since they were out of provisions and ammunition,
they were forced to live on a diet of fish. Thinking of food,
they called on the Fisk emigrant train and were invited to
an exceptionally good meal (1862).

On his way to Gold Creek he met Henry Crawford, who
offered him twenty-five dollars a month with board to be his
butcher in Bannack, but Kohrs was supposed to furnish his own

4 Conrad Kohrs, Autobiography (Unpublished manuscript,
Conrad Warren, Deer Lodge), p. 27.
tools. At that time he owned only a skinning knife and steel. He was successful, however, in borrowing a scale, a carpenter's saw, and a bowie knife ground down for a steak knife. Crawford had purchased three fat heifers from Lavatta and started Kohrs on foot to drive them to Bannack, since he had his horses loaded with tools and supplies. Between Dempsey and Race Track the heifers mixed in with Dempsey's cattle. The more he chased them the wilder grew the cattle. Help came at this point in the form of Dr. Glick, who succeeded in separating them and helped him drive them for twenty-two miles. In three days, Kohrs had traveled the one hundred twenty miles to Bannack. He worked conscientiously and was so successful with the meat business that Crawford immediately raised his wages to one hundred dollars per month and kept him employed until Crawford fled the country because of his fear of Plummer.

After Crawford's departure, Kohrs found that he could continue the successful business without any cash, for he was able to borrow. He purchased eight head of oxen and traded them for fat steers from Leon Cannel and Louis DeMar of Deer Lodge. These were stolen, so he had to begin again by borrowing.

Besides butchering and selling meat, he made candles, a very scarce item, which he sold at one dollar and a half per pound. The hides of the butchered cattle were given
away and were used by the miners as rugs on their dirt floors.

Having borrowed a considerable sum from Grant, Kohrs was asked to liquidate the debt. He turned over about half the amount as that was all he could collect. Later he handed the final payment of one thousand one hundred fifty dollars to Grant, who was quite surprised since, as he never kept books, he had believed the account with Kohrs settled.

He was so tickled that he had found an honest man that he actually forced me to buy one hundred head of cattle, giving me the pick of the herd and selling them at a more reasonable figure than I had ever bought from him before, and allowing me my own time to make the payments.

Kohrs later established two large shops, one in Virginia City where he had followed the miners and the other, the Highland Market, in Helena.

In the summer of 1864, Peel and Kohrs bought four hundred head of poor cattle, paying forty dollars a head, and a number of horses. These they placed on a ranch at Race Track to fatten. On this ranch they also sowed twenty-five acres with oats and barley, paying twenty-five cents per pound for the oats and fifty cents per pound for the barley. They dug a ditch for irrigation and cut the grain with cradles. Grant's threshing machine threshed it, and the grain was sold for seed at twenty-five cents per pound the next spring.

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5 Kohrs, op. cit., p. 45.
In the winter of 1865-66, Kohrs purchased between three and four hundred head of cattle brought in to winter by Churchill and McCoy. The price paid was eighty-five dollars each. He bought Grant's ranch for $19,200 in August, 1866. The severe winter of 1867 caused him to lose a number from his herd though he saved some by feeding them hay at one hundred dollars a ton.6

The first herd of thoroughbred cattle were Durhams and consisted of four hundred fifty heifers and five bulls. The animals had been shipped from Omaha to Ogden and then driven north. D. E. Graham and J. B. Taylor were the owners.7

Cattle had become so numerous in this valley in 1866, that the range difficulties forced the territorial legislature to pass an "act granting the county commissioners authority to define the various types of range and to regulate their use for the general welfare."8 This act was repealed at the next session of legislature because it violated the right of the Federal Government to control the public lands.

The cattle were branded as early as 1862, for Dempsey's

6 Ibid., pp. 1-84.
7 Stuart, op. cit., II, p. 34.
brand was "RD", Thomas Lavatta's was "TL", and Grant's was "G". One of these branding scenes was described as follows:

Mounted on the top rail of a log corral, I also witnessed the skillful use of the lasso, by the vaqueros, who were branding a lot of wild Spanish cattle. Over the horns and the hind-legs flew the nooses, and the bellowing beeve was thrown and branded "G", by Johnny (Grant) himself. The agility with which the operators cleared the fence, or jumped on the low roof of a shed, when the "Toto" charged, was highly amusing.9

Cattle raising which became one of Montana's leading industries made its start in the Deer Lodge Valley. Its grassy hills covered with the rich bunch grass were used to fatten the herds of the first settlers. In 1867, John Grant was finding that the cattle range was becoming crowded and sold his cattle to Conrad Kohrs. In 1873, Kohrs and Bielenberg were taking their huge herds to central Montana. Conrad Kohrs and Granville Stuart will always remain in the Montana cattleman's hall of fame.

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9 Montana (Virginia City) Post, December 16, 1865.
CHAPTER VIII

CULTURAL LIFE AND AMUSEMENTS

In fifty years time or less Deer Lodge Valley changed from a wide open country known only to the various Indian tribes and fur traders who passed through it to go east or west to a place that had already spread its root firmly into the fertile and rich soil to become a permanent settlement inhabited by men and women who were even then, past the first hard and rough stages of pioneering and were looking for a fuller and richer life—religiously, culturally and socially.

RELIGION

The first missionary work in the Deer Lodge Valley was done by Father Giorda, one of the Jesuit Fathers, when he visited the settlement on his way to and from the Indian Missions on both sides of the range. At those times he stopped to baptize people, hold Mass, and visit the sick. Some baptisms performed by him on his visit to Deer Lodge in March, 1863, are on record in the St. Ignatius Mission. Other records of his baptism of eighteen people, among whom were seven members of Johnny Grant's own family, have been preserved at St. Peter's Mission. Father Giorda said Mass in the home of Johnny Grant and made at least three
trips to Deer Lodge in 1864—in March, May and December.¹

Since many of the miners who found their way to the rich placer diggings of Deer Lodge Valley were Catholics, there was a great need for a resident priest. Father Giorda, therefore laid the matter before the Ordinary, the Rt. Rev. A. M. Blanchet, who assigned to this new field the Rev. Remigius De Ryckere. The beginning of the Deer Lodge Mission dates from his arrival in July, 1866. His first Sunday services were also held in the home of Johnny Grant.²

In October, 1866, the building of a log chapel was started on Main Street, between Fourth and Fifth. It was completed and the first service was held on December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, under which title Father De Ryckere dedicated the first church to be erected in the Deer Lodge Valley.

This zealous missionary priest visited all of the mining camps in his Mission District from Gold Creek to Silver Bow and Philipsburg in winter and summer through all kinds of hardships. Later he included visits to the farming communities of New Chicago, Flint Creek, and Nevada Creek, and still later the railroad towns of Elliston, Drummond,

¹ Lawrence B. Palladino, Indian and White in the Northwest (Lancaster, Pa., 1922), p. 340.
² Ibid., p. 340.
Garrison, and Avon. Horseback rides of forty, sixty, ninety or more miles over dangerous trails were frequent in the life of this hardy priest, who served the Mission from 1866 to 1922.3

Probably the first Protestant service ever to be held at any settlement in what is now Montana was the one held at Gold Creek on July 13, 1862, by the Rev. Francis.4

Bishop Daniel S. Tuttle of the Episcopal Church held his first service in Deer Lodge, July 17, 1868. He stayed at the Scott House and held the service in a hall in the adjoining building. The hall which served as the Court House, was over a billiard saloon. This was the second protestant service to be held in Deer Lodge as the first was held by a Methodist South minister. Bishop Tuttle was given a lot for a church by Granville Stuart, president of the Town Committee, and he paid one hundred dollars to have it fenced.5 In 1869, both he and Rev. George Comfort, Methodist South, were holding services in the Court House.6

3 Ibid., pp. 340-341.
5 Daniel S. Tuttle, "Early History of the Episcopal Church in Montana" in Montana Contributions, V. pp. 315-316.
6 New North-West (Deer Lodge), August 20, 1869; August 27, 1869.
SCHOOLS

The first school in Deer Lodge County was held in a small log cabin on Race Track Creek with twelve pupils attending. The first term was from December 1, 1865, to April 1, 1866, and for his work the instructor, D. P. Newcomer, received his board. The second school was established soon afterwards in Deer Lodge, with the tuition of two dollars a week for each student. William Mackey was the teacher. The third term was conducted by Miss Elizabeth Walker (Hardenbrook) in the summer of 1866 in the old Granville Stuart cabin.

The first school house built was made of the logs originally cut for the jail at Silver Bow. C. E. Irvine hauled and donated them for the school. The building which was erected directly west of J. A. D'Acheul's residence was twenty feet by twenty-four feet in size and had a ceiling nine feet in height.

The first school board elected in November, 1866, was composed of C. I. Hart, Allen Hardenbrook, C. E. Irvine, and D. P. Newcomer, clerk. The first school superintendent was Robert Wiles, appointed October 1, 1866. The second school superintendent was Morton Perrin whose salary was three hundred dollars in county warrants that were worth twenty cents for two terms: November, 1867 to November, 1869.
There were two hundred and twenty-one students on October 1, 1868. The second board, Thomas H. Irvine, Thomas Aspling, and Granville Stuart, was reelected until 1874. The first school census taken in 1867, showed that there were eighty school children--forty-six males and thirty-four females. The first levy of a school tax was made August 10, 1866.7

BOOKS

The desire of many of the early settlers to improve their minds and those of their children did begin and end in their efforts to establish schools for their children. Many of them had no books but were eager to secure them wherever they could.

The Stuarts saddled their horses, took some fried meat for food and immediately set out for a hundred and fifty mile ride into the Bitter Root when they heard that a man had arrived there with a trunk full of books (1861). Their first winter, like that of many other people, had been spent without any reading matter of any kind. When they arrived they learned that the owner of the books was absent but he had left the trunk in charge of Henry Brooks. Brooks was living in a tepee near the town of Victor. With much persuasion, Brooks sold them five books at five dollars

7 Article written by Granville Stuart in New North-West (Deer Lodge), January 31, 1874.
each with the stipulation that if the owner, Neil McArthur, was not satisfied, they were to pay him more. They chose Napoleon and his Marshalls, by Headley, a Bible in French, Wealth of Nations by Adam Smith, and a book of Shakespeare and Byron. 8

In 1869, Father De Ryckers received a shipment of two hundred and sixty books from New York for a circulating library. The library rooms were in the building adjoining the chapel. 9

HOSPITAL

Dr. A. H. Mitchell established a hospital as early as 1862, in Deer Lodge. 10

In 1869, another important step forward was made by the county commissioners of Deer Lodge County in 1869 when they contracted Dr. Mitchell to care for the county poor and sick. For the sum of $3600 a year he was to support, house and provide medical attention for the needy. To do that he


9 New North-West (Deer Lodge), October 22, 1869.

leased the Bowie House in Court House Square, fitted it up as a hospital with five rooms and two bath rooms, and employed a steward and a nurse. Those not dependent on the county were admitted at their own expense. The commissioners had paid $4,000 the year before (1868) for medical care and attendance of the sick.\textsuperscript{11}

**NEWSPAPERS**

The first paper, the \textit{Independent}, was published on October 12, 1867 by Frank Kenyon. In 1868, the paper was purchased by John Rodgers who sold it to J. C. Kerley, W. H. Todd, and M. C. Hathaway on May 3, 1869. The \textit{Independent} was a weekly following the interest of the Democratic party. In 1874, it moved to Helena and became the \textit{Helena Daily Independent}.

Captain James H. Mills, a former editor of the \textit{Montana Post}, published the first issue of the \textit{New North-West} on July 7, 1869, and it began as a weekly paper. In 1870, it became both a daily and a weekly publication.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11} \textit{New North-West} (Deer Lodge), October 22, 1869.

The pioneer's mind was not always filled with problems that were progressive, serious, or difficult. There were the gayer and brighter moments that helped to lighten the loads and day of an old timer, and those were to be found in any settlement. The frontier people never lacked for some form of amusement to enjoy the sociability of a group.

As soon as the cabins were erected, dancing, hunting, excursions, fishing trips, horse-racing, shooting and boxing matches took place. Many evenings were spent playing poker. The Gold Creek, Cottonwood, and Grantsville people were especially fond of dancing. They would dance all night, and during the winter, would spend every evening dancing, a week at a time. The Indian women were adept at learning the dances and enjoyed them as much as the white women. Thomas Lavatta and Johnny Grant were always issuing invitations to dances in their homes.

A "grand ball" was held at Peter Martin's home in Cottonwood as early as December 25, 1861, "had a fine supper and then danced all night till sunrise."13 On January 1, 1862:

Everybody went to a grand ball given by John Grant at Grantsville and a severe blizzard blew up and raged all night. We danced all night, no outside storm could

13 Stuart, op. cit., p. 192.
dampen the festivities.\textsuperscript{14}

The next day the gale was still blowing and it was forty below zero. No one even thought of going home for two reasons: some of the couples lived ten or fifteen miles up the valley while the Stuarts lived eight miles below and then John Grant insisted that everyone remain until the storm ceased. After breakfast, all slept on buffalo robes on the floor until two o'clock in the afternoon. Dinner, prepared by John Grant's wife and the other wives, was eaten and then the dancing continued with unabated pleasure until nine o'clock in the evening. Supper was eaten and again the dancing was resumed to be continued until dawn. The blizzard had ceased at daybreak; therefore, everyone was on his way home immediately after breakfast.

The music for these dances was two violins; and the dance most popular, was the old-fashioned quadrille. The floors were all of puncheon hence not smooth or waxed. Some men called the figures. The women were Indian or half-breed and there were never enough to go around. A man with a handkerchief tied around his arm supplied the place of a woman in some of the sets. There was as much rivalry among the women of those days, as to their finery, as there is now among their white sisters. At these balls they wore their brightest calicoes with new scarlet leggings and handsomely beaded moccasins with gay plaid blankets and ornaments of feathers, shells, silver money, beads, and a generous supply of vermilion paint. The children were also gotten up in the most elaborate beaded costumes that their mothers could supply. It was no uncommon thing

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 193.
for an Indian woman to spend all of her spare time for six months, preparing a suit beaded and embroidered with colored porcupine quills, for her young son to wear to these festivities. Nor were the men without vanity. We always wore our best flannel shirt, a highly ornamented buckskin suit, and best moccasins and trimmed our hair and beards. I (Granville) kept my handsomely beaded buckskin suit with its decorations of fringe until 1880, when it was stolen from my cabin on the cattle range.15

"Danced last night. It is not often that we have a fiddler and when we do have one, we try to keep him in practice by having a dance every evening."16 The people of Gold Creek attended a ball given by Thomas Lavatta at Cottonwood on November 8, 1862 and remained for the night. This time they went home sick from sleeping in houses with no ventilation.17

Dancing was still popular in 1865, for a visitor to Deer Lodge declared that there were "not more than seven dances a week" and described a ball at Johnny Grant's home.

Johnny Grant--the great medicine man of the mixed French-Indian race who ranch round Deer Lodge--had opened a fine Hall for dancing and on entering, my ears were saluted by the familiar music of Bullard's band. On the principle of a Methodist Class-meeting, all the sisters (and the babies, not exceeding thirteen in number) were on the right; the lords of creation were on the left, with the exception of one or two daring innovators, who had ensconced themselves among the ladies, white, brown, and red. This startling proceeding was considered as indicative of want of breeding. A small pappoose, with glittering black eyes, looked daggers at the principal intruder, and

15 Ibid., pp. 193-194.
16 Ibid., p. 196.
17 Ibid., p. 228.
then shaking his head and opening his mouth, betook himself to the maternal fount of nourishment with immense vigor and evident success. . . . The ladies "embraced" twenty individuals; twelve were either half-breeds or full blooded squaws, and eight were white ladies. The demeanor of the aboriginal danseuses was as correct and becoming as could be seen in the most polished assembly; and, as a rule, they danced very well, and some exceedingly well. Those, even, who could not speak English were most courteous in gesture. The white ladies and gentlemen were of course very similar to those you are accustomed to meet in Virginia or Nevada. One specially fine dancer had been lately married, to the sound of music and the beat of measured footfalls. The quadrille was set; the bride and groom stepped forward—were married; and the chain being welded with the usual chaste saluet, off they started.18

When John Grant moved to Canada much of the half-breed and Indian population went with him. From that time the dances were attended mostly by white women. An outstanding occasion in 1867 was the pre-election dance. Everyone within a radius of twenty miles was invited and nearly everyone attended. The children and babies were well provided for: a room with beds for the children and a baby-tender, Tom Strang, took care of the infants. The music was furnished by two fiddlers. The women wore clean calico dresses and the men danced in fancy-beaded mocassins as shoes and boots were scarce items. Tea, coffee and sandwiches were provided, but most of the men brought a

18 Montana (Virginia City) Post, December 16, 1865.
supply of whiskey caching it in the woodpile. David L. Irvine, candidate for clerk and recorder, had never taken a drink, but while electioneering this time he became quite intoxicated. "The Missouri ladies were strict Campbellites, had never danced and the boys had been very temperate.

During the evening Jim Brown tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Con, the country is saved". "Why, how so," I asked. He replied, "The girls have gone to dancing and the boys to drinking."19 Some of those attending the dance were W. B. Dance, Caleb Irving, Judge Wiles and wife, Jim Brown and wife, Jack Meyers, Maggie and Eliza Irvine, Big Eyed Tom, Wash McCormick, Newcomber, and McMurrtry.

In August, 1869, the McKinstry House ball was enjoyed by seventy-five people and "all went merry."20

To raise money for a new school building a ball which brought in two hundred dollars was given November 12, 1869. Buz Caven provided the music.21

HUNTING AND FISHING

Hunting and fishing were more than just mere sports to all early pioneers whose life stories would have been

20 New North-West (Deer Lodge), August 20, 1869.
21 Ibid., November 12, 1869.
much shorter if they had not been able to find food when and where it was needed. It was almost a rare occasion, however, when a hunter was successful in bagging a buffalo near Deer Lodge. The Indians, therefore, went further east to the prairies on their hunting trips.

One of the exceptional stories to come down through the years records the success of a Mr. James McKain, who was hunting between Deer Lodge and Boulder, where he ran across a herd of buffalo and shot two within ten miles of Deer Lodge.22

Ducks were more plentiful. One morning in October, 1869, a man bagged eighteen ducks—teal and mallard—bringing down four at a shot within a mile of town.23

Antelope, deer, and fish were numerous. One prospector in the valley in 1862 said, "The two rivers in our front yard (Little Blackfoot and Deer Lodge) were alive with fine large mountain trout, and with an occasional antelope for change, we lived on the fat of the land."24

A real "fish story" was told about:

A party of six gentlemen, Messrs. James H. and Phil M. Brown, Howard Zenor, Bill Hardenbrook, and Bob Harris, Esq. (the Hoodoo Chief) were on a fishing

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22 Ibid., October 8, 1869.
23 Ibid., October 22, 1869.
24 Francis M. Thompson, "Reminiscences of Four-Score Years" in Massachusetts Magazine, VI (1913), p. 40.
and hunting excursion to Lost Creek on last Saturday and Sunday. They brought in Five Hundred and Twenty-Six Trout, some weighing three pounds as the spoils of the raid--only one day's fishing.  

Horse racing very early became one of the important forms of amusement.

The sixty mile race between Col. Thornton's "Billy Bay" and Valiton & Talbot's "Lizard" for $2,000, on Monday, 16th, is a sure thing as stated by the parties. It is attracting more attention than any race ever run here, and will attract the largest assemblage ever congregated on Olin's Track.  

Mr. Olin also built a skating park at the head of Second Street, 1869, using the water from Cottonwood Creek.  

Boxing had its place, too, in the lives of the pioneers.

There has been considerable talk over the probability of another encounter between Hugh O'Neil and Con Orem; the latter it is said, not feeling satisfied with the affair of Jan., 1865. Some of Hugh's friends have addressed him a note, proffering all the needful which might be required, in the event of another meeting between the parties being determined upon; and Hugh has written to Orem upon the subject.  

In 1869, Deer Lodge also had a bowling alley on Main Street. It was the Excelsior Bowling Alley of Steward & Co.  

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25 *New North-West* (Deer Lodge), August 20, 1869.  
26 Ibid., November 11, 1869.  
27 Ibid., October 22, 1869.  
28 *Montana* (Virginia City) Post, April 7, 1866.  
29 *New North-West* (Deer Lodge) October 8, 1869.
A story or a history of any part of the West would not be complete without a statement about gambling, for poker was a favorite game among the frontiersmen who spent many winter evenings engaged in that pastime. Powell and James Stuart both liked to play and in one night's games Powell lost $97.50 while Stuart was one of the winners.30

A good contest, with or without stakes has always appealed to people of every period and every part of the country--but to no one more, perhaps, than to the real Westerner, who is noted for his interest in sports and good sportsmanship.

SHOOTING MATCH

In December, 1861, the men gathered at Grant's for a shooting match. Chief Tendoy, who was camping at Grantsville, sent a challenge to John Powell. The Indians were hunters of small game and could easily outshoot the whites unless they would shoot long range. Powell arranged the details: the target was to be placed at a distance of one hundred yards, and then moved one hundred yards for each succeeding shot until one thousand yards had been reached. The whites felt that with this arrangement they had increased their stores of buffalo robes and horses as these were the stakes.

30 Stuart, op. cit., p. 167.
Early in the morning we rounded up our horses and collected all the blankets, beads, and butcher knives, we could scrape together and started for the Indian camp. Arriving on the grounds we found Chief Tendoy ready for business. He had selected one of his men named Pushigan to do the shooting. This Indian had an old-fashioned Dimmock Rifle, weighing about thirty pounds. He had taken a piece of hoop-iron and improvised a sight by slightly turning up the end in which he filed a notch, this contrivance being fastened to the gun-barrel with buckskin thongs, and by means of a small wooden wedge he could raise and lower the sight to suit his fancy. For a target we took the end-gate of his wagon-bed, a board three feet square, and in the center of this we made a bull's eye, on paper. Pushigan fired the first shot and struck the bull's eye near the center. We had selected Granville Stuart for our marksman. He stepped up to the scratch and took deliberate aim: with the crack of the gun the dust flew up away beyond the target. He had missed the board, which was not very encouraging considering the close proximity of the mark. As the match progressed up to five hundred yards we had not made a single score, but at six hundred yards Granville managed to strike the board near the bull's eye. Up to this point we had been making very light bets, but now confidence was restored with a whoop and betting ran high. Pushigan began to more carefully manipulate his hoop-iron sight and up to nine hundred yards we had but one score to our credit. By this time our crowd was "flat broke", with not a pony, blanket or butcher-knife left. . . . We had to foot it back to camp.

Granville tried his gun the next day and by carefully weighing the powder he found that he could shoot very accurately. He had been too hasty in loading his cartridges the previous day.

Thus ends this record of the early people and happenings in the beautiful Deer Lodge Valley, a record that has had its beginnings in the early years of the nineteenth

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31 Perry W. McAdow in a letter to Dr. W. S. Bell Helena, 1908.
century at a time when the first-known white people in the
country paused to gaze at one of nature's most unusual
creations, the mound at WarmSprings, or stopped to breathe
the clear fresh air as their eyes strayed to the summit
of Mount Powell, the highest mountain overlooking the
valley.

Its close comes with the year 1870, a date that
reveals to the interested reader the fact that the pattern
of the Deer Lodge Valley with all its intricate design
of camps, cities, progress, education, religion, industries,
and people was being well worked out and that it was at
that time, giving a generous, but true, promise of the con-
tinuance of life and real American principles in the cities
and towns and country founded by the early settlers.
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